**Introduction**

This document sets out the policies and funding principles for the Welsh Ground Improvements (WGI) for 2020/21 and 2021/22 football seasons, following the decisions of the Football Association of Wales (FAW) Board.

**About WGI – Its PurpOSE AND RATIONALE**

WGI is a not for profit company limited by guarantee. There are twelve Board members comprised of ten FAW representatives and two from the FAW Trust.

The important, and unique, role of WGI is to support clubs to improve their ground infrastructure to meet the top tier league criteria and broadcasting requirements. Its remit is clearly defined as investment in clubs enabling them to play in Tiers 1-3, or the Welsh Women’s Premier League, based on the agreed league and broadcasting requirements.

WGI distributes FAW money as grant aid to affiliated clubs as well as overseeing the distribution of other external funding that helps top tier clubs meet league and broadcasting standards.

**General Eligibility Rules**

Applications can be made from FAW affiliated clubs currently competing at Tiers 1 to 4 which require investment to support projects specifically required to adhere to the Infrastructure Regulations of the Tier, into which they will be, or have been, promoted. In summary, clubs which are eligible/qualify to play in Tiers 1-3 including the Welsh Premier Women’s League.

The different eligibility criteria for each tier are summarised below;

**Tier 1**

WGI will have oversight of the funds allocated to Tier 1 clubs, for example funding from broadcast income which is provided for specified ground improvements i.e. floodlights, gantries specialist work or UEFA grants to help clubs secure 500 LUX floodlighting levels.

**Tier 2**

Applications can only be accepted for projects that are required to meet the FAW Tier 1 Club

Licensing Regulations by the annual deadline. WGI offers of grant must be made before the

Club Licensing First Instance Body meeting that approves the eligibility of the club and

ground for promotion. An offer must be conditional upon the Club being awarded the FAW

Tier 1 Licence and promotion to the Cymru Premier League for the following season.

APPLICATION DEADLINE 31st JANUARY 2021

**Tier 3**

Applications can only be accepted for projects that are required to meet the FAW Tier 2

Compliance Regulations. WGI offers of grant are made only to promoted Clubs, following the

Tier 2 AGM when the promoted Clubs have been confirmed. The work must be completed

by the following 30th April.

APPLICATION DEADLINE 30th APRIL 2021

**Tier 4**

Applications can only be accepted for projects that are required to meet the FAW Tier 3

Ground Criteria Regulations. Clubs **must** comply with the Tier 3 minimum pitch size **before** submitting an application for other elements.

Minimum playing area 98m x 62m Plus

Minimum run off 1.5m 101m x 65m Plus

Hardstanding to one length and one width min. 1.0m 102m x 66m

**Minimum size required 102m x 66m**

There must also be sufficient space to install 8 person dug outs and a spectator stand with 100 seats

WGI offers of grant are made only to promoted Clubs following the Tier 3 AGM when the promoted Clubs have been confirmed. The work must be completed by the following 30th April

APPLICATION DEADLINE 30th APRIL 2021

**WPWL**

Applications can only be accepted for projects that are required to meet the WPWL.

Regulations. WGI offers are made to Licenced Clubs which ground share with another

Directly Affiliated League club, and may only apply if that other club has not applied in the

same season.

APPLICATION DEADLINE 30th APRIL 2021

**Specific Eligibility Rules**

In normal circumstances clubs will have to provide evidence that they have a minimum of ten years security of tenure at their ground. Where they are unable to do this, each case will be considered on its individual merits.

As part of the application, clubs must evidence that three quotes, planning permission (if relevant) and that the necessary finance will be in place (including minimum club funding contributions) in order to complete the required upgrades in a timely manner, consistent with the relevant Regulations.

# **Grant Funding Limits and Securing Value for Money**

The maximum levels of grant available for clubs promoted to each tier are:

* For Tier 2 clubs seeking promotion to Tier 1: 75% of eligible costs.
* For Tier 3 clubs seeking promotion to Tier 2: 80% of eligible costs.
* For Tier 4 clubs seeking promotion to Tier 3: 90% of eligible costs.

**Value for money**

The grant award will be based on the lowest acceptable tender.

Where appropriate, WGI will also attempt to achieve value for money for clubs with the same projects by securing preferential rates with contractors.

For purposes of consistency, the following fixed grants, based on historical evidence, will apply to the following standard projects:

* Concrete hardstanding: £3,300 (1 pitch length); £2,100 (1 pitch width);
* 8 person Dugouts (set of two): £3,700

(Moveable and fixed dugouts that meet league requirements are eligible for grant aid. Dugouts should be positioned on the same side of the pitch and equidistant either side of the half way line.)

* Perimeter pitch spectator barrier: £3,700

(Must be 50mm diameter of galvanised metal)

* 100 seat stand: £16,500
* Foundations to stand: £7,500
* Security shutters to stand: £9,200

N.B. In circumstances where the scale of the project needs to be greater to meet League requirements i.e. seat numbers, the standard level of grant will be adjusted on a pro-rata basis.

**Contractors**

A club may use a contractor which did not submit an estimate at tender stage, provided it seeks permission and has good reason. Any business or family connection between a director or employee of the Club and a contractor (including consultancies) should be disclosed to WGI before any contract between the Club and the contractor is agreed.

**PROCESS AND ADMINISTRATION**

**Applications**

Clubs must complete the on line WGI application form via the CSN portal, enclosing three competitive tenders for each project applied for. Applications should be supported by detailed plans and drawings.

**Claims**

When work has been completed clubs should submit a Grant Claim Form with final invoices from the contractor. WGI reserves the right to ask for additional proof of payment.

**Payments**

Payments to clubs will be made by BACS transfer within 14 days of receipt of a satisfactory project completion report from a WGI appointed inspector. Staged payments for projects, where appropriate, will be considered subject to the agreement of inspection criteria.

**Floodlights**

Clubs are required to submit a Floodlighting Design Report from Floodlighting and Electrical Services (FES) Ltd to support applications for new or for upgrading existing floodlights.

Contact details are: Darren Brearley; Telephone Number: 01443 226009;

E mail: darren@fandes.co.uk.

**Conditions of grant**

The terms and conditions of grant are sent with the grant offer letter together with a Grant Acceptance Form which clubs should sign and return within two months of receipt.

Projects requiring planning consent may receive conditional grant offers with subsequent grant aid being subject to planning approval.

Clubs must complete the project and request payment of grant within six months of the grant offer unless reasons are given for the delay, and they are accepted in writing by WGI. If no valid claims for grant monies are made within six months the application will be regarded as having been withdrawn.

A grant may be reduced proportionately if the cost of the Project on completion is less than the anticipated cost set out in the grant offer letter.

WGI may seek to reclaim grant monies should the recipient club decline promotion.

**Decision Making**

WGI approves grants to eligible clubs and determines levels of funding depending on financial needs and levels of funding available following consideration of the merits of the individual application.

The WGI Board

* Implements grant aid policy, based on the principles determined by the FAW Board.
* Reviews summaries of applications from clubs and confirms eligibility.
* Agrees level of funding awarded to club projects based on financial need and any prioritisation necessary in the event of there being insufficient/limited funds available.
* Inspects, where required, the completed project before final payment of the Grant.