

MERLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

CLUB CONSTITUTION

LAST UPDATED: MAY 2026



FUN | LEARNING | RESPECT | TRUST | TEAMWORK

CLUB CONSTITUTION

The club shall be known as the MERLEY FOOTBALL CLUB and shall be affiliated to the Dorset County Football Association.

Objectives:

- a. To provide the opportunity for individuals of all abilities to play Association Football and/or learn/develop football skills in an organised and safe environment.
- b. To provide an environment within which to learn and develop life, personnel and interpersonal skills.
- c. To provide financial support for a designated disability group to provide personnel, interpersonal and life skills to children with additional needs whilst developing football skills in an organised and safe environment.

Guidelines:

- a. Players and members will be treated fairly, equally, impartially and with respect.
- b. Every individual who participates will do so in a safe and enjoyable environment, protected from physical, sexual and emotional harm, and from neglect or bullying (in conjunctions with the FA Policy Statement on Child Protection).
- c. In line with our ethos of being a local community club, membership will be encouraged from those who live in Merley, but also, it's surrounding areas (for example, but not limited to Wimborne, Corfe Mullen and Poole).
- d. Teams will be arranged in year groups in line with rules and regulation laid down by the appropriate leagues.
- e. Team selection will become more competitive as the players progress through the age groups.
- f. Final selection, including substitutes will be left to the discretion of the Team Manager.
- g. Facilitating football for everyone of all abilities is essential, but for the advantage and development of all players, the club (and its managers and coaches), may want to facilitate football at an ability level. This ensures that players are getting specific training for their developmental needs and is in line with how the counties football associations manage their Pools / Divisions, ensuring a suitable environment for all players.
- h. Attendance at weekly training sessions is a pre-requisite for team selection unless absence results from illness, a pre-arranged family event or attendance at other activities PROVIDING this is notified to the Manager

Membership:

- a. Members shall be:
 - i. All players registered to the club (known as Registered Playing Members).
 - ii. All individuals who registered their player with the club (known as Non-Registered Playing Members).
 - iii. All individuals who act as managers, coaches, safeguarding representatives, officials (e.g., referees) or members of the clubs committee (known as Non-Playing Members).
- b. All Registered Playing members will complete the appropriate club membership forms during Sign-On.
- c. All Registered Non-Playing members are required to have the relevant qualifications and approvals.
- d. Membership will be deemed as complete upon agreement to pay the relevant subscriptions for the year.
- e. Registered and Non-Registered Playing Members who withdraw from the club are required to do so in writing.

Committee:

The club shall be run by a General Committee (hereafter referred to as "The Committee") whose constitutional members shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Committee shall comprise of

The below are known as 'the officers' of the club:

1. Chairperson
2. General Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Welfare Officer

The committee will then be made up of other individuals based on the needs of the club and its officers. The current committee also includes the following individual roles which were elected at the AGM:

1. Registration Secretary
2. Club Ambassador
3. Referee Mentor

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4. Committee Support (individuals who support with communication, advise, events and facilities).

Responsibilities and Functions

1. The Management Committee shall be responsible for laying down and implementing policies of the club.
2. Exercise supervision and control over all subcommittees and employees / volunteers of the Club.
3. Oversee the Club's activities, ensuring the club is well run and deliver the outcome for which it is set up for.
4. Provide direction and guidance in the Club's development and improvement plans.
5. Perform such functions or duties which the Chairman may delegate from time to time.

Powers of the Committee:

1. The properties and assets of the club shall be bestowed upon the Committee.
2. The committee has the power to appoint individuals or sub-committees to undertake activities as may, from time to time, be deemed necessary and shall receive reports from these individuals or Sub-Committees at its meetings.
3. The Committee shall have the power to appoint individuals on a temporary basis, as it sees fit, to serve on the Committee to assist in the activities of the Committee or otherwise assist in the running of the Club
4. **The Committee shall have the power to provide warnings or suspend / terminate any member deemed guilty of a breach of the club's code of conduct and / or one of its policies (via the Grievance Procedure below).**
5. The Committee shall have the power to fill such vacancies as may arise in its constitution between AGM's.
6. The Committee shall have to power to remove a committee member between AGM's if there are sufficient grounds to do so (for example if the committee member is not performing their duties).

Grievance Procedure:

1. In the first instance, all grievances should be addressed to one of the Chairperson, General Secretary or Welfare Officer. If this is not possible, the final option is to contact another committee member.
2. All grievances should be actioned by one of the following groups:
 - i. The Chairperson and Secretary, as well as another member of the committee.
 - ii. One of the Chairperson or Secretary and two members of the committee.
 - iii. If a grievance relates to both the Chairman and Secretary, the grievance can be dealt with by three members of the committee but should include the Welfare Officer.
3. Upon receipt of a grievance, the committee will determine the most appropriate individuals to manage the situation (based on the groups listed in #2 above). The nominated group shall be named the 'Disciplinary Action Group', who will be responsible for formulating a plan of action and finalising the grievance.
4. **In certain circumstances, the Disciplinary Action Group may have direct evidence to prove a breach of the club's code of conduct and / or its policies. In such circumstances, the club can take immediate action under #4 of the 'Powers of the Committee' section. The Disciplinary Action Group should agree on the action based on the severity of the grievance and notify the individuals involved once a decision has been made.**
5. If the grievance requires further investigation, then the Disciplinary Action Group will continue with their investigations, which may require speaking to the individuals involved (on both sides). A final decision will be made by the group which could result in either action under #4 of the 'Powers of the Committee' or no further action.
6. Initial communication between all parties should be verbally delivered, unless there are circumstances which prevent this (for example, if any of the impacted parties refuse to speak or are anxious about communicating verbally). In such circumstances, it is permissible for the Disciplinary Action Group to communicate in writing, which can be via e-mail or letter; whichever the Disciplinary Action Group decides is appropriate.
7. **Verbal communication should comprise of at least two members of the chosen Disciplinary Action Group.**
8. For clarity, an individual who is connected to the grievance cannot be part of the Disciplinary Action Group.

In Season vs. Off Season:

The difference helps provide clarity around the annual subscriptions ONLY. All members are required to always adhere to the club code of conduct and policies whilst registered (both in season and off season).

'In Season' is the timeframe in which subscriptions are due to the club. This will run from mid-late August until the following years AGM around the start-mid June (official dates will be confirmed each season).

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'Off Season' is the timeframe when each team determines their own structure for subscriptions. Each team can dictate their own structure and any subscriptions are retained by the individual team and not due to the club. All subscriptions are to be for the benefit of our members (for example, for specific equipment or social events).

Annual Subscriptions:

The subscriptions will be reviewed annually by the Committee Officers and prior to the club's AGM. All Registered Playing Members will be subject to two types of subscriptions, known as 'Instalments' and 'Match Fees'. These subscriptions cover the 'In Season' period only (as described in the previous section).

- **Instalments** will be confirmed at the AGM each season and include sign-on fee's, equipment, winter training, registrations, insurances, pitch maintenance, events and several other costs over the 'In Season' period.
- **Match Fees** will be confirmed at the AGM each season and include cover pitch hire and referee costs.
- Merley Football Club is a non-profit organisation, and all subscriptions are for the benefit of its members.

Equipment and Kits:

Each team will be provided with a training kit and a match day kit. For the benefit of its members, the club request that where possible, a sponsor for match day kit is provided to cover up to 100% of the kit costs. Replacements and several other items are available but require sponsorship or payment from its members.

Each team will be provided with the basic equipment to facilitate football, including training footballs, match day footballs, cones, bibs, training poles, respect barriers, corner flags and first aid kits. Other equipment will need to be purchased by the individual teams throughout fundraising or via the 'Off Season'.

Constitution:

This Merley Football Club constitution will be published and available on the Club Website www.merleyfc.com

Annual General Meeting:

1. The AGM shall be held no later than June each year, with notification at least 28 days prior.
2. The AGM will include confirmation of minutes from the previous year, the Financial Statement from the Treasurer, the Secretary's report and any other matters of which have been submitted (at least 7 days prior to the AGM).
3. Members of the committee will be elected / re-elected during the AGM.
4. Each committee member must be 'Proposed' and 'Seconded' by two members of the members.

Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM):

An EGM may be organised by the committee when deemed necessary or if requested in writing by 10 or more members. The Secretary is required to give 14 days' clear notice of such a meeting. All reasonable efforts shall be made to give notice to all members either through the Secretary directly, through Team Managers or a combination of both.

Finance:

1. All expenses or payments out of the club's accounts can only be approved by the Chairman or Secretary.
2. Receipts must be provided in all instances for payments to be made.
3. The Treasurer is responsible for being the registered owner of the club's bank account, completing payments, raising invoices and writing cheques. The treasurer must also provide financial information to the committee upon request.

Code of Conduct:

All Registered Playing Members and Non-Registered Playing Members must agree to the clubs Code of Conduct when they sign onto the club via the Website. All individuals should always follow the Code of Conduct.

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Safeguarding:

1. During training / match days, each team must have a minimum of 1 individual that has the following qualifications:
 - FA Specific DBS Check
 - FA Specific Safeguarding Training
 - FA Specific First Aid Training
 - FA Specific Coaching (formally Level 1).
2. All managers and coaches must have an FA Specific DBS Check and Safeguarding Training.
3. The club will always aim to adhere to the NSPCC 'guidelines' on child – coach ratio's (as followed by the FA).
4. It will be the responsibility of the Welfare Officer to monitor all Managers and Coaches, and to provide reminders
5. It will be the responsibility of the Welfare Officer to provide reasonable assistance to persons requiring the qualifications for each team to have sufficient safeguarding in place.
6. Failure to adhere to the above can result in further action from the committee (see Powers of the Committee #4).

Referees

1. The Club will provide the opportunity to players/parents to attend a Dorset FA Referee course (paid for by the club).
2. In return, the Club request that these referee's make themselves available every week and prioritise our matches.
3. The Club will set out the referee payments each year, based on the FA guidance and Chairman approval.
4. The Club will continue its methodology of having its own referees and supporting them throughout.

Other Business:

All matters that have not governed by this Constitution, shall be dealt with by the Committee, the decision of which shall be final and binding.