

# DEVON FA AGM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

EXECUTIVE REPORT  
SATURDAY 17TH JUNE 2023



# AGENDA

1. **Presidents Welcome**
2. **Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 9th June 2022**
3. **Submit the Associations Chair of Directors Report**
4. **Submit the Associations Leader of Council Report**
5. **Submit Statement of Accounts for 12 months ending 31st December 2022  
(appendix A)**
6. **Submit 2023 - 2024 Devon FA Rules (County Cups) (Appendix B)**
7. **Election of President and Vice President**

The following have been nominated according to rule:-

President - M. Benney

Vice President - D. Blanchford

8. **Date of next AGM – Saturday 15th June 2024**

## **Questions:**

Clubs/Leagues/Competitions wishing to raise questions at the Annual General Meeting.

Should you have any questions relating to those items listed on the agenda they must be submitted to the the CEO 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting.



# LEADER OF COUNCIL REPORT

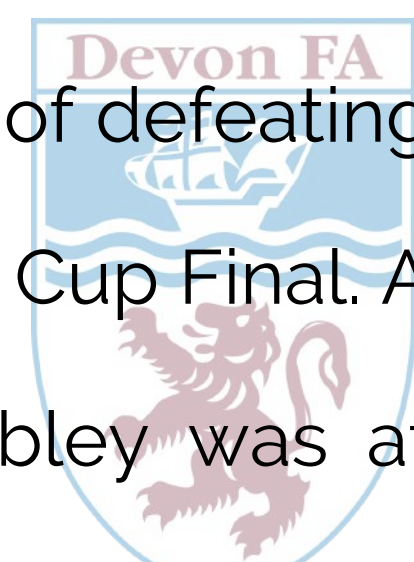
Another year has passed and it is time to reflect on an exciting year of Football.

On the international front our National Mens team could not emulate the Women's exploits of the summer and with the now usual measures of expectation and disappointment they bowed out to France in the quarter finals of our first ever winter World Cup. There's always the next one in 2026!

The Professional game however has proven to be far more successful especially for our Devon based teams.

Congratulations to Plymouth Argyle the new Champions of League One, I'm sure we all wish them well in the Championship next year. Exeter City consolidated their place in their first season in League One with a credible 14th position. We look forward to City continuing on their upward trajectory. On the downside we have lost Torquay United who were relegated to National League South.

In the Women's game success continues at pace. Torquay United Women won promotion to FA Women's National League, Plymouth Argyle Women maintained Tier 3 status in the Women's League and Exeter City Women missed out on promotion to Tier 3 on goal difference. Exeter City had the consolation of defeating their local rivals Argyle in a thrilling game at Coach Road in the Premier Cup Final. A testimony to the traction gained in Women's football, is that Wembley was at capacity for the first time for a Women's FA Cup Final, with over 77,390 attending.



The future also looks bright with the launch of a new Devon Girls Emerging Talent Centre with three providers, Devon FA, Argyle Community Trust and Exeter City Community Trust delivering centres across the County.

Since the start of this season, we have had fantastic individual achievements for a number of players from Devon, with 8 players being selected to represent their Countries at various levels, and a further 11 players being selected for various talent programmes.

Under the leadership of our own Devon FA staff member Ashley Harris the disability game in Devon is thriving, with participation in the County (958 players) the highest per head of population in the Country. If you have never attended a tournament, please do! The excitement and enjoyment of the participants makes you realise how wonderful the game of football can be. Keep up the great work Ashley and all the volunteers involved in the game.

Grassroots football has grown in the number of players registered. There are currently 36,604 players registered across Devon, 31,572 males up from 26,150 from June 2022, 4,074 females up from 3,346 in June 2022. I think these statistics will provide a great discussion point on the future of the game, as getting all these players on the pitch on a Saturday or Sunday is proving problematic for some of our local Leagues. For many years our product (football) has attracted its participants without much thought or change. We now have many other attractions impinging on our game, and I look forward to your thoughts on what we can implement to reverse the decline in participation in some of our Leagues.



At Devon FA the Football Development team has welcomed Lorraine Tilley, Dan Dixon and Nick Garlick to support safeguarding, Clubs & Leagues and facilities respectively.

A big thank you to Mark Buley and Jason Haywood and their team for providing a great experience for the teams taking part in our County Cup Finals, it is great to see so many of our 'Life Members' involved. The feedback from the team's taking part so far has been fantastic.

A special thanks to the army of volunteers across our county for their commitment and dedication, they are the 'life blood' of grassroots football.

Finally, to support grassroots football £40,000 was invested into 53 cubs through the DCFA Community Fund.

## **Dave Parish**

Leader of Council



# CHAIR OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Well, what a first year it has been as Chair of Devon County FA.

Not long after my taking up this position, Paul Morrison, our long standing and well respected Chief Executive handed in his notice, with his intention to finally hang up his boots from this AGM. That then started the process of finding a replacement – a task which I knew would be difficult, as Paul will be a hard act to follow, but culminated in the appointment of Chris French as his successor. Chris is known to us all already and will bring a new dynamic to the organisation to continue to press on to make DCFA a leading light in the football community – not only in Devon, but across the wider footballing family. Chris has his own ideas as to how we should move forward, and these will start to appear over the next few months.

It is pleasing to note that after many months of working on our Code of Governance, we finally passed the finishing line as being fully compliant – only the tenth County FA in the country so to do. This means that we now meet the standards for all professional governing bodies, set by Sport England, and ensures that what we do is done correctly; to an even, yet exacting standard; and with transparency – something which some sporting organisations have often been accused of avoiding.



It's important to me that whilst there was no incentive for achieving this award, we needed to follow these standards – and it is pleasing to note that whilst we now have to work to achieve compliance with version 2 of the standards by the end of this forthcoming season, there is a small financial incentive to do this. Special thanks must go to Paul, and our former Chairman Bernard, for initially pushing this forward.

Whilst on the subject of awards, I am delighted to write that only this week, we have been informed that we have been awarded the Equality Standard for Sport Preliminary Level – this is a massive recognition for the work that the whole organisation has an understanding of, and works towards, ensuring that the game is available to all.

With one of the highest, if not the highest, levels of engagement anywhere in England, this very much shows that our desire to encourage all to play the game is embedded across our organisation. However, special thanks must go to Ashley Harris and Jen Dixon, Chair of our Inclusion Advisory Board who is the driving force behind this.

Over the past year, we have been fortunate enough to have the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, David Fursdon, (the King's representative in the County) agree to be our Patron. Having had several conversations with him since, it is clear that he wants to be more than just a name on the top of our letter head – as he wants to actively engage with the work we do across the County so as to ensure that football can be at the heart of our wide and diverse population.



As we all know, some of the funds we raise via our Player Registration Scheme is re-invested into the footballing community – over 50 projects and clubs were rewarded in this way, with £40,000 given out – and we are just about to start the next round of applications in time for the start of next season. To me, this shows that Devon's footballing community wants to not only support itself, but also improve the overall quality of its offering.

It would be wrong of me to not congratulate Plymouth Argyle on their promotion to the Championship – again highlighting Devon, and helping to spread the word that the footballing world does not stop at Bristol. I wish them, and all clubs, well for the forthcoming season.

Finally, the changes that we have seen in the organisation over the past 12 months, particularly with the uncertainty surrounding the appointment of a new Chief Executive, will always be unsettling for the organisation as a whole. On behalf of myself, and the Board of Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for the excellent work they do in supporting everyone involved in the game – I know it is much appreciated.

**John Street**

Chair of Directors



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

I would like to start my report by saying how proud I am to be leading the County FA as your Chief Executive Officer following my appointment at the start of April this year. I have been with the County for the past 13 years and started my career in football development at Plymstock School back in 2008 when I was the lead officer on their new Football Foundation funded 3G facility. Across the past 13 years I have held four different roles within the county and for the past 10 years I have been Paul's number 2 as the County Development Manager and then to most recently Chief Operating Officer.

Paul is leaving the County after 17 years, his impact over these years has enabled the County to go from strength to strength. His leadership has been invaluable to all members of staff and the whole of Devon Football. On a personal note Paul has been more than my boss over our time together and I thank him for all his support, mentoring and friendship and wish him and Terri all the best for the future.

As we enter the final year of our current three year business strategy we will continue to deliver against our six strategic priorities to unite and serve Devon football to provide an inclusive and enjoyable experience for all.



But we also look to begin consulting with the game across Devon and all stakeholders as we look to develop a 10-year vision for the game in the County and how future business strategies will deliver this. Over the next 12 months myself and our team we will be engaging with all our stakeholders on how we can work together to improve and strengthen the game across all areas in Devon.

We have an excellent workforce at the County FA from our Directors, Council members and staff and I am looking forward to adding to this team over the coming months as we continue to build the workforce to deliver a new vision for Devon Football.

I would like to finish by saying thank you to all the grassroots volunteers across the County that work tirelessly every week delivering football across the various formats as without them football would not be possible.

## **Chris French**

Chief Executive Officer



# RETIRING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

After 17 years, I've had my "Last Dance" and what a lovely time I have had whilst working at the Devon County FA.

I'm not going to name names as there have been so many people who I've had the privilege of working with who are now friends, colleagues and wonderful people who commit their lives to help us all to enjoy the game of football in Devon.

I look back over my time in Football and in 1994, when I worked for Leicestershire & Rutland FA the staff structure then was just the two of us and two-part timers and thankfully lots of volunteers running and administering football in Leicester.

Now as I leave Devon FA, we have over 20 staff, all working full-time and doing their part for everyone in Devon to enjoy football, how the world has changed in nearly 30 years.

Devon FA has given me wonderful memories, one was the time in March 2020, when we were given the keys to our new Artificial 3G pitch only for the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, to say that everybody "should stay at home" because of Covid. There is a picture of me and Roger, our Groundsman, opening the pitch and then taking penalties with each other, nobody else at the time was allowed on the complex for the next three months.



I'm proud to say that Devon FA is a very well-respected County Association, thanked many times by The Football Association for what we do, and that is credit to the wonderful staff that I have been allowed to manage and the terrific support from my Board of Directors.

Regrets, do I have any? Yes only one and that is I wished we built the Artificial 3G pitch five or ten years earlier as that one project has given so many people the wonderful opportunity of playing football at the lovely Coach Road complex. I would encourage we campaign the FA, so we can more of these types of these facilities everywhere in Devon.

I wish Chris French, all the best in his new role, and with the Directors, Council, Staff and our wonderful football family of volunteers, he will fly the Devon flag very high in the world of football.

Finally, I would love to thank my lovely wife, Terri, who might be climbing the walls after a few months of me being retired for all her patience, help and support during our time here at Devon FA. It's great to say that my kids Max, Alex and Laura Beth have all enjoyed being involved with Devon FA over the past 17 years in some shape or form.



I do hope you all take care, enjoy your football and if you see me at the bar we can laugh, debate, and enjoy having a good old chat about local football.

Farewell and I hope I will see you all soon

**Paul Morrison**

Chief Executive Officer



# FINANCE REPORT

The financial accounts for the year ending 31st December 2022 accompany this report.

Firstly I would like to thank Dawn Rainbow our Devon FA Finance Officer who has overseen the move from the Sage bookkeeping system to Xero which has enabled the production of the monthly management accounts to be informative to the Board of Directors.

The county finds itself in a healthy financial position having moved cash funds into Fixed Assets over the last two years with its investment in the 3G pitch and upgrades to the Corner Flag Clubhouse. It is anticipated this will see the replacement of the cash funds over the next 5 - 6 years which will see further investment in the regional areas of the county.

The past twelve months has seen us move out of the restrictions endured under Covid. Turnover has returned to normal levels and a larger contribution has been received from Property Management.

However it is important to remember £30,000 each year of that contribution needs to be set aside in the sinking fund for the replacement of 3G carpet in the future.



The community fund has been a great help to all clubs and it is anticipated the amounts ploughed back into grass roots football will rise going forward and help the clubs to invest in their club's future.

I would also like to praise the work done by the board members and staff who have worked hard to achieve the Code of Governance award. This will undoubtedly secure FA funding in the short term which can be used to sustain and generate football in the county.

**Chris Cole**

Finance Director



# FA CODE OF GOVERNANCE

Devon County FA evidenced full compliance with the regional Code of Governance which sets a higher precedent than the current gold standard for sport and aims to provide support and guidance to those running the grassroots game up and down the country.

In January 2020, The FA became the first national governing body in English sport to introduce a regional Code of Governance, with a number of other sports now following the model which has been endorsed by Sport England. The Code itself represents a 'Gold Standard' of governance, made up of 65 requirements based on Sport England and UK Sport's Code for Sports Governance.

The requirements within the code means each County FA can assess their current practices against the highest standard of corporate governance in football, supporting their development and ensuring they have the structures, functional operations and decision-making processes in place to offer the best possible service to the game at a local level. The code also includes provisions for gender diversity, ethnic diversity and youth representation across the County FA network.



All 50 CFAs have self-assessed against the Code and are committed to improving their governance, with Devon County FA becoming the tenth County to be awarded with the County FA Code of Compliance logo.



**Above - a photograph of Devon FA's Board of Directors.**

From right to left:

Top row - Max Willey, Jen Dixon, Chris French, Emma Reed, Chris Cole

Bottom row - Bill Wilson, Dave Parish, John Street, Paul Morrison, Tom Sampson, Rod Hawker.



# EQUALITY STANDARD FOR SPORT

In May 2023, Devon County FA were awarded the Preliminary Level of the Equality Standard for Sport from the FA.

The National Standard for Equality is a nationally recognised framework that assists County Football Associations with embedding equality at the highest level of their organisation, and communicating and sharing that commitment with its staff and partners.

It also provides a framework to review how a County FA is organised around equality in relation to its service delivery, workforce, policies, procedures and legal compliance against the backdrop of the FA's National Game Strategy.

To find out more about the Equality Standard for Sport, head to the [Equality in Sport website](#).



# DEVON FA COMMUNITY FUND

As part of our strategy for football in Devon, we have committed to reinvesting £240,000 back into the game over three years. To honour this commitment, we launched our new Devon County FA Community Fund in late 2022 which will provide financial support to clubs within the Devon FA Player Membership Scheme to enhance their facilities, create new opportunities and raise standards.

The Fund replaced the previously successful Devon FA DIY Programme, which invested £120,000 for clubs to improve their grounds.

Following feedback from clubs in Devon, we developed this new scheme to ensure every grassroots club in the county can apply for a form of support for their club.

The Devon FA Community Fund will look to invest £40,000 during 2023 across eight areas of the game:

- Materials for work to take place on improving your grounds, changing rooms or pavilions,
- Storage units or containers
- Partnership funding towards applications to the Football Foundation for replacement or new goal posts



- Line Marking Equipment
- New female or disability teams for existing affiliated clubs
- New male teams for the 2022 – 23 season for existing affiliated clubs
- Respect package for grounds
- League programmes - new for 2023

The programme was a huge success supporting over 50 clubs across Devon and a new application window will open in 2023.



# SAFEGUARDING

Throughout the 2022/23 season we have continued to embed safeguarding across the business and football in Devon. Lorraine Tilley started her role as a full time Designated Safeguarding Officer at the start of the season and has delivered a wide reaching and informative programme for everyone in Devon;

- Visited 26 youth clubs as part of our safeguarding monitoring visits throughout the season.
- Four Club Welfare Officers meetings held face to face/online over the season.
- Two League Welfare Officer's meetings held online.
- Supported the FA's Play Safe weekend, handing out nearly 500 captain's armbands to youth clubs. Promoting the Safeguarding for Parents/carers course.
- Supported the FA's Anti Bullying Week, by sending out information and support to youth clubs to share with their players.
- Supported the FA's Safer Internet campaign, by sending out information and support to youth clubs to share with their players.
- Introduced Young Referees safeguarding cards to 65 young referees in the Pioneer League. This is to be rolled out to all Young Referees in the County next season.
- Youth survey published in September 2022, with 207 responses. NSPPC commented on how good the response was from our youth.



- Youth Hub established in South Devon, so youth involved in grassroots football can have their say and develop their leadership skills. North Devon Hub to meet in June.
- Presentation from former professional and England player Paul Stewart to Club Welfare Officers. Paul spoke about the sexual and mental abuse he received from his grassroots coach from the age of 10 and how this has affected his whole life. <https://paulstewartofficial.com/>
- Introduction of monthly meetings between safeguarding, discipline, referee, and respect officers.
- Monthly 7 Minute Briefing sent out to Youth Club Committees, looking at various issues such as supporting youth referees.
- Four Safeguarding drop-in session ran around the County, to support all clubs with the new Safeguarding Affiliation Compliance.

All of the above played a key role in ensuring the County FA met the Safeguarding Operating Standard (Safeguarding 365) assessed by the NSPCC.



In partnership with

**NSPCC**



# GIRLS EMERGING TALENT CENTRE

The FA's change to the Girls' Talent Pathway last year saw us transition from a Girls' Advanced Coaching Centre into the new Girls' Emerging Talent Centre (ETC) programme. In reality for us, this has been a great change and has meant an upscale on what we are able to deliver with more FA funding (through the Premier League's support) and better flexibility in the programme.

We've also been able to support the addition of two further ETC licenses in the County which has massively helped us to expand the opportunity for girls to be involved in the programme. In addition to our own u12, u14 and u16 age group, the County now also have Argyle Community Trust running u10, u11 & u12 age groups and Exeter City Community Trust running u10 in Exeter and u10 & u12 age groups in North Devon. This means there are somewhere around 160-180 girls' now accessing the Girls' Talent Pathway through the ETC programme, up from around 60 the year before.

For our programme specifically, we have had a brilliant season. Some excellent new additions to the staffing team have slotted in seamlessly and we have had some incredible success of players progressing to regional and national level.



**GIRLS' EMERGING  
TALENT CENTRE**  
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL



This includes players being selected for England u16, Wales u16 and Rep of Ireland u16 as well as 3 players being selected for the England/FA National Talent Camp. In addition we have had 2 goalkeepers selected to be part of the England/FA National Goalkeeper camp and several more players who caught the eye at regional events and have been monitored by the FA Talent Technical Coaching team across the season.



# DEVON SCHOOLS FA - GIRLS' TEAMS

For the first time, we entered teams into the English Schools FA competition structure at the u14 girls' and u16 girls' age groups, working hand-in-hand with the squads from our Emerging Talent Centre. This opportunity has added a competition element to what we offer and enabled the most talented girls in the County to represent Devon in regional and national competitions.

Competition wise, our u16 girls reached the semi-final of the South West Counties Schools FA Cup, where we were beaten 2-0 by eventual champions Oxfordshire FA. The u16's were also excellent in the National ESFA cup where we were again beaten at the semi-final stage in heart-breaking fashion, conceding a last minute equaliser and then losing in extra time to Kent.

The u14 squad reached the quarter finals of the ESFA National Cup, losing 3-2 to a very strong Gloucestershire side who went all the way to the final stage. In the South West Counties, the u14's went all the way to the final where we were once again beaten by Gloucestershire in one of the most competitive and tightly contested games of the season.



# COUNTY CUP

# WINNERS 2022-23

## **Great British Confectionery Devon Girls Under 12 Cup**

Winners - Central Youth

Runners Up - Stoke Hill Juniors

## **Great British Confectionery Devon Girls Under 14 Cup**

Winners - Newton Fire

Runners Up - Drake FC Youth

## **Great British Confectionery Devon Girls Under 16 Cup**

Winners - Signal Box Youth

Runners Up - Plympton Girls

## **Robson Financial Devon U12 Youth Cup**

Winners - Braunton Wanderers Youth

Runners Up - Ocean City Youth

## **Scott Richards Solicitors Devon U13 Youth Cup**

Winners - Watts Blake Bearne Youth

Runners Up - Marine Academy Plymouth Junior

## **Scott Richards Solicitors Devon U14 Youth Cup**

Winners - Marine Academy Plymouth Junior

Runners Up - Ocean City Youth

## **Graddon Vending Devon U15 Youth Cup**

Winners - Horrabridge Rangers Juniors

Runners Up - Culm Valley Youth

## **Wotton Printers Devon U16 Youth Cup**

Winners - Dawlish United Youth

Runners Up - Elburton Villa Juniors

## **Wotton Printers Devon U18 Youth Cup**

Winners - Plymouth Parkway Youth

Runners Up - Tiverton Town



**Wotton Printers**

**Graddons**  
Your Vending Partners

**robson** financial

# COUNTY CUP

# WINNERS 2022-23

## **TheClickHub Devon Women's Premier Cup**

Winners - Exeter City Women

Runners Up - Plymouth Argyle Women

## **Graddon Vending Devon Women's Senior Cup**

Winners - Exeter City Women 2nds

Runners Up - Juventus Women

## **Bayside Graphics St Luke's Challenge Bowl**

Winners - Tiverton Town

Runners Up - Willand Rovers

## **Sportslighting Devon Premier Cup**

Mount Gould vs Newtown

To be played on Saturday 17th June, at Coach Road

## **Robert Williams Estate Agents Devon Senior Cup**

Winners - University of Exeter 3rds

Runners Up - Newton St Cyres

## **A&S Paving Devon Intermediate Cup**

Winners - Bovey Tracey 2nds

Runners Up - Bickleigh

## **Thomas Westcott Devon Midweek Cup**

Winners - Plymouth Argyle FITC

Runners Up - Plymouth University Students Union

## **Stitch3Sixty Devon Sunday Senior Cup**

Winners - Queen & Constitution

Runners Up - Tamar View

## **Stitch3Sixty Devon Sunday Supplementary Cup**

Winners - Plympton Athletic Sunday

Runners Up - Plymouth Marjon Sunday



**Robert Williams**



**Thomas Westcott**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

# COUNTY CUP WINNERS 2022-23

## **Scott Richards Solicitors Devon Veterans Cup**

Winners - Elburton Villa Veterans

Runners Up - Lakeside Athletic Veterans

## **Allwood Timber Devon Ability Counts Finals**

To be played on Sunday 11th June, at Coach Road.

## **Devon Walking Football Cup Final**

To be played on Friday 16th June, at Coach Road.

A huge thank you to all of our County Cup sponsors for season 2022-23.





Enhancing lives through football in Devon