



PREPARING FOR A CHANGING CLIMATE



INTRODUCTION

Climate change is already affecting communities, natural environments and the places where football is played. While reducing greenhouse gas emissions remains essential, some changes to our climate are already unavoidable.

Climate adaptation means taking practical steps to prepare for these changes, reduce risks and make our Clubs, facilities, pitches and communities more resilient. For football in Wales, this means considering how heavier rainfall, flooding, storms, hotter weather, drought and water pressures could affect training, matches, facilities, participants and the long-term sustainability of Clubs.

Natural Resources Wales identifies warmer, wetter winters, hotter and drier summers, more intense rainfall and more extreme weather events among the climate changes Wales needs to prepare for.

Adaptation does not need to mean major infrastructure projects. Often, resilience begins with better planning, maintenance, communication and small changes to how facilities and activities are managed.

This resource will help your Club to:

- Understand what climate adaptation means for football.
- Identify the climate risks most relevant to your Club.
- Protect facilities, equipment and Club operations.
- Consider vulnerable participants when planning for extreme weather.
- Develop simple emergency and contingency arrangements.
- Identify longer-term adaptation actions for your Club.
- Connect climate adaptation with your Together Greener action plans and Green Goals.





BENEFITS

Why Adapt to Climate Change?

Climate change is not only a future issue. Clubs are already experiencing changing weather conditions that can disrupt fixtures, damage facilities, affect pitches and create health and safety risks. Preparing in advance can help Clubs avoid unnecessary disruption and reduce the potential cost of damage and emergency repairs. Heat, flooding and drought are three of the UK's most significant climate risks, highlighting the importance of preparing for these impacts now.

Adaptation Can Help Your Club:

Protect people - Reduce risks to players, coaches, volunteers, officials and spectators during extreme weather.

Protect facilities - Reduce the likelihood of damage to clubhouses, changing rooms, equipment, pitches and access routes.

Keep football moving - Improve the Club's ability to continue operating when weather conditions become challenging.

Reduce costs - Preventative maintenance and early action can often be less expensive than responding to damage after an event.

Protect the pitch - Improve the resilience of playing surfaces to periods of heavy rainfall, heat and drought.

Support biodiversity - Healthy soils, trees, hedgerows and natural habitats can provide important benefits for water management, shade and resilience.



LOCAL RISKS

Start With Your Risks

Every Club will face different climate risks depending on its location, facilities and surroundings. A Club close to a river may need to prioritise flooding, while another may be more concerned about heat, drought, storms or water availability.

Understanding your local risks is therefore the starting point for adaptation. Use the risks identified in your [Climate Action Readiness Audit](#) to help determine where to focus your efforts.

Reflect on the following questions:

- Has the Club experienced flooding previously?
- Does water regularly collect on the pitch?
- Are access roads or car parks vulnerable to flooding?
- Is the Club close to a river, stream, lake or coastline?
- Have storms previously damaged facilities or equipment?
- Does the Club have areas with little shade?
- Could extreme heat affect players or spectators?
- Could water restrictions affect pitch maintenance?
- Are trees or structures vulnerable during high winds?
- Are local forests or grasslands susceptible to wildfires?
- Could extreme weather disrupt electricity, communications or transport?
- Who makes the decision to cancel or postpone activities?
- Does the Club have an emergency or severe weather plan?





PREPARE & ADAPT

Preparing for a Changing Climate

Understanding your Club's climate risks is the first step. The next is considering what you can do about them. Climate adaptation is about making practical changes that help your Club prepare for the impacts of a changing climate, while also recognising that some changes are already happening.

This means thinking about how changing weather patterns could affect pitches, buildings, facilities, participants, volunteers and matchday activities. The most useful approach is to focus on the risks that are most relevant to your location and take practical action to reduce their impact.

Adapt to a Changing Climate

Climate adaptation is not only about preparing for future events. It is also about adapting to conditions that Clubs are already experiencing. More intense rainfall, periods of extreme heat, changing rainfall patterns, storms and periods of water scarcity can affect how Clubs operate.

Adapting may therefore involve changing how facilities are managed, when activities take place, how pitches are maintained or how the club responds to extreme weather.

Small changes can make a meaningful difference. Clubs do not need to address every climate risk immediately. A practical approach is to prioritise actions based on risk, impact, cost and feasibility. Your aim is not to predict exactly what weather will happen, but to make the Club better prepared for a wider range of conditions.

The following sections provide practical ideas for responding to some of the key climate risks that may affect football Clubs in Wales.





FLOOD RESILIENCE

Flooding can cause significant disruption to football. Heavy rainfall can saturate pitches, overwhelm drainage systems, damage buildings and equipment, restrict access and result in cancelled matches and training. Flood risk can also change over time as rainfall patterns, land use and climate conditions change.

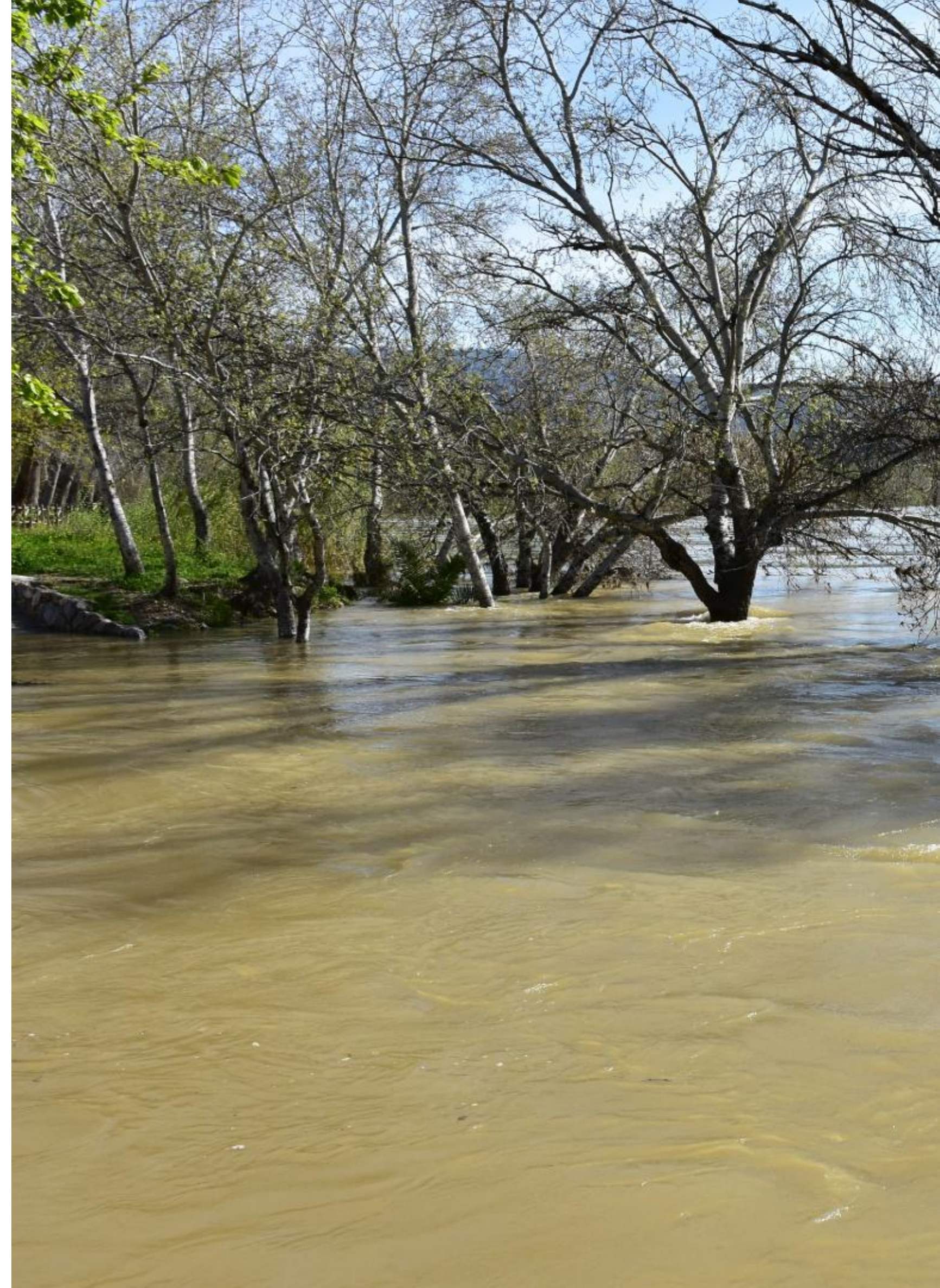
Clubs can use the [Natural Resources Wales Flood Risk Assessment Wales](#) information to understand potential risks from rivers, the sea and surface water/small watercourses. Local authorities may also hold additional information about surface water, drainage and historic flooding.

Flood maps are a useful starting point, but they cannot capture every local drainage problem or future event. Your Club's own experience and local knowledge are valuable too.

Practical Actions

Maintain Drainage

- Keep drains, gullies and channels clear.
- Remove leaves, litter and debris.
- Check drainage systems regularly.
- Report damaged or blocked infrastructure.
- Maintain ditches and other drainage features.





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Slow and Manage Water

Where appropriate:

- Create planted buffer zones.
- Maintain grassed areas.
- Plant native trees and hedgerows.
- Consider rain gardens.
- Use permeable surfaces where suitable.
- Explore sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).
- Natural approaches can help slow rainfall runoff while also providing biodiversity benefits.

Protect Critical Equipment

Where flooding is possible:

- Store electrical equipment above potential flood levels.
- Keep important documents backed up digitally.
- Store pitch equipment safely.
- Identify vulnerable machinery.
- Consider how power supplies could be affected.

Prepare a Flood Response

Create a simple plan covering:

Before: monitor warnings and secure equipment.

During: prioritise people's safety and follow emergency procedures.

After: inspect facilities before reopening and record damage.

Natural Resources Wales provides flood warnings and alerts to help communities prepare for flooding.

Further support for preparing for a flood can be found on the [Natural Resources for Wales](#) website.



STORM PREPAREDNESS

Strong winds and storms can damage roofs, fencing, signage, trees, lighting, temporary structures and equipment.

Good maintenance and preparation can reduce the likelihood of damage and help your Club respond more quickly.

Practical Actions

Inspect

Regularly check:

- Roofs and gutters.
- Fencing and gates.
- Floodlights and other structures.
- Trees and branches.
- Temporary structures.
- Outdoor equipment.
- Signage and advertising boards.





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Secure

Before severe weather:

- Secure portable goals and equipment.
- Bring lightweight items indoors.
- Check gates and fencing.
- Secure bins and storage.
- Review temporary structures.
- Protect vulnerable equipment.

Plan

Establish:

- Who monitors weather warnings?
- Who can close the facilities?
- Who contacts teams and officials?
- Who checks the site afterwards?
- Who has authority to reopen the facility?

The aim is not to predict every storm. It is to make sure the Club knows what to do when severe weather occurs.



HEAT RESILIENCE

Hotter weather and more frequent periods of extreme heat can create risks for Players, Officials, Coaches, Volunteers and Spectators.

This is particularly important for younger participants, older people and anyone who may be more vulnerable to heat.

Hot, dry summers can also be tough on grassroots football pitches. Surface hardness and cracking is the key thing to check regularly during a drought. Hard, dry ground increases the risk of injury for players, so it's important to monitor this and act if conditions become unsafe.

Recent Met Office warnings have demonstrated that extreme heat is already capable of affecting parts of Wales, including periods where temperatures approached the mid-30s with red weather warnings in place.

Practical Actions

Plan Activities

Consider:

- Moving training to cooler times.
- Providing additional breaks.
- Reducing intensity during extreme heat.
- Rescheduling activities where necessary.
- Monitoring weather and heat warnings.
- Adapt grass maintenance routine.





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Provide Shade

Create or identify:

- Naturally shaded areas.
- Temporary shaded spaces.
- Covered spectator areas.
- Rest areas away from direct sunlight.

Trees and vegetation can provide valuable shade while supporting biodiversity.

Keep People Hydrated

- Provide accessible drinking water.
- Encourage players to bring reusable bottles.
- Make hydration breaks routine.
- Ensure water supplies are available for volunteers and officials.

Protect Vulnerable Participants

Ensure coaches and team managers understand how to recognise signs of heat-related illness and know when activities should stop. Safety should always come before football.

Further guidance for managing football activity in hot weather can be found in the [‘FAW Hot Weather Guidance’](#).



WATER RESILIENCE

Climate change can create a difficult combination for Clubs: heavier rainfall and flooding at some times of year alongside hotter, drier periods and pressure on water resources.

Wales is projected to experience hotter, drier summers alongside wetter winters, making effective water management increasingly important.

Practical Actions

Reduce Water Demand

Use the Together Greener Water Conservation resources to:

- Repair leaks.
- Install water-efficient fixtures.
- Monitor consumption.
- Reduce unnecessary use.
- Encourage responsible showering.

Capture Rainwater

Where appropriate, consider:

- Water butts.
- Rainwater harvesting.
- Collecting water from suitable roof areas.

Captured rainwater may provide a useful source for appropriate non-potable activities, subject to safe and suitable systems.





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Manage Planting

Choose:

- Appropriate native plants.
- Drought-tolerant species where suitable.
- Plants that require less irrigation once established.

Water plants during cooler parts of the day and avoid unnecessary watering.

Protect Supplies

Consider how your Club would operate if:

- Water supplies were temporarily interrupted.
- Water restrictions affected pitch maintenance.
- A pipe failed.
- Extreme weather affected water availability.



PITCH RESILIENCE

The pitch is at the heart of the Club. Climate change can create competing challenges: heavy rainfall can lead to waterlogging and damage, while prolonged dry and hot periods can create stress on grass and soil.

Building healthier and more resilient pitches can help Clubs cope with these pressures.

Practical Actions

Improve Soil Health

Healthy soil can support:

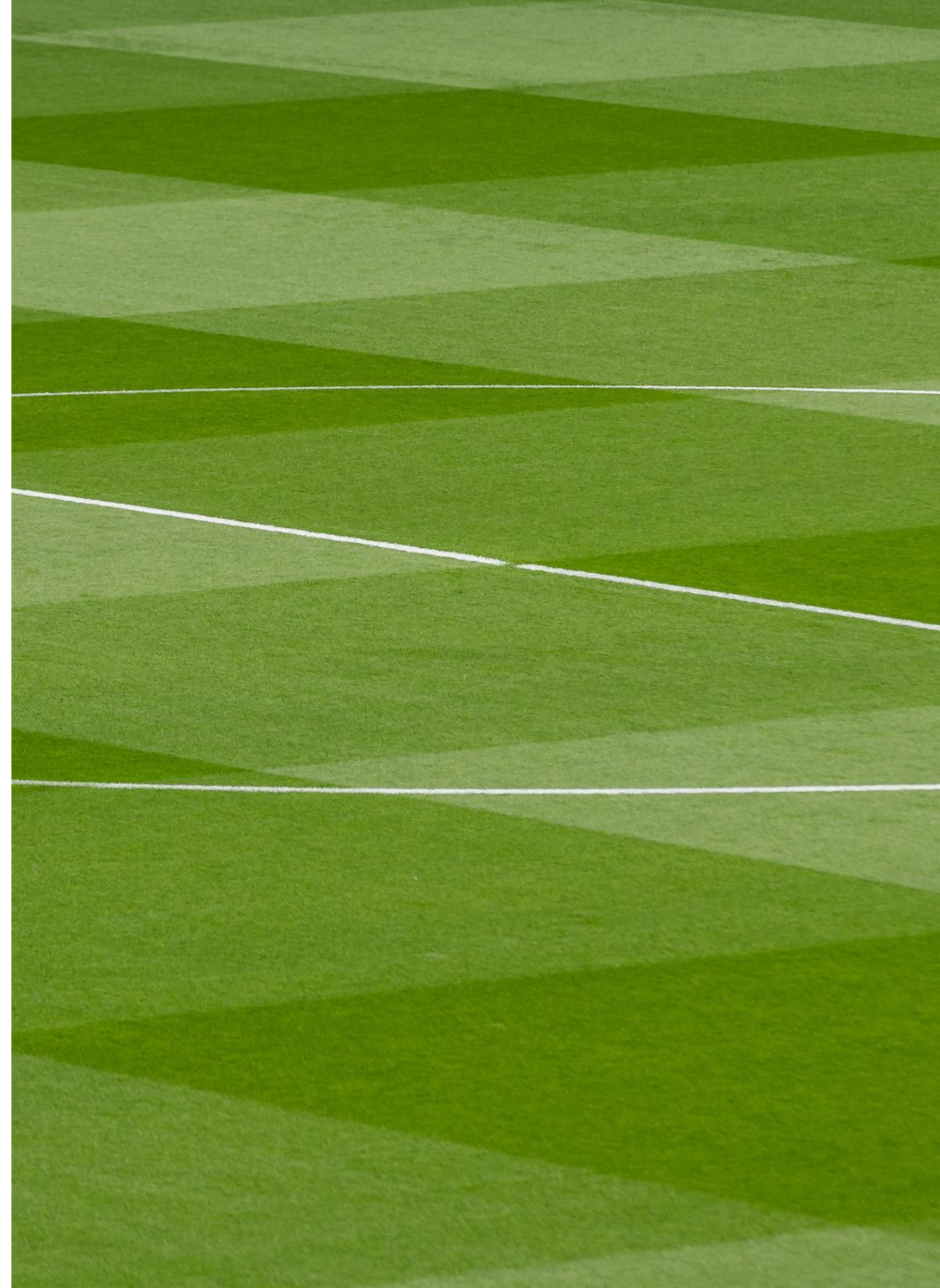
- Better drainage.
- Stronger grass growth.
- Greater resilience during dry periods.
- Improved recovery after heavy use.

Work with your grounds staff, pitch provider or specialist contractor to understand what your pitch needs.

Improve Drainage

Consider:

- Maintaining existing drainage.
- Keeping drainage channels clear.
- Investigating recurring wet areas.
- Improving soil structure where appropriate.





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Reduce Pressure

Where possible:

- Rotate training areas (where possible).
- Avoid unnecessary use of waterlogged pitches.
- Allow recovery periods.
- Adjust maintenance according to weather conditions.

Increase Biodiversity

Appropriate planting around pitch areas can:

- Support wildlife.
- Help manage rainfall.
- Reduce erosion.
- Provide shade.
- Improve the wider resilience of the site.

Pitch management should be based on the specific surface, usage and local conditions. Seek professional advice before undertaking significant changes.

Further guidance on pitch maintenance can be found in the CFF's [‘Top Tips for Maintaining Grass Pitches in a Heatwave’](#) guide.



BUILDINGS & FACILITIES

Climate adaptation should extend beyond the pitch. Clubhouses, changing rooms, storage areas, car parks and access routes can all be affected by extreme weather.

Practical Actions

Protect Against Heavy Rain

- Keep gutters and downpipes clear.
- Check roofs regularly.
- Maintain drainage around buildings.
- Identify areas where water enters buildings.
- Consider flood-resistant storage where appropriate.

Improve Heat Management

Where feasible:

- Improve insulation.
- Use external shading.
- Increase natural ventilation.
- Maintain ventilation systems.
- Consider the positioning of seating and activity areas.





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Protect Equipment

Identify critical equipment and consider:

- Where it is stored.
- Whether it could be damaged by flooding.
- Whether power loss would affect it.
- How quickly it could be replaced.

Plan Improvements

When repairing or upgrading facilities, consider whether the change could also improve climate resilience.

A repair today can be an opportunity to prepare for tomorrow.



EMERGENCY PLANNING

Emergency & Continuity Planning

Climate adaptation is not only about physical improvements. Clubs should also consider how they will operate when extreme weather disrupts normal activities.

A simple emergency plan can help people respond quickly and consistently.

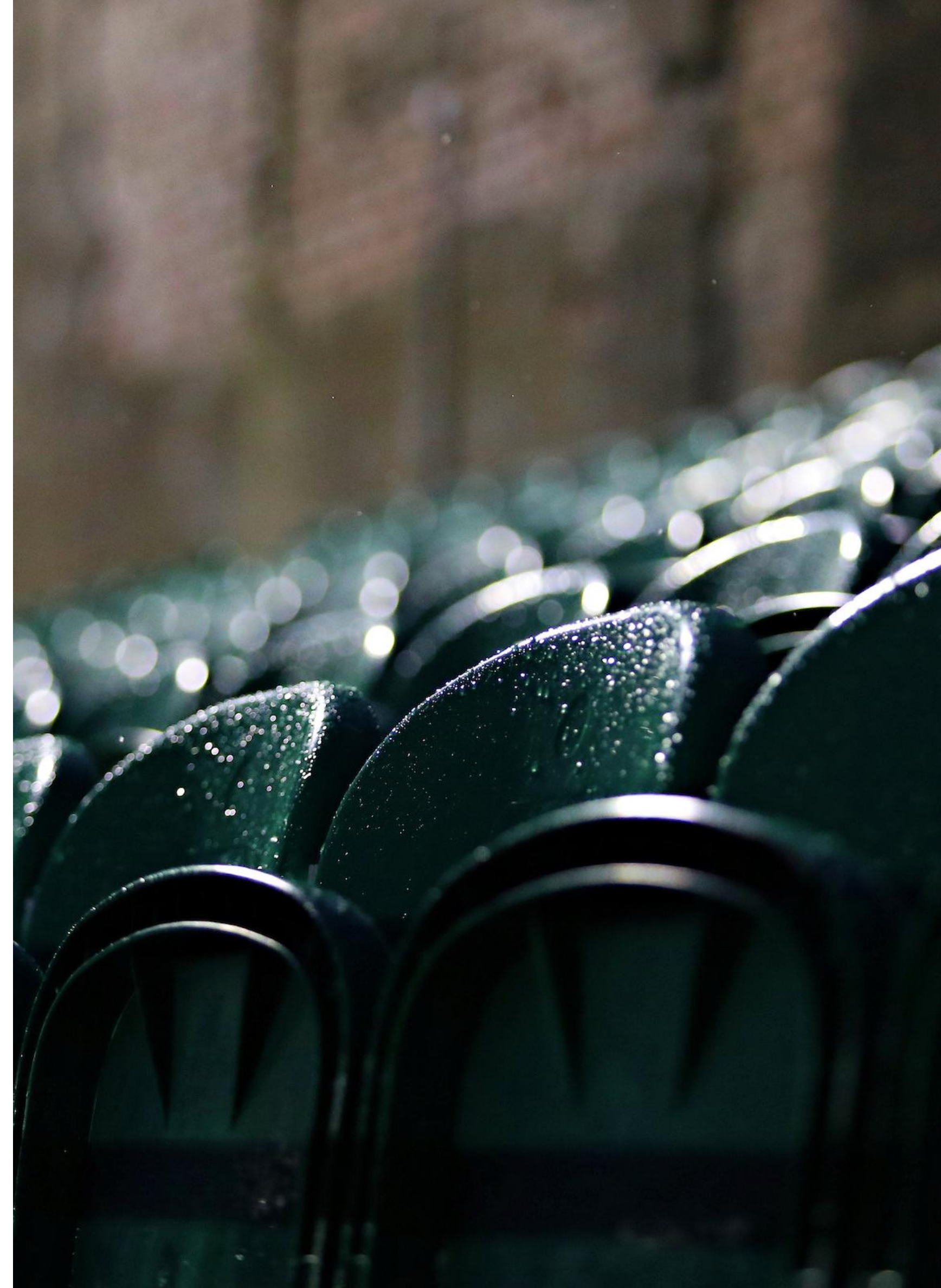
Your Club Could Identify:

Key Risks

- Flooding.
- Heat.
- Storms.
- Power loss.
- Water interruption.

Key People

- Who makes decisions?
- Who communicates with teams?
- Who contacts facility owners?
- Who manages emergencies?





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Key Information

Keep accessible:

- Emergency contacts.
- Facility owner's contact details.
- Utility contacts.
- Insurance information.
- Weather warning information.
- Keyholder details.

Key Decisions

Agree in advance:

- When training should be cancelled.
- When pitches should be closed.
- When facilities should be evacuated.
- How people will be informed.
- Who can authorise reopening.

After an Event

Record:

- What happened.
- What was damaged.
- What worked well.
- What did not work.
- What should be changed.

This turns each incident into an opportunity to improve resilience.



PARTNERSHIPS

Work With Others

Climate resilience is rarely something a Club can achieve alone. Many Clubs use facilities owned or managed by local authorities, schools, trusts or other organisations. Others rely on contractors, grounds teams, volunteers and community partners.

Consider Working With:

- Local authorities.
- Facility owners.
- Grounds maintenance providers.
- Welsh Government or local environmental initiatives.
- Natural Resources Wales.
- Community organisations.
- Local schools.
- Environmental organisations.
- Neighbouring Clubs.
- FAW and the Cymru Football Foundation.

If a Club does not control a drainage system, building or pitch, it can still raise risks, share evidence and influence future decisions.

Keep records of recurring problems, such as flooding, heat damage or pitch deterioration, to strengthen conversations with facility owners and potential funders.





NATURE SOLUTIONS

Nature-Based Adaptation

Nature can be part of the solution. Trees, hedgerows, wetlands, healthy soils and other natural features can help manage water, provide shade, support biodiversity and make Club grounds more resilient.

Practical Ideas

Depending on your site:

- Maintain native hedgerows.
- Plant appropriate native trees.
- Create wildflower areas.
- Establish buffer zones.
- Create rain gardens.
- Protect existing vegetation.
- Improve soil health.
- Consider small wetland or pond features where appropriate.

These actions can provide multiple benefits, supporting biodiversity while also helping Clubs respond to heat, rainfall and water pressures.

However, nature-based measures should be appropriately designed. For example, tree planting near waterways should consider local conditions and ecological impacts.





PLANNING

Build Adaptation Into Your Plans

Adaptation works best when it becomes part of normal Club management rather than a separate project.

When developing your Sustainability Strategy or Sustainability Action Plan, consider adding climate resilience actions alongside your Energy, Waste, Travel, Biodiversity and Water priorities.

Examples

CLIMATE RISK	POSSIBLE ACTION	TIMESCALE
Flooding	Investigate recurring pitch flooding	Short-term
Heat	Identify shaded areas	Immediate
Water shortages	Install rainwater collection	Medium-term
Storms	Develop severe weather checklist	Immediate
Pitch damage	Review seasonal maintenance	Short-term
Building damage	Assess vulnerable facilities	Medium-term
Extreme weather	Develop emergency plan	Short-term

Prioritise actions according to:



You do not need to address every risk at once.





REVIEW

Review & Improve

Climate risks and Club circumstances can change. A drainage system may be improved, a new building may be constructed, a pitch may be upgraded or a Club may experience an extreme weather event that reveals a previously unidentified risk. Review your adaptation plans regularly.

Ask Yourself:

- Have we experienced any extreme weather since our last review?
- Did our response work?
- Was anyone put at risk?
- Was there damage to facilities or equipment?
- Did we experience pitch disruption?
- Are our water supplies secure?
- Have new risks emerged?
- Have our facilities or land use changed?
- Are there new opportunities to improve resilience?

Record your learning and update your Sustainability Action Plan and Sustainability Progress Tracker.



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FURTHER SUPPORT

Adaptation Is About Being Ready. Climate adaptation does not mean trying to predict exactly what the weather will do. It means understanding the risks, preparing for disruption, making sensible improvements and building the resilience needed to keep people safe and football moving.

For Clubs in Wales, this is an important part of creating a sustainable and resilient future for the game. [Natural Resources Wales](#) provides information on flood risk, flood warnings and climate adaptation, while the [Met Office](#) provides weather forecasts, warnings and climate information that Clubs can use when planning activities.

A greener Club is not only one that reduces its environmental impact, but it is also prepared for the changing conditions in which football will be played.

Use what you have learned in this resource to:

- Identify the climate risks most relevant to your Club.
- Review your Club's flood and extreme weather risks.
- Develop a simple emergency and severe weather plan.
- Improve heat resilience for players, volunteers and spectators.
- Improve water efficiency and resilience.
- Review pitch maintenance and resilience.
- Protect buildings, equipment and other Club assets.
- Use nature-based solutions where appropriate.
- Work with facility owners and local partners.
- Include climate adaptation within your Sustainability Strategy.
- Add priority actions to your Club Sustainability Action Plan.
- Review your resilience regularly and learn from extreme weather events.

Further information on Management can be found at www.faw.cymru/togethergreener-management

If you require support completing this resource, please contact sustainability@faw.cymru