

**Birmingham County Football Association Limited**

Report of the Directors and Financial Statements

for the 12 month period ending 30th June 2020

for

Birmingham County Football Association Limited

A company limited by guarantee

Registered Office: County HQ, Ray Hall Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6JF

**Reg No. 03733866 (England and Wales)**



**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the 22nd Annual General Meeting of the Birmingham County Football Association (BCFA) Limited will be held remotely and ‘online via Microsoft TEAMS **on Thursday 24th September 2020 at 7.00pm**, for the transaction of the Ordinary and any Special Business of the Company, an agenda of which accompanies this notice.

Therefore, and as a result of Government guidance, the office will NOT be open that evening.

The agenda, reports and audited accounts are collated and available to download via the BCFA web site and will also be available to view ‘on screen’ throughout the meeting.

By Order of the Board



Kevin Shoemake

Chief Executive Officer

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**AGENDA**

Welcome

Chairman’s Remarks

**BUSINESS OF BIRMINGHAM COUNTY FA’S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

1. **Reports – for the 12 month period ending 30.06.2020**

Chairman & Chief Executive Officer

1. **Statements of Accounts and Auditor’s report**

* BCFA Ltd Accounts including appendices
* BCFA Benevolent Fund
* Joel Richards Memorial Fund

Auditors verbal statement & questions

1. **Appointment of Auditors**

To advise that the Board appointed Baldwins Audit Services Ltd to continue as the BCFA Ltd auditors for the following year.

1. **Articles of Association – proposed amendments**

* 9.2. & 9.3. Appointment of Chairman & Deputy Chairman
* 14. Appointment of FA Representative
* 15. Powers of Council
* 16. Proceedings of Council
* 20. Election of the Board
* 23. Disqualification & Removal of Directors

1. **Date of the next (22nd) Birmingham County FA Ltd Annual General Meeting**

Thursday 23rd SEPTEMBER 2021 at 7.00pm.

**CHAIRMANS REPORT**

This has turned out to be the most challenging season for all of us, due to the world-wide effect of Covid-19, which the World Health Organisation declared a pandemic on March 22nd.

When the season kicked off in August no one had even heard of Covid-19 but in March Football and all forms of sport were effectively stopped, the ‘normality’ of how we lived our lives was changed by the infectious nature of the virus and the number of people who lost their lives.

We were all totally unprepared by the impact of this deadly virus and All County FA’s were instructed by The FA to close their Offices with very short notice – Kevin, Amy, David and Richard, our Senior Leadership Team, quickly devised a plan and our staff were sent home with their lap tops and told to work from home, where possible, and until further notice.

With no likely date to restart the season the FA, after extensive consultation with stakeholders declared the Season 2019-20 ‘null & void’ for grass roots football.

However, at professional level the Premier League & EFL Championship eventually completed their fixtures and the playoffs for EFL Div 1 & Div 2 and The Vanarama National League – all played without any spectators, as was the FA Cup Final.

In the Premier League, **Wolverhampton Wanderers** finished 7th and reached the quarter-finals of the Europa Cup, while **Aston Villa** retained their status with a win on the last day of the season. **West Bromwich Albion** join them, promoted back to the Premier League by retaining second place in the EFL Championship, after a nail-biting finish on the last day of the season.

**Birmingham City** retained their status in the EFL Championship and will be joined by ground tenants **Coventry City** who finished as Champions of EFL Div. One decided by points per game. **Burton Albion** & **Walsall** retained their status in EFL Div. One and Two respectively.

It is also hoped the 2019/20 FA Trophy Final will be played at Wembley and we were hoping to see **Halesowen Town** reach the final after a long wait but it was not to be having recently lost out in a one-legged semi-final.

Many congratulations to all our Clubs, players, match officials, staff, volunteers and supporters in what was an unprecedented season ‘null & void’ season and for all you’ve done to at least kick start and hopefully complete the 20-21 season whilst staying healthy being paramount for everyone in the game.

I would also like to thank our Match Officials who received the following prestigious appointments –

**UEFA Youth League Final** – AssistantReferee:Sian Massey - Ellis

**FA Cup Final –** VAR: Stuart Attwell

**FA Community Shield Final** – Referee:Andre Marriner & Assistant Referee: Marc Perry

**Vanarama National League Semi- Final** – Assistant Referee: Bradley Hall

**Vanarama National league North Elimination Round** –Assistant Referee: Daniel Robinson

**Vanarama National League North Promotion Final** – Fourth Official: Scott Tallis (also refereed the Semi-Final).

The financial effect of Covid-19 has been massive, resulting in The FA reducing its core funding to all CFA’s by 14.50% as well as restructuring The FA Coach / Education Department. This alone has resulted in a considerable loss of income and some jobs. We are still assessing the long-term impact this will have on the business.

Despite no football being played after 22nd March, we had and then continued to invest over £40,000 in our own club innovation and pitch improvement schemes which were really well received by all the Clubs who have benefitted.

Just like many businesses, including football clubs and leagues, the impact of the game stopping for virtually six months had a significant impact on our own finances. However, the work that has been achieved in recent years has left us in a positive position along with a fantastic team and team culture but the small surplus that we have posted was largely due to the furlough scheme, two large local authority facility grants, some one-off FA grants and a substantial VAT refund.

There were three vacant Directorships arising under Article 20.2. However, the three retiring directors Monica Shafaq, John Berry and Stuart Welch were all eligible to re-apply and did so. As there were no other applications received, they were interviewed and re-appointed for a three-year term starting 1st July 2020 until 30th June 2023 in accordance with the article.

Guy Rippon was re-appointed as a co-opted Director and Gareth Roberts (replacing Harry Organ) was also appointed as a co-opted Director (to lead on developing commercial income). Both these appointments are for a one-year term in accordance with Article 20.3

Following the FA recommendation that all CFA’s review their Code of Governance. The BCFA Staff and Directors are compliant but Council is not. This was discussed at the July Board meeting and it was agreed to appoint the following to a Steering Group to review our Code of Governance to make Council compliant.

The Steering Group comprising, Directors – Mike Penn, Steve Poole, Kevin Shoemake, Sandra Hampton and Monica Shafaq and BCFA staff – David Nixon, Richard Lindsey, and Mohammed Juned met on 4th August and set its Term of Reference as ‘in accordance with the FA ‘s Code of Governance for CFA’s we are undertaking a review which includes, but is not limited to, The Articles of Association and the role of Council. We intend to consult with the wider football community so that the Association better represents the community we represent’.

The aim of this is for BCFA to achieve Sport England’s Tier 3 of Governance which would allow us to apply directly for additional funding. As reported by Sport England, the BCFA, is larger than some national Sports Associations!

This will be discussed further at the next Council Meeting, which is proposed to follow the AGM on 24th September approx. 7.30pm.

Finally, I’m pleased to report the BCFA Offices having been closed until 31st August, with most of the staff furloughed, making use of the UK Gov. Job retention scheme – as did most UK businesses, were re-opened and staff returned to work on a rota basis from 1st September with the lifting of UK Gov. restrictions and the likely re-start of grass roots football in September.

A big thank you to all our hard-working Staff, the Senior Leadership Team –

CEO Kevin Shoemake, Amy Sproson, David Nixon and Richard Lindsey, my Deputy Steve Poole and our Board of Directors who have worked tirelessly in these unprecedented and very challenging times.

l would like to thank everyone who contributes, plays, supports, administers, volunteers and officiates in our wonderful game to ensure it continues to be played across our region in a safe environment.

Football is a team game so please remember T.E.A.M. - Together Everyone Achieve More.

**Michael J. Penn**

Chairman

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT**

This is now my fifth AGM report and it follows one of the most challenging periods ever known, not only in the Associations history but also for football, sport and all businesses worldwide! The impact of the global pandemic on the game locally and nationally at all levels and especially for Club and League volunteers has been immense but as I write this in early September, we have already seen small shoots of recovery with football restarting with some FA Cup matches being played and some Leagues looking to start a new season in the coming weeks. We keep our fingers firmly crossed that we can at least complete a full league season without any issues or lockdowns but with the priority for all to remain safe and healthy.

As always, I’d like to thank the entire team at BCFA for all their hard work, dedication and resilience prior to and during the lockdown period and also for their personal encouragement and when supporting all participants with their football needs and queries as they do so well each and every season.

We closed the office, but not the business, on the 17th March with everyone able to work remotely from home up until 1st September. It is testament to all colleagues that the new Operational Plan was completed and signed off as ‘excellent’ by the FA and our customer service rating was consistently at or over 90% each week before and during lockdown and this also takes into account some of the FA IT systems and online services, which are out of our control, running slowly and many of our course learners being left in limbo due to Government restrictions and changes to FA Education. Nevertheless, the social and economic impact of the game across the West Midlands is an incredible £522m each year which is why it is so important for people’s wellbeing as well as the local economy that the game flourishes.

I’d also like to thank the Senior Leadership Team of Amy, David and Richard who have provided fantastic support, drive, ideas and motivated the team as a whole before and during lockdown. I’d also like to take the opportunity to thank the Directors for their individual and collective support and passion in the last 12 months with each one driving specific areas of the business. They were also very supportive of our new Pitch Improvement and Club Innovation Funds which has seen BCFA invest in the region of £45k back into the game. This is in addition to a number of Football Foundation grants which have totalled over £300k to assist Clubs with their pitches and facilities during and after lockdown.

We started last season with 1,200 clubs at all levels of the pyramid who themselves support over 4,800 teams playing all forms and formats of the game within 60 sanctioned competitions. It is the role of any County FA to support these clubs and grow the game. We also have over 1,400 registered Referees and usually deliver in excess of 350 courses each year. So the impact of Covid-19 has been huge and been felt right across the football family, especially financially. We were also unable to complete our County Cup competitions – with the war years being the only other times these prestigious competitions were unable to be completed.

As the accounts reflect, our income streams have been severely impacted by the pandemic, not least discipline and courses and the use of the facility by third parties. However, we have posted a small surplus due largely to some local authority grants, the Government furlough scheme and a vat rebate.

Safeguarding still remains a priority area for the business and I am still amazed that some clubs are laxed and do not take this area seriously and check and challenge their people and processes.

Marketing and communication as well as innovation and insight are also key as we learn and target specific areas of the game and region for growth. We partnered with Warwick University at the start of the season on a sustainability project and this will also remain at the forefront of our work as we look to reduce the amount of single use plastic within the game and thereby deliver a more friendly and sustainable game for all to enjoy for years to come.

There has been a significant amount of work done in recent years regarding the governance of the Association which has helped us complete the initial stages of the FA’s new Code of Governance for County FA’s and we are in a good position to deliver on the Code later in 2020. We have also started work on the Advanced level of the Equality Standard for Sport which will see us check and challenge what we do and areas that we can improve on and we will disseminate the learning to Clubs and Leagues for them to follow suit in delivering a fully inclusive game For All.

I’d also like to thank Paul and Liam who have worked tirelessly on the pitches and facility for a number of years and the positive feedback that we receive from visiting teams and visitors is testament to the work they do and the investment we have provided to improve the County HQ.

Indiscipline across all formats and ages of the game is still a major concern even when confined to half a playing season – not just the amount but the depth and complexity of cases as well as the seriousness, including a marked increase in discrimination cases (50+) and assaults. I will keep saying it as I have done since taking the CEO role at this fantastic County FA – the indiscipline of participants both on and off the pitch is a blight on our game and it has to improve. Discrimination in any form will not be tolerated and assaults, especially those on match officials will be dealt with severely and as per FA rules and regulations and more often than not by statutory authorities along with custodial sentences which we support.

The Football Development and Football Services teams are all working hard in all areas and formats of the game to support Leagues and Clubs in their own endeavours and to provide advice and guidance and information, especially regarding the rules and regulations that govern the game.

During my many club visits, I have seen the investment that clubs are providing volunteers, spectators and players of all ages and their keenness to keep improving and investing and it’s the BCFA’s role to help and support clubs in the promotion of the game and to help them deliver their own local priorities and initiatives that benefits thousands of people each week.

Finally, thank you again to the BCFA Council and Committee members and in particular the Chairman and Deputy Chairman for their unwavering support in allowing me to lead and develop the business. However, by far the biggest thank you must go to the thousands of volunteers who make football happen week in week out with little or no reward. We cannot continue to achieve all we want by ourselves and our continued success is a reflection on the positive relationships we have with all our customers in order to grow this fabulous game in all its formats within the best County FA in the Country.

Have a great, enjoyable and RESPECTFUL football season ahead and when football restarts – win, lose or draw! But above all else, please remain safe and well and look after each other by following the Government guidelines.

**Kevin Shoemake**

CEO