



Burwell
Community Sports Centre

Run for the community, by the community

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Business Plan

October 2025

Company limited by guarantee, No 07752933
Charity Registration No: 1147828

Burwell Community Sports Centre, Bunting's Path, Burwell, Cambridgeshire CB25 0DD

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1 Executive Summary

Burwell is an expanding village 11 miles northeast of Cambridge with a rapidly growing population. In 2019 the population was recorded at 6,417 and according to Burwell Parish Council is now over 7,000. This is expected to grow considerably in the next few years with one development alone within the village having permission to build 350 homes.

Beyond Burwell, we serve many of the surrounding villages including Reach, Swaffham Prior, Swaffham Bulbeck, Reach, Fordham to name a few.

In the early 1980s local residents formed a committee to raise funds for a village sports hall. The sports hall was built and opened in 1983 right with the aid of grants from the Sports Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council. The Burwell Community Sports Centre Association was formed and a management committee established to oversee the facility. The association successfully applied to be a registered charity.

In 2004 an all-weather floodlit astroturf pitch was added and in 2012, some of the upstairs space was converted into a dance studio.

The facility is situated right in the heart of the village, next door to the village primary school and library. It offers a multi sports hall, a dance studio, a bar/kitchen/ social area, a viewing gallery, changing rooms with toilets, additional toilets including a facility for the disabled, a staff office and various storage areas. Outside there is an all-weather pitch and extensive car-parking.

In 2013 the association was incorporated into a charitable company limited by guarantee. Now simply known as the Burwell Community Sports Centre, (BCSC). The directors of the company oversee the management of BCSC and employ a manager and part-time staff in an operational capacity.

This plan will be used to define the scope of our services, and to support grant applications that BCSC deems necessary to maintain and improve the facility to enable it to meet the needs of a rapidly growing local community. It will also be used on a continual basis in the evaluation of the mission, goals, and objectives.

As a community sports centre we strive to provide affordable and convenient access to sporting and leisure activities to people of all ages and abilities in the local community.

BCSC is a 'not for profit' charity, so it is crucial that it is financially viable but also can be accessed on an affordable basis for those most in need. It has seen growth in turnover and extended the range of activities on offer in recent years. This needs to continue, to

better fulfill our mandate and to counter the effects of inflation and the constant need to renovate and improve our facilities where possible.

Recent examples of this are:

- Replacing the main hall and astro lighting with energy efficient LEDs, which has reduced our energy costs substantially and improved the facility for our users as well as reducing our carbon footprint.
- We replaced the flooring on the stairs leading to the social area to ensure the health and safety of users and to improve the feel of the centre
- We successfully secured a grant from the Climate Change Opportunity Fund for £148,500, which has allowed us to install Solar panels across the roof, battery storage to enable us to save the energy generated, an air source heat pump to heat our water, air conditioning to reduce the temperature in the summer and warm the building up in the winter, so that in dire need the centre can be used as a respite centre for the community and two EV charging stations. The impact overall is to significantly reduce the centre's costs and allows it to generate income from feeding excess energy generated into the UK Power Network and from offering EV charging to the community at rates that cover the centre's costs, but which are significantly lower than power charging options at a more commercial charging station. Finally, we installed a display unit to show the community how alternative energy benefits us and them and what it means in terms of carbon reduction.
- The introduction of a regular maintenance programme, undertaken by a team of volunteers to reverse the deterioration of the building that has been happening for many years.
- We successfully secure a grant amounting to £4,500 from Burwell Parish Council and Burwell Carnival allowing us to purchase two new laptops for the centre and to introduce new software to manage the finances/ accounts of the centre, far more efficiently than had been possible previously.
- Reviewing the full range of policies and legal requirements that the centre needs to have in place to ensure that what we do meets current requirements and that the way we work is safe and efficient.
- Purchasing uniforms for our staff, to improve staff visibility and to signal this new era for Burwell Community Sports Centre.
- We built a new website, so that users could see what we currently offer and now regularly engage with our users via social media.

There is much more that we need to do in the future and these are covered in more detail within the 'Future Plans' section of this plan, but includes:

- The replacement of the main hall flooring. After over 40 years of usage, it is reaching the end of its useable lifetime.

- Re-design the front entrance area of the centre to make the centre more useable for the disabled, improve how welcoming it feels when users enter, to upgrade the changing rooms and toilet facilities, which again are reaching the end of their useable life and to make better use of the space so that we can consider alternative usage such as the introduction of a small gym.
- Improve the bar/ kitchen and social area, so that it becomes a space that users want to be in. This is with a view to opening a café area as well as opening up the bar on a regular basis.
- Maximise the usage of the facilities by offering a wider range of offerings to our community and extending the opening hours.
- Work more closely with other local institutions like Burwell Parish Council, Burwell Village College, the Burwell Day Centre, the Burwell Print Centre and Burwell Museum for the good of us all.
- Install two more partition curtains, so that each of the four courts can be independent of the rest of the hall.

2. Mission Statement

Burwell Community Sports Centre is 'run by the community for the community'.

We aim to promote a healthy lifestyle and social integration by providing reasonably priced leisure and sporting activities plus special events for residents of all ages and abilities in Burwell and surrounding communities. We support healthy minds and bodies and communities.

We aim to make BCSC a thriving social hub at the heart of our community.

We will offer a wide range of activities designed to attract all sectors within our community.

We will aim to maximise opening times.

We will play our part in reducing the carbon footprint of our community.

2.1 Implementation Plan

We will enable our mission statement by:

Programming

- Providing after school clubs and school holiday activities for local children.
- Continuing our programme aimed at adults over 55, (Mature and Active), which currently includes badminton, tai chi and carpet bowls.
- Providing low-cost activities for parents and toddlers. (Stay & Play, Football Fun Factory, Fun Skating).
- Providing a venue for adults to participate in a range of sporting activities (currently we offer football, cricket, badminton, table tennis, pickleball, yoga, roller hockey and dance classes).
- Providing facilities for local clubs and organisations to extend/complement our offer, (Badminton, Karate, Table Tennis, Soham Roller Hockey, Performance without Limit).
- Working with and developing facilities and sessions for all sectors of our local community.

Partnerships

- Working with Burwell Village College and enhancing our relationship.
- Working with other community organisations like Burwell Parish Council, Burwell Museum, Burwell Day Centre, local health agencies, East Cambridge District Council, Cambridge Football Association as best serves our growing local community.

Social Engagement & Responsiveness

- Making BCSC a major social hub in the local community. (develop the bar/ café area)
- Helping to support healthy living habits from youth to old age.
- Supporting, (as far as the economics of running BCSC allows), those within our local community who are subject to financial deprivation.
- Become a respite centre of the community in times of crisis such as extreme heat or cold.
- Engaging with and educating the local community in relation to the impact of the changes we make with regard to the environment.

Operational Efficiency

- Ensuring that we have and maintain an up to date and resilient IT support system to improve the customer and staff experience.

3. Company Ownership and Management

BCSC is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The company is run by a board of directors who are also the trustees of the charity. They provide strategic direction and support for the staff.

The centre employs a full-time manager to run the centre. The centre manager liaises closely with the directors and attends board meetings as and when asked.

The centre also employs one fulltime, and one part time duty managers/leisure assistants, who carry out operational duties under the supervision of the centre manager. There is also a small number of staff who work on a casual basis as and when required.

BCSC owns the Centre's facilities. The company leases the land on which the sports centre stands from Cambridgeshire County Council. The lease is for a period of 25 years.

4 Services and Facilities

BCSC is a facility with a main sports hall, dance studio and all-weather outdoor pitch, making it a multisport complex. It provides its users with a wide range of sporting and leisure activities. There is a community social area and an upstairs balcony viewing area as well as extensive car parking.

It is based right in the heart of the village.

4.1 Sports Hall

The sports hall is a typical 4-court hall, 32 metre long and 17 metre wide, and can accommodate most indoor sports such as volleyball, basketball, cricket, five-a-side football, gymnastics, roller hockey, as well as circuit training, soft play sessions for children with a bouncy castle and other suitable equipment, plus children's multisport programmes. The recent adoption of LED lights has improved both lighting levels and energy efficiency.

Some activities are run by the centre and others are run by qualified instructors. The sports hall is also booked by outside organisations for various events including sporting tournaments, roller discos, boxing, martial arts events, demonstrations, seasonal party events and even to fly model aeroplanes.

4.2 All-Weather Pitch

When the centre was first built, there was no junior football club in Burwell. Soon afterwards, residents formed one. By the late 1990s there were more than 15 junior teams. The sports hall could not meet the demand from all the teams for indoor winter training facilities. As a result, the floodlit all-weather pitch was constructed in 2005 to meet that demand. The Football Foundation was the principal funder, but there were also contributions from East Cambridgeshire District Council and other funders. The pitch was re-laid with a new 3G surface in November 2022 with the aid of a further grant from the Football Foundation. (*BCSC has to set aside money annually to eventually replace the pitch surface*).

It is 40 meters long and 30 meters wide. The surface is 3G synthetic grass to a depth of 50mm.

4.3 Dance Studio

The studio was first constructed in 2012 but proved to be too small for many classes. The studio was extended and refurbished in 2020 with the aid of a bank loan. It

measures 9.5 meters by 9 meters with a capacity of between 16-20 dependent on the activity.

With its sprung wooden floor and ventilation system it is ideal for classes. It caters for aerobics, dance, ballet, table tennis, karate and yoga classes. It is also used for meetings and training sessions.

Primarily it is booked by external instructors to hold their classes.

4.4 Community Social Area and Balcony

This area situated upstairs offers a small, licensed bar and kitchen area, (the latter can be used for the provision of tea/ coffee/ cakes). It is available to users and for hired events. Generally, it is used by party bookings or evening sports clubs.

Usage of the bar has dropped significantly since covid. but we are actively looking at ways to reverse this trend.

The balcony area overlooks the sports hall and acts as a viewing area for the activities with seating available. (Again, we are actively seeking to renovate this area).

4.5 Other areas

The sports centre has changing rooms and showers for men and women, separate toilets, (including one that allows for disabled access), a reception area at the main entrance and large storage spaces in the sports hall for sporting equipment and further storage upstairs.

It also offers extensive car parking now with 2 EV charging stations.

5 Key Users

Under 5s and Their Parents/Carers

The Sports Centre runs a low cost weekly 'Stay & Play' session for parents and toddlers. It also offers the Football Fun Factory on Sunday mornings. The centre is also a popular venue for children's birthday parties.

Under 18s:

The sports centre hosts and runs after school activities during term time including dance, skating, roller hockey, and badminton coaching. Classes are monitored for popularity and additional classes added when demand for them is apparent. The centre is also a popular venue for children's birthday parties as the hall can cater for a wide range of different activities.

We have recently developed our relationship with 'Burwell Action for Youth' and have supported football sessions for this age group. WE have recently agreed to host the BAFY youth bus every Thursday, which will be a hub for various activities aimed at this age group.

In addition, the centre runs:

- Weekly badminton coaching sessions for 11–16-year-olds.
- The Performance Without Limits Dance School offer a range of dance classes for 11–18-year-olds.
- Burwell Table Tennis Club has a youth section.
- Soham Roller Hockey Club runs youth teams, which train and play matches at the centre.

All of these activities are very popular.

We are about to introduce a couple of after school activities including art classes and sewing classes.

Over 55's:

This age group has been identified as one that can benefit from specialist activities during the daytime. The Centre runs a low cost twice weekly Mature & Active programme. The fixed cost includes badminton, tai chi, and carpet bowls. These activities are proving very popular.

We also run Stretch and Balance classes and Chair Based Exercises.

Young Adults.

Burwell FC teams train at the Centre's all-weather pitch during the winter and this engages many young adults, both male and female, in sporting activity.

We also try to encourage young adults to participate in sport through offering the use of the astroturf pitch at a discounted price when it is available, because we know we need to encourage youngsters to actively participate in sport.

Adults.

Football comprises a large proportion of centre usage, both indoor football and on the outdoor astro pitch.

Badminton is also a popular sport with Burwell Badminton Club meetings and courts being regularly booked by groups to play at other times during the week.

Burwell Table Tennis Club is proving increasingly popular at the centre as well as other exercises classes run weekly including karate, yoga and dance classes. The facilities can be booked for other activities and events.

We are actively seeking to increase this range and are currently reviewing what options might prove most popular.

Disabled

At present the centre's provision for the disabled is limited and we do have access issues that need to be addressed. We have consulted with individuals within this section of the community who will help us improve what we offer in this area.

6 Market Analysis

6.1 Local Context

Burwell is a large village with a population of over 7,000 people based on figures provided by Burwell Parish Council and continues to grow rapidly.

According to the census of 2021 the surrounding villages of Fordham, Swaffham Bulbeck, Swaffham Prior, Soham, Isleham, Exning and Bottisham account for another 23,211 and the nearby town of Newmarket has a population of 18,864.

Many of these locations have seen extensive residential building programmes since that time and are likely candidates for further development in the future.

The customer profile is very broad, covering infants through to the elderly and less physically able, as well as the full range of socio-economic groups. We are especially aware of those on low income who can least afford leisure activities, but may well have the most need.

BCSC is a vital resource for our local community, especially in an environment where people are mindful of reducing their carbon footprint by undertaking fewer journeys and accessing facilities on foot or by bicycle.

However, it is impossible to cater for everyone's needs due to the limitations of the site. So, we will seek to work positively with other facilities and agencies within the village that promote health and fitness activities. These include the local medical surgery, Burwell Parish Council and local sports and leisure clubs.

Locally, there are two community sports centres located in Soham (7 miles) and Bottisham (7 miles) as well as a relatively modern Leisure Centre in Newmarket (6 miles) and multiple Leisure facilities further away in Ely and Cambridge. We share many of the same aims and have many of the same needs, so working with them, rather than seeking to compete with them makes a lot of sense. Using local agencies generally set up by the county council, we can share best practice, which will benefit us all in terms of how we serve our communities and reduce our costs.

6.2 National Context

The following data is taken from the Sport England website,
(<https://www.sportengland.org/about-us/economic-development>)

'The overall value of sport provided by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport within the UK was £99.6 billion, with the figure for England calculated to be £87 billion, with a gross value added of £46.7 billion in 2021.'

It is an established fact that sport and leisure activities have the following positive benefits:

- They help people with their physical and mental wellbeing.
- Connect and strengthens communities.
- Boost the economy in two ways. Firstly, it results in job creation and secondly, by reducing healthcare costs due to a healthier population and reducing crime.

As such, the economic impact of sport is an important part of our strategy, and we'll invest in sports and physical activity projects that contribute to the national and local economy.

7 How We Engage with Our Community

Due to the size and convenient location of our facility, many people are attracted to BCSC. However, we have to maximise our outreach. We seek to do this in a number of ways:

- 1 Advertising activities and events in local magazines and more widely through promotion in local media.
- 2 After a long period without any web presence, we have recently built a new site, which will be regularly updated to promote any new sessions or events that are taking place at the centre.
- 3 Regularly communicating with the local community via social media.
- 4 Offering discounts for high frequency activities along with free taster sessions for new activities.
- 5 Using Burwell Village College's Parent Mail system to target families of primary school children.
- 6 Hosting and/or supporting various community events that will bring in many people who otherwise would not come.
- 7 Print and radio media being invited to events and new activities.
- 8 Building partnerships with other community groups where we can work together for mutual benefit.

8 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Strengths

We are situated in the heart of the village close to other village amenities like the library, Burwell Village College and the Cambridge Army Cadet Force hut. So, for the residents of Burwell, we are well-known and convenient.

Many of the activities we offer are competitively priced.

We have a strong management board with a range of necessary skills and a shared vision.

We have the capacity to significantly increase accessibility to BCSC, by extending the range of the services we offer and the hours that we are open.

We have been able to engage the local community to assist us in areas where we have to date lacked critical skills such as IT, human resources, health and safety, graphic and general design plus handymen.

BCSC was only built because the local community made it happen and has always operated on the basis that it is 'Run by the community, for the community'.

We have secured new IT equipment and are introducing new software, which will increase staff efficiency and the customer experience, as well as providing IT resilience and data backup, which is essential if we are to ensure business continuity.

We can be relatively certain that following the installation of solar panels, along with battery storage and an air source heat pump plus EV Charging points that we are able to be meet are costs and make a small profit to ensure that we can implement our current programme and maintain our facilities.

Weaknesses

We lack the capital to implement the plans any time soon that are set out in the executive summary. Many of these will be costly and so we will be reliant on securing grants or possibly securing loans.

We always have a chicken and egg situation when it comes to the need for recruitment balanced against the need to expand our income to support the overhead.

We are vulnerable and struggle to maintain our programme when staff leave, (though we have considerably improved our resilience in the last 12 months or so).

The leisure industry tends towards offering minimum wages and so it does not always attract high quality, reliable employees.

The board is made up of volunteers and at any time, they can choose to step down, which reduces the effectiveness of the board.

Because the centre is run on a 'not for profit' basis, we are vulnerable in times of economic hardship.

We are currently unable to offer the local community key and desired facilities like a gym or swimming pool.

Maintaining the facilities of the centre is an ongoing burden. By way of example, the main hall requires new flooring, as the old one is reaching the end of its useable life. The cost of replacement is very high when compared to our reserves and profitability.

Opportunities

We have the opportunity to significantly increase accessibility to BCSC, by extending the range of the services we offer and the hours that we are open.

The local community is growing in size all the time, so we have an expanding client base to target.

With full solar panel installation and EV charging, we have created new income streams for the centre.

There is the potential to considerably increase the income derived from the bar/kitchen/ social area.

We are a convenient location for the local community that we serve.

We have the opportunity to expand our relationship with Burwell Village College, (if they are willing) to use the school fields, their netball court, tennis court and basketball court) when the school does not need them. This would mean that we could offer a whole range of different activities, which would especially benefit our summer programme.

There are significant grants available to help us achieve our goals sooner rather than later.

Threats

Potential economic downturn.

Failure to secure grants for the capital outlay required to help us achieve our goals.

Loss of key staff or board members.

We currently only have a lease on the astro up to 2029. If this is not extended, it would have a serious impact on our income.

The installation of new software may result in teething problems as staff adjust to the changes.

9 Future Plans

IT

We are in the process of introducing new accountancy software and supporting software such as 'point of sale' software which should significantly improve our efficiency. This should free up the time of staff and management to allow them to engage more with customers and extend the range of services we offer.

Maintenance

The main hall flooring is coming to the end of its natural life and research is being undertaken to replace it.

The changing rooms, toilet facilities, reception area and front door are badly in need of renovation. A complete overhaul would allow us to make much better use of the space, create a more welcoming atmosphere and to provide facilities that people like to use.

The disabled facilities need to be upgraded to meet the latest standards.

The centre in many respects looks tired and unfriendly, we need to give it a cosmetic uplift to create a space where people feel welcome and simply want to be. This includes upgrading the bar/ kitchen/ social area to encourage more usage

Developing Local Partnerships

This has started but there is much that can be done to improve our relationship with other local agencies and organisations for the benefit of all parties.

Meeting Legal Requirements

Using the local expertise that we have found to ensure that the centre complies with latest the latest legislation in key areas like human resources, health and safety, safeguarding, accounting, first aid, and data protection.

Extending Our Outreach

We will develop a programme and timetable for expanding the range of services that we offer and our opening hours.

Grants

We will be actively seeking grants to replace the floor in the main hall and to carry out the changes mentioned in the maintenance section above

10 Financial Information

As a registered charity, the sports centre currently receives mandatory and discretionary business rates relief from East Cambridgeshire District Council.

The centre applies for grant funding for specific capital projects. The running costs of the centre are met by income generated by the centre, which derives principally from the fees that customers pay, but will now include feeding energy to the UK Power Network and usage of our EV charging facilities. If the centre makes an annual surplus, the funds will be used to maintain/ improve our facilities to enable us to deliver on our mission statement.

The centre is not registered for VAT as most of our income from the provision of sports services to the community is exempt from VAT.

2024-25 audited accounts are available for inspection upon request.