

= Kenilworth Road =

Kenilworth Road is a football stadium in Luton , Bedfordshire , England . It has been home to Luton Town Football Club since 1905 when they left Dunstable Road . The ground has also hosted women 's and youth international matches .

The 10 @, @ 356 all @-@ seater stadium is situated in Bury Park , one mile ( 1 @. @ 6 km ) west of the centre of Luton . It is named after the road which runs along one end of it , but the official address is 1 Maple Road . Kenilworth Road hosted football in the Southern League until 1920 , then in the Football League until 2009 , when Luton were relegated to the Conference Premier . It has hosted Football League matches once more since 2014 .

The ground is known for the artificial playing surface which was present from 1985 to 1991 , the unusual entrance to the Oak Road End , and the five @-@ season ban on away supporters that Luton Town imposed following a riot by visiting fans in 1985 . Floodlights were fitted in 1953 , and the ground became all @-@ seated in 1986 . The record attendance of 30 @, @ 069 was set in 1959 , in an FA Cup sixth round replay against Blackpool .

= = History = =

Luton Town moved to Kenilworth Road in 1905 , leaving their previous home at Dunstable Road after their landlord sold the site for housing at short notice . The club 's directors quickly procured a new site , and the club 's first match at the new ground came on 4 September 1905 ? a 0 ? 0 draw against Plymouth Argyle . Watford player C. Barnes scored the first ever goal at the stadium , in a reserve match . Originally known as Ivy Road , the new ground brought success with it ? in their last season at Dunstable Road , Luton had finished second from bottom , but in the first at Kenilworth Road , Luton finished fourth in the Southern League .

The ground has undergone several major changes since its original construction in 1905 . The original Main Stand , boasting a press loft and a balcony above the roof , burnt down in 1921 , and was replaced by the current stand before the 1922 ? 23 campaign . The new Main Stand was split into two : the upper tier contained wooden seats , so there was a ban on smoking in the stand ; the lower tier , which became known as the Enclosure , was terracing .

When attendances were first counted , in 1932 ? 33 , Luton Town 's average home attendance was taken at 5 @, @ 868 . Kenilworth Road 's capacity of the time was 25 @, @ 000 , so it was not deemed necessary to improve the ground . However , only three years later , on 25 April 1936 , a match against Coventry City attracted 23 @, @ 142 spectators ? at that time a club record . The decision was taken to renovate the stadium , already in disrepair , and work began at the end of the following season . The Kenilworth End terrace was extended , the Oak Road End received a roof and major work was done on the Main Stand . Following these steps , the ground was more in line with those of rival clubs , the capacity standing at 30 @, @ 000 .

The first ten years following Kenilworth Road 's renovation saw average attendances of between 15 @, @ 000 and 18 @, @ 000 ; a huge improvement on what the club had previously been able to attract . Floodlights were installed at the ground before the 1953 ? 54 season , and used for the first time in a friendly against Turkish side Fenerbahçe on 7 October 1953 . The Oak Road terrace was extended in 1955 , and promotion to the First Division for 1955 ? 56 saw the average attendance climb as high as 21 @, @ 454 .

Renovation of Kenilworth Road was neglected for the next two decades ? financial difficulties and the club 's ambitions to build a new ground meant that regeneration was unaffordable , and would also prove unnecessary should relocation occur . However , following the rejection of several potential sites for a new ground , the club finally turned their attentions back to the maintenance of Kenilworth Road . The first real modernisation of the ground came in 1973 , with the first addition of seats at the stadium since the construction of the new Main Stand in 1922 . The Bobbers Stand became all @-@ seated , while the rest of the ground remained terracing . The new @-@ look stand could only hold 1 @, @ 539 seats , and as a result the capacity of the ground dropped to 22 @, @ 601 .

A £ 1 million refurbishment got under way in 1985 with the introduction of artificial turf , as well as the conversion of the ground to all @-@ seater , which began a year later in 1986 . The Oak Road End was filled with seats , while the Bobbers Stand had its seats ripped out to be replaced with executive boxes . The Main Stand 's enclosure received seats , and work also began on converting the Kenilworth Stand , which had a roof added at this time . The stand would also receive seats in stages over the coming years .

The David Preece Stand was erected in 1991 , simply called the New Stand on construction . The final improvements to the ground came in 2005 , when the conversion of the Kenilworth Stand was finally completed to bring the capacity to its present 10 @,@ 356 .

On 24 March 2015 the ground was officially renamed " The Prostate Cancer UK Stadium " for one day , for the game against Wycombe Wanderers , in support of charity and raising awareness of prostate cancer .

= = = Artificial pitch = = =

In 1985 , following the lead of Queen Park Rangers ' experiment at Loftus Road four years earlier , the grass pitch was dug up and replaced with an artificial playing surface . The surface , called Sporturf Professional , was manufactured by En @-@ Tout @-@ Cas , and cost the club £ 350 @,@ 000 . The first match on the new pitch was a 1 ? 1 draw with Nottingham Forest . The new surface became exceedingly unpopular ? derided as " the plastic pitch " , other clubs were starting to protest about Luton 's artificial pitch by 1989 . A meeting was held with other major clubs , mediated by a Football League Commission . The League Commission concluded that the pitch had suffered too much wear and tear from excessive use , and Luton installed a new surface during the summer of 1989 , at the cost of £ 60 @,@ 000 . This new artificial pitch was dug up during the summer of 1991 , as the surfaces were banned from English football .

= = = Away fan ban = = =

On 13 March 1985 , Millwall visited Kenilworth Road for an FA Cup sixth round match . After only 14 minutes the match was halted as the visiting fans began to riot . The referee took both teams off for 25 minutes , before bringing them back on to complete the match . Following the final whistle , and a 1 ? 0 victory for Luton , another pitch invasion and subsequent riot by away supporters caused noticeable damage to the ground and the surrounding area . Many of those arrested turned out to be supporters of teams other than Millwall . The club 's chairman , David Evans , reacted by imposing a ban on all away supporters from Kenilworth Road from the start of 1986 ? 87 , as well as introducing a scheme that would require even home supporters to carry membership cards to be admitted to matches . The Football League insisted that Luton relax the ban for League Cup matches , but when Evans refused to allow Cardiff City fans to visit Kenilworth Road for their second round tie , the club were thrown out of the competition . The ban continued for four seasons , with exceptions for cup matches , before Luton Town repealed the ban before the 1990 ? 91 season .

= = = Ownership = = =

The ground was first constructed in 1905 , soon before the club moved in . The club rented the ground until 1933 , when newly appointed chairman Charles Jeyes organised the purchase of the stadium . The club retained ownership of the ground until February 1989 , when the freehold was sold to Luton Borough Council for £ 3 @.@ 25 million . The club was granted a seven @-@ year lease at peppercorn rent for its continued use . This arrangement has been extended several times , and as of 2015 is due to end in 2028 .

= = Structure and facilities = =

The ground is made up of five stands ? opposite the eponymous Kenilworth Stand is the Oak Road

End , and to the left is the Main Stand , which is flanked to its right by the David Preece Stand . Opposite them stand a row of executive boxes .

The Main Stand covers approximately two thirds of the length of the pitch , though the attached enclosure is longer , covering the whole distance . The Main Stand , which seats 4 @, @ 277 fans , also contains the dressing rooms , club offices and television gantry , as well as a number of supporting pillars , a car park and the Nick Owen and Eric Morecambe suites . To the Main Stand 's right , in the corner above the end of the enclosure and next to the Kenilworth Stand , is the David Preece Stand , a family area which seats 711 spectators . The David Preece Stand acquired its present name in 2008 , a year after the former player 's death .

Opposite the Main and Preece Stands are 25 executive boxes , which have an attached net to catch balls directed over them and a total capacity of 209 . The Bobbers Stand stood here until 1986 , when the seats were removed from the stand and replaced with the boxes .

To the right of the Main Stand is the 3 @, @ 229 @-@ seater Kenilworth Stand , which backs onto Kenilworth Road . The Club Shop is behind this stand , which was once an open terrace but is now a roofed all @-@ seater stand . In the corner between the Kenilworth Stand and the boxes is the stadium clock .

Opposite the Kenilworth Stand is the Oak Road End , which bears an electronic scoreboard on its roof and can seat a maximum of 1 @, @ 800 fans . Originally a home section , the Oak Road End was turned into a stand for away fans only at the start of the 1991 ? 92 season . Early in the 2013 ? 14 season , the Oak Road End was re @-@ opened for home supporters for fixtures where visiting support was predicted to be especially low , with the section for away fans moved to A Block of the Kenilworth Stand for these games . Later that season , it was announced that the stand was available for shared use between both home and away supporters , increasing Kenilworth Road 's home capacity by 15 % . The Oak Road End has an entrance that is often considered unusual , requiring spectators to go through an entrance built into the row of houses and up stairs to the stand .

= = Future = =

Luton Town have been looking for a new ground since 1955 , when club chairman Percy Mitchell spoke of building a stadium " to hold 35 @, @ 000 in comfort ... [ and ] get a lot of support which goes to London at the moment " . However , due to unstable finances and an inability to find a site , no ground was built . The club proposed a move to Milton Keynes in 1982 ? according to The Luton News , to play as " MK Hatters " in a " super @-@ stadium " ? but this was prevented by vehement protests in Luton , where supporters against such a move marched through the town to display their feelings . Despite consistent fan opposition to the idea , relocation up the M1 motorway to the new town was raised several more times over the next two decades ; for example , The Football League refused Luton permission to move to Milton Keynes in 2000 , saying that a member club was not allowed to leave its home town . Wimbledon F.C. was granted permission to relocate there in 2002 , did so a year later and became Milton Keynes Dons in 2004 .

Luton have only managed to get as far as a planning application for a new ground once , when chairman David Kohler 's Kohlerdome was proposed in 1995 . The Kohlerdome was envisioned by Kohler as a 20 @, @ 000 all @-@ seater indoor arena with a retractable roof and pitch , hosting 85 capacity events each year . Kohler 's plans , though ambitious , were perhaps not very realistic ? the plans were turned down by the Secretary of State in 1998 , with the reason given that the ground was not feasible unless the M1 motorway was widened . Kohler put the club on the market upon the plan 's rejection and after a period under Cliff Bassett , the club came under the control of Mike Watson @-@ Challis in 2000 . Watson @-@ Challis bought 55 acres ( 220 @, @ 000 m2 ) of land by Junction 10 of the M1 in 2001 , intending to move the club there , but once again , nothing came of the scheme . Most recently , in 2007 , Jayten Stadium Limited were hoping to relocate the club to a new purpose built stadium at Junction 12 , near Harlington and Toddington . This plan was very unpopular with both Luton Town supporters and the local authorities , but a planning application was still submitted by former chairman Bassett on the club 's behalf . The application was withdrawn by

the club almost immediately after the takeover by Nick Owen 's Luton Town Football Club 2020 consortium in 2008 .

As of 2012 , the club is undertaking an independent feasibility study to determine a viable location to move to . Sites mooted include a ground built as part of a new housing development to the west of Luton and a site by the proposed Junction 11A of the M1 , which is the preferred site of the local authorities . Luton Town did not rule out staying at a redeveloped Kenilworth Road , entering talks to buy the stadium back from the council in October 2012 , but by mid @-@ 2015 these plans had been dropped in favour of a move to a new location . Managing Director Gary Sweet confirmed that the club was in a position to " buy land , secure the best possible professional advice ... and to see the [ planning ] application process through to the receipt of consent . " The club announced its new preferred location in December 2015 ? Power Court in central Luton , near the Mall and St Anne 's Church . The proposals describe a 17 @,@ 500 @-@ seater stadium ready for the start of the 2020 ? 21 season .

= = Other uses = =

Kenilworth Road has been used occasionally by the England women 's team . The inaugural UEFA Women 's Championship in 1984 saw Kenilworth Road play host to the second leg of the Final against Sweden , won by Sweden on penalties . The most recent use of the stadium by the women 's team was a 4 ? 2 victory over Spain on 22 March 2001 . Kenilworth Road has been used by England 's under @-@ 17 team since the 1970s , most recently in a 3 ? 0 win over their Italian counterparts in the 2007 FA International Tournament Final .

The ground is home to the Hatters Study Support Centre , which provides local school pupils with ICT equipment , football training and lessons in numeracy and literacy . Kenilworth Road also hosts a number of local tournaments and events , including an annual youth competition organised by London Luton Airport .

= = Records = =

The highest attendance record at this stadium was 30 @,@ 069 against Blackpool in the FA Cup on 4 March 1959 . The highest attendance in the Football League was 27 @,@ 911 against Wolverhampton Wanderers in Division One on 5 November 1955 .

The highest seasonal average for Luton at Kenilworth Road was 21 @,@ 455 in the 1955 ? 56 season . Luton 's lowest seasonal average was 5 @,@ 527 in 1998 ? 99 . The most recent season in which the average attendance was more than 10 @,@ 000 was in the 1990 ? 91 season , when the seasonal average was 10 @,@ 313 .

= = Transport = =

The ground is located about half a mile away from Luton railway station , which lies on the Midland Main Line between London 's St Pancras railway station and Leeds 's City station . Many of the roads near the ground are for residential permit holders only , meaning car parking at the ground is notoriously difficult . The number 31 bus , which is operated by Arriva and runs every ten minutes from outside the railway station , stops at the junction of Oak Road and Dunstable Road . The Luton to Dunstable Busway includes a terminal behind the Main Stand on Clifton Road as part of the A , B , C and E routes running between London Luton Airport and Houghton Regis .