

Please take a few moments to fill out this questionnaire about your club and what you would like to see from any potential crest redesign.

Club Overview

Club name: Hitchin Town FC

Founded: Originally founded as Hitchin FC in 1865, folding in 1911. Reformed as Hitchin Town in 1928.

Location: Top Field, Hitchin, SG5 1NU

Nickname(s): The Canaries

Club colours: Currently - Yellow & Green home / All Green away / White as a third.

Club rival: Stevenage, St Albans City & Biggleswade Town.

League/Competition in which club competes: Southern Premier Division Central (Step 3)

Describe your club in 5 words:

Traditional, Community, Respectful, Progressive, Inclusive

What is the club's ethos and mantra?

The club mantra/slogan is "Football for the Future", but in my personal opinion, it's a bit weak and not something we would like to include in any crest. The club is open-to-all, we're very inclusive. We're a community club with over 30 teams and 500 people playing in Hitchin Town colours every weekend, from under 7s to under 19s, plus the first team, ladies and disability teams. We regularly welcome a number of families to Top Field. We're respectful of our history and our opponents, regularly receiving positive feedback from visiting away fans.

What is the club's overall vision and idea for a rebrand?

The overall vision is to create something which compensates for our history but offers a bold and bright future corporate identity which the next generations of fans of the club will be proud to wear. We'd like a strong identity – when you see our crest, you know it's Hitchin Town. At the moment, a coat of arms is a coat of arms, it isn't distinguishable from afar and in no way links to the football club. We'd like something which would look strong on merchandise and indicates to potential sponsors that we're a professional outfit.

What do you hope to achieve from a potential rebrand/redesign?

We hope to achieve the above. However, consistency is key to increasing our brand awareness and wow, we've really struggled with that in the past. People changing colours, adding a shadow, overlay filters, stretching out of proportion. As a marketer, it makes me shudder. ☹️

The Crest:

What are some important historical facts about the club and the area it is from?

The Club

Canary – During the most recent parts of our history, we've worn yellow & green, hence the nickname *The Canaries*. The first time a canary appeared on our club shirt, was 1949/50, which we featured a canary with HTFC above it. A sample of this is shown below. However, we've struggled to track down any images on this appearing on a club shirt since, but feel it's about time we returned to this.

FA Cup – The club actually appeared in the first ever FA Cup back in 1871. We drew 0-0 with Crystal Palace with both sides progressing to the next round. We then lost 5-0 to eventual runners-up Royal Engineers. We even contributed towards the cost of the first ever FA Cup (£25 in 1871).

Top Field – We’ve played at the same Top Field location since around 1873-75 and it’s a ground-hoppers paradise. We are one of very few grounds left with wooden terracing and regularly receive groundhoppers from across the UK and abroad.

The town of Hitchin

St Mary’s Church - St Mary’s Church is the largest parish church in Hertfordshire and is remarkably large for a town of the size of Hitchin - this has been cited as evidence of how Hitchin prospered from the wool trade. The present church tower dates from around 1190. The church has been Grade I listed since 1951.

Royal connections – Hitchin was described as a “Royal Manor” in Domesday Book from 1086. The Queen Mother was also born in the parish and her birth was registered in the town. *The theatre in the town is the Queen Mother Theatre.*

River Hiz - The name of the town is also associated with the small river that runs through the town, (north to south) most picturesquely in front of the east end of St. Mary’s Church. The river is noted on maps as the River Hiz. However, the ‘z’ is an abbreviated character for a ‘tch’ sound – hence Hitchin.

In terms of looks, what are some example club crests you’d like your club’s crest to mirror/take inspiration from?

We’re keen to have a strong logo, kept relatively simple, unique, memorable and instantly synonymous with the club. Each of the below do this well. I particular like the ones which incorporate the more traditional crest shapes within a circular design – the Miami and Kilmarnock ones do this very well. A prominent figure is also key – such as the Brentford or Minnesota designs. Both incorporate such a distinctive shape of their animal, that would work well standalone too.



If known, what do the club’s officials and fans like and dislike about your current crest?

Firstly, there has historically been a reluctance to change. The attitude is very passive about the current crest, but there has been a tendency to “bastardise” it, omitting the plume and/or scroll, just

using the shield etc. Then it means absolutely nothing in isolation. This has mainly occurred on the programmes and posters produced, which are the most public-facing forms of advertising we produce. So we've come to the point we believe any new crest/badge needs to be reproduced in its entirety in all cases and scenarios.

Also, our demographic supporter profile is starting to lower in age, and tradition is starting to become history. We still have a large amount of 50+ white males who live in the comfort zone of tradition, have supported Hitchin since they were a boy and like things: "just the way they are". This demographic has dominated, but year by year, it is becoming more apparent that we need to move with the times.

Another couple of dislikes with the existing crest: the plume around the outside is very dated. Also, whilst the crest pays homage to the traditional industries within the local area, none of these are unique to Hitchin (mostly Agricultural / Farming / East Anglian) and none remain key industries today.

What local landmarks, club affiliated imagery, icons and symbols MUST be included in your club's crest?

- A canary. I'm a particular fan of the Minnesota, Palermo and Palace ones as they show a bird in flight. Just a personal option but seems more progressive in flight than standing static i.e. West Brom / Norwich / Swindon in the 60s. However one issue with this might be that it then raises confusion as to which bird it is - with the third and example shown below easily confused with an eagle and a swift. However, each of these are good examples of a nod-to-traditional whilst still being contemporary. A poor example to help further explain this is the current Oldham Athletic crest, which looks pretty poor in my opinion.



What local landmarks, club affiliated imagery, icons and symbols would you/fans like to see in the club's crest but is not a necessity?

We're happy to be led by your views here. The more we pack in, the less iconic and distinctive it'll be, so maybe a less is more approach would work best here. However, additional imagery will help to "Hitchin" it and help gain buy-in from the exec committee. Here are a few others in order of preference:

- A silhouette of St Mary's Church (which is fairly distinctive)
- A silhouette of the First FA Cup - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1872_FA_Cup_Final
- The River Hiz (running north to south if possible)
- A crown (royal manor / queen mother etc.)

What imagery should NOT be included?

I think it's fair to say we would be looking to ditch all of the elements from the existing crest - an explanation of the Hitchin coat of arms is available here:

<https://www.heraldry-wiki.com/heraldrywiki/index.php?title=Hitchin>

What information (club name, founded date and so on) MUST be included in the crest?

- Club Name incl. Football Club – the Brentford, Kilmarnock and Leamington designs do this well.
- Originally founded (1865) & reformed date (1928)

Historically speaking what crest shape is most synonymous with your club?

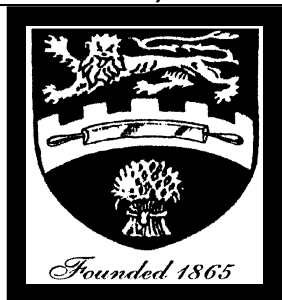








There isn't one shape which is synonymous with Hitchin Town, as it's changed over the years, but it would be really nice to have a nod to one of the previous in the new design. As mentioned above, a crest within a circle design might offer us a good traditional-meets-contemporary option here.

What colours should your crest include? (I recommend a maximum of 4 colours)

We actually only changed to yellow and green in 1984. Our main playing colours for decades after the war were Amber Shirts, Black Shorts, Amber/Black Hooped Socks. A change to all yellow and then yellow and blue happened between 1973 and 1984.

However, going forward, Yellow & Green – white or black if a third colour is needed.

History of club crest:

1865? – 1949? Not entirely known	1949 – 50	Mid 1960s – late 80s	2015 (one-off)
			
Late-1980s – Now (just four of its various incarnations/colours used)			
			
Created by a fan who creates our matchday posters and sometimes uses it on them. Not an official crest but used on official advertising.			
			

Other examples of a canary being used to represent the club:

Pennant exchanged with hosts during a visit to Holland in the late 1950s.



Any additional information you feel is relevant to the redesign of your club's crest?

As well as the main club crest, we currently have the Youth section and the Ladies team, both of which have created their own variations on the club crest over the past few years, both of which are shown below. I've also shared the logo of the Canary Club, which is the football clubs social club on the site of our ground.

What would be great is it utilise the newly-incorporated Canary design into a "Canary Club" logo, tying the two sections of the club together. When it comes to the addition of the wording "Hitchin Town Football Club" to the crest, you might also want to factor in that "ladies" and "youth" options will be required too. Again this'll nicely tie everything together.

