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Professional team is goal in new plan

by **Tristan Harris**
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AMBITIOUS plans have been unveiled to make Coventry United Ladies FC the city's first professional football club.

The three owners of Coventry firm Mirius, initially unveiled as CULFC's shirt sponsor, have now bought into the club, confirming they will take a 49 per cent stake.

A new ownership structure has been put in place with a view to turning the club professional by the start of the 2022/23 season.

Initial investment will enable an increase in activity across the transfer window, with the club aiming to strengthen the squad in January.

It is hoped the improvements will bring about better results in the second half of the season and save the club from relegation from the Championship.

Steve Quinlan, Darren Langdon and Paul Marsh, who run the global cleaning and hygiene product manufacturer, also want to develop the infrastructure and off-field facilities.

The new partnership will see



existing CULFC Directors, Jason Timms and Marcus Green, retain majority control but the Mirius trio will be closely involved and will use their business network and experience to benefit the club.

Mr Langdon said: "From the moment we became involved with Coventry United Ladies, we could see there were so many synergies between our two organisations."

"CULFC have consistently out-

performed against larger and better financed clubs by thinking creatively and approaching challenges differently, and the same can certainly be said of Mirius and our brand Hycolin.

"We also absolutely share a love and a passion for our community of Coventry."

Jade Ogle, Director of Women's Football at the Club, hopes the accelerated plans for turning pro-

fessional - alongside dual employment opportunities and access to fully paid scholarships via a relationship the club has with Coventry University - will help attract a marquee signing.

Despite the league position, the club enjoys some of the biggest crowds in the league, with just shy of 1,000 supporters watching their FA Cup clash with Tottenham in February.

Mirius' Darren Langdon and Coventry United Ladies FC's Jade Ogle are looking towards a bright future following the investment. Picture courtesy of Coventry United / Jeff Bennett. s

2021 is 'huge opportunity'

AS WE LOOK to 2021 and the City of Culture year, the Mayor of the West Midlands has outlined the main benefits for Coventry.

Andy Street leads the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) which has invested \$35million in the event.

He said it offered a unique opportunity for Coventry to showcase itself to the world and stressed the importance of the culture year being part of the region's recovery plan and leaving a lasting legacy for the city.

He said the celebrations, which begin on May 15, would benefit the economy with 2.55million extra visitor days - amounting to \$350million between 2018 and 2022.

Investment in the city centre to have it looking its best for its culture year will benefit its people for years to come.

"The railway station is being completely upgraded from the 1960s building to create the modern gateway this growing city needs, costing more than \$90million, and money has been put into the Telegraph Hotel and improvements to the street scene."

Mr Street said the event would also create significant job and training opportunities in culture, hospitality, tourism, production, stewarding and security.

And he added the whole profile of Coventry and the wider West Midlands would be raised, estimating the coverage and publicity in print, online and through broadcasters at more than \$50million.

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