



From: The Minister

**Level 9
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Telephone: (028) 90512692
e-mail: private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk
Our ref: SUB-1744-2024
Date: 15 November 2024

NI Assembly Library

Via email: Library.IssueDesk@niassembly.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

CORRECTION OF ASSEMBLY RECORD

Please find attached letter from Minister Lyons to the Speaker's office, Cc'd to all Members correcting the NI Assembly record in relation to the Football Ground Business Case Development Fund. We would request that this letter be retained in the Assembly Library.

Yours sincerely,

**Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities**

Cc neil.sedgewick@niassembly.gov.uk



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Edwin Poots MLA
Speaker
NI Assembly

Via email: speaker@niassembly.gov.uk

Dear Edwin,

FOOTBALL GROUND BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

I am writing to inform you that I unwittingly misled the Assembly during Minister's Question Time on Monday 7 October and as a result I wish to apologise to Assembly Members and seek a correction to the record.

On Monday 7th October, during Minister's Question Time, I updated the Assembly on a small grants scheme administered by my Department to disburse funding to football clubs to assist them in developing proposals for the modernisation of their facilities and articulate their plans in a recognised, public-sector business case format. The Scheme provides awards of up to £30,000 to eligible clubs and has been running since late 2023, with 13 clubs funded up to September 2024.

A further tranche of clubs is to be awarded funding for the remainder of this financial year, and I named the following five clubs during Question Time on 7 October: Ards FC; Institute FC; Loughgall FC; Newington FC; and PSNI FC.



I have since been informed that this information provided by my officials was inaccurate.

PSNI FC no longer plays within the Northern Ireland Football League and are therefore no longer eligible for the funding. The Club has been informed of this decision.

Newington FC is currently unable to accept the funding offer as the Club has been unable to identify a suitable location on which to establish a home ground. The Club currently ground shares with Larne FC. The Club has been informed that it is not therefore possible to develop a meaningful business case at this time.

Warrenpoint FC is the next eligible Club to receive funding from this scheme and therefore will be offered an award under the scheme in 2024/2025.

The final list of awards for the third tranche is therefore as follows:

| | |
|---|----------------|
| 1 | Ards FC |
| 2 | Institute FC |
| 3 | Loughgall FC |
| 4 | Warrenpoint FC |

These clubs will be offered awards of up to £30k each in the 2024/2025 financial year to develop business cases for their proposals.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities
Cc All Members