

WORCESTERSHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION LIMITED



Notice is hereby given that the 23rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the WORCESTERSHIRE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION LIMITED will be held at County Sports Ground, Claines Lane, Worcester WR3 7SS on **THURSDAY 16th JUNE 2022 at 6.30 pm** precisely for the transaction of the ordinary and special business of the Association, an Agenda of which accompanies this notice.

By order of the Board of Directors

N E Trigg
Chief Executive Officer

County Sports Ground
Claines Lane
Worcester
WR3 7SS

10th June 2022

AGENDA

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

The following ordinary resolutions shall be considered and, if thought fit, passed.

ITEMS

1. **Apologies**
2. **To receive and, if thought fit, adopt the Annual Report for season 2021-22**
3. **Statement of Accounts and Independent Accountants Report**
To receive and, if thought fit, adopt the Abbreviated Unaudited Accounts for the Worcestershire Football Association Limited for the period 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2021.
4. **Election of Officers**
 - 4.1 **Honorary President**
The Board of Directors proposes the election of **Mr Colin Waldron** as Honorary President for a term of office for one year.
 - 4.2 **Chairman**
In accordance with Article 48 at the Annual General Meeting the Chairman shall retire but shall be eligible for re-election. **MR R NORTHALL** has formally notified the Board of Directors that he wishes to be considered for re-election. No other nominations have been received.
 - 4.3 **Vice Chairman**
In accordance with Article 48 at the Annual General Meeting the Vice Chairman shall retire but shall be eligible for re-election. **MR R BATE** has formally notified the Board of Directors that he wishes to be considered for re-election. No other nominations have been received.
 - 4.4 **Independent Accountants**
The Board of Directors proposes the appointment of **KENDALL WADLEY LLP, 27 SANSOME WALK, WORCESTER, WR1 1NU** as Independent Accountants.
5. **Annual Election of Area Representatives and Disability Clubs Representative**
To receive a report of the Area Representatives and Disability Clubs Representative elected for following year, in accordance with Article 43.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR SEASON 2021-22

On behalf of the Board of Directors I have pleasure in offering this report as an overview of the Association's activities during season 2021-22 - the 128th year of The Association.

IN MEMORIAM

During the season we recorded the passing of several members of the local football family. To these, and other servants of association football who have passed away during the past season, we offer our gratitude for their valued service and extend our sincere condolences to their families.

COUNTY SPORTS GROUND - CLAINES LANE

Since last year's report the world has come to terms with Covid and as Season 2021-22 has progressed more normality has returned to the game. There has been some disruption particularly early in the season, but Leagues planned well and most finished their fixtures on time helped by a less severe winter than in the previous few years resulting in less games lost to inclement weather.

Staff returned to work fulltime by the end of September and more regular working patterns were established. Some of the technological improvements and capacity building has remained - these were the positives of Covid - and there weren't many!

We are delighted to report that the 3G ATP has been well received and fully booked for most evening and weekend slots – the daytime slots are gradually increasing and we welcomed the university sides here for regular Wednesday afternoon bookings. We have been able use the building for events since restrictions were lifted and are very proud of the "Talking Football" Dementia café which is held on Mondays and Fridays led by Anna Konstantinides and this is proving very popular and regularly has good attendance. We are also fortunate to have some regular bookings for dance and fitness groups, dog training (inside and outside booking), and some local businesses are also using our facility for meetings and presentations including NHS Worcestershire. We are now seeing the asset being regularly used by the Community which is good news for increasing our presence and also allows us an additional revenue stream.

Both office suites remain rented out on full commercial terms allowing us to repay the annual Prudential Loan amounts to Worcester City Council without having to use other sources of income to do so.

Worcestershire Football Association now has a venue to be proud of and to allow us to diversify and work towards securing our future over the next few years to reduce our reliance on any one source of funding.

ANNUAL AWARDS

Due to the Government restrictions imposed due to Covid-19 in March 2020 and the subsequent national restrictions imposed for a considerable part of the last 15 months events, we have been unable to hold the Awards Ceremony for those recipients from 2019-20 season and 2020-21 season. We are disappointed that we were unable to present local, regional and national awards representing the great work undertaken by our leagues, clubs, volunteers and referees but we are currently arranging for those recipients to receive their awards directly as it has not been logistically possible to rearrange this.

COUNTY CUPS

Following disruption, curtailment and various cancelled competitions during the previous 2 season we can report County Cup Competitions were run to conclusion and all, but the Senior Invitation Cup were held for the first time on the grass pitch at Claines Lane. We hosted 16 finals and welcomed huge numbers of supporters and visitors over a very busy 3-week period. The Senior Invitation Cup held at Bromsgrove Sporting's Victoria Ground had a record attendance of 1109. It was also the first season for the Saturday Cup which merged the previous Saturday Junior and Minor Cups. It was also the inaugural season for the Under14s Girls Cup.

Senior Invitation Cup
Saturday Cup

Pershore Town '83 FC v Worcester City FC (1-1, 4-3 pens)
Fairfield Villa FC v Bredon FC (3-1)

Saturday U18's Cup	Kidderminster Harriers Youth FC v Eckington Juniors FC (4-0)
Saturday U16's Cup	Kidderminster Harriers Youth FC v TDMS Youth FC Colts (2-1)
Saturday U15's Cup	Worcester City Youth FC v Droitwich Spa Boys & Girls FC Trojans (0-1)
Saturday U14's Cup	Drakes Broughton Rangers Youth FC v Pershore Town FC Youth (0-8)
Saturday U14's Girls' Cup	Kingfisher Youth FC v Droitwich Spa Boys & Girls FC Lionesses (6-2)
Midweek Youth Cup	Kidderminster Harriers FC Juniors v Kidderminster Harriers FC (2-2, 6-5 pens)
Sunday Premier Cup	Stourport Swifts FC v Perrywood FC (4-3)
Sunday Junior Cup	Chaddesley FC Corbett v Hornets FC (2-1)
Sunday Minor Cup	Redditch Borough FC Sunday LA v Bvilly Block FC (1-4)
Sunday Women's Cup	Worcester City Women FC v Kidderminster Harriers FC Women (1-3)
Sunday U18's Cup	Droitwich Spa Boys & Girls FC Kestrels v Inkberrow Eagles FC CWYFL (2-1)
Sunday U16's Cup	West Worcester Youth FC v Meadow Park Youth FC CWYFL (2-3)
Sunday U15's Cup	West Worcester Youth FC Chelt v West Hagley (Juniors) FC (4-1)
Sunday U14's Cup	West Hagley (Juniors) FC West v Meadow Park Youth FC CWYFL (2-2, 3-4 pens)

DEVELOPMENT

The Development team comprise Martin Collier as Senior Football Development Manager supported by Jodie Williams. Ben Langworthy who led on Disability and Inclusion, and adult male participation left us at the end of February as he had accepted a role closer to home with Active Sports Partnership. Ben was instrumental in us reaccrediting our Foundation Equality Level in Sport Accreditation and we thank him for the work he has done whilst part of the WFA team. Jodie leads on Women's & Girls (including Wildcats), mini soccer and Youth Council. A new Development Officer Issey Lee-Fisher starts in post in July, and we are also recruiting for a new FA funded post - Facilities Officer whose remit will be to identify where Football Foundation funding is required and support Clubs, Local Authorities etc., to apply for grants and improve the facilities in Worcestershire. This post is funded for 3 years. Jacquie Owers supported the development team administration as well as bookings throughout the season but will shortly be moving to a new role within a centralised Administration team.

There continues to be significant changes in how our FA funding and targets are managed. There has also been great change within The FA. The FA Coach Education programme has had a complete overhaul and all Education programmes are now administered and centrally managed by The FA with most learning being transferred to online or with only minimal face to face delivery. The Charter Standard Programme has been rebranded to "England Football Accreditation" All KPIs have now been changed and most areas are based on market share – a huge change from that of the past 2 decades. It means a considerable cut in FA funding for the next 3 years which added to the 13% cut all County FAs received in July 2020 due to the pandemic is frustrating and unwelcome in the challenging times. We have been successful though in identifying other income streams and are looking forward to being able to develop these and massively reduce our reliance of FA funding.

The WFA Youth Council with members aged between 16 and 24 was suspended for the season but we have recruited some new members for the forthcoming season to develop football in all areas of the game within Worcestershire. Their focus will continue to be on delivery. James Green steps down at the end of this season as Chair and he has been instrumental in ensuring its success and transforming this to a delivery team rather than a consultation team. We thank James for his support and hope his legacy is developed by the incumbent Chair.

Provision and availability of facilities continues to be a challenge for football as local Councils and other privately owned facilities struggle financially and are continually looking to reduce costs. We have worked closely with all pitch providers this season to find more economic ways of providing places to play and keep pitches open and we will continue to do so. It has been an extremely challenging season, but we have identified grants and funding streams that may be available. We have supported and encouraged many clubs to apply for these sources of financial support. The new Facilities Officer will be able to strengthen the support we can provide, and this is to be welcomed.

The Association's not for profit company, WFA Sports Facilities Limited continues to try and retain facilities for football. This enterprise was established to be a legal entity capable of holding leases of sports facilities primarily where District Councils/Local Authorities wish to transfer responsibility for maintaining and operating football facilities. Currently Wyre Forest District Council have leased all their 4 sites (13 pitches) to WFA Sports Facilities Limited for 50 years and a licence

to Kidderminster & District Football League (2 sites), Kidderminster Athletic FC (1 site) and Kidderminster Lions (1 site) has been granted.

CHILD WELFARE - SAFEGUARDING AND RESPECT

Anna-Maria Konstantinides, Safeguarding & Investigations Manager leads the Association on Safeguarding and we were reaccredited with The FA Safeguarding Operating Standard. The independent assessment for 2021-22 season is on 23rd June 2022 – this year there are new independent assessors from NSPCC who replace Girling Hughes Associates after 3 years. The amount of work involved to achieve this annual reaccreditation is immense and requires complete support from the entire team as well as The Board and Council Members. Clubs also need to be recognised for their efforts in ensuring their volunteers engage with the new regulations and processes and maintain in date qualifications. The Standard has been extended to include Adults At Risk.

Anna continues to support clubs during the affiliation process to ensure all statutory and training requirements for Club Welfare Officers (CWO) are met. It has been challenging - social behaviour post Covid has been noticeably more challenging and disruptive. It appears that people have forgotten how to interact considerately and reasonably and we have experienced a significant increase in reported safeguarding concerns over the last few months, but all serious cases were managed effectively and we continue to provide support and guidance to clubs and leagues.

Serious child welfare cases reported to us are referred directly to the FA Case Management team and external agencies. Anna has been actively involved in multi-agency working during the season and this cross party working ensures that information is disseminated effectively and professionally to all relevant parties. External agencies i.e., Social Services and the Police are now referring directly to the WFA and seeking information and requesting our attendance at strategy meetings.

Spectator behaviour/coach behaviour remains a perennial problem but as in previous seasons there appears to be no consistency regarding particular clubs or age groups making it a difficult area to target for improvement. WFA had to take action in the autumn following one particularly concerning weekend where a number of instances of unacceptable behaviour was reported. WFA took a zero-tolerance approach and immediately suspended all teams involved until the investigations into the allegations were completed and any discipline matters resolved. We would like to thank the Clubs and Leagues who supported our action. The Clubs also prevented their teams from playing friendlies whilst investigations were ongoing and WFA also used social media and more traditional media to outline action that was being taken. It had reasonable success and thankfully although there have been other instances reported during the remainder of the season, they have been isolated and certainly not of the level reported that weekend.

All poor practice reports of coach behaviour are referred to the Club Welfare Officer in the first instance and Anna receives a report on the action taken. We only have isolated incidents of repeated poor behaviour, which we refer to The FA Safeguarding Unit.

GOVERNANCE

Roy Northall has completed his fourteenth season as Chairman. Richard Bate has completed his eighth season as Vice-Chairman and Eric Birch his eighth season as an Independent Director. Following Dave Hodges' retirement at the end of season 202-21, Eric has also taken over the role of Board Safeguarding Champion.

WFA participated in a FA funded initiative for recruitment of Independent Directors and were delighted to be able to appoint Simon Trickett, Jo Kelly and Elaine Brewster. They bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in Corporate Governance, Marketing and Human Resources which will strengthen the Board and allow it to continue to steward and actively administer and govern the Association's business affairs and regulate its football activities. The next challenge ahead is to achieve the FA Code of Governance.

Council Members continued to support the activities of the Association and gave their time generously. Their commitment to service and improvement is greatly appreciated.

FA REPRESENTATIVE

Chairman Roy Northall was re-elected at the Annual General Meeting in June 2021 and served as the Association's Representative on The FA Council for the 2021/22 season. He reported back to all Council and staff regularly throughout the season keeping them informed and updated over FA issues and the impact on the Association.

REFEREEING

The season has proved challenging for many referees - most experienced 'stop/start' as restrictions were imposed then lifted. Ollie Williams continues to run the CORE programme which is an academy for both promotion seeking and aspiring promotion seeking referees to aid their development and fitness. This continues to be popular and is now a regular feature of the WFA Referee Development programme. There has been a new initiative to provide a mentor for every newly qualified referee this season through some grant funding - this has been very successful and will continue for the 2022-23 season. Ollie also supports Herefordshire FA for development and training of their referees.

Marvyn Amphlett & Neil Radford lead the Development Groups for promotion seeking referees and Helen Plumley continues with the Central Pool of Referees Appointments for the County Youth Leagues. The referee tutor workforce comprises Jerry Curtis, Ravel Cheosiaua, Dan Pattison, Marvyn Amphlett and Ollie Williams.

Worcestershire's referees have continued to represent themselves and the County FA with distinction at all levels of the game from grass roots to the professional game. Ravel Cheosiaua was appointed as Assistant Referee for the FA Vase Final at Wembley and gained his "Three Lions". We also had a number of successes with promotions and certainly have good representation now at all levels of the game locally and nationally.

DISCIPLINE

Cases going to personal hearings have increased this season. Compared to neighbouring counties we continue to have fewer reported cases relating to discrimination but the trend for reporting such cases continues to increase significantly and we are also seeing an increase in the range of alleged discrimination incidents reports as well as a greater age range of the participants alleged to have made such remarks. It is of particular concern that there is an increase at the younger age groups where this would not be expected given the greater focus on anti-discriminatory behaviour in schools and colleges. Most allegations are for homophobic remarks, followed by racist remarks and disability.

It is evident that where Clubs take action against poor practice and are intolerant of unruly and unacceptable behaviour there are fewer on or off field misconduct charges. Club Welfare Officers continue to be extremely supportive and early intervention led by Ollie Williams (Referee & Discipline Manager) and Anna Konstantinides (Safeguarding & Inclusion Manager) continues to address this undesirable trend. The Association continues with the weekly round table meeting where all cases of poor practice, misconduct and potential aggravated breaches (discrimination) are considered and allocated to the relevant staff member for action. This continues to be very effective and we will continue to develop and refine this process.

The FA continues to implement significant changes to the discipline process. The national discipline system continues to focus on streamlining the process and this programme of change will help ensure that the discipline procedure will be both fairly and consistently applied across the country at all levels of football. WFA has joined a pilot scheme where a Regional Panel of Commission Members is available as a pool and a number of our previous panel members have been successful in being appointed. We now use The FA's video conferencing system for most hearings and are likely to do so for the foreseeable future. All FA hearings continue to be via video conference. This reduces the time taken to manage cases and is more cost effective and efficient for the participant in the long term.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The County FA website www.worcestershirefa.com continues to be widely accessed. It is a significant source of current information. We also use selective social media tools such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter (@WorcsFa) to act as notice boards providing the latest information to our participants across Worcestershire and the wider football fraternity. Twitter usage has increased significantly, and we now have over 7100 followers; Facebook is less popular for general notices but has proved a valuable communication tool for specific closed user groups e.g., referees. Youth Council predominantly uses WhatsApp.

FINANCE

Locally and nationally there continues to be significant changes to funding. As reported previously The FA reduced our overall income by 9% per season until June 2019; following the suspension of football in March 2020 due to the pandemic the FA cut County FA funding by 13% and there is a further 9% reduction from 2022-23 season. The Association now works with a grant finder organisation and has successfully bid for some large grants which will be used to deliver projects in the next 12 months.

The organisation continues to strive to maximise efficiency and rigorously monitors its expenditure and the financial forecast targets breakeven or better. However, like all organisations, particularly those with external funding streams there is reliance on these income streams continuing and plans are in place to quickly address any situation should any funding stream be withdrawn. Increased communication by electronic means continues to provide significant savings in postage, stationery and print costs.

STAFF

We have had some staff changes this season. Ben Langworthy left us at the end of February; Lynne Williams left us at the end of May and with some reshuffles and appointments we will have several new members joining the team. We welcomed Spencer Knott who successfully completed the DWP Kickstarter Scheme and now has a permanent appointment with us on the maintenance team and Issey Lee- Fisher starts her new role as Football Development Officer on 5th July. We are currently advertising for a Site Manger and a part-time Facilities Development Officer so there will be some new faces around over the summer. The team continues to be constantly professional and positive when delivering their area of responsibility. We are fortunate to have such a diligent and skilled team.

SUMMARY

I reported last year that 2020-21 was the most challenging year of my 32-year working career and certainly the most unpredictable of the 10 years I had worked in football. I was concerned if the building project would be completed and if football would ever return to what we knew. Whilst this year has been incredibly busy and at times disruptive and unpredictable, the building was completed, it is well used, and we regularly receive reports of what a great facility it is. Football continues to thrive - yes there are challenges. Formats of the game are ever evolving, facilities need investment but opportunities for that are now available and a reality, volunteers are becoming more scarce but there are new faces getting involved and new ways of administering and delivering the game are being found. Football in whatever format one participates in is being enjoyed and is as popular as ever - the single biggest team participation sport in the UK. I am proud to lead the team at WFA to support those involved with the game locally

Sometimes we are unable to meet expectations particularly given the wide variety of requests and resource availability. Not every need can be met or delivered. What WFA can continue to do is to support those providing football to the many to ensure football remains the number one participation sport in whatever format of the game they choose and that the facilities they play on and the coaching and training opportunities are be the best that can be achieved with the resources available.

With staff and funding changes the year ahead will be very different but new opportunities will arise, new perspectives will enhance the offer we currently provide, and we will develop new ways of supporting and administering the game locally. It is an evolution not a revolution and with our excellent facility we look to remain the hub for football throughout the County.

The WFA staff team and I look forward to catching up with all of you in person, at some point over the forthcoming season.



Nichola Trigg
Chief Executive Officer
June 2022