

**Birmingham County Football Association Limited**

Report of the Directors and Financial Statements

for the 12 month period ending 30th June 2021

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 23rd Annual General Meeting of the Birmingham County Football Association (BCFA) Limited will be held remotely (online) via Microsoft TEAMS **on Thursday 23rd September 2021 at 7.00pm**, for the transaction of the Ordinary and any Special Business of the Company, an agenda of which accompanies this notice.

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

[kevin.shoemake@birminghamfa.com](mailto:kevin.shoemake@birminghamfa.com)



**AGENDA**

Welcome

Chairman’s Remarks

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

1. **Reports – for the 12 month period ending 30.06.2021**

Chairman & Chief Executive Officer

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

* BCFA Ltd Accounts including appendices
* BCFA Benevolent Fund – at the meeting
* Joel Richards Memorial Fund – at the meeting

Auditors verbal statement & any questions

1. **BCFA Strategy 21-25**
2. **BCFA ‘Save Today, Play Tomorrow’**
3. **Appointment of Auditors**

To advise that the BK Plus Ltd to continue as the BCFA Ltd auditors for the following year.

1. **Date of the next (24th) Birmingham County FA Ltd Annual General Meeting**

Thursday 22nd SEPTEMBER 2022 at 7.00pm.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

I’m pleased to report that there is a strong desire to play the beautiful game and get back to some ‘normality’ when the 2021/22 season kicks off in August / September, with spectators able to watch their teams play again.

Over 1,060 Clubs have affiliated over 4,730 teams which includes 100 new Clubs with the Clubs having managed to register 56,000 players as at the 7th September. This makes us the second largest County FA out of the 50 nationally.

We have again been able to offer FREE Affiliation to All our Clubs thanks to funding from SPORT ENGLAND via the FA and The Directors agreed to fund the difference.

We have also recommenced playing our 14 County Cup Competitions but with maximum number of entrants to minimise disruption to playing League fixtures.

We have all been affected by Covid -19 and Season 2020-21 was again declared null and void by the FA for National League System (NLS) Step 1-6 Leagues. After consultation with Step 4 to 6 Clubs and their Leagues, there was agreement for FA to restructure but based on points-per-game over the previous two incomplete seasons because of the pandemic and also no relegation.

The majority of our Affiliated Clubs play below this level and they were also able to play football after the FA extended the playing season to 30th June, provided their League’s held special meeting of Clubs to approve continuing to play.

Our 7 Professional Clubs were able to play, but with no spectators, Wolverhampton Wanderers and Aston Villa retained their Premier League status but West Bromwich Albion were relegated.

Birmingham City & Coventry City also retained the EFL Championship status with Coventry City moving back to the Ricoh Arena for 2021/22 Season.

The FA Cup was played at Wembley on 15th May and FA Trophy & FA Vase on 22nd May (Non League Finals Day) which were UK Government test events with reduced spectator capacity.

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

2020 UEFA Super Cup – Stuart Attwell VAR

FA Inter League Cup - Scott Tallis 4th Official

FA Cup Final – Sian Massey – Ellis Assistant VAR & Stuart Attwell 4th Official

Premier League 2 Division 2 Play Off Final - Tom Reeves

UEFA Euro 2020 – Stuart Attwell VAR

Finally, many congratulations to Tom Reeves (Coventry) on his promotion to the National Referees Group List (Football League).

We have continued to invest over £45,000 in our own club innovation and pitch improvement schemes which were really well received by all the Clubs who have benefited. We also launched a new Green Innovation Fund in June as part of our ‘Save Today Play Tomorrow’ initiative with this specific fund already receiving 36 applications totalling over £23k.

Just like many businesses, including football clubs and leagues, the impact of the game having to stop again as 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 and we have posted a small loss which would have been higher had we not used the furlough scheme, and received local authority facility grants, and some one-off FA grants.

There were three vacant Directorships arising under Article 20.2. However, the three retiring directors Sandra Hampton, Holly Murdoch and Shameem Kazmi 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 2021 until 30th June 2024 in accordance with the article. Shameem advised he would only be able to serve for one more year to 30th June 2022 due to increased business commitments, therefore the Directors will discuss succession planning to cover the next 6 years.

Sandra Hampton was appointed Senior Independent Director

Guy Rippon was co-opted as Director for one year to 30th June 2022 and Gareth Roberts appointed as Commercial Director for 3 year term to 30th June 2024.

The Steering Group comprising Directors, Mike Penn, Steve Poole, Kevin Shoemake, Sandra Hampton and BCFA Staff, David Nixon, Richard Lindsay and Mohammed Juned, concluded the review of the Articles of Association and the role of Council.

The proposals were first outlined to Council by Sandra Hampton at the re-scheduled Council Meeting on 15 October 2020. A slide-deck of the timetable for the implementation of the proposals was presented to Council at their meeting on 3 December 2020. The slide-deck and Minutes of the Meeting were circulated along with a request for “any questions” which would be addressed at the next Council Meeting on 8 April 2021.

On 23 March 2021 the Board of Directors approved the revised Articles of Association and Membership Rules and the formal adoption process began.

At the historic final Council Meeting on 8 April 2021, the Steering Group responded to the questions that had been submitted in response to the request made at the December 2020 Council Meeting. Having done so, Council endorsed the Articles of Association and the revised Membership Rules.

Following the adjourned Extraordinary General Meeting on 24 June 2021, due to a quorum not been formed, the EGM re-convened on 1 July 2021. Those Members present, who formed the quorum, formally adopted the Articles of Association and Membership Rules, 1 July 2021.

At their meeting on 20 July 2021, the Board of Directors formally adopted the Articles of Association and Membership Rules, 1 July 2021 as the working Articles of Association and Membership Rules of Birmingham County Football Association Limited.

At the same meeting, under Article 13.1, the Directors appointed me as Chairman of the Board of Directors.

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 very challenging times. Amy has decided to leave us in August, after 17 years, to change career to teaching and we wish her well. Luke Bowles has been appointed to replace Amy, having been Amy’s No.2 for several years and is a very talented and capable replacement to lead the Football Development Department.

I would like to thank all our Clubs, players, match officials, staff, volunteers and supporters in what was another ‘null & void’ season, who contribute to our wonderful game ensuring it continues to be played across our region in a safe environment.

Football is a team game so please remember T.E.A.M. - **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore.

**Michael J. Penn**

Chairman

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT**

This is now my sixth AGM report and as I documented last year, it again follows one of the most challenging periods ever known, not only in the Associations history but also for football, sport and all businesses worldwide!

As I write this report (with fingers crossed which is never easy), it appears we may be over the worst and if the amount of new clubs and teams is anything to go by, then there seems to be a renewed and even heightened desire to play the beautiful game at all levels.

At this point and following another August and September where IT systems have been awful, it would be remiss of me not to thank the volunteers at every one of our 1,200 clubs for the efforts and sacrifices they make before and during each season. I’m not one for excuses but we share your pain and angst as the BCFA team also have to use the same FA systems in our desire to help and support all participants. We are therefore left equally frustrated when the IT systems that we all have to use fall way short of what is expected and required both internally and externally and for the second season running. The issues faced are further compounded by the DBS requirements which are vitally important in order to safeguard participants but again, the systems have been unable to cope with demand.

Having thanked the volunteers, I’d like to thank the BCFA team for all their efforts and dedication during the year – a year which saw us lock the office up in March 2020 and manage to effectively and efficiently run the business remotely for 18 months and consistently strive for a 90% customer satisfaction rating which we regularly achieve despite all the moans and groans related to FA IT.

It is vitally important that the game is played at all levels across the region and that we can develop and grow participation. A recent report that the FA commissioned on our behalf estimates that 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 health and wellbeing as well as the local economy that the game flourishes.

I’d also like to thank the Senior Leadership Team of Amy, David, Richard and Luke who have provided fantastic support, drive, ideas and motivated the team as a whole before, during and after the enforced lockdowns. After 17 years of fantastic service to the business, Amy has left to take up her dream role of teaching and I know her colleagues and many customers wish her well in her new career.

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 benefitted many of our clubs in various aspects of pitch and facility development.

For the second season running and with the help of a specific return to football grant from Sport England and a further £50k of BCFA funding, we have been able to make affiliation free which we know has benefited new and existing clubs and we hope will kickstart the game for the 21-22 season. We will again start the forthcoming season with circa 1,200 clubs at all levels of the pyramid who themselves support in the region of 4,800 teams playing all forms and formats of the game within 60 sanctioned competitions.

The pandemic has seen a marked reduction in Referee numbers but now that we can deliver courses then we hope the demand for referee training and development will see a huge influx into the game and to officiate the 48,000 matches which take place each season.

As the accounts reflect, our income streams have been severely impacted by the pandemic. We also used to organise and deliver over 300 training courses each season but a year ago, the decision was made by the FA to control these centrally. The lack of football and with no courses being delivered nationally because of the pandemic and now not administered by BCFA, means we show a small deficit on the year. The lack of activity showed me how reliant BCFA is and also our Leagues and clubs are on the game being played and, like so many, things could’ve been worse financially had it not been for the Government furlough scheme, some additional local authority grants and some savings on expenditure.

Safeguarding still remains a priority area for the business and I am still amazed that some clubs are very laxed and do not take this area seriously and check and challenge their people and processes, especially volunteers who remain on the periphery of the game and without specific and defined roles which are captured on WGS. At this moment in time and with all the checks and balances rightfully in place, these peripheral roles are the only way perpetrators can access young children, youth players and vulnerable adults so please remain vigilant!

At the same time, indiscipline across all formats of the game and across all ages is still a major concern and an all too constant blight on the game we all love – not just the amount of cases that we deal with on a weekly basis but the depth and complexity of cases as well as the seriousness, including a marked increase in discrimination cases and serious 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 and then stop! Discrimination and hate crime in any form will not be tolerated along with assaults, especially those on match officials will be dealt with severely and as per FA rules and regulations and more often than not by the Police and statutory authorities along with custodial sentences which we fully support.

Our new and ground breaking ‘Save Today Play Tomorrow’ initiative which we launched in June recognises our joint responsibility to lead on creating an environmentally friendly and sustainable football model in order to facilitate a positive step change from within the game to reduce single use plastic and carbon emissions which stain our game, our football facilities and the wider environment. With this in mind, I ask you and your committee and club members to think about how your players, coaches and spectators can help to clean up ‘your’ game with some quick wins and positive interventions and recycle so that the game can be enjoyed for future generations to come. I would also urge you to sign our sustainability pledge which is the first of its kind in the Country.

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 2021. 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 which will coincide with the new grassroots diversity code being launched at the start of the 21-22 season.

I’d also like to thank Paul, Liam and Steve who have worked tirelessly on the two HQ 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 to the extent that we had over 110 ‘elite’ academy matches played across the two pitches during the pandemic.

Finally, a massive personal thank you to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman for their unwavering support in allowing me to lead and develop the business still further. It’s over five years since a wide-eyed Essex boy landed in the Midlands but I’ve loved and continue to love every minute and even with the challenges the pandemic through at us and others for many months. I cannot wait for the season to start and to visit new and existing clubs at all levels and to see and hear about all their exciting plans which we also want to support and help bring to fruition.

However, by far the biggest thank you must again 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 Region.

Have a great, enjoyable and RESPECTFUL football season ahead whether you win, lose or draw! But above all else, please remain safe in all you do both inside and outside of this great game and here’s to a full, happy, easier, stress-free and hopefully mask-free season ahead For All.

The BCFA team is here to help so please do not hesitate to contact us at:

[support@birminghamfa.com](mailto:support@birminghamfa.com)

**Kevin Shoemake**

CEO

[www.birminghamfa.com](http://www.birminghamfa.com)

<https://www.birminghamfa.com/about/save-today-play-tomorrow>