

Cornwall County Football Association



Annual Report 2021

Football for onen hag oll - 'one and all'

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Cornwall FA Chairman and FA Representative Report for the 2021 AGM

March 21 -June 21 FA Meetings

All FA Meetings are still being held remotely. Whilst this has saved considerable time and money, face to face meetings generate more discussion and debate. There is some hope that we may be able to return to more traditional meetings for season 2021-22 but it is likely that these will be a mixture of on-line and face to face. We have been informed that the FA staff may return to Wembley after the European Championships

I have continued to be present for all FA meetings where my attendance was required as a member of the respective group/committees. Since May these have been Council, Girls Talent Pathway, FA National Game Competitions, National Game Members and Adult Participation Committee. Over the course of the season to date I have attended numerous on-line meetings in connection with my role as your FA Rep. These include, Council, National Game Members, Competitions Committee and Adult Participation Committee. I have also attended meetings in my position as Chairman that include Code of Governance, our Safeguarding External assessment, and the Cornwall FA NG Strategy presentation which took place on 14th June.

One significant FA change, following the National League System Restructuring for 2021-22 will see a number of our senior teams moving from the SW Peninsula League to step 5 football with the Western League Premier Division. We wish Helston, Mousehole, Saltash and Millbrook our best wishes and every success on behalf of the Cornwall FA in their new challenge.

In respect of the new Cornwall FA Code of Governance, our Articles have now been updated and passed by the Board and the Football Management Board. Looking forwards the Board will begin to look different with some new appointments to ensure we are compliant with the new FA Code of Governance. This will include a position on the Board for an Inclusion and Diversity Director and Chairperson for our Inclusion Advisory Board which we hope to appoint before the AGM. Other new appointments will be made soon to reflect the expertise we will need to manage and drive our new headquarters and football facility. Talks are now at an advanced stage with the landowners and we hope to move forwards with this exciting project soon once all the legal and planning stages are completed.

As you may be aware Ian Anear and Brian Baker are stepping down from the Board at the AGM after giving significant service over many years. Whilst Ian is retiring from both the Board and the Football Management Board, we are pleased that Brian is remaining on the Football Management Board. We were able to make a small presentation to Ian at the last Board meeting and sincerely thank him for his services to the Board since 2009.

Much of my role this season has been spent supporting Dawn and her team as well as keeping the Board informed on a range of matters. Like a number of FA Council colleagues we have been trying to ensure that the volume of work coming down from the FA, during a time when County Offices have been closed and staff have been furloughed,



has been manageable, and where this has not be the case we have fed our concerns back to the FA. These have been raised locally and at full council.

It would be an understatement to report that the Covid pandemic has seriously affected our ability to provide the level of service to our football community that we would like. The season has been badly disrupted, and the staff have been furloughed while the office was forced to close. I am delighted that the staff are now back at work full time again and eager to get football started. I hope we have been able to provide support during this difficult time on a range of matters including accessing various FA grants that have been available in addition to “Back to Football” matters and I would sincerely thank our staff, a number of whom who have been working from home during this time, for their efforts in trying to provide support and services. This will, I am sure we all hope, make the start of next season smoother after such a long lay-off.

I also like to thank all members of the football family in Cornwall for their patience and dedication during such a difficult year and hope that as far as possible we can run a full programme again in 2021-22.

I wish everyone an enjoyable and successful 2021-22 season both on and off the pitch!

Geoff Lee

Chair and FA Representative.



Chief Executive's Report

County FA Overview

We support and deliver playing opportunities to over 900 teams, 600 between the ages of 7 and 18 (boys and girls), over 300 open aged male, female, veteran, walking and disability teams, and in addition over 100 small 5 and 6 a-side encompassing over 10,000 people a week.

We have intrinsically strong governance from board level down, we are well organised, well run, well-structured and therefore well placed to accurately assess our football communities needs and their required support to recover from the impacts of Covid-19 and move forward.

We have strong financial controls which have enabled us to remain a highly effective business as we also strive to recover from Covid-19 and its knock-on effects.

We have a highly effective, proactive staff that understand the needs of our football community and work closely with them. Their understanding of both the business needs and the community needs is reflected in their flexibility in adapting and realigning roles and responsibilities as needed.

Community engagement throughout last 12 months remained strong, all staff remained active, although at reduced hours and produced training tip videos, online competitions, continuous information updates and direct communications for additional support.

We have a marketing partnership with another county and are looking currently at an extension across other business needs. We are also investigating ways to enhance opportunities to the benefit of our football community.

Our Articles of Association in compliance with the FA Code of Governance were presented to and approved by our membership in April 2021. This enables us to now recruit additional Independent Non-Executive Directors to strengthen the expertise on our Board of Directors, the process is now underway.

With recruitment completed, facility site secured and football restarted we will be committing to undertaking further external consultation and launching an inspirational new strategy in the near future.

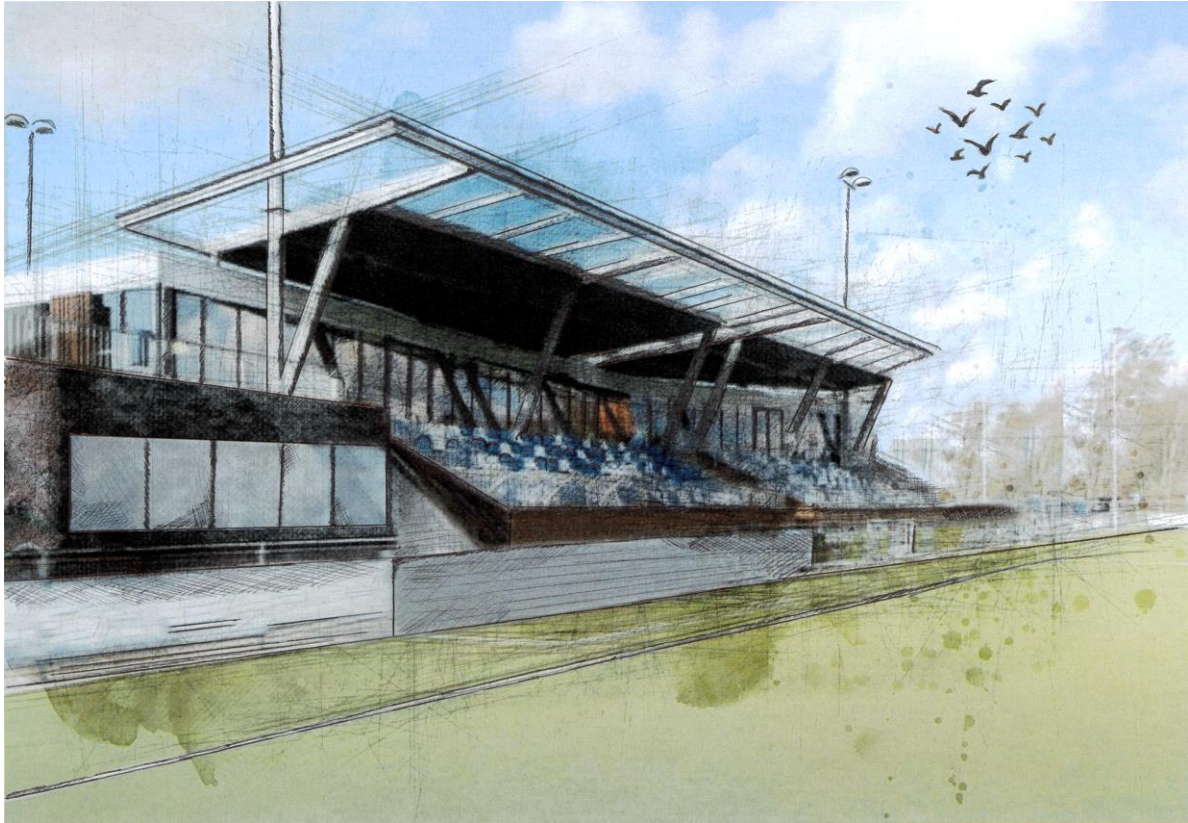
We achieved well against all aspects of our previous strategy.

County FA Vision

To use the power of football to improve lives providing opportunities for “one and all” whilst growing, supporting, developing, and safeguarding the game.



County FA Facility Vision



We remain focused on achieving our new flagship headquarters and facilities

Our proposed outcome will be to have our own flagship headquarters offering suitable workspace for our staff, enable us to offer and deliver a comprehensive education programme, offer full conference facilities, create 3G pitch facilities, seating and suitable changing facilities to become more relevant and accessible to our football community.

County FA Review

With the delay in being able to hold last year's AGM, finally being held online on 24th September 2020 the following months have continued in the same vein due to Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions, culminating in the final termination of the majority of scheduled football in March 2021.

We have never lost sight of the necessity to protect our staff and football community, the people come first. With vaccination strengthening the ability and likelihood of a more normal future we are hopeful that the new 2021-2022 season will see more football played than the last, always in Cornwall with the caveat of being weather permitting.

The County Office is now fully operational with all staff having returned to normal (Covid-19 compliant) working conditions. We are still limiting visitors to the site whenever possible but the priority being to support our football community to also return to positive activity heading towards the new season.



The Governments furlough scheme has enabled us to protect our workforce but also enabled us through their flexible provisions to remain operational throughout this extended, difficult period of time.

That does not take away the significant impact we have had due to funding cuts from The FA. As reported in September 2020 the The FA were forecasting a £300m deficit over the next four years, £75m per year. This resulted in monumental cuts across the whole football framework and has been confirmed as continuing to affect us detrimentally in our strategic funding for the next three years.

For Cornwall FA we have not only had significant funding cuts directly from The FA but also from additional linked funding streams. We operate strong financial planning and governance policies and procedures but with also having experienced a total business shut down for an extended period of time this additional impact is also significant.

Further staffing changes have taken place over the last 9 months, Liam Mankee left us after a very short spell managing the referee appointments and Corinne Winkworth who predominantly managed the coach education programme and development admin support. We were delighted however at the very end of September to welcome Luke Wilkes and Mark ‘Charlie’ Philpott who jointly manage the referee appointment scheme and have had a successful introduction to a very difficult role.

Our Team:

Dawn Aberdeen	Chief Executive
Daniel Greenough	Football Development Manager
Vicky Fisher	Football Development Officer–Womens, Girls & Disability
Joshua Stockdale	Football Development Officer – Male Participation
George Roberts	Marketing & Communications, Football Development
Richard Pallot	Governance Manager & Senior Safeguarding Lead
Claire Summers-Evans	Designated Safeguarding Officer and Competitions lead
Lee Swabey	Referee Development Officer
Luke Wilkes	Referee Appointments Officer
Mark ‘Charlie’ Philpott	Referee Appointments Officer

These are perhaps the headline areas of the business that each member of staff manages but there are many, many different facets that are encompassed within the roles and the necessity for staff to understand, cover and support each other is paramount in a small office.



What should never be overlooked or criticised (but often can be in the football community) is the outstanding commitment of our supporting network of volunteers.

Our Board of Directors are all volunteers. They are the legal custodians of Cornwall FA Ltd they direct and organise the affairs of the Association and progress a number of strategic objectives committing their time to us free of charge and willingly, but they are still 'legally' responsible as volunteers for the actions taken within the Company. They each have a formal role and area of responsibility but in addition to their formal responsibilities they are also great supporters of our working groups, events and initiatives around the county.

We will this season see two stalwarts of county football step down as directors namely, Brian Baker and Ian Anear. Their contribution to Cornwall FA over many years cannot be underestimated. They have overseen so many changes at all levels and have been great ambassadors both to Cornwall FA and the game in the county and will certainly be missed at board level although not to the game as they all continue with either the FMB or local league involvement.

Our Football Management Board members are also all volunteers. Compiled from all areas of the county and all areas of the game they are key components of support both to the County FA and out to the football community. They are able to act as the conduit of information both into and out of the county office. They work with us and guide on supporting FA initiatives and assist with the delivery into clubs and leagues etc in the county.

There are also various additional staff that work and support Cornwall FA in the community, at development centres and ability festivals, tutors, coaches and volunteers that support the game. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank each and every one as each one has been a part of what makes 'Cornwall FA', and very much a part of our enthusiastic team that are working very hard to raise standards of service and provide opportunities to the football community in Cornwall.

We are also working towards the recognised gold standard of governance 'Code of Governance' in conjunction with The FA which sets out standards of good practice for companies including board composition, development and accountability.

In conjunction with this piece of work on 8th April 2021 we held an EGM for members to discuss and approve changes to our Articles of Association. We are now in the process of restructuring our Board of Directors and recruiting additional new Independent Non-Executive Directors to strengthen our strategic plans and visions for the future.

As part of this process we are currently (at time of writing) recruiting for a Director for Equality & Inclusion to also lead on our Inclusion Advisory Group to ensure we provide inclusive environments for people to participate across our footballing communities. What is 'Inclusion' - Really simply, it means treating people openly, honestly, with respect and according to their needs, so people feel they are engaged and a welcomed part of our footballing community.

The IAG helps to support CFA on the ways to reach people who may feel excluded or find it difficult to access football. This could be on the basis of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability, pregnancy and maternity.



Every IAG is different depending on specific demographics and priorities. Here in Cornwall we recognise that the rural nature of Cornwall sometimes makes it hard for individuals to access football, with very different diversity profiling to that of highly populated inner city areas. The IAG works to raise awareness of inclusion matters, support solutions to break down barriers to participation and help CFA build on some of the important work already taking place across the county around the inclusion agenda.

We currently hold the Foundation Level of the independent Equality Standard – A framework for Sport Foundation level award and are striving to achieve the ‘Preliminary’ level in the near future. We are very keen to ensure that equality is at the heart of everything we do and it is through the commitment of both this team of key volunteers and the staff at the County FA that we are able to undertake, evidence and do this.

Dawn Aberdeen

Chief Executive Officer



Governance Report

Overview

The 2020/21 season has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which forced the early conclusion of The Grassroots Football season at most levels. Plenty of football was played in the early months of the season, under the new COVID Guidelines and regulations, however all football was brought to a halt in January 2021. Several Leagues and competitions however did offer football again from April 2021 and two leagues managed to play to a conclusion. Huge credit should go to those leagues and competitions which facilitated football for their members in such challenging circumstances.

Credit should also go to our clubs who have made every effort to continue to provide football in these challenging times, especially with so many extra regulations and guidelines. Clubs have had to confront many challenges just to provide football and the efforts of the volunteers across Cornwall to do this has been phenomenal.

Technology

There have been lots of challenges around the Whole Game System and the various technology systems of The FA. However over recent months the changes and amendments made to the system, especially player registration have meant a quicker and more efficient system. All admin functions will slowly transition onto the new Platform for Football system over the next 12 months, which should continue to improve our volunteer's experience.

County Cups

The difficult decision was made to cancel all the 2020/21 adult County Cup Competitions. With several cups at different stages the challenges in co-ordinating the competitions with all the additional restrictions meant that we made the decision which was fair to all involved.

We did however manage to run all 8 of the County Youth Cups, with 6 of those cups format being amended to provide additional football for the youth teams. This was a huge success and the feedback received has been extremely positive.

Equality

Cornwall FA renewed the Foundation Level of the Equality Standard for Sport and will now look to move forward with the Preliminary Level in 2021. We hope to appoint a new Chair for our Inclusion Advisory Group, who will also sit on the Board of Directors and drive inclusion work within the County. This is a huge area of work for Cornwall FA over the coming years.

Richard Pallot

Governance Manager



Football Development Manager Report

As we come to the end of the strategy 2018-2021, it feels like a good time to reflect on what has been delivered across Cornwall in the past 3 years. Please see figures in table 1 for results against The FA National Game Strategy Outcomes/Targets. As you can see, we have made great progress not only in achieving most of our set KPI's but more importantly growing in all areas, a great achievement in problematic circumstances.

This season has been challenging for everyone involved with lockdown forcing the closure of football on numerous occasions. Despite this, people across Cornwall where possible have come together to provide football. The development team have been supporting football in any way they can as volunteers have had to adapt to many situations. The team are keen as ever to support football getting to its feet again. There have also been numerous changes from The FA across different departments and as we look forward, we have all been working hard on our reset business strategy and completing the operational planning for the 2021-22 season and beyond.

Joshua Stockdale (Football Development Officer, male), Vicky Fisher (Women and Girls and Disability Football development Officer) and George Roberts (Marketing and Football Development Officer) have worked tirelessly on supporting clubs, teams and leagues attain their CS status via new applications or health checks. This also then links to the safeguarding operating standards ensuring football is as safe as possible for our young players. Because of this, our Charter standard results are some of the best in the Country and we will continue this as Charter Standard moves into the new accreditation framework from September 2021.

We are continuing to support our clubs, teams and leagues with a number of different funding/grant opportunities. We have created a funding opportunities booklet to help support our partners attract and apply for additional funding which is so key to the delivery of any project. The Football Foundation grants have also played a big part. Please see Table 2 for funding overview of the last 20 years in Cornwall. Additionally, we have been successful with a Sports England bid to support recreational football in the female game and are awaiting a decision on an Active Through Football bid, of which, we are the lead organisation within a wider consortium.

I have been supporting various facilities and projects in partnership with the Football Foundation and the FA to help develop and sustain our vital amenities which enable our game to be played. We are still working proactively to deliver our key priority projects as identified in the Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) in partnership with the Football Foundation. This will be a vital piece of work to undertake over the coming years on facility investment which will require key partners including the Council to help shape this.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 meant that all coach education across the country had to stop with immediate effect. Currently our coach education is going through significant changes as The FA look to centralise Coach Education across the Country, our focus will concentrate on coach development provision and support via CPD opportunities whilst also ensuring we have qualified coaches with our youth teams.



Cornwall FA has successfully applied and been granted the license to run the girls 'Advanced Coaching Centre' as part of the FA player pathway for the 2021/22 period and are planning the new season. We have continued to develop and improve our boys and girls player pathway to ensure relevant and suitable competitions and opportunities exist across Cornwall.

Looking ahead to next season and delivering on our new strategy 2021-24, we must ensure that in these still uncertain times we support football back to its feet as we will not know the true impact of Covid, lockdown and restrictions until affiliation is complete.

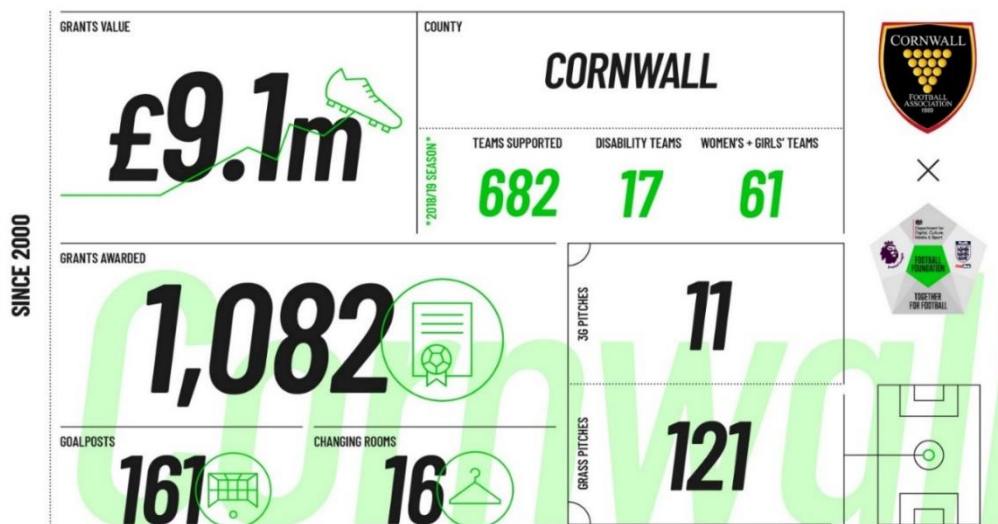
Daniel Greenough

Football Development Manager

Table 1



Table 2



Designated Safeguarding Officer's Report

Despite a very challenging season for everyone involved in grassroots football I would like to personally thank our wonderful volunteers who have met every Covid condition set by the Government and FA, including writing detailed risk assessments to allow children and young people to play football safely.

Safeguarding has been highlighted more than ever this year mainly due to the Sheldon Report into non recent sex abuse cases, along with the BBC documentary 'Football's Darkest Secret'. Whilst it told the story of the horrific abuse children suffered by those in a position of trust, I would like to take this opportunity to promote how far safeguarding has progressed and confirm that Cornwall FA take the Safeguarding of all children and young people playing football in Cornwall very seriously. We adhere to all of the safeguarding policies and procedures set by the FA and the restrictions and checks that are in place for anyone looking to work with children help towards putting barriers in the way of those individuals who might wish to harm our children.

Safeguarding Operating Standard

We are pleased to announce that Cornwall FA have met and passed all the conditions of the Safeguarding Operating Standard. Every two years County FA's undergo a rigorous assessment of our safeguarding procedures and we need to pass and provide evidence for each of the six criteria set out below:

1. Governance and Leadership
2. Operational Delivery
3. Listening to the Voice of and Supporting Under 18's
4. Football Disciplinary
5. Case Management
6. Compliance and monitoring



16/17 years old in Open Aged Football

We are pleased that the FA have incorporated the guidance originally created in Cornwall regarding safeguarding all 16- and 17-year olds playing in Open Aged Football. There will be a big push next season for Clubs to ensure that their young players are protected and all coaches/managers and physios working with these players will need to undertake an FA DBS check. Cornwall FA will also proactively work with leagues to recruit a Safeguarding Advocate to promote safeguarding to their member clubs.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS IN FOOTBALL

YOUR RIGHTS:

- You have the right to feel safe on and offline;
- You have the right to healthy relationships and appropriate boundaries;
- You have the right not to be bullied, harassed or intimidated;
- You have the right not to feel uncomfortable or unsafe;
- You have the right not to be discriminated against because of your age, gender, gender reassignment, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, faith, ability or disability, pregnancy and maternity.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Tell an adult you trust at home, school or college or at football;
- E-mail safeguarding@TheFA.com, or speak to your Designated Safeguarding Officer;
- Contact the NSPCC for free **0808 800 5000** or Chidline **0800 1111** or visit their website for more information;
- If someone is in immediate danger dial 999 to speak to the Police;
- Set up privacy settings for your online profiles;
- Report inappropriate online behaviour to CEOP.

HELPFUL ORGS:

NSPCC: [nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse)
Chidline: [chidline.org.uk](https://www.chidline.org.uk) Helpline: **0808 800 5000**
CEOP: [ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting](https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting)
ThinkUknow: [thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus)
ChildNet: [childnet.com/young-people/secondary](https://www.childnet.com/young-people/secondary)
Samaritans: [samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you)
Helpline is open 24 hrs a day: **0116 123**
Stonewall: [stonewall.org.uk/help-advice](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice)
Stonewall Youth: [youngstonewall.org.uk](https://www.youngstonewall.org.uk)
YoungMinds: [youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)
DisrespectNoBody: [disrespectnobody.co.uk](https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk)

Safeguarding Site Visits

Cornwall FA regularly undertake unannounced safeguarding site visits to various clubs during their training or matches. The aim of these visits is to ensure that those adults working with children are registered against the relevant team on the Whole Game System, that they have an in date FA DBS check and have the relevant safeguarding qualification and knowledge to work with children. Due to the pandemic our visits were disrupted, however we did arrange some desktop reviews of clubs along with a few online meetings with some of our clubs' committees and I would like to thank them for their time. We look forward to restarting our site visits in the 2021-22 season and meeting the coaches, volunteers, parents and the players.

Respect

Thank you to those clubs and leagues who continue to proactively encourage good behaviour from their coaches, players and spectators creating a better environment for everyone during match days. Unfortunately, poor behaviour continues to blight the youth game with reports mainly of poor behaviour from coaches and spectators.

Research shows that 90% of players perform better with positive encouragement. Being positive about a young person's actions or behaviours has a much better effect on their development, being negative towards them can have a real detrimental impact. Cornwall FA will continue to work with our youth leagues to monitor poor behaviour and recognise patterns of poor behaviour within clubs and teams. We will look to hold a Respect Weekend in the near future in conjunction with all the youth leagues in Cornwall to promote the 'We only do Positive' message.



Claire Summers-Evans

Designated Safeguarding Officer



Referee Development Officer Report

Referees

Level 3 to 7 Parented to Cornwall- 189

Trainee and Youth Parented to Cornwall – 12

Associate Referees - 43

Referee Developers - 4

Total- 248

New Referee Courses

The FA have now developed the new referee course which consists of an online section and a face to face section. We now have 3 newly qualified referee developers whose role will be to lead the training of the new referees across the county. Due to Covid restrictions and the change in the referee course we have not been able to offer any new courses since the last report, we have however got 3 courses planned in June/July across the county.

During the lockdown period we ran 3 online stand-in referee workshops targeted at people interested in becoming referees and parents/coaches who would act as a stand in referee when one wasn't appointed. We had 19 people attend and we are looking to encourage these to take the full referee course now we can offer one.

Promoted in 2021

We have had 11 county promotions for season 2020/21, all 9 FA promotions and 8 county promotions were rolled over to Season 2021/22 due to the lack of games and observations because of the reduced amount of football played in Season 20/21.

We had 2 of our county observers being promoted to Supply League observers during Season 2020/21 and we will be supporting 2 more of our county observers apply for promotion during Season 2021/22.

Promotion candidates 2021-22

We have had 30 referees apply for promotion for Season 2021/21.

Level 7 to 6 x 4

Level 6 to 5 x 8

Level 7 to 5 x 3

Level 6 to 4 x 3

Level 5 to 4 x 12



We are very happy to have so many referees apply for promotion but, it will be a big task for us to be able to get every referee observed at least 3 times. We feel confident that we will be able to achieve this due to the increased number of observers we now have and the support from our referee mentors and developers as well as the fantastic leadership of Luke Wilkes in his role as Observer coordinator.

Referee Development

Much of our referee development this season has been done online due to Covid restrictions. This has not stopped us from working and supporting our referees though. We have run 16 online CPD events for all referees covering several topics. We have had the support of Farai Hallam, Referee Manager for The FA, Richard Mellin a PGMOL observer and Brett Huxtable a Level 1 referee during these events.

We have run 1 event for U18 referees to provide them with the support during their first season as a referee.

We have run 2 events for our referee mentors and referee developers who are now able to support our CFA 'Support' Groups moving forward.

We have continued to support our referees applying for promotion by having regular updates and 3 online CPD sessions.

We had referees observed on 44 games and mentored on 11 games during Season 2020/21, we are planning on increasing this number for Season 2021/22 due to the new referee 'support' groups and the relaxation of Covid restrictions.

Lockdown gave us a good opportunity to review the 'support' group we had in place this season and to plan how we can develop them further to best support our referees. We now have a clear pathway in place for our referees from when they first attend a referee course up to Level 3 and beyond. We have 3 'support' groups:

Cornwall FA 'Development' Group (*attends group for 1 or 2 Seasons*)

All newly qualified referees will join our 'Development' group to provide quarterly online support and training events to share experiences. There will be a group of Referee Mentors who will support these referees and attend games to provide feedback to each referee. RAO will appoint referees in this group to Youth or Flexi League games and will provide a pathway into senior football when 16 and ready.

Cornwall FA 'Progression' Group

Referees who wish to apply for promotion (7-6, 6-5 or 5-4) will join our 'Progression' group. They will attend monthly online training events and 2 face to face training events throughout the season. Each referee will be assigned a Referee Developer whose role is to work with each referee before and after games. This will provide a more tailored development support for each referee to enable them to achieve their promotion targets.

Cornwall FA 'Advanced' Group

The 'Advanced' group is for referees who are Level 4 or above. All referees will be able to attend quarterly online training events as well as 2 face to face training events. Each referee will have the offer of a referee developer whose role will be as a point of contact



for the referee to discuss any game situations or any other situations that could arise as a referee.

National FA Core Program

During Season 2020/21 we had 7 referees who were nominated and selected for the National FA CORE program and have done Cornwall FA proud with their professionalism and performances during the season. Due to Covid and the lack of opportunities to referee for those referees who are currently in FA CORE, The FA have made the decision to retain all referees from Season 2020/21 for Season 2021/22 and will be unlikely to accept any new nominations for Season 2021/22.

For the start of Season 2020/21 Simon Long was selected to become a Referee Developer as part of the National FA CORE program which is a great achievement for Simon and Cornwall FA. Simon will continue this role in Season 2021/22 helping to provide support on behalf of The FA to referees in Devon and Cornwall.

Lee Swabey

Referee Development Officer

