Boost for football club, thanks to engineering firm

Thursday 3 September, 2026

A grassroots football club is looking forward to playing on an improved pitch, thanks to a grant from a Cumbrian engineering firm.

The Shepley Group Fund was established in 2009 by Whitehaven-based Shepley Engineers Limited to give grants to small, volunteer-led or community groups helping people facing disadvantage.

The fund, managed by Cumbria Community Foundation, has awarded more than £160,000 in grants since then. Six projects have received a total of £11,300 from the fund in recent months.

Gosforth Juniors Football Club has been awarded £800 to buy a piece of equipment that will enable them to bring pitch maintenance and improvements in-house, rather than having to pay an external contractor to keep the pitch in good shape.

Tim Ferris, of Gosforth Juniors FC, explained why the funding was so important. “Relying on external contractors rapidly depletes our limited club reserves, making it financially unsustainable to maintain the required pitch quality long-term.

“The £800 funding will pay for a tractor-mounted PTO cone spreader attachment. This equipment will enable our club volunteers to carry out pitch maintenance ourselves, eliminating high contractor fees while significantly improving turf density and playability for our junior and youth teams.”

Ryan Christie, Group Operations Support Manager at the Shepley Group, said: “We love supporting good causes across the county through our fund with Cumbria Community Foundation. It’s particularly nice to be able to support an organisation such as Gosforth Juniors Football Club, so close to Sellafield, the base for much of our work.

“Junior football clubs provide a vital role in communities across Cumbria, keeping young people fit and boosting their mental health too. Hundreds of people give up their own time each week to volunteer both on and off the pitch.

“We are delighted to be able to support this project, which will enable the community to be more self-sufficient, bringing key skills and jobs in-house. We hope this grant will have a positive impact for all at Gosforth Juniors FC and wish them all the best for the season ahead.”

Other projects supported by the Shepley Group Fund in recent months include:

- £2,500 to Boxwise Foundation for the delivery of 10-week boxing programmes in West Cumbria
- £2,000 to Every Life Matters to fund suicide bereavement support for children and young people in Cumberland
- £2,000 to Lighthouse Centre Limited towards running costs for the Good Enough Start Programme
- £2,000 to Phoenix Enterprise Centre to provide advice on employment and benefits, free digital access and food support
- £2,000 to Time to Change West Cumbria towards staff wages to operate Calderwood House emergency homeless hostel

Annalee Holliday, Head of Grants Practice and Programmes at Cumbria Community Foundation, said: “The Shepley Group Fund supports a wide range of vital projects across Cumbria, making a real difference where help is most needed. We are really grateful that they trust us to deliver this essential work.”

Cumbria Community Foundation gives around £6million in grants a year to local charities and voluntary groups through over 100 grant making funds set up by generous businesses, individuals and families.

To find out more about setting up a fund and supporting those in need in Cumbria, contact Development

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