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../02/16

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DINNER KICKS OFF W3ST FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

A special sportsmans' dinner at Strathaven Hotel kicked off the official campaign to raise funds for Strathaven's first full size, multipurpose, all-weather, floodlit pitch.

W3ST or Whiteshawgate 3G Sports Trust – a partnership between Strathaven Rugby Club and Strathaven Dynamo AFC – have been working hard for the past two years to raise more than £530,000 towards the £630,000 target for the project.

They have done this mainly through applying to various community facility funds available from Cashback For Communities, Sportscotland, Renewable Energy Fund, Scottish Football Partnership and The Robertson Trust.

W3ST now hope that the proactive and enthusiastic Strathaven community will help push them closer to their goal by the summer deadline, through a special opportunity for individuals and local businesses to literally take ownership of a little piece of the new pitch.

Similar to the sponsor a brick schemes many professional sports teams have adopted at their stadiums, the idea is for supporters of this exciting project to buy sections of the pitch and have their names displayed on a permanent grid billboard at the side of the playing area.

These sponsored sections will be split into three packages: Bronze Level (individual 10m sq for £30), Silver Level (Business 200m sq for £200) and Gold (major donations of £2,500).

Strathaven Hotel – not far from the Whiteshawgate site of the new sports facility - was the venue for more than 150 guests on Friday 26 February as the campaign was officially launched.

Renowned after-dinner speakers Scott Glynn – himself at the centre of a similar community fundraising effort in his hometown of Tranent – and Peter C Brown provided the entertainment on the night and helped W3ST make a good start towards the required amount.

Frank McGraw, a W3ST Trustee and also Chairman of Strathaven Dynamo AFC, said: “The speakers dinner was fantastic and we want to thank Scott and Peter for helping us to launch our fundraising appeal and to everyone who attended and helped us start the ball rolling to reach our target.

“We have joined forces with Strathaven Rugby Club to create the independent charity W3ST, to secure the funding necessary to build this new pitch and make all types of outdoor sports more accessible to people of all ages and abilities in Strathaven.

“We feel passionately that Strathaven is long overdue a high quality sports facility of this nature. Its construction will be something that the whole community will be able to use, from both a sport, fitness, health and wellbeing point of view as well as from a social point of view. The new pitch when completed – hopefully by October this year, will be something that the people of Strathaven will be proud of for many, many years to come. However, we need everyone in the Avondale area to help us get there. We can see the finishing line, but we just need one more big fundraising push and we are looking for the people of Strathaven to get behind this campaign.

Garry Tough, also a W3ST Trustee and President of Strathaven Rugby Club, said: “This was a great event to kick off our appeal and I would also like to thank everyone who attended, especially the very entertaining speakers.

“We are calling on everyone to help us make this dream a reality. One in four children and young people in Strathaven participate in outdoor team sports, yet there is no suitable full-size artificial pitch. The creation of this new multi-purpose, all-weather and floodlit pitch is vital to secure the future of outdoor team sports in Strathaven.

“Access to facilities in East Kilbride and Hamilton is extremely limited and costly and this project will significantly improve the capacity of community teams and clubs to carry out activities focussed on supporting the social, mental, educational and physical development – as well as improving the overall wellbeing and quality of life – of our young people. Please help us, help you and pitch in with a donation as soon as possible.”

For more information on how to donate visit the Whiteshawgate3GSportsTrust Facebook page on <https://www.facebook.com/Whiteshawgate3GSportsTrust/> or visit the W3ST page on the Strathaven Dynamos website on <http://www.strathavendynamofc.co.uk/club/CustomPages/view/20068> .

Alternatively you can e-mail w3st.info@gmail.com with your contact details and someone from W3ST will get back to you with more information. It is hoped an information evening will be held soon where the public will be able to attend and find out more about the new facility.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

The single purpose of this new charity is to create an independently funded, financed and managed 3G artificial sports pitch which will be floodlit and marked for both football and rugby. Both clubs will receive equal access and the pitch will be offered to other community groups and individuals. This marks a fantastic spirit of cooperation between the town's two largest community groups in what will be one of the few community only funded and independent sports pitch projects in Scotland.

The new pitch site at Strathaven Rugby Club will be leased to W3ST and operated by W3ST on behalf of the clubs for a minimum of 25 years and - funds permitting – it is hoped that work will start by late summer and be completed by the autumn of this year.

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