

Essex County Football Association Annual Report (2020/21)





Chief Executive's Report

The impact of Covid-19 continued to provide an exceptionally challenging period for grassroots football in Essex, and for wider society.

As we entered the summer period of July 2020, grassroots football clubs, volunteers and leagues were working hard to look at the conclusion of the 2019/20 season, as well as adapting and managing a wide array of Covid-19 guidance, allowing football to begin to return ahead of the 2020/21 season.

The determination and commitment the grassroots workforce demonstrated to adapt to the guidance and continue to provide opportunities for local communities to participate in the game, at what was a particularly difficult period of overarching rules and guidance from the Government, was tremendous.

It highlighted the important role football was playing to give young people and adults alike an opportunity for healthy activity. Credit, rightly, goes to everyone behind the scenes at club and league committee level involved in making that happen, as well as the coaches, volunteers, parents, referees and stakeholders.

It is also important to again acknowledge the devastating impact the pandemic continued to have, and our thoughts continued to be with everyone who had been affected by it. We acknowledge the NHS staff and key workers throughout this period, and the tremendous work they undertook.

Entering into the 2020/21 season, we had had to take some very difficult decisions to help balance the financial position of the organisation. It was well-documented that Covid-19 had a significant blow on The FA's finances, where it was disclosed The FA planned for £300million of losses up to 2024. This, naturally, had an impact on the funding distributed down to County FAs.

It led to many changes taking place centrally at The FA, with some key decisions taken in regard to how future services would operate, and a move to more virtual and online delivery models for aspects such as coach education.

There was a significant transition during the season, but the overriding focus was to support all the existing learners who had their courses disrupted in early 2020 due to Covid-19, and to ensure they could complete their learning journey.

However, the financial position of the association served it well during this period and allowed the Essex County FA to continue to focus on serving its members and trying to support the many thousands of volunteers and players across the game to come back to football when it was able to return.

This was demonstrated with the decision to offer free affiliation, along with a 100% contribution for public liability insurance and 50% towards personal accident insurance for the 2020/21 season for our members.





Progress also continued in the delivery of our 'Moving Forward Strategy 2018-21' and, at the heart of our strategy, was our vision of: **"Creating a united grassroots football environment which delivers football opportunity For All."**

At the end of June 2021, we had reached the end of that three-year strategic plan. What was achieved during this period, given the heavily-disrupted Covid seasons of 2019/20 and 2020/21, gave a strong foundation to build upon towards 2024. Our objectives were set out in four strategic pillars:

Engagement: *'To develop new and enhance existing offers to engage all stakeholders and formats of the game by putting the participants' needs at the heart of the game'*

Engagement with our stakeholders, and the ability to grow and utilise modern communication platforms to engage with more participants, has been vital. During this period we have grown our Twitter following to more than 30,000, making the Essex County FA the most followed County FA in the country.

As well as this, Essex regularly achieved the most engagements in the country in the FA National Grassroots Survey in successive years which, in turn, allowed us to listen to the feedback and adapt services to meet the needs of stakeholders.

Our network of clubs and leagues continue to be critical stakeholders in the process of engagement and, through our award-winning Club and League Participation Reviews, we have been able to utilise data and insight to help inform clubs and leagues with their own decision-making to help engage more participants.

By the end of the 2020/21 season, this had contributed to an 8% increase in the number of teams playing football, with more than 4,700 sides playing across Essex.

Corporate Governance: *'To be an inclusive, accountable and transparent decision-making organisation to develop, safeguard and support football'*

Our work in this pillar focused on our progress towards achieving Tier 3 status of Sport England's Code of Governance and, more recently, The FA's Code of Governance for County FAs (which you can see at <http://bit.ly/CFACOG>).

Keep your child's football info in one safe place

.....

Linked to your account so you know your child's game

.....

Updates from your club, league, County FA and The FA, including safeguarding

.....

No need to re-register your child's details if they move club

.....

Access to all of the benefits of the Matchday app and Full Time

.....

Registering your child with your email in Whole Game allows you to access The FA Matchday app, which has loads of great benefits including

.....

Keep all your child's football info in one easy to access place

.....

Instantly receive key messages from your child's manager

.....

Stay cash-free on matchday and pay your child's club fees via PayPal

.....

Completely free of charge to use

This work underpins all aspects of the organisation, and changes to the Essex County FA 'Articles of the Association' have seen the board increase in size from five directors to nine. There is also a new open application process in place for Independent Non-Executive Directors (INEDS) to come directly onto the board, helping to enhance skills, knowledge and experience at this level.

This allows for more business skills to be married with the football knowledge within the organisation, maximising the impact of the County FA and helping to ensure good governance practices are in place.

This led to three new INEDS coming onto the board, as well as the reinvigoration of our Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG), with new members and a new IAG Chair, linking directly into the Essex County FA Board of Directors as an INED, ensuring equality and inclusion matters are represented at the highest levels of decision-making.

Significant progress was also made on our application for Intermediate Status of the Equality Standard, which was submitted in June 2021. Essex became one of only two County FAs in the country to achieve Intermediate Status.

Business: *'To develop a sustainable business model that promotes innovation and continuous improvement, attracting inward investment'*

The Covid-19 pandemic, and cuts in FA funding, have placed pressure on the income streams of the business but, despite this, the business has remained in a very strong and secure position. We continue to undertake prudent financial management and budget-planning across all our financial investments whilst maintaining high levels of service towards grassroots football.

We have also developed strong partnerships with outside organisations which have helped to drive inward investment, both into the Essex County FA, but also into grassroots football.

The securing of funding from the Football Foundation towards the development of the FA Parklife Scheme at Parsloes Park, in partnership with the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham, has led to circa £8 million of investment allocation into new football facilities in the borough.





Operations: *'To be the strategic lead for football in Essex'*

Each department has a specific, department-focused strategy which drives the day-to-day and season-by-season activity of the department. The focus across each department has been to use data and insight to drive decision-making. Our growth since 2018 in specific areas has been significant despite the Covid-19 impact going into the 2021/22 season:

- * the male pathway has had an 8% growth in youth football, 3% in open-age, 7% in veterans' football and a 26% growth in Walking Football
- * the female pathway had a growth of 56% in youth football and 19% in open-age, as well as more than 80 Wildcats centres being delivered across the county
- * the disability pathway had a 12% growth in youth and 5% in open-age, however the growth slowed in 2020/21 as this particularly-vulnerable group battled with the Covid-19 restrictions and necessary precautions
- * at the end of the 2020/21 season, the number of referees stood at 1,232 and, within that, included an increase in referees from ethnically diverse communities and the number of female referees
- * our Coach Education Department delivered a high-quality programme, engaging more than 2,000 learners on an annual basis prior to the FA changes, transitioning successfully to the new model of delivery developing our "On the Pitch", "Your Club", and "In Focus" programmes to support the ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of coaches
- * our Safeguarding Department continued to ensure a safe environment for grassroots football as we continued to achieve the FA Safeguarding Operating Standard
- * our Governance Department continued to support the rollout of technology through player registration, where we are now at almost 100% player registration coverage, as well as supporting the game through the discipline process, with over 13,000 discipline cases administered.

These represent an example of some of the progress made, but there is more detail contained within this report highlighting the excellent work which has taken place within each department.

Following the conclusion of the 2020/21 season, the Essex County FA also undertook a strategic review of the progress made and updated its business plan, launching the new Moving Forward 2024 Strategy, which sets out all of the ambitious targets and programmes the organisation will be working towards. This can be found at www.essexfa.com/about/strategy.

THE BOARD

Andrew Chaplin became the Chairman in July 2020, leading the board in the 2020/21 season, with Wayne Deller deciding to stand down.

Although Wayne stepped down as Chairman, he was re-appointed as a Director along with Barry Fitzgerald in July 2020. There was also a new appointment onto the Board to fill the vacancy left by Toyin Higgs, with Sheryl MacRae appointed as Director. Dave Emerton remained on the Board as Director for the 2020/21 season.

Work around the FA Code of Governance for County FAs also saw changes to the articles, with an increase from five to seven directors going into 2020/21. An open application process took place to recruit two Independent Non-Executive Directors (INED) to fill the vacancies, with a focus on finance, commercial and legal skill sets.

Through this process, Hafiza Patel (Finance) and Matthew Clare (Commercial) were appointed onto the board as INEDs in March 2021. In addition to this, the board also co-opted Craig Leverington (Commercial) and Jahad Rahman (Legal) as Board Advisors.

At the end of June 2021, Dave Emerton stepped down from the board as a Director following Board elections held in May 2021. Andrew French was appointed onto the board by the Essex County FA Council.

During 2020/21, continuous work was taking place to review the Essex County FA articles to update them as part of the FA Code of Governance work. This saw new articles adopted at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2021, which increased the size of the board up to nine, with additional INEDs able to be recruited.

COUNCIL

Andrew Chaplin became Chairman of the council for the 2020/21 season, with Wayne Deller stepping down as chairman. There were also a number of positions which were due for elections on council.

The following individuals were elected onto council: Dave Emerton (Group 2 Open-Age), John Meates (Group 2 Youth), Sheryl MacRae (Group 3 Open-Age), Mark Holmes (Group 3 Youth), Rob Parker (Group 4 Open-Age). Graham Hall also continued to serve as the Essex County Schools FA Representative, and Andrew French continued as the Essex Referees Association Representative.





In addition to these appointments, Alan Dare resigned from council as the Group 2 Youth Representative. Wayne Deller resigned from council as an Open-Age Representative for Group 4 after reaching the age of 70, but he was nominated by council as a Vice-President, having given at least 15 years of service to the Essex County FA Council.

Dave Threadgold resigned from his position as Group 1 Open-Age Representative, as he was nominated as a Life Member, having given at least 21 years of service to the Essex County FA Council. Alec Berry, also resigned from his position as Group 3 Open-Age Representative after reaching the age of 70 and he was also nominated by council as a Life Member, having also given at least 21 years of service. The appointment of Wayne Deller as a Vice-President and Alec Berry and Dave Threadgold as Life Members were approved at the AGM.

The volunteer Council Members again undertook their regulatory and management role and they were involved in many council, disciplinary, refereeing, competitions and rules meetings throughout the 2020/21 season.

2020/21 Council Members: Morris Jeffers, Gordon Snell, Richard Brooks, Michael Hemsted, Edward Rhymes, Michael Game, Alec Berry, David Threadgold, Sheryl MacRae, David Emerton, Wayne Deller, Roger Crane, Barry Fitzgerald, Kevin Curran, Mark Holmes, Alan Dare, Graham Hall, Andy Chaplin, Martin Berry, Kim Farmer, Danny Coyle, Micah Hyde, Andy French.

STAFFING

By the end of the 2020/21 season, the County FA employed 24 members of staff - 21 full time and three part time. In addition, we continued to have around 70 casual employees who carried out coaching, tutoring and physiotherapy roles.

There were some staff changes during the 2020/21 season which saw Beth Morrell and George Lowe depart in August 2020 to explore new opportunities within, and outside, of the football sector. There were no new recruits to the Essex County FA throughout the season.

2020/21 Staff: Brendan Walshe, Greg Hart, Fran Smith, Mark Wallis, Robert Craven, Chris Evans, Nick Emery, Lana Gillard, Emma Burden, Sean Harris, Andrew Crowl, Helen Hever, Sue Hammond, Cindi Chatha, Rhys Elmer, Lawrence Gower, Lukas Wood, Jennifer King, Emma Froment, Jake Fairman, Chloe Hookins, George Lowe, Beth Morrell, Karl Sear, Cairo Duncan, Jake Ling.



Governance

Association Membership Figures

At the end of the 2020/21 season, the membership figures were as follows:

	2020/21	Teams	2019/20	Teams	2018/19	Teams
Men	694	1,178	671	1,034	708	1,098
Women	37	196	30	44	36	47
Youth	290	3,155	276	3,192	263	2,995
Girls	82	196	85	178	76	152
Totals	1,103	4,725	1,062	4,448	1,083	4,292

Discipline

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Cautions	11,399	13,103	17,265	16,457
Misconducts	648	1,321	1,211	1,198
Standard	1,286	644	1,843	1,750
Total	13,333	15,068	20,319	19,405

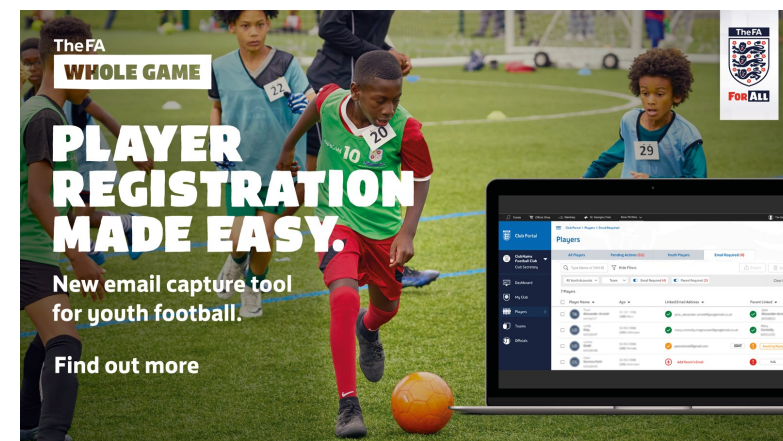
Regulations and Sanctions

Appeals

Season 2020/21 saw eight appeals against league decisions being lodged with the Essex County FA, compared to eight in season 2019/20 and 25 in 2018/19. As in previous years, members of the Executive Council presided over the appeals. The decisions were: three upheld, five dismissed.

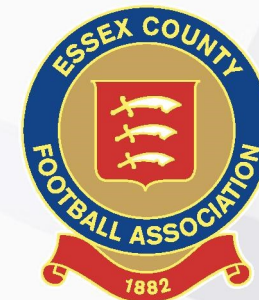
Player Registration

30 leagues utilised the Player Registration facility through FA Full-Time during season 2020/21, compared to 28 in season 2019/20, with 64,282 (55,064) registrations created.
















Governance Strategy

To lead the administration of football in Essex and create a fair and inclusive environment for all



2020/21 IN NUMBERS

On-Field Discipline	Investigations	Regulations and Sanctions	Cups, Competitions and Reps
 PUBLISHED DECISIONS AND REASONS FOR SERIOUS CASES ON OUR WEBSITE	 80.86% OF DISCIPLINE INVESTIGATIONS COMPLETED WITHIN 60 DAYS (55.89% WITHIN 30 DAYS)	 £31,526 PROVIDED TO CLUBS FOR PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE	 INTRODUCED POSITIVE CHANGES TO COUNTY CUP RULES AND STRUCTURES FOLLOWING CLUB AND LEAGUE CONSULTATION
 1,103 CLUBS, 4,725 TEAMS, 33 LEAGUES	 PROVIDED GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT TO CLUBS, TEAMS, MANAGERS, REFEREES, VOLUNTEERS, PARENTS, SPECTATORS AND PLAYERS ON HOW TO REPORT DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOUR	 £58,856 PROVIDED TO CLUBS FOR PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE	 INCREASED COUNTY CUP ENTRY FIGURES
 13,333 DISCIPLINE CASES ADMINISTERED			
 1,611 DISSENT CAUTIONS, COMPARED TO 2,315 LAST YEAR (69.6% DOWN)			
 323 COMPLETED DISCIPLINE HEARINGS, 87% WITHIN 45 DAYS	 SUPPORTED CLUBS AND LEAGUES WITH RULE QUERIES		
 25 ESSEX LEAGUES INTEGRATED WITH FA FULL-TIME			

Referees

FA Referee Courses

This year we recruited and trained 39 trainee referees across Essex, who all successfully qualified over the two FA Referee Courses held. Unfortunately, due to the impact of Covid-19, we are unable to deliver more than two courses.

Detailed below is a short review of the total number of learners we trained from July 2020 to June 2021.

FA Referee Course

During the course of the 2019/20 season, 39 learners were trained to become a referee over the two FA Referee Courses we delivered across the county, utilising the following venues: Philip Morant School & College (Colchester) and Frenford Clubs (Redbridge).

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, all of our other planned FA Referee Courses, which would've been a further 12, were all postponed.

FA Futsal Referee Course and Refereeing Walking Football Workshop

Due to the impact of Covid-19, we were unable to deliver a FA Futsal Referee Course or a Refereeing Walking Football Workshop.

Promotion

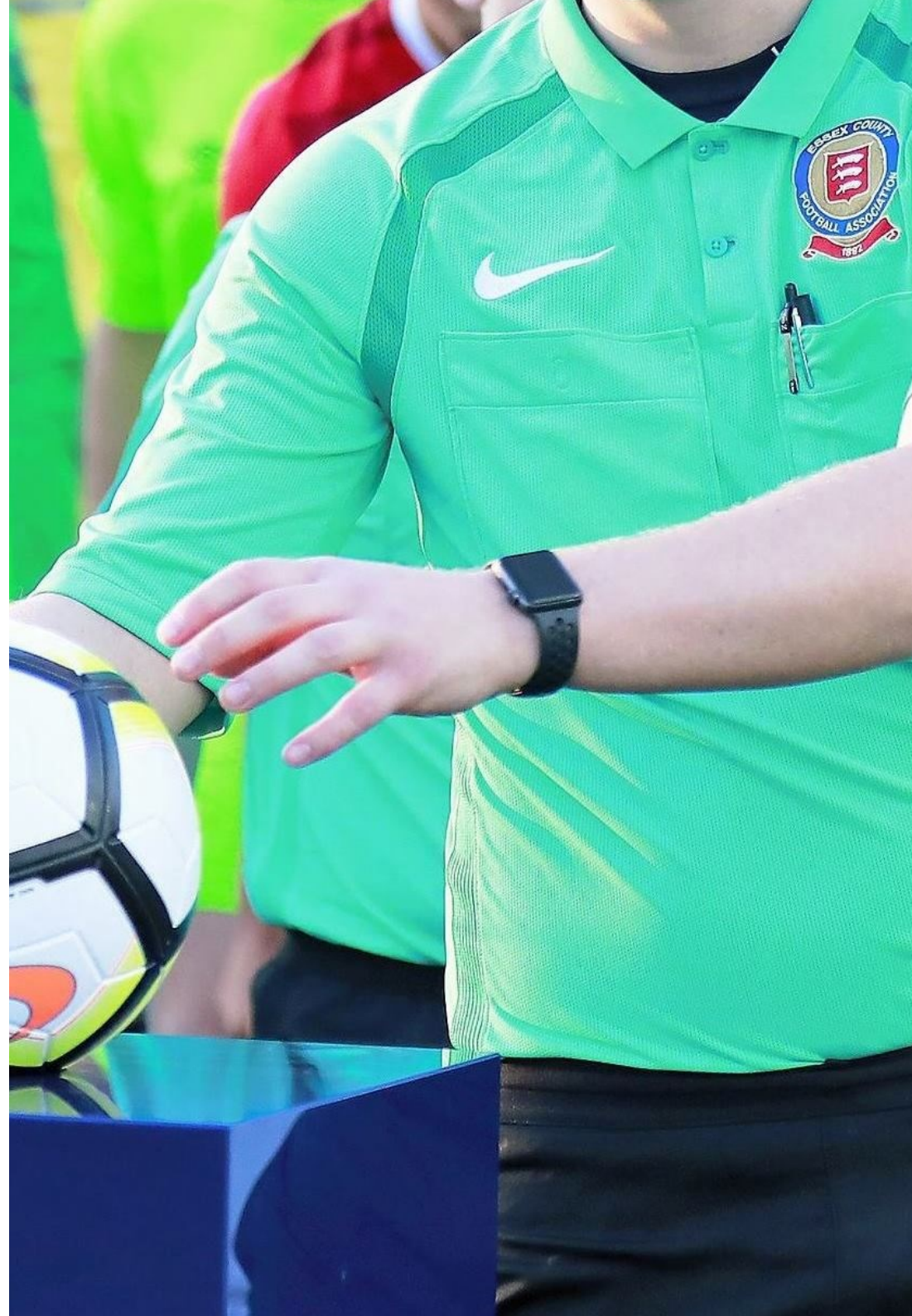
Following the conclusion of the promotion season for 2020/21, the following referees were promoted to their new respective levels for season 2021/22:

Promoted to Step 1 Assistant Referee: No promotions were made by The FA from Step 2 Assistant Referee to Step 1 Assistant Referee

Level 2b to Level 2a: No promotions were made by The FA from Level 2b to Level 2a

Level 3 to Level 2b: No promotions were made by The FA from Level 3 to Level 2b

Level 4 to Level 3: No promotions were made by The FA from Level 4 to Level 3





Essex Referees
@EssexReferees

...

Thank you for having us yesterday evening!
#DevelopedInEssex

 **Basildon Referees Association** @BasildonRA · Aug 21, 2020

Thanks so much to everyone who attended our zoom meeting yesterday for LOTG update. Huge thanks to @glowe1996 from @EssexReferees. Keep you eyes peeled for our September meeting which is our AGM !



Essex Referees
@EssexReferees

...

Congratulations to the 13 @EssexCountyFA match officials who have been appointed to the Fourth Qualifying Round of the @EmiratesFACup
#DevelopedInEssex

THE EMIRATES FA CUP

FOURTH ROUND QUALIFYING




Kings Lynn Town vs Notts County AR: Ayrton Hursey	Eastleigh vs Weston-super-Mare R: Lloyd Wood
Canvey Island vs Cray Wanderers AR: Ivaylo Kyosev and Joseph Gray FO: Leigh Ballinger	Bishop's Stortford vs St Albans City AR: Thomas Whay FO: Ryan Smith
Maldon & Tiptree vs Haringey Borough AR: Rhys Battye and Robert Claussen FO: Craig Charles	Concord Rangers vs Chippenham Town AR: Peter Wilson FO: Joe Burgess
Leiston vs Barnet R: Robert Whitton	







 You and 8 others

Level 5 to Level 4: No promotions were made by The FA from Level 5 to Level 4

Level 6 to Level 5 (County Referee to Senior County Referee): Adedotun Adeyemi (Chelmsford), Ryan Anderson (Havering), Royan Campbell (Redbridge), Daniel Charlwood (Chelmsford), Connor Cornell (Southend-on-Sea), Charlie Duggins-Jones (Thurrock), Albert Forbes (Redbridge), DeeAn Foster (Barking & Dagenham), Adam Gordon (Rochford), Mark Jones (Colchester), Mackenzie Klessa-Smith (Thurrock), Glenn Michaels (Southend-on-Sea), Lewis Moore (Brentwood), Graham Pavitt (Tendring), James Perry (Southend-on-Sea), Francis Rabbles (Waltham Forest), Matthew Rowling (Harlow), Benjamin Smith (Tendring), Andrew Wheaton (Uttlesford) and Yaron Woolf (Redbridge)

Level 7 to Level 6 (Junior Referee to County Referee): John Adeoye (Braintree), Harry Arnot (Colchester), Daniel Axente (Colchester), Neil Barratt (Havering), Ryan Bennett (Rochford), Alfie Davidson (Tendring), James Davies (Basildon), Alfie Debono (Thurrock), Rymell Francis (Newham), Jack Good (Chelmsford), Adam Hatcliff (Rochford), David Leeks (Thurrock), Daniel Mann (Southend-on-Sea), Jack McKechnie (Tendring), Jim Miller (Chelmsford), Adewale Olola (Barking & Dagenham), David Owen (Colchester), Andrew Packer (Southend-on-Sea), Ross Pearson (Braintree), Leon Randall (Redbridge), Paul Sadler (Tendring), Mark Samson (Chelmsford), Daniel Squibb (Chelmsford), Henry Steele (Brentwood), Alfie Treacher (Southend-on-Sea), Anthony Vaughan (Tendring), Archie Waine (Chelmsford), Robert Walker (Basildon), Paul Watts (Thurrock) and Christopher Wilding (Braintree)

Level 4W to 3W (Regional Referee to National Referee): Anthony Abbs (Basildon) and Kevin Curran (Southend-on-Sea)

League Referee Coverage Report

With the Referees Department's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) switching from the number of referees registered in a season to referee coverage as part of The FA's National Game Strategy, we were asked to collate the leagues' referee coverage statistics.

Therefore, detailed on the next page is the 2020/21 referee coverage information, which has been collated into their respective categories from the responses, received from our affiliated leagues (79% Coverage Baseline Calculator).

Key: GP = Games Played, GC = Games Covered by Qualified Referee

League Name	GP	GC	Coverage	Difference
Essex & Suffolk Border League	411	411	100.00%	0
Chelmsford & District Churches League	7	7	100.00%	0
Essex Alliance League	236	236	100.00%	0
Essex Senior League (Reserve Division)	72	72	100.00%	0
Essex Veterans League	376	376	100.00%	0
North Essex Veterans League	26	26	100.00%	0
Southend Borough & District Football Combination	116	116	100.00%	0
County Motor Works Vauxhall Mid-Essex League	297	289	97.31%	-8
ProKit UK Essex Olympian League	294	289	98.30%	-5
Braintree & North Essex Sunday League	135	110	81.48%	-25
Brentwood Sunday League	196	196	100.00%	0
Colchester & District Sunday League	156	156	100.00%	0
Essex Sunday Corinthian League	348	348	100.00%	0
Essex Sunday Football Combination	83	83	100.00%	0
Harlow & District Sunday League	162	153	94.44%	-9
Pope & Smith Chelmsford Sunday League	179	169	94.41%	-10
Sceptre Sunday League	169	160	94.67%	-9
Southend Borough Combination Veterans	159	147	92.45%	-12
Southend & Basildon Sunday League	129	125	96.90%	-4
Thurrock Association Sunday League	194	163	84.02%	-31
Blackwater & Dengie Youth League	527	513	97.34%	-14
Brentwood Community Football Alliance Youth League	538	200	37.17%	-338
Chelmsford Youth League	298	132	44.30%	-166
Colchester & District Youth League	449	353	78.62%	-96
Eastern Junior Alliance	775	682	88.00%	-93
Echo Junior League	787	175	22.24%	-612
Southend & District Junior Sunday League	1,244	949	76.29%	-295
Eastern Region Women's League (Essex-Based Clubs Only)	12	12	100.00%	0
Essex County Women's League	42	42	100.00%	0
Essex County Girls' League	310	184	59.35%	-126
Overall Total	8,727	6,874	78.77%	-1,853



Emma Guest
@EmmaGregory86

...

What an amazing day @Frenfordfc developing the next crop of referees #grassroots #lovethewhistle #developedinessex #football

 **Essex Referees** @EssexReferees · May 30, 2021

The sun is shining down here at @Frenfordfc where we have another @FA Referee Course underway #DevelopedInEssex



B&D Ref Society
@BandDRefs

...

One not to miss team ...



Get Involved! ... 

#RefereeLife #DevelopedInEssex #LearnAndAspire @EssexRA

 **Essex Referees** @EssexReferees · Feb 24, 2021

From the parks in Essex to the @EFL! We are delighted to be welcoming Select Group Two Referee, Matt Donohue and National List Assistant Referee, Garry Maskell, for a CPD in March for all to attend.

 29th March 2021

 18:30 - 20:00

 bit.ly/3shOLV2

















Refereeing Strategy

To recruit, retain, and develop a high-quality and diverse referee workforce to support football across Essex



2020/21 IN NUMBERS

Recruitment	Retention	Development	Workforce
 1,232 AFFILIATED REFEREES	 79% OF ALL 9v9 AND 11v11 GAMES APPOINTED WITH A QUALIFIED MATCH OFFICIAL	 52 REFEREE PROMOTIONS	 224 REFEREE DEVELOPERS (COACHES, MENTORS AND OBSERVERS)
 39 LEARNERS ON REFEREE COURSES	 11 FA REFEREE TUTORS	 ONLINE INTERVIEWS AND WEBINARS PUBLISHED ON YOUTUBE	 IMPLEMENTED REVIEWS OF REFEREE WORKFORCE ACTIVITY LEVELS AND UNDERTAKEN RECRUITMENT DRIVES FOR ADDITIONAL REFEREE DEVELOPERS
 61 FEMALE REFEREES	 71.79% TRAINEE REFEREES CONVERTED TO JUNIOR OR YOUTH REFEREES	 DELIVERED A SHOWCASE EVENING WITH SELECT GROUP ONE REFEREE MARTIN ATKINSON AS GUEST SPEAKER	 LAUNCHED THE MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPION SCHEME FOR REFEREEING IN ESSEX
 99 REFEREES FROM ETHNICALLY-DIVERSE COMMUNITIES	 DELIVERED A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME WITH LEAGUES TO ENSURE TRANSITION FROM NEWLY-QUALIFIED REFEREES DIRECT INTO LEAGUE SETTINGS		

Essex Clubs in National Competitions

Hornchurch's FA Trophy success at Wembley Stadium was the undoubted high point of the season for Essex County FA clubs in national competitions during the 2020/21 season.

The Urchins, from the Isthmian League Premier Division, fought off National League competition in the Fourth Round and the Semi-Finals in the shape of King's Lynn Town and Notts County - both in penalty shootouts - as well as Tonbridge Angels, Dulwich Hamlet, Maidstone United and Darlington from the tier above en-route to the showpiece occasion.

The feat was made all the more remarkable given that Hornchurch's own league campaign had been curtailed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the final, they were roared on by boisterous support amongst a restricted 6,000-strong crowd against Hereford, coming back from an early deficit to triumph 3-1 thanks to goals by Charlie Ruff, Liam Nash and Ellis Brown inside the final 15 minutes.

In the Football League, Essex's representation was halved when **Southend United's** 101-year stay in the competition was ended by relegation to the National League. It was a second consecutive relegation, following a final-day reprieve in 2019.

County rivals **Colchester United** survived by six points, despite a 14-match winless run which threatened their own Football League status, largely due to a 2-0 derby win over Southend, played out behind closed doors, in April 2021.

Dagenham & Redbridge finished twelfth in the National League, having briefly threatened to sneak into the play-off positions, in the only other league to be completed during the campaign. The National League South season was ended on 18th February, with the Isthmian, Essex Senior and Eastern Counties Leagues following on 24th February.

There were some celebrations for Essex clubs, however, as vacancies within the pyramid were filled by teams being moved up based on points per game over the two previous curtailed seasons.

Hashtag United moved from the Essex Senior League to the Isthmian League North Division, whilst **White Ensign** and **Little Oakley** moved into the Essex Senior League from Eastern Counties League Division One South.



Two Isthmian League North Division clubs took the plaudits in the FA Cup. **Canvey Island** and **Maldon & Tiptree** both entered in the Preliminary Round and progressed through five matches to reach the competition proper. Maldon lost 1-0 at home to League Two Morecambe in the First Round and Canvey went one stage further, losing 3-0 to Boreham Wood live on BT Sport.

Interest in the FA Vase was ended at the Second Round Proper stage. **May & Baker Eastbrook Community** - from Step 6 - were beaten 2-1 away to Norwich CBS, whilst Step 5 clubs Hashtag United, **Stanway Rovers** (both on penalties) and **Ilford** were also knocked out.

Colchester United reached the Third Round of the FA Youth Cup with wins over Stevenage and Dorking Wanderers before going out to Watford. **Chelmsford City** also earned recognition for reaching the Second Round before bowing out to Category Two Academy status Ipswich Town at Melbourne Stadium.

In the FA Women's Cup, **Billericay Town** progressed to the Third Round Proper, where they were beaten by FA Women's National League Premier Division club Oxford United. **Harlow Town**, of the Eastern Region Women's League, enjoyed a run from the Extra Preliminary Round to the First Round Proper, where they were defeated by higher-status opponents, Ipswich Town.



Representative Squads and County Cup Finals

Representative Squads

There was, unfortunately, no Essex representative football in 2020/21, due to the Covid-19 pandemic (including schools).

County Cups

All of 2020/21's Essex County Cup competitions were concluded in February, supporting leagues and competitions to best consider how they could continue to provide participation opportunities for the remainder of the Covid-19-affected season.

Following a period of very careful consideration of all factors involved, and in consultation with local leagues, the Essex County FA Board of Directors made the exceptionally difficult decision that there would be no further matches played in the County Cups from that point.

Schools and Colleges

Competitions and Representative Squads

There was, unfortunately, no Essex County Schools FA cup or representative football in 2020/21, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Coaches

The 2020/21 season saw some significant changes for the Coach Development Team, with courses heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, plus a restructure in the national coaching pathway.

The season kicked-off with an extensive programme of coaching courses, delivered between September and December 2020. Much of this programme consisted of course places for those who had their learning postponed during the March-June period. These learners were offered priority booking.

A wide variety of course formats were offered to grassroots coaches, including weekdays, evenings, and the more traditional weekend format. We'd like to thank the fantastic support of facility providers cross the county, including some of our affiliated clubs, for helping us to plan our offer.

Our Coach Development Team and FA Affiliate Tutors were supported by the wider Football Development Team, to overcome the logistical challenges involved with delivering an education programme under Covid-19 restrictions.

In total, we were able to support over 2,200 learners during this period. This included the FA Level 1 and 2 in Coaching Football, the FA Level 1 in Coaching Goalkeepers, the Introduction to First Aid in Football and the Level 2 in Coaching Futsal.

FA Education set a deadline of the end of December for County FAs to support learners with face-to-face learning on the courses above. Details of learners yet to start/complete their courses were passed to FA Education. In early 2021, all learners on the above were offered solutions to support with the completion of their courses.

For many, this meant completing a series of online modules. This was a complex task, with many learners at various stages, both locally and nationally. Our Coach Development team worked closely with FA Education to ensure that learners were supported and provided with timely updates to support with course completion.

As the season progressed, FA Education began sharing details of significant changes to the FA Coaching Pathway. Course format and content would be impacted, specifically the suite of learning delivered by County FAs. The new, online, BT Playmaker Course launched in early 2021, which has now become the entry point for all new coaches.





This must be completed, before enrolling on to the Introduction to Coaching Football Course (replacing the FA Level 1 in Coaching Football). Also completed online, this consists of three live webinar sessions and e-learning modules, as well as exclusive access to the FA Coaching Community, where learners can share tips, discuss ideas and learn from other coaches during the course.

FA Level 2 learners continued to be offered support during the second half of the season, with in-situ support visits carried out by Essex-based FA Affiliate Tutors. This process would continue throughout 2021. The FA Level 2 is due to be replaced by the UEFA 'C' Licence in early 2022.

Thankfully, our FA Level 3 (UEFA 'B') in Coaching Football Course, which was postponed from the 2019/20 season, finally started in spring 2021. The cohort of 24 learners attended the first of their four face-to-face blocks of learning in May, at Billericay Town FC. All future UEFA 'B' courses will be managed centrally by FA Education.

The 2020/21 season ended with 87% of youth teams with a qualified coach. A focus over the coming seasons will be to increase this figure and ensure that more players have access to coaching from qualified individuals.

Coaching Support

As well as continuing our 'Interview Series', with content being uploaded to our Essex County FA YouTube Channel, the latter part of the season saw the Coach Development Team focus their efforts on planning for the future. It was important to consider what the local offer looked like, for the development and support of volunteer grassroots coaches.

This planning was heavily influenced by the clear need for face-to-face coach development experiences, following a prolonged period of coaches being unable to access this type of support. Added to this, the shift to FA Education managing coach education nationally, and many now accessing learning online, meant it was important to continue offering localised opportunities.

In February 2021, a coaching survey was circulated to all coaches and managers linked to affiliated teams. This survey returned almost 900 responses, which asked individuals about the type, frequency and location of support they'd like from the Essex County FA.

Utilising the responses, FA planning guidance and feedback received from clubs and individuals, our Coach Development Team set about forming a new offer for grassroots coaches across Essex. Along the way, ideas were shared with colleagues, clubs, coaches and other stakeholders to ensure our new programme was fit for purpose and met the needs of the volunteer workforce.

Initially, the offer would consist of three strands:

On the Pitch: Practical coaching workshops, with an emphasis upon sharing top tips and advice for coaches to try in their own environments. Exploring a variety of topics, these workshops would be delivered on a regular basis throughout the year and would be hosted at multiple venues countywide.

In Focus: Delivered by a range of guest presenters and planned in partnership with organisations such as universities, professional clubs and other national governing bodies. Content will be linked to coaching within the grassroots game, helping coaches add to their knowledge and skills.

Your Club: Providing clubs with the opportunity to invest in the development of their volunteer workforce, this offer includes a series of workshops, delivered at a club venue, with content designed to meet the needs of both the club and their coaches. An Essex County FA Coach Developer is assigned to the club, who then provides bespoke support.

By the close of the 2020/21 season, work had commenced to recruit a team of Essex County FA Coach Developers, who would deliver both the 'On the Pitch' and 'Your Club' elements of this offer.





Male Pathway

The male pathway, since the Covid-19 pandemic, has shown a real resilience to ensure participation and engagement in the game stays positive. Participation across all ages and formats is in a really healthy position, with the male pathway boasting circa 4,500 teams.

Notably, it's experiencing an increase in open-age participation. Where, nationally, there is a decline, here in the county of Essex we are against the curve and showing a growth across the adult male 11v11 game. This particular growth is a reflection of the great work which is being done across the county by our member clubs and leagues to ensure there is a game for all.

Mini-Soccer

Mini-Soccer within Essex has grown by 0.22% (three teams) during the 2020/21 season to 1,315 affiliated sides when compared to the 2018/19 season, representing 42.3% of youth football teams across the county over the 'Moving Forward' Strategy.

75% of age groups experienced growth in team numbers from the 2018/19 season, with an average growth of 7.6% at each age group, the largest growth being at Under 7s, with an increase of 15% (44 teams).

Four of the five youth leagues who offer provision for mini-soccer teams experienced growth in membership numbers across at least one age group, with the biggest being 50% (30 teams) by the Brentwood Community Football Alliance Youth League within their Under 7s provision.

As part of our support to our affiliated clubs' leagues, we delivered bespoke League Forums, where youth leagues were given the opportunity to work with the County FA on a one-to-one basis post-pandemic, gaining support in regard to re-starting within the new season of 2020/21.

Youth Football

In the 2020/21 season, youth football approximately represented 75% of the County FA's overall affiliation. With twelve age groups from Under 7s to 18s, there were 3,055 teams affiliated, representing an increase from the previous season of 0.5% (17 teams).

More specifically, in the Under 11s to 18s category of youth football, there was a 5% (83 teams) growth from the previous season. Notably, 88% of those age groups specifically experienced growth in team numbers and player participation. The largest increase was seen within the Under 18s age group, where an increase of 20% (19 teams) was recorded.

Adult Football

Adult Male 11v11 (Open-Age to Walking Football, including Veterans)

Open-Age	777
Veterans	172
Walking Football	49
Total	998

Saturday Open-Age

Work continued with open-age football providers across Essex to slow the decline in team numbers. Bespoke league reports were produced and shared with our respective Saturday leagues to provide them with valuable insight on club, team and player data.

Within Essex, our Saturday open-age leagues were against the declining national curve, seeing a positive growth in team numbers post-pandemic. Our Saturday open-age leagues grew by 9.9% (29 teams), showing a clear appetite for players to continue, or take up, playing once again.



Sunday Open-Age

Like open-age Saturday football, the decline rate has continued to decrease relating to team numbers.

Sunday leagues within the county showed a team increase in the 2020/21 season by 10.6% (44 teams). This shows positive signs that, within the county of Essex, our participation is against the national curve.

Veterans Football

Veterans football in Essex has experienced a 4.2% (seven teams) growth during the 2020/21 season, now with a total of 172 teams playing across the county.

In Essex, the three veterans' leagues have demonstrated sustainability within their team numbers across the Moving Forward Strategy. The Essex Veterans League experienced growth for the 2020/21 season, and it now represents 73% of the teams affiliated.

Walking Football

Walking Football in Essex has positively grown season-upon-season and increased the number of teams affiliated by 31 from the 2016/17 season, when data recording began.

More recently, the growth within Walking Football teams up to the 2020/21 season has increased by 28.9% (+11 teams) from 2019/20. Walking Football in Essex is widely represented across the county and the Essex Walking Football League continues to provide a competitive environment for the format.

There have also been further developments within Walking Football in Essex, as a second league has become affiliated within the north of the county, demonstrating the rate of interest and growth within this format.

Small-Sided

Small-sided provision across the country is becoming a more popular format of the game for adult players. This trend is representative of the number of affiliated small-sided providers within Essex.

The Essex County FA, during the 202/21 season, affiliated nine local small-sided providers, which saw 137 teams participating across those leagues and circa 950 players participating within this format of the game.

Futsal

Here at the Essex County FA, we recognise that Futsal is a well-participated format of the game across the county and there are many clubs and players who choose to play outside of their mainstream grassroots clubs.

Within the county, there are ten affiliated clubs who offer provision for ages as young as Under 7s through to Under 16s. Due to the pandemic, we were unable to deliver our County Futsal Finals, although they have been planned for the 2021/22 season.



Essex County FA ✓
@EssexCountyFA

...

[#WeOnlyDoPositive](#)

WithamTownFC @Withamtownfc · Dec 13, 2020

It's who we are and why we are what we are ! so proud of one of youth teams players today in a cup match awarded a penalty that was not , our player steps up and kicks out for a goal kick respect young man @EssexCountyFA



Clubs

As we transition from the FA Charter Standard to England Football Accreditation, the ambition to become accredited continues to grow through clubs and leagues across Essex.

One of the well-received features of the transition will be that clubs will have the ability to apply for the accreditation online through the Clubs Portal. Adopting/uploading club policies and procedures allows clubs to visualise a virtual checklist.

Auditing coaches' qualifications will also be a new feature to the portal, enabling club officials to visualise any expired, or soon-to-be expired, qualifications within their club workforce.

Building on the Club Report distribution in the 2019/20 season, 68 of our largest clubs across the county received a data report providing insight into their volunteer workforce, affiliation data, community engagement and social value.

Season 2020/21 saw an additional eleven clubs grow to 20+ teams to receive a Club Report. This took the total number of clubs providing opportunities for 20+ teams across the three player pathways to 79.



FC Vilomah
@FCVilomah

...

A nice early Christmas present from @EssexCountyFA @FA with some free footballs. We are an @FA Charter Standard club. We make our football the best place for people to play and enjoy the game. We are Built to Last. #CharterStandard #proud #BuiltToLast #sandsunited





DagenhamUnitedBlues
@DufcBlues

...

#SquadBooster We are looking for 1 or 2 more players to add to the team. Registrations happening this month **#Dagenham #youthfootball #dagenhamunited #hornchurch #romford #essex** Registration for 2020/21 is at a 50% discount due to the current financial climate for many families

DAGENHAM UNITED UNDER 14 BLUES
SPONSORED BY MJC ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING TO ADD A COUPLE OF PLAYERS TO THE EXISTING TEAM

THE TEAM ARE ENTERING THEIR 4TH SEASON TOGETHER AND THEY ARE A FRIENDLY GROUP OF LADS WHO WILL MAKE ANYONE FEEL WELCOME

WE ARE NOT LOOKING FOR PLAYERS IN ANY PARTICULAR POSITIONS, WE ARE HAPPY TO WELCOME ANYONE TO TRAINING

MAYBE YOUR TEAM HAS FOLDED OR YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A NEW CHALLENGE?

GET IN TOUCH TO SEE IF YOU THINK THE TEAM IS THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR CHILD AND VICE VERSA

PLAYERS SHOULD BE IN YEAR 9 FROM SEPTEMBER

VICKY 07823 441 270
ADMIN

TIM 07463 781804
MANAGER




DAGENHAM UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB



Chelmsford City YFC
@CCYFC

...

U14 players wanted for the 2020/21 season.
@OfficialClarets @EssexCountyFA @BCFAYL
#SquadBooster #YourCityYourClub #ClaretTogether

Players Wanted

U14 Clarets

We are looking to add players to our extremely successful U14 Clarets squad.

We will be competing in the BCFAYL Premier division for the 2020/ 21 season

Dates for open training TBC.



For more information or to arrange a visit, contact Andy:
hulla0@yahoo.co.uk 07828 193628

www.ccyfc.com

 /CCYouthFC
  @CCYFC
 #ClaretTogether
 #YourCityYourClub




Female Pathway

Mini-Soccer

Youth leagues driving the foundation stage for girls' football within Essex were piloting the initiative which permitted girls' teams to play a year group down within predominantly boys' leagues.

Initially driven by the Brentwood Community Football Alliance Youth League (BCFAYL), season 2020/21 saw the South-East Essex Primary Mini-Soccer League, the Southend Junior League and the Echo Junior League also successfully apply to The FA to provide this opportunity.

Over the pandemic-hit season, the county managed to retain the provision for this category, and there was a growth of one team. We gained five teams at the Under 7s, 8s and 9s but we also lost five teams at the Under 10s age group. With no new Wildcats Centres created due to Covid-19, it was inevitable that the pandemic play was to a big part in the county's growth.

It is hoped that youth leagues will continue to drive the pilot forward in an effort to increase opportunities and create a shift in football culture where girls and boys are playing on the same pitch.

The Essex County Girls' League continued to offer opportunities at the Under 9s and 10s age groups, offering a league programme of fixtures and the chance to get involved with their fantastic Cup Finals Day!

Youth Football

Female youth participation figures saw some growth amongst most age groups. From Under 11s through to Under 19s, 20 new teams affiliated, while we lost three teams in both the Under 11s and Under 19s categories. This was slightly more positive than mini-soccer.

The biggest increase was seen in the Under 14s age group, with an increase of five teams, whilst the Under 13s and Under 16s both grew by four teams. There has been a 9.8% increase overall, with 202 girls' youth teams now affiliated. The table on the right demonstrates the number of girls registered within each youth league for season 2020/21 through The FA's player registration system.

League	Female Players
Blackwater & Dengie Youth League	98
Echo Junior League	Didn't Use System
Brentwood Community Football Alliance Youth League	575
Essex County Girls' League	3,667
Colchester & District Youth League	48
South-East Essex Primary Mini-Soccer League	80
Southend & District Junior League	47

There was a steady increase within each youth league. This has been supported by various initiatives such as Wildcats, the Essex County FA Under 12s Girls County Cup (which, sadly, was postponed due to the pandemic) and the Girls' Schools Football Programme taking place within secondary schools.

Adult Football

Women's Open age figures saw a 20% increase, from 40 teams to 48 by the end of 2020/21. This category includes Under 23s College teams. There was an interesting introduction to our affiliations, with the first Women's Veterans affiliated, and this category is expected to continue to see growth, alongside women's Walking Football opportunities.

The Essex County Women's League continued to be the foundation within the county, with two divisions, and it's the platform for many new teams starting their journey in adult women's football. The number of recreational opportunities is also increasing slowly across the county.

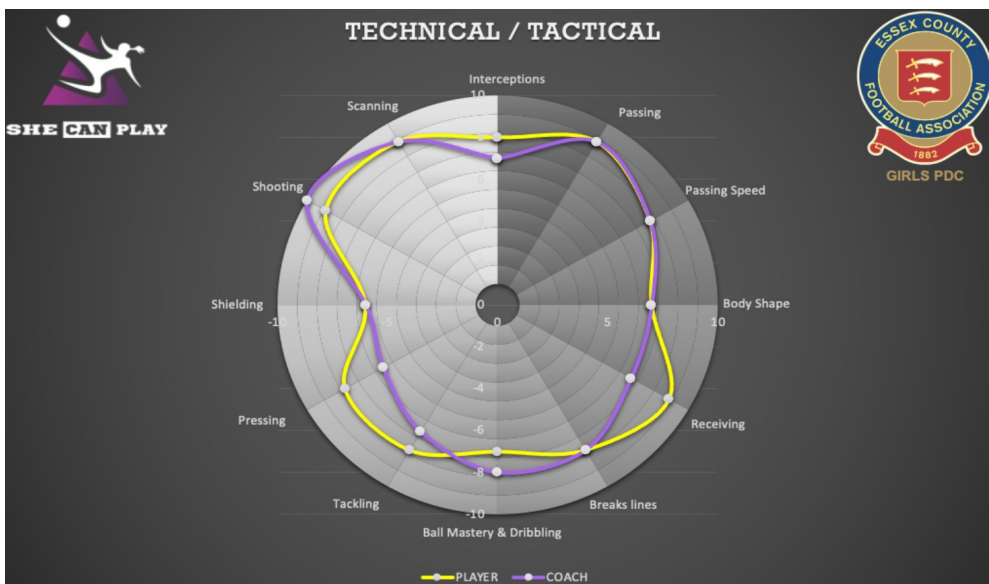
The Snickers 'Just Play' Centres continue to grow, alongside key partners delivering localised, informal opportunities. There were three women-only Just Play Centres operating during the season, led by Woodham Radars FC, Stones FC and Mazza Futsal. Again, this area has huge potential for growth moving forward.

Player Development Centre

It was a challenging season for the She Can Play Essex County FA Girls' Player Development Centre (PDC). The programme had to demonstrate real innovation, delivering a percentage of the programme online and providing girls with virtual sessions when Covid-19 rules didn't allow them to practice together.

When the restrictions were lifted, the sessions continued at Noak Hill in Havering and, once again, they proved very popular, with four age groups. The PDC continues to offer an opportunity for aspiring female players to access a formal link to the Regional Talent Club (RTC), which enables girls to be seen by coaches from the elite programme.

Four female coaches were provided with an outlet to access an environment to develop their skill set and gain confidence to take the next step on their coaching path. The PDC is now in its eleventh season. It has developed tremendously over the years and now individual development plans and goal-setting are a big part of the programme's success.



Regional Talent Club

Essex's Regional Talent Club (RTC) remains a Tier 2 Licence of the Elite Female Player Pathway. RTC centres, nationally, remain at 29 clubs across three tiers.

The programme was in its eighth year at the start of 2020/21. It restarted during the heights of Covid-19 and a national decision was made which saw all RTCs commit to supporting players who were already registered with the programme, with a limited trial option available. This saw the Essex RTC continue to develop 58 players.

Throughout 2020/21, the centre had England Women's Under 16s training camp call-ups for the Essex Under 16s' Mia Filipiak and Kelsey Morgan. National camps and events were limited due to the changing Covid-19 circumstances.

Under 16s: Kevin Baker (Head Coach), Joe Sheehan (Assistant Coach): Lucy Lyon, Leah Mitchell, Elizabeth Way, Layla Kenly, Learna Daniels, Ruby Sealey, Paige Gardiner, Ella Houghton, Ellie Moore, Amy Taylor, Kelsey Morgan, Alicia Garwood, Leonnie Bezan, Katie McClean, Megan Wearing, Betty Booker, Mia Filipiak and Leonie Telford.

Under 14s: Simon King (Head Coach), Paige Wakefield and Amy-Lee Gullefer (Assistant Coaches): Erin Williams, Maria White, Ruby Gaunt, Darcy Marks, Isabella Vernon, Amana Oguntuga, Daisy Warren, Scarlett Lazarus, Darcy Drewitt, Emily Dilliway, Annabelle Webb, Demi Hetherington, Lois Hall, Tilly Philpot, Maddie Barrow and Helen Duncan.

Under 12s: Daniel Parker (Head Coach), Christa Osman (Assistant Coach): Estelle Scherer, Tabitha Hellen, Holly-Mae Elmes, Roxanne Carlie Ball, Camille Adams, Georgia Banyard, Maddie Dennis, Freya Matthews, Mia Coster, Freya Butcher, Chloe Tilley and Eve Minifie.

Under 10s: Carla Dickinson (Head Coach), Aaron Runnacles (Assistant Coach): Scarlett King, Lexie Bennis, Amy Longford, Fleur Bennett, Connie Chilvers, Keira-Leigh Bright, India Small, Katie Stevens, Kayda Burdett, Reisha Patel, Amy White and Anya Durbin.

Danielle Warnes (Club Manager), **Steve Downey** (Technical Director), **Kevin De Keijzer** (Strength and Conditioning Coach), **Matthew Johnstone** (Goalkeeping Coach), **Amy McMillian** (Physiotherapist), **Tracy Lewis** (Physiotherapist), **Daniel Morton** (Sports Therapist).



Football Development Strategy

To provide a safe, engaging and progressive football environment for all



2020/21 IN NUMBERS

High-Quality Introduction to Football



42.3% OF AFFILIATED YOUTH FOOTBALL IS REPRESENTED WITHIN THE MINI-SOCCER FORMAT, TOTALLING A GROWING 1,315 TEAMS



FULL RETENTION OF ALL FEMALE MINI-SOCCER TEAMS IN SEASON 2020/21



3,055 TEAMS WITHIN ALL YOUTH FOOTBALL (UNDER 7s TO 18s)



28.9% INCREASE IN WALKING FOOTBALL TEAMS SINCE 2019/20

Embrace All Formats, Engage All Participants



50+ PITCHES ON THE FA 3G PITCH REGISTER



SUPPORTED CLUBS WITH INTRODUCTION OF PITCHPOWER TO ASSESS THE QUALITY OF THEIR GRASS PITCHES



SUPPORTED THE SAFE RETURN OF DISABILITY CLUBS



RECRUITED NEW MEMBERS FOR INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP

Develop Clubs and Leagues



79 CLUBS ACROSS THE COUNTY NOW PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 20+ TEAMS



SUPPORTING CLUBS' AND LEAGUES' TRANSITIONS FROM THE FA WHOLE GAME SYSTEM TO THE CLUB/COMPETITION PORTAL

Recruit, Develop and Support the Football Workforce



SUPPORTED FOOTBALL WORKFORCE THROUGH COVID-19 QUERIES



PROMOTED THE #CELEBRATEESSEX VOLUNTEER COMPETITION ON TWITTER TO HIGHLIGHT TEN KEY ROLES, ATTRACTING 69 NOMINATIONS, WITH 6,057 VOTES CAST



SUPPORTED OVER 2,200 COACH EDUCATION LEARNERS

Disability

The Disability Pathway has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic due to the vulnerability of those participating. Despite this, the Essex Soccability League has continued to develop their open-age offer, whilst consulting with the membership throughout the process.

FA Charter Standard Clubs currently providing playing opportunities within the mainstream environment are exploring the development of disability provision. This is supported and encouraged through the transition between FA Charter Standard and England Football Accreditation.

This work carried out by existing clubs with teams playing within Essex Soccability League, plus the development of disability sections within mainstream clubs, has led to reaching 61 affiliated teams at the end of the 2020/21 season.



**ENGLAND
TALENT DAY**

**One Player, Two Journeys, Three Lions.
Stay with your club, play for your country.**

For players aged 7-11 and 12-16 with the following impairments:
Cerebral palsy • Hearing impairments • Visual impairments
Start your journey here.

Date: 22/07/2021
Time: 10.30-12.30
Venue: Chelmer High School, Chelmsford, CM1 7ER
Contact details: Abigail: Abigail@disability4sport.co.uk

PARA FOOTBALL

Youth Forum

The 2020/21 season has seen the Essex County FA Youth Forum continue to evolve, with Gemma Stubbles as Chairperson and Alfie Davidson as Vice-Chairperson. Despite the pandemic, the group continue to meet virtually, driving projects forward as grassroots football resumes.

With a more flexible way of meeting, a recruitment process will take place within the coming season, and it's anticipated that the Youth Forum will continue to represent all four group areas.



Essex County FA
@EssexCountyFA

Congratulations to [@gem_stubs6](#), who has been named as the new Chairperson of the [#Essex](#) County FA Youth Forum!

The FA National Youth Council and England Football

Education

University of Essex

The University of Essex (UoE) continued a partnership with The FA and the Essex County FA through investment into higher education by holding a hybrid Tier 1 status. However, with the effects of Covid-19, the opportunity to deliver some of our core development programmes were not feasible due to the restrictions.

During this time, the full-time Football Development Officer position ceased at the end of May 2021 due to funding constraints which have been encountered across the sector, and sport, during this very difficult spell.

Futsal

Unfortunately, we were not able to host our County Futsal Finals due to the safety restrictions on the running of indoor sports as part of The FA's Covid-19 guidelines.

Recreational Football Offer

The highly-successful and popular 11v11 Flexi-League was paused, and plans were put in place to re-launch in October 2021, in-line with the new academic year, as one of the core offers for students.

Female Football

The University affiliated three 11v11 women's teams and one Futsal team in preparation for when fixtures were able to resume after Covid-19 restrictions. The university have appetite to progress an application to become an FA Women's High-Performance Centre.

The Essex County FA will be supporting this process and ensuring strong connections with key partners in the region, brokering partnerships with further education female football providers and Tier 3 FA Women's National League clubs.

Volunteering and Leadership

A female leadership and development project was put forward to British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) for funding as part of their innovation and investment grant.

The focus was to connect students into local grassroots England Football Accredited clubs, including the Essex County FA's Girls Regional Talent Club. The scheme was focused on student personal development, including coaching, officiating and volunteering experiences.

Coach Education

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, we were unable to deliver any in-person coach education courses or workshops. With the change in landscape of the coach education offer now moving online through our Essex County FA Coach Mentor Team, we plan, in the future, to offer bespoke workshops and insight sessions for students on sport-specific courses.





BTFCU13G BLUE
@Btfcu12G

...

A hearty thank you to [@WrittleGirlsFC](#) for an exciting and spirited match with loads of goals. Lots of positives, opportunities to try things we've worked on in training. A match that will help both teams improve. [@EssexCountyFA](#) [@BCFAYL](#) [@ECGFL_2018](#) .
[#WeOnlyDoPositive](#)



Essex County FA ✓
@EssexCountyFA

...

Brilliant! 🙌 [#WeOnlyDoPositive](#)



Robert Elmes @BowersGirlsSec · May 30, 2021

What a great game today, we couldn't quite keep our unbeaten record but super proud of the 9 players out there today, great effort. Congratulations to [@AveleyU15Girls](#) huge respect for the guard of honour. [#respect](#)
[@EssexCountyFA](#) [@bowersladiesfc](#) [@pitseagirlsfc](#) [@BowersU15](#) [@FA](#)

0:08 1,397 views



Equality and Inclusion

Equality Standard

Work took place across the 2020/21 season to prepare the Essex County FA's application for Intermediate Level of the Equality Standard.

The Equality Standard, managed by Plan4Sport, was launched by the UK sports councils in November 2004 to help address the inequalities which exist within the sports sector. It is a framework to guide sports organisations towards achieving equality.

As part of the project, and ongoing work, all of our staff, board and council attended training workshops around equality, diversity and inclusion and an Equality Audit was completed of all our stakeholders, including clubs, leagues, referees, coaches and players, to provide data and insight on the demographics currently engaged in grassroots football.

Inclusion Advisory Group

A recruitment process took place during the course of the season to develop and relaunch a new Inclusion Advisory Group which would support the County FA and its equality, diversity and inclusion work, including checking and challenging strategy, policies and practices. The new group saw the Chair co-opted onto the Essex County FA Board.

Projects and Programmes

Work continued to promote equality and inclusion throughout the organisation and the wider workforce, including promotion of a number of religious occasions and international days through our social media accounts.



Facilities and Funding

With Local Football Facility Plans (LFFP) in place for each of our local authorities, work continued in engaging appropriate partners to take forward identified projects.

Across the season, meetings and calls were held with local authorities to revisit their respective LFFP, which acts as an investment portfolio across four investment pillars: 3G Pitch Provision, Grass Pitch Improvement, Changing Rooms/Pavilions, Small-Sided Football Facilities.

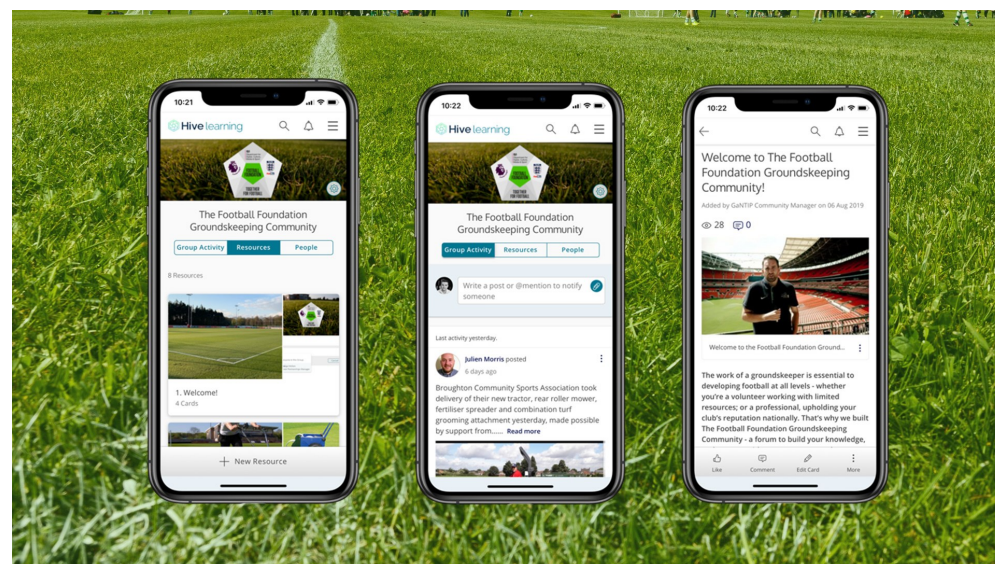
This engagement was aligned to Playing Pitch Strategy action plan work completed in conjunction with Active Essex, Sport England and the other national governing bodies (NGBs) to establish short, medium and long term priorities for grassroots football facilities. During 2020/21, one large capital project was successful in applications to the Football Foundation (FF) panel:

*** Tendring District Council** - resurface and extend existing 2G Artificial Grass Pitch to full size 3G Artificial Grass Pitch

FA 3G Pitch Register

There has been growth in the number of 3G pitches listed within Essex on the FA 3G Pitch Register during the 2020/21 season. It requires that all 3G Football Turf Pitches used for affiliated match play should meet the standards set in the FA 3G Pitch Performance Test.

This ensures there is a high-quality standard across all 3G pitches. There are now 50+ pitches (of varying sizes) within Essex listed on the register (up from 30 during 2015). This has ensured football matches continue to get played in adverse weather conditions.



Protection of Football Facilities

The protection of existing football facilities is a key priority for football. Housing growth is playing a significant factor in the development of future facilities.

Disused football facilities can be at risk of being lost or reallocated for other purposes as part of local authority plans to identify key sites for housing growth, with submission to the Government for approval. Playing Pitch Strategies are an important assessment tool in the process.

We work closely with Sport England to comment on, and provide evidence in regard to, any sites which could be lost to football to ensure they are not lost or to ensure replacement facilities are developed to offset any potential loss of pitch stock. Over the course of the 2020/21 season, we commented on 28 different planning applications.

FA Grass Pitch Improvement Strategy

As part of The FA's Grass Pitch Improvement Strategy (which aims to improve 20,000 pitches over the next ten years) The FA, in partnership with the Football Foundation and the Grounds Management Association (GMA) launched PitchPower, a new digital assessment tool.

It was designed to support clubs and pitch operators to assess the quality of their pitches without the need for a visit from a GMA Regional Pitch Advisor. PitchPower is a web app which can be accessed on multiple devices, including smart phones.

It allows clubs to quickly and easily inspect their grass pitch(es). Clubs and organisations can use the app to submit information about their pitch to experts at the GMA.

During the 2020/21 season, the Football Foundation revised their Enhance Maintenance Fund to the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund, which allowed clubs to access funding for enhancing or sustaining maintenance on their pitches, depending on their quality, as determined by a Pitch Power Report.

Up to the end of 2020/21, clubs had accessed up to **£138,424** funding to invest into their grass pitches over six years. As well as this, the FF issued grants up to **£182,000** to support clubs with new and upgraded maintenance machinery to support maintenance programmes across their pitches.

Local authorities continued to work under increasing budget pressures and constraints, which resulted in less intensive pitch maintenance programmes. The Essex County FA actively engaged with some of our local authorities to assess their pitches and provide them with some recommendations which could be implemented in their schedules to aid pitch improvement.

Football Foundation Small Grants

Alongside this, clubs and organisations also accessed some of the Football Foundation's smaller grant support.

The table below shows the breakdown in funding distributed, including to total project values. This has been accessed by circa 65 clubs and organisations:

Item	Grant Value	Project Value
Portable Floodlights	£24,233	£34,923
Fencing	£46,982	£62,451
Storage Container	£1,062	£1,416
Goalposts	£141,956	£203,744

Football Stadia Improvement Fund

Over the course of the 2020/21 season, Essex's senior status clubs received funding through the Football Stadia Improvement Fund.

This fund is there to support clubs playing within the FA National League System (NLS) to meet their ground grading requirements. The table on the next page outlines the clubs who received investment.

As well as this, Essex-affiliated NLS clubs accessed a winter and summer Covid-19 survival package, totalling £712,996.

	Project Detail	Grant Value	Project Value
Harwich & Parkeston FC	Pitch Perimeter Barrier	£14,065	£20,094
Rayleigh Town FC	Pitch Perimeter Barrier	£4,204	£6,006
Sungate FC	Pitch Boundary Spectator Fencing	£4,833	£6,904
Great Wakering Rovers FC	Pitch Perimeter Barrier	£3,146	£4,494
Clapton Community FC	New Changing Pavilion	£50,000	£149,639
Canvey Island FC	Pitch Perimeter Fencing	£19,340	£27,628
Stanway Rovers Community FC	Pitch Perimeter Barrier and Gates	£19,999	£28,570
Heybridge Swifts FC	Replacement of Floodlights	£20,000	£33,360
Dedham Old Boys FC	Refurbishment of Boiler, Shower Rooms	£12,794	£18,277
Buckhurst Hill FC	Supply and Installation of Floodlights and Covered Seating for 100 Spectators	£66,458	£94,940





The year was an incredibly difficult one for so many reasons. We would like to, firstly, acknowledge the truly superb efforts undertaken by volunteers to support children and young people in football.

During this transition, we created a bespoke Welfare Officer Workshop to support new welfare officers as we were all aware that support and guidance would still be required, even if football was not physically taking place. It was great to meet so many new, dedicated welfare officers during the season's development sessions.

In supporting children and young people during lockdowns, we reached out via social networks and encouraged their participation. One of these activities was the #Lockdown3for3 promotion to share best practice during lockdown, which ran over three weeks.

In delivering our strategy, the department works closely with the volunteer taskforce in meeting FA DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) compliancy. As certain roles within under 18s' football require an accepted FA DBS, it's vital parents/carers are confident those coaching their children meet these requirements. Part of this is to work with volunteers to manage and maintain this process.

As part of The FA's Safeguarding Operating Standard, we conduct safeguarding visits to clubs. This took a new form during the season, with desktop visits being undertaken. Feedback was shared with clubs, recognising lots of good work which goes on in grassroots football to support and embed safeguarding.



Safeguarding & Welfare Strategy

Provide a safe and compliant football environment with a skilled and knowledgeable workforce



2020/21 IN NUMBERS

Workforce and Education	Safeguarding Compliance	Investigations	Environment
 <p>SHARED A SAFEGUARDING PRESENTATION TO OPEN-AGE FOOTBALL ON YOUTUBE, WITH 95 VIEWS</p>	 <p>SAFEGUARDING VISITS COMPLETED WITH CLUBS</p>	 <p>IDENTIFIED AND ASSESSED INDIVIDUAL CASES AND REFERRED THEM TO THE APPROPRIATE SAFEGUARDING AGENCY</p>	 <p>PROMOTED FA NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING EVENT AND SUPPORTED UNDER 18s WITH A #LOCKDOWN3for3 CAMPAIGN</p>
 <p>ARRANGED CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) FOR 84 WELFARE OFFICERS TBC TBC</p>	 <p>PROVIDED INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE TO MEMBER CLUBS TO MEET LEGAL REQUIREMENTS</p>	 <p>REVIEWED ALL YOUTH DISCIPLINE CASES TO IDENTIFY SAFEGUARDING CASES AND DELIVER APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS</p>	 <p>ENCOURAGED AND SHARED CLUB AND LEAGUE BEST PRACTICE</p>
 <p>PROVIDED SUITES OF RESOURCES TO SHARE GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES ACROSS GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL</p>			

Marketing and Communications

Website

As our central information point for grassroots football stakeholders, the website at www.essexfa.com was regularly reviewed and updated with new and existing content to create key reference and resource pages on cups, players, referees, coaches, clubs, leagues, volunteers, facilities, safeguarding and inclusion.

News stories were the most regular additions, with maintenance of existing pages and new ones being added. As well as supporting our own strategy targets, our website promoted a number of FA campaigns and projects such as the SuperKicks app for youth activity, the #WeOnlyDoPositive initiative for Respect, the Matchday admin app and the Boot Room coaches' portal.

#SquadBooster, our portal to pair players with clubs, published hundreds of adverts in 2020/21, attracting visits by 11,542 individuals, making it the fifth most popular page on our website. This was always backed by social media, particularly on the exceptionally-active Twitter hashtag.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused a great deal of difficulty to grassroots football. In order to ensure crucial live information and support was shared in a simple and streamlined way, we maintained a dedicated Coronavirus Update page. This was viewed by 32,905 individuals.

Visitors: 163,073 individuals visited our website in 2020/21. Web traffic is impacted by a number of seasonal factors. In our case, these include the peaks and troughs of activity during a football season, County Cup results and finals, large events and spikes of publicity, albeit with less of these during this season due to Covid-19.

Traditionally, our best months are September to November when we have the most teams looking for County Cup results. The increased use of social media feeds such as Twitter and Facebook as ways of sharing news and information are factors to consider. Grassroots stakeholders are now able to access our content in a wider variety of ways, such as social media and E-Mail.



Flyers FC U11 2021/22
@FlyersU11

...

Flyers Falcons U10s 2020/21 (school year 5 from Sep) looking for keen, committed players (and parents) who love football and want to play in a fun and engaging environment. Playing in Echo division 4. For open training session details contact Dave 07904161081 [#squadbooster](#)



Essex County FA
@EssexCountyFA

...

Players Wanted! @Sporting77YFC: 2020/21 Age Group: Under 17s (Stingrays), School Years: 13, Format: 11v11, Position/s Required: Various, Training: Wednesdays, Matches: Sundays, Competition: @DengieYouth #Braintree Details: squadbooster.com #SquadBooster



#SquadBooster

essexfa.com
#SquadBooster
Matching Players with Clubs

News: Another strategic target, which contributes towards our visitor statistics, is to promote at least 16 key priority football news items on a monthly basis. This was either achieved or exceeded for most months in 2020/21, covering articles across many areas of the game. Throughout the season, 192 stories were published.

Our news stories are regularly picked-up by newspapers, radio stations and websites, which has led to additional external coverage on sites such as TheFA.com and bbc.co.uk. BBC Essex have again been huge supporters of grassroots football during the campaign.

Customer Service: We continued to embed and integrate 'Freshdesk' functionality onto our website, improving our online query-handling capabilities. It offers enhanced support for our stakeholders and a constant means of access. Freshdesk allows us to monitor and analyse the volume and type of enquiries we receive, meaning we can create set responses to frequently asked questions.

Social Media

Twitter (@EssexCountyFA, @EssexReferees, @EssexCoaches), Facebook (EssexFootball, EssexReferees) and YouTube (EssexFA) have continued to be key engagement and promotional vehicles for sharing news and information in an increasingly online world.

These core channels have informed and educated grassroots football quickly and efficiently. We're interacting with stakeholders and evolving our presence every minute of every day, growing our audience and network.

Twitter: Regular activity on our social media feeds is growing the game to an extending network across a wider platform of partners. Some examples of these include referees associations, prominent coaches, member clubs/leagues, facilities and brands, plus safeguarding and inclusion groups. They regularly retweet, or interact with, our content on Twitter.

The #SquadBooster hashtag has continued to provide huge support to the player-to-club matching service on our website, with 789 submissions from teams using the improved online form in 2020/21. An enhanced refereeing and coaching presence has been achieved on Twitter through the @EssexReferees and @EssexCoaches accounts.



Essex County FA ✓
@EssexCountyFA

...

#WeOnlyDoPositive



Elite Colts FC @EliteColtsFC_ · Oct 19, 2020

Replying to @RichHellen74 @BCFAYL and @EssexCountyFA

Thanks for a great game. The girls played some great football. All had a smile on their faces, laughing and extremely polite. Credit to their parents and coach. See you next week for the return fixture.



Essex County FA ✓
@EssexCountyFA

...

Excellent! #WeOnlyDoPositive



Gary Telling @garytelling · Oct 11, 2020

Have just returned from reffing @TigersJFC Girls u/14 v @CatholicUtdFC
Both teams a credit to the league but special mention to Tigers manager who brought off 3 of his better players to make the game more of even contest.
@EssexCountyFA will be receiving an email to praise.



Essex County FA ✓
@EssexCountyFA

...

#WeOnlyDoPositive



Daniel Treharne @daniel_treharne · Sep 21, 2020

Replying to @BowersU16s @BowersGirlsSec and 3 others

Thanks for a great game yesterday and certainly we can take away some positives from the first half performance and lessons to be learnt from the second half. Great bunch of girls and coaches as always. Good luck for the season and looking forward to playing you again soon.

Amongst our most popular 'hashtags' (which group together tweets about a specific subject or conversation) were #SquadBooster and #CelebrateEssex, our volunteer competition proving very popular once more.

The monthly contest recognised local unsung heroes through a nomination and voting process across ten roles. It showcased personal stories, increasing their visibility as role models to engage new members and inspire newcomers to join the grassroots community as volunteers. In 2019/20, 69 nominations were received, with 6,057 votes cast.

By May 2021, we'd achieved our #MovingForward Strategy target of reaching a total of 32,000 Twitter followers (6,032 new in 2020/21), showing continual growth and achieving the accolade of becoming the most-followed County FA in the country in May 2020. 10,540 tweets were dispatched throughout the season, generating 28,053,998 impressions.

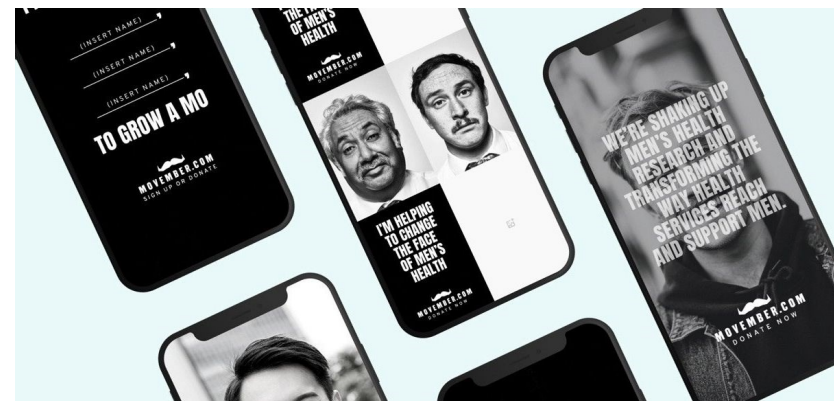
Facebook: By 30th June 2021, we'd reached 10,226 Facebook likes (543 new in 2020/21), showing real growth. 594 items were posted throughout 2020/21 (including EssexReferees). The targeted post frequency was exceeded during every month in 2020.

There was a noticeable boost in new Facebook likes and activity during October and November 2020. This was likely a result of posting individual profiles of many award winners who were unable to attend a traditional Awards Evening due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, more regular activity of this kind, promoting individual volunteers, is being planned for the future.

YouTube: We attracted 109 new YouTube subscribers during 2020/21, evidencing continual growth. 45 videos were posted, and these were viewed on 8,300 occasions, totalling a watch time of 459.7 hours.

New promotional videos, distributed through YouTube and our website, were especially well-received during 2019/20, especially with the additional face-to-face educational challenges. In the initial few months of Covid-19 there was a noticeable increase in demand for YouTube content, which we met with a larger number of coach, referee and club development videos.

During July 2020, we were particularly prolific at publishing videos, largely providing online learning opportunities for referees and coaches. This attracted an above-average amount of YouTube activity and new subscribers.



Communication

E-Mail: It is our strategic goal to deliver efficient and effective communication to all football stakeholders in Essex. In addition to our website and social media streams, we achieve this in a variety of other ways, including a fortnightly, GDPR-compliant E-Mail newsletter to update subscribers on key developments.

Subjects always include items for coaches, referees, clubs, players and volunteers, as well as other important news. The audience grew by 185 during the campaign, partly supported by a new 'opt-in' when submitting the #SquadBooster advert request form.

By June 2021, we'd accumulated 835 subscribers, showing continual growth. 25 E-Mails were dispatched throughout 2020/21. These were opened on 10,580 occasions (which works out, on average, at 55.7%, well above the industry standard of 20%), with 1,202 link clicks.

Publications: Visually-enhanced Annual Reports were produced and published, updating stakeholders on all of our key activities each season. In addition, a brochure was created to detail the targets and aims of the Essex County FA 'Moving Forward' Strategy 2024.

Podcast: Work got underway on the production of a pilot Essex County FA podcast to provide an additional, audible means of sharing news and information. Existing archived material was reviewed to assess whether it was still relevant, and could be re-used.

Considerable amounts of training took place, as well as investigative work to research software and publishing options. To date, an actual pilot is yet to be published, although audio clips have been shared. There were plans to release an episode in the first half of 2020, which was delayed by Covid-19. Audio materials have been retained with a view to picking-up this project again in 2022.

Branding and Commercial

Branding: It's important to maintain a defined image to help us achieve specific, strategic goals. In collaboration with a branding partner, we've produced and displayed infographics to use online and in hard copy, as well as banners and signage for events such as County Cup Finals and the annual Awards Evening.

Work has continued to nurture a defined image, and a consistent, high-quality brand has been maintained alongside JB Studio. Projects are regularly undertaken to present a more professional-looking and consistent image to stakeholders.

Commercial: Our high-quality branding has contributed towards the maintenance of existing and new opportunities with a selection of partners, and provided a window for new external investment to support Essex grassroots football.

Infographics: Visually-appealing infographics have been created which represent County FA activities and present information efficiently and concisely. 32 infographics, documents and certificates were created in 2020/21.



BTFCU13G BLUE
@Btfcu12G

...

Was our pleasure hosting Springfield today in a proper driving gale. Both teams battled hard, player the game the right way and showed good sportsmanship. Referee did a fantastic job as well. [#BCFAYL](#)
[@EssexCountyFA](#) [#WeOnlyDoPositive](#) [#SheCanPlay](#)



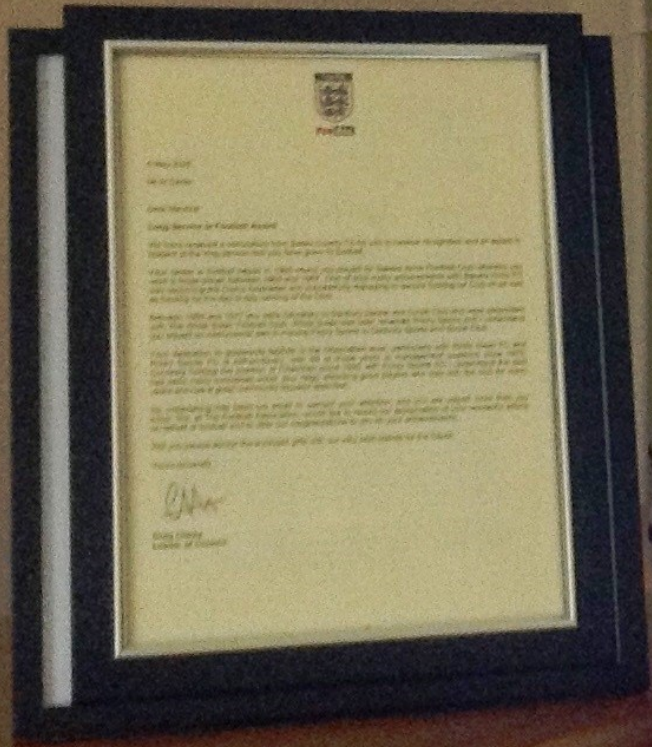
Marketing & Communications Strategy

To communicate and engage effectively with every football stakeholder in Essex



2020/21 IN NUMBERS

Website	Social Media	Communication	Branding and Commercial
 163,073 UNIQUE WEBSITE VISITORS	  INCREASING SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT ON TWITTER, FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE	 EXCELLENT RELATIONSHIP WITH BBC ESSEX	 CREATED A CONSISTENT AND HIGH-QUALITY BRAND IMAGE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A BRANDING PARTNER
 NEWS, PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTS SHARED INFORMATION	 6,032 NEW TWITTER FOLLOWERS	 GROWING AUDIENCE FOR E-MAIL MARKETING WHICH HIGHLIGHTS LOCAL ACTIVITIES	 PUBLISHED VISUALLY-APPEALING 'INFOGRAPHICS' WHICH REPRESENT COUNTY FA ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION EFFICIENTLY AND CONCISELY
 BUILT NEW PAGES ON THE COUNTY WEBSITE	 543 NEW FACEBOOK PAGE LIKES	 ANNUAL REPORT SHARES IMPORTANT INFORMATION	
 #SQUADBOOSTER (PORTAL TO PAIR PLAYERS WITH CLUBS) RECEIVED 789 TEAM ADVERTS, ATTRACTING VISITS BY 11,542 INDIVIDUALS	 IMPROVED YOUTUBE VIDEO AND AUDIO CONTENT		
	 POPULAR #CELEBRATEESSEX COMPETITION RECOGNISES VOLUNTEER HEROES		



Awards

FA and McDonald's Grassroots Football Awards

Grassroots Coach of the Year (Adult Teams): **Yasmin Hussain** (Frenford FC and the Muslimah Sports Association)

Grassroots Coach of the Year (Youth Teams): Ambar Hussain (St Clere's YFC)

Grounds Team of the Year: Stuart Blake and Ray Sherrin (Buckhurst Hill FC), Highly Commended: **Jim Robinson** (Dagenham United FC)

Grassroots Club of the Year: Great Bradfords FC

Grassroots Volunteer of the Year: Donald Glasson (Torquespeed YFC), Highly Commended: Sheryl MacRae (Southend Borough & District Football Combination)

Rising Star of the Year Award: Dan Marriage (Brandon Groves YFC), **Highly Commended:** Georgia Lockerbie (Stanway Rovers Girls FC)

Spirit of Grassroots Football: Simon Johns (Sands United Essex FC [now FC Vilomah]),
Highly Commended: Mark Gordon (FC Redwing)

Grassroots Project of the Year: **Mates FC**, Highly Commended: Sands United Essex FC (now FC Vilomah), Lancaster Lions FC, Every Man Matters FC

Grassroots Match Official of the Year: Liam Spreadbury (Blackwater & Dengie Youth League and Essex & Suffolk Border League), Highly Commended: Daniel Mann

Grassroots League of the Year: Southend Borough & District Football Combination

FA 50-Year Award

Tony Hoskins (Prittlewell Rangers FC, Standers FC, Aurora Sports FC, Cricketers FC, Blenheim Sports FC, Southend Sunday League, Southend Phoenix FC, Oakwood Sports FC, Ambleside FC, Thurrock FC, Southend Borough Combination, Southend Borough Combination Veterans League, Essex Inter-League Competition, Essex County FA), **Barry Sackett** (Leytonstone United FC), **Dennis Yellop** (Leytonstone United FC), **Derek Vernon** (Leytonstone United FC), **Ken Tunbridge** (Leytonstone United FC), **Kevin Reilly** (Leytonstone United FC), **Peter Andrew** (Leytonstone United FC), **Peter Andrews** (Leytonstone United FC)



Award of Merit (40 Years)

Alan Payne (Wickford Town FC), **Barry Sackett** (Leytonstone United FC), **Dennis Yellop** (Leytonstone United FC), **Derek Vernon** (Leytonstone United FC), **Geoff Page** (Colchester & District Youth League), **Jim Woolley** (Brentwood Sunday League), **John Bartlett** (Wickford Town FC), **Ken Tunbridge** (Leytonstone United FC), **Kevin Reilly** (Leytonstone United FC), **Peter Andrews** (Leytonstone United FC), **Robert Pashley** (Southend & Basildon Sunday League)

Outstanding Service Award (30 Years)

Andy D'Urso (Referee), **Chris Evans** (Wickford Town FC), **Gary Heard** (Referee), **Jack Warriner** (Blackwater & Dengie Youth League), **James Haynes** (Referee), **John Copeland** (Referee), **John Graham** (Brookhouse FC and Chelmsford Sunday League), **Keith Succamore** (Referee), **Lee Chilvers** (Essex Minors (Hornchurch) FC), **Michael Allen** (Referee), **Michael Ewen** (Referee), **Mick Devlin** (Referee), **Patrick Carroll** (Referee), **Philip Barham** (Referee), **Terry Hunt** (Referee)

Exemplary Service Award (20 Years)

David Ingle (Referee), **Ernie Forsyth** (Referee), **Gary Jerden** (Referee), **Geoffrey Brazier** (Referee), **Jackie Leno** (Blackwater & Dengie Youth League), **Jan Bushell** (Trinity YFC), **Jeff Stanley** (Referee), **Joseph Sansom** (Referee), **Marion Wakeling** (Blackwater & Dengie Youth League), **Mark Nicholls** (Witham Town YFC), **Martin Leno** (Blackwater & Dengie Youth League), **Michael Wood** (Blackwater & Dengie Youth League), **Ricky Johnson** (Referee), **Robert Duncombe** (Referee), **Ronnie Docherty** (Earls Hall United FC), **Trevor King** (Referee)

Long Service Certificate (10 Years)

Aaron Farmer (Referee), **Andrew Jenkins** (Referee), **Anthony Abbs** (Referee), **Chris Horsman** (Referee), **Christopher Smith** (Harwich & Parkeston YFC), **Clifford Smy** (Referee), **Clive Lodge** (Wickford Town YFC), **Craig Barnett** (Referee), **Craig Sherrin** (Buckhurst Hill FC), **Daniel Foord** (Bowers & Pitsea FC), **Dean Markwick** (Referee), **Dean Welham** (Referee), **Donald Glasson** (Torquespeed Youth FC), **Edward Davenport** (Sungate FC), **Edward Smith** (Referee), **George Lowe** (Referee), **Gordon Webb** (Referee), **Ian Butler** (Referee), **James Beal** (Referee), **James Hill** (Referee), **Jeff Caley** (Referee), **Joe Wrigley** (Referee), **John Tillet** (Referee), **John Tyson** (Referee), **Jonathan Wing** (Referee), **Joseph Earll** (Referee), **Katie Dorling** (Referee), **Keith Mitchell** (Referee), **Keith Ross** (Referee),

Kevin Hayhow (Referee), **Larry Johnson** (Wickford Town YFC), **Mark Neller** (Wickford Town YFC), **Matthew Jarvis** (Referee), **Paul Kemp** (Referee), **Paul Sturton** (Referee), **Robert Claussen** (Referee), **Robert Ray** (Referee), **Samuel Everitt** (Referee), **Sean Burnett** (Referee), **Sharon Mills** (Great Bradfords FC), **Simon Brickwood** (Referee), **Simon Caton** (Referee), **Stephen Everitt** (Referee), **Steve Buckley** (Referee), **Terry Doherty** (Brightlingsea Regent FC)

#CelebrateEssex Volunteer Awards

Young Volunteer: **Tommy Magill and Ria Lee** (Ridgeway Rovers FC)
Welfare Officer: **Maxine Ford** (Hashtag United YFC)
Footie Dad: **Ian Kendle** (Chelmsford City Ladies FC)
Football Family: **The Hunwicks** (Chadwell Heath Spartans FC)
Media Manager: **Lewis Murphy and Aaron Moore** (Harlow Town Ladies FC)
Coach (Youth): **Rob Woodcock** (Trinity YFC)
Coach (Adult): **Ben Adams** (Corinthians FC)
Footie Mum: **Dee Weare** (Weare United FC)
Treasurer: **Paul Brooker** (Valley Green YFC)
Secretary: **Christian Waugh** (Ridgeway Rovers FC)
Chairperson: **David Bird** (Academy Soccer FC)



Great Bradfords FC
@GreatBradfords

...

We are so happy to see our club chairlady recognised for 10 year service (in this role!) anyone who knows Sharon knows she has been around Great Bradfords for over 20 years and lives and breathes the club! We cannot thank her enough for everything she does!

#ESSEXFOOTBALLTHANKS

In Conclusion

The 2020/21 season has been another challenging year, but the many achievements we note as we look back in this report can be a source of real pride. Some huge progress has been made during the 2008-21 strategy period.

We now focus on continuing this momentum as part of our 'Moving Forward' 2024 strategy, which features ambitious, updated goals and objectives to ensure we continue to meet the needs of Essex football. A strong team will support with this, underpinned by the volunteers who support their leagues, clubs and teams.

We'd like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to members of the grassroots football community who we lost during the last year. Your legacies will live on. Moving forward, the ongoing success of grassroots football in Essex ensures thousands of people get to play football on a weekly basis.

We look forward to continuing to work as part of your team.

Brendan Walshe

Chief Executive and Company Secretary



...

Well done, @SBDFCL! #EssexFootballThanks

SB&DFC @SBDFCL · Jun 25, 2021

WOW!! How fantastic is this. Thank you to everyone on the league that has helped to make this happen, by making positive changes 🙌🙌 & thank you to the panel that chose our league as the winner @EssexCountyFA @McDonaldsUK @CJPhillips1982 twitter.com/EssexCountyFA/...





Essex County FA

@EssexCountyFA

...

Well done! [#EssexFootballThanks](#)

EveryManMattersFC @FC_EMM · Jun 24, 2021

Mistakes have been made in our first year but we are still learning and can only move forward as a club.

Thank you to the @EssexCountyFA for the "Highly Commended Grassroots Project of the Year"

We are just trying to do our best ❤️ [#StrongerTogether](#)



Essex County FA

@EssexCountyFA

...

Congratulations to [@fc_mates](#) for winning the Grassroots Project of the Year category of the 2021 @FA and @McDonaldsUK [#GrassrootsFootball](#) Awards in [#Essex!](#) [#GrassrootsHeroes](#) [#EssexFootballThanks](#) [@SpencerOwen](#)





Essex County Football Association

The County Office,
Springfield Lyons Approach,
Chelmsford, Essex,
CM2 5LB.

www.essexfa.com

Incorporated in Cardiff. No. 3843186

