



RAINBOW
BLADES



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Strategy

1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023



1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 review

Please view the Founder’s report at/from the AGM.

Vision

United for all: create a **fully inclusive** environment where all LGBTQ+ Blades can be their **authentic selves**.

Mission

Empower LGBTQ+ Blades & Allies to **celebrate diversity and inclusion; drive positive change in attitudes; increase LGBTQ+ visibility**. Ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all at SUFC, a progressive football club.

Rainbow Blades’ building blocks



Our journey

A brief glance ahead is followed by more detail about Rainbow Blades’ ambitions for the coming year. Will give a look ahead and then later in the document more detailed ambitions.

Social

The committee, specifically the Events Officer, will continue to embed regular socials into the events calendar for our members, ensuring we have a mix of in-person and virtual meetups to reach those Blades who live further afield. As the season ends, we will look to add a few more casual ad-hoc events such as a ‘Summer Bash’ at Spirit of Sheffield.

We will continue to work on big ticket events such as EOS & LGBTQ+ Football Conference and involve our corporate sponsors in key events.

Campaigns

It is clear from the past two years that there is a greater return and larger impact when we focus on key campaigns. This will continue to form the bedrock of our approach for our third year. Other campaigns will



of course, be acknowledged, but the key campaigns we plan to focus on and collaborate with members, the club and foundation are:

- Football v Homophobia – February
- PRIDE Month – June
- Rainbow Laces – Nov/Dec

It is imperative we continue to raise the bar when we mark these campaigns. Allyship will form a key part of our approach to these campaigns.

Visibility

Visibility naturally ties into everything we do; the more we do, the more people know about us. In our third year we will continue to work with the club & foundation on reviewing and advancing the Rainbow Range in addition new unique ideas to improve LGBTQ+ inclusion and raise awareness of Rainbow Blades amongst the fan base.

SUFC & SUFC

The club and foundation remain our strongest allies. These relationships have continued to grow and most notably over the second-year other departments have now become increasingly involved such as Media, Retail & EDI.

It is key for our third year that we continue the journey with our ambassadors, develop and progress player interaction and engagement and ensure Rainbow Blades and the club are the industry leaders, being bold and brave in our approach.

Community

Continuing to work with our partner venue, Spirit of Sheffield and our Charity Partner, SAYiT in addition to holding two Sheffield Rainbow Laces community football events (Cup & Tournament) are key to this strategy. Our third year will also open new opportunities with hopefully the return of Sheffield Pride in July, working with the newly launched Sheffield United Supporters Association and more community campaign events such as IDAHOBIT.

We are also now in a core influential position where we can try to do more for our Charity partner such as fundraising initiatives (The Bramall Lane run, calendars, etc).

Empowerment (LGBTQ+ Blades & Allies)

One of the most, if not the most, important reasons for Rainbow Blades is empowering our members and the wider fan base. This has been evident over our second year with initiatives such as in person socials, the launch of Proud Allies, rainbow range, fan forums, podcasts and the 'What Rainbow Blades Means To Me' series. It is crucial we continue to grow on this and empower even more. Members and Proud Allies need to be at the heart of what we are doing, and we will continue to involve them at every possible opportunity.

Financial Sustainability

The group continues to be in a strong sustainable position with 5 Corporate Sponsors and other revenue streams such as Sheffield Rainbow Laces. As well as continuing to increase and maintain a healthy bank balance so we can give initiatives and campaigns that Rainbow Blades umph we must also look after our sponsors and ensure they are also getting exposure for their financial contributions. This will be evident through examples such as ActionCOACH Sheffield being cited as the official sponsor for the Rainbow Blades podcast & other opportunities like EOS & Player awards.

Our Ambitions

Area	Ambition
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular socials & expand ad-hoc socials • End of season • AGM • 3rd Birthday • LGBTQ+ Football Conference • Sheffield Rainbow Laces (Cup & Tournament) • Sheffield Pride • Fan Forums
Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football v Homophobia Month of Action • PRIDE Month • Rainbow Laces
Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainbow Range expansion & player engagement • Continue to grow Rainbow Blades presence online (SUFC & Foundation) & physical (Bramall Lane, events, city) • Member & Proud Ally engagement
SUFC & SUFCF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working with Media, Marketing, Retail, Club Engagement, EDI • More activity with the foundation & Empower LGBTQ+ • Ambassador development and engagement. • Progress player interaction & engagement. • Philosophy of being bold and brave in our conviction.
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationship with Venue & Charity. • Hold two Sheffield Rainbow Laces events (Cup & Tournament) • Continue to explore the idea of holding an annual Rainbow Blades charity match at Bramall Lane launching in 2023. (Soccer Aid) • More city-wide initiatives (IDAHoBIT, Sheffield Pride) • Develop fundraising opportunities (The Bramall Lane run, calendar, etc)
Empowerment (LGBTQ+ Blades & Allies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop & grow the podcast with members and beyond. • Find more ways to involve Proud Allies. • Lead by example from the club, foundation, committee, and core membership. • Work with SAYiT with younger LGBTQ+ Blades.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow and maintain a healthy bank balance. • Use the funds in a responsible but impactful way. • Involve our sponsors more.

Summary

Rainbow Blades are set and primed for a great third year. We have over 300 members, a healthy bank balance, a growing relationship with all corners of the club and a year where even more in person events look possible. With Josh Cavallo coming out in 2021, the launch of proud Allies and the Rainbow Range, engagement with the club on EDI & Fan Forums & now player engagement, it is more imperative than ever before that we are **Bold & Brave**.