

# Case Study



## SANDY PARK STADIUM & CONFERENCE CENTRE

South West Communications Group provides Sandy Park with a state-of-the-art wireless, hosted communications system.

**Sandy Park Stadium & Conference Centre** is a purpose-built £15 million rugby venue, complete with full training facilities and commercial offices topped with two expansive floors of banqueting suites. It is home to the ambitious Exeter Chiefs RFC as well as hosting national and international banquets and conferences for gatherings of up to 1,000 delegates.

### The challenge

Sandy Park required a single information technology and communications solution to satisfy the operational needs of both its rugby and conferencing staff, as well as those of its visitors.

Sandy Park's vision was to enhance the visitor experience for its clients in a pleasant, safe and entertaining environment with flexible working and communications facilities. The latter would be used as an additional revenue stream for visitors wishing to use public Internet access.

The stadium and conference centre needed a wide ranging solution to meet its telephony, data, Internet, CCTV, disaster recovery, metered WiFi access, audio visual entertainment and media accessibility needs. This would mean the integration of a number of differing technologies and equipment from a variety of manufacturers yet providing a seamless customer experience.

However, Sandy Park was built on an isolated green field site making provision of ample voice, data and Internet connectivity at a reasonable price very problematic, especially with the stadium and conference centre being built in just eight months.

### The solution

South West Communications Group provided Sandy Park with all its communications needs with a point to point microwave link providing the key element to a fully hosted and managed solution with the following functions:

**Point to point microwave link** – the installation of a wireless link between Sandy Park and the South West Communications Group's Data Centre two miles away carries all of Sandy Park's voice, data and Internet traffic.

**Hosted telephony** – using its talkiP service, South West Communications Group hosts Sandy Park's entire telephony solution in their Data Centre linked to Sandy Park via the microwave link and provides the stadium and conference centre with all of the telephony features required, as well as providing access to pooled ISDN digital lines enabling them to handle the high volumes of calls its staff receive on match days.

**Data sharing** – Sandy Park implemented a Cisco network for its voice, data and Internet use, as well as for transmitting CCTV images to the stadium's control centre for match day events.



This enables the chief steward to monitor crowd numbers entering the stadium, as well as overseeing the public facilities and bars. This network also enables the stadium and conference centre's audio-visual facilities to be controlled on a room by room basis from a central communications control centre.

**Cordless telephony** – Digital Enhanced Cordless Telephony (DECT) handsets were provided to the conference centre staff to allow them to roam seamlessly throughout the building and always be contactable.

**Auto attendant** – was installed to provide callers with information regarding upcoming matches, including ticket sales and travel information on how to reach Sandy Park.

It also provides direct access to the conference centre managers and other key staff at Sandy Park therefore routing its customers to the most relevant person for their query.

**Public access WiFi** – this Cisco wireless infrastructure enables conference delegates and visiting media to access the Internet wirelessly providing a critical service to its clients and an extra revenue stream.

### The result

Sandy Park had been levelled for building work in January 2006 before hosting its first match the following September in front of a crowd of 6,000 supporters. Sandy Park could not open for business without its communications solution being in place for both health and safety reasons and in order for the stadium to receive the endorsement of the public and media to make the opening a complete success.

Access to the unfinished site was not available until late August, so South West Communications Group had less than three weeks to complete and test the whole installation.

Detailed project plans were put in place by South West Communications Group's dedicated project manager which were fleetingly adapted as the requirements of physically delivering the structural building took precedence.

South West Communications Group's flexibility and willingness to work closely with the building contractor meant the project was delivered on time and within budget.

This solution makes full use of the latest communications technology, both on site and hosted remotely hosted, and delivers wireless services to deliver an integrated solution that satisfies the needs of Sandy Park's staff and customers. It has also been future-proofed in anticipation of Sandy Park's growing customer and supporter base.

Sandy Park wanted a complete communications solution from just one provider that would take total responsibility for all its installation and maintenance. South West Communications Group was able to do this and in doing so delivered a cost-effective and efficient solution that has paid dividends in attracting thousands of customers to its conference facilities and ensuring Sandy Park is at the forefront of England's club rugby stadia.

Sandy Park's deputy chief executive Kieron Northcott said:

"One of our main concerns on choosing Sandy Park as our new site was its inaccessibility in terms of communications. South West Communications Group quickly allayed any fears we had by providing a single solution that was not only efficient and cost-effective, but was able to cope with the stadium and conference centre's differing needs.

In addition, we could not give them very much time to work in but South West Communications Group delivered the job on time in a flexible and professional manner that we still benefit from today with regular contact from our account manager."