



GLOUCESTERSHIRE FA **GRASSROOTS** **AWARDS**

2026

Celebrating the people who make the game



FRIDAY 24 JULY 2026

THORNBURY GOLF CLUB



Welcome

Grassroots football is about so much more than what happens on the pitch. It brings people together, creates opportunities and gives people of all ages a place to belong.

None of this would be possible without the incredible individuals who dedicate their time, energy and passion to the game. From coaches and referees to club officials, grounds teams and the many volunteers working behind the scenes, their commitment makes grassroots football across Gloucestershire possible every week.

The Grassroots Awards are an opportunity to recognise those who consistently go above and beyond for their clubs and communities. Every nominee has made a meaningful difference, whether by creating a welcoming environment, supporting others, developing new opportunities or simply being someone their club can always depend on.

Tonight, we come together to celebrate their achievements and offer a heartfelt thank you for everything they do. Being nominated is a fantastic achievement in itself and reflects the lasting impact each individual and club has made on those around them.

Congratulations to all of this year's nominees and award recipients. We hope you enjoy a memorable and thoroughly deserved evening of celebration.



Gloucestershire FA STAFF



David Neale

Chief Executive Officer



Matt Boucher

Head of Strategy & Delivery



Judith Langworthy

Head of Commercial & Finance



Chris Lucker

Head of Football Services



Liz Barnett

Designated Safeguarding Officer



Laura Faulkner

Club Support and Deputy
Designated Safeguarding Officer



Matt Counsell

Participation & Development
Manager



Sam Myatt

Equality & Workforce Development
Manager



Skye Smith

Football Development Officer -
Women & Girls

Gloucestershire FA STAFF



Toby Colliver

Football Development Officer -
Disability



Rosie Pike

Football Development Officer -
Facilities and Investment



**Alex Gaona-
Gonzalez**

Coach Development Lead



Martin McConachie

Football Services Officer



Dave Williams

Football Services Officer



Lisa Innes

Facilities and Hospitality Manager



Ed Malin

Finance Apprentice



Liam Cole

Football Business Administration
Apprentice



Jonny Gilder

Marketing and Communications
Contractor

WHY WE LOVE GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

“

I love grassroots football because I have seen first hand how it brings people together, creates opportunities and gives people a real sense of belonging.

I want to say a genuine thank you to everyone who continues to make the game possible.

Matt Counsell

“

I really enjoy seeing the confidence, expertise and teamwork develop in grassroots football. We really appreciate all the time our volunteers put into making football fun and safe for players. They could not gain such important skills and friendships without this.

Liz Barnett

“

To every volunteer, thank you – you are the lifeblood of grassroots football and our clubs simply couldn't do it without you.

Toby Colliver

“

A huge shout-out to all of our amazing volunteers and especially to the groundskeepers! The game would not happen without you!

Rosie Pike

“

I love grassroots football because it is a place for all to enjoy and get involved. I think what is special about it too is that it is run by volunteers selflessly giving up their time to create such great opportunities for people to play!

Skye Smith

“

I love grassroots football because there is a great sense of community where anyone can get involved, volunteers are at the forefront of what we do and without their support and engagement we wouldn't have these big successes.

Liam Cole

“

Grassroots Football is a sense of community that brings people together for 90 minutes each week - often creating friends for life and long-standing memories. Without the Grassroots Volunteers working behind the scenes, none of this is possible and tonight is a great way to recognise the hard work that goes on when nobody else is watching! Thank you!

Sam Myatt

“Grassroots football provides participants not just a great outlet for physical activity, it also is great for building lifelong friendships and a belonging. Football clubs don't just 'happen', running a club is a big job and the more volunteers a club has, it helps spread the load and ensures the clubs longevity and success.

Dave Williams

“Grassroots football is an eclectic mix of some fantastic characters allied with super committed football folk & highly talented volunteers.

Football, and the community in general, is lucky to have people like this but more are needed to continue the great work. To those already here, "Thank you so much". To those not here yet... "Come and join us!".

Martin McConachie

“It is pretty simple... grassroots football simply doesn't happen without the countless hours, commitment, and dedication volunteers give to the game we all love so much. Nights like tonight are a fantastic opportunity to recognise and reward volunteers.

Everyone should be incredibly proud of what they do and the impact their role, no matter how small or big, has on so many lives within football in Gloucestershire.

Matt Boucher

“I love grassroots football as it is a sport that everyone can be involved with, whether it's playing, supporting, refereeing or an administration role within a club or league. Football is great for fitness, it's fun and it gets the local community together. Our Volunteers make sure the environment is safe, inclusive, and enjoyable for all who want to participate and they do this for free, in their own spare time for the love of the sport!

Laura Faulkner

“I love grassroots football because it takes me back to my childhood, when football was all about having fun and enjoying the game.

At the core of it all are the volunteers, whose commitment and dedication make opportunities for so many players possible.

Alex Gaona-Gonzalez

“Grassroots football brings together people from all backgrounds to play one beautiful game, without volunteers there is no game of football to be played. From the waterlogged pitches to the orange slices after a game and scorching summer tournaments, there is nothing I would change about grassroots football!

Ed Malin



About Brunel Trophies & Awards

Brunel Trophies & Awards is your trusted local partner for football awards. Based in Clevedon, North Somerset, we specialise in supplying high-quality trophies, medals, and engraving services.

Established in 1989, we combine traditional craftsmanship with modern engraving technology and printing processes to offer a wide range of trophies and glassware. We're delighted to partner with Gloucestershire FA again this year in celebrating the achievements of players and managers.

What We Do

- Supply sports trophies, cups, medals, shields, and plaques
- Provide bespoke engraving and printing (including laser and sandblasting)
- Create customised awards for clubs, organisations, and businesses
- Offer high-quality glassware at competitive prices
- Cater for both small local orders and large events
- Deliver fast turnaround times with excellent customer service

Supporting Grassroots Football

Grassroots football deserves recognition. Every season, thousands of youth and amateur players, supported by dedicated volunteers and local communities, rely on end-of-season presentations to celebrate their achievements.

At Brunel Trophies & Awards, we're here to help. As a complete awards partner, we provide everything clubs need in one place - saving organisers time and reducing the hassle of managing multiple suppliers. We also offer discounts where budget constraints are a concern.



Get In Touch

We'd love to discuss your upcoming club requirements.

Call us on 01275 871720 or email info@brunelengraving.co.uk

Thank you to **Brunel Trophies** for sponsoring our Grassroots Awards.

Tonight's Schedule

- 6:30pm** — Guest Arrival Drinks & Networking
- 7:00pm** — Opening Speech - Errol Thompson GFA Chair
- 7:05pm** — Dinner
- 8:30pm** — Awards Presentation
- 10:00pm** — End of Grassroots Awards

Awards Running Order

New Volunteer of the Year
Grounds Team of the Year
Match Official of the Year
League of the Year
Positive Behaviour Award
Young Volunteer of the Year
Coach of the Year – Disability Pathway
Coach of the Year – Female Pathway
Coach of the Year – Male Pathway
Bobby Moore Award
Lioness Award
Club of the Year



Nominee | New Volunteer of the Year

Andrew Baldwin

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

I think grassroots football is amazing because it's for everyone. It doesn't matter what race or religion you are, or whether you have a disability. Grassroots football is for everyone.

My team, for instance, has twenty boys from fifteen different cultural backgrounds, including my son, who is autistic. These boys have been playing football together for the last four years, and they are all very good friends.

It has really brought our community together.

Your favourite moment/memory

My favourite memory, it has got to be winning our first game in the league.

After losing our first 7 matches, the boys finally got their desired win, and the excitement in them is something to remember



*“Andy has been nothing short of a **positive burst of happiness** every minute of this season.”*

Award sponsored by



Nominee | New Volunteer of the Year



Dave Price

How many years have you been volunteering?

I have been volunteering in grassroots football for just under two years. I started by helping out at training sessions when there were only a handful of ladies attending. Since then, I've been lucky enough to help grow the team, support the players' development, and prepare them for their very first season.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

What I love most about grassroots football is seeing people grow, both on and off the pitch. It's about much more than football, it's about creating a team that supports one another, socialises together, has each other's backs, stays active while building confidence and becoming a family. Being able to give the ladies something that's just for them, while supporting both their mental and physical wellbeing, has been incredibly rewarding.

Your favourite moment/memory

One of my favourite memories was watching the team walk onto the pitch for their first-ever friendly wearing their kit. Although we lost the game, it didn't matter. Seeing how proud they were of themselves and the effort they had put in was a special moment. That was the day the belief really started that we could compete, improve, and win games together. Seeing the smiles on everyone's faces as they came off the pitch is something I'll never forget and something I'll always be proud of.

“Dave embodies everything you would hope for in a new volunteer. His **enthusiasm**, **reliability** and **willingness** to get involved have made a **significant impact** in a very short period”



Award sponsored by



T H WHITE GROUND CARE



About T H WHITE Groundcare

T H WHITE Groundcare supports clubs, schools and local authorities in maintaining high-quality natural turf pitches, from grassroots facilities through to elite playing surfaces. With decades of experience in sports turf machinery and maintenance, we combine expert product knowledge with industry insight to help maximise the value of your Football Foundation (GFA) grant.

Our team provides tailored guidance throughout the process, from selecting the right equipment for your application to delivering dependable after-sales support. Backed by skilled engineers and a comprehensive parts inventory, we ensure your machinery operates at peak performance, helping you maintain consistent pitch quality with minimal downtime.

Machinery, Service & Support

T H WHITE Groundcare offers a complete solution for your grounds maintenance needs, including sales, servicing and parts across a portfolio of leading brands such as Toro, Iseki, Wessex, Ventrac, Amazone, Kress and Ferris.

Whether you're investing in new equipment or looking for cost-effective used machinery, we work closely with you to identify the right solution for your pitch requirements and budget. Our year-round servicing and parts support ensure your equipment remains reliable throughout the season.

Supporting Your Football Foundation Grant

The Football Foundation provides funding of up to £50,000, covering up to 75% of eligible project costs, helping organisations invest in essential grounds maintenance equipment.

T H WHITE Groundcare can help you build a practical, compliant machinery package tailored to your site.

Our experienced team will guide you through equipment selection, ensuring your application is supported with the right specification and justification to maximise your chances of success.

Get In Touch

Speak to our dedicated groundcare specialists today for expert advice on your Football Foundation grant application and machinery requirements. We're here to help you get the most from your investment, both now and for seasons to come.

Thank you to **T H White** for sponsoring our **Grounds Team of the Year** award



Nominee | Grounds Team of the Year

"This is a full time volunteer role for John and he **never lets us down.**"

Award sponsored by



John Winter

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

As you can imagine I have seen hundreds of children pass through our club over the years building friendships with each other that last a lifetime.

I am just starting to see the next generation of previous players families rejoining our Club which in itself I find very rewarding.

Your favourite moment/memory

My favourite memory is something that fortunately happens every year and is the starting up of our under 5s each season, when I see these boys and girls smiles on their faces and the excitement it really recharges the batteries , but this can only work when there are volunteers at the club willing to give up their time and effort to which I feel I should share this award with.

25 Years Volunteering



Nominee | Grounds Team of the Year

Elliot Bostock

How many years have you been volunteering?

10 years - 2 years as groundskeeper

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

Seeing friendships and memories being created and shared. Helping children grow in confidence through the game we all enjoy.

Your favourite moment/memory

My favourite memory is travelling home and away with my Dad and Gramps to games when I was younger. Both supported me wherever I was playing. Also winning a few trophies along the way.

Award sponsored by

T H WHITE
GROUND CARE



“What makes Elliot stand out is his **unbelievable commitment** and **selflessness**. He looks after all the club’s pitches on his own and regularly gives up his evenings after a full day at work to prepare them. Seeing him out in the dark during winter with a head torch marking pitches shows the level of dedication he has. He asks for nothing in return and does it purely for the **love of the club and grassroots football.**”

Nominee | Match Official of the Year



Joshua Maydew

How many years have you been volunteering?

I have been a referee for 2 years now.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

I have been part of grassroots football since the age of 6, playing for many teams as goalkeeper and I am about to start the coming season with an U18s team. Over these years my love of football has grown and now I want to help others enjoy football as much as I do.

Your favourite moment/memory

My favourite moment has to be being given the opportunity to referee at this year's GFA cup finals.

*“Joshua always plays a **fair game** with explanations for his decisions, and this is recognised with **positive feedback** from managers and parents.”*

Nominee | Match Official of the Year

Harry Evans

How many years have you been volunteering?

I've been doing refereeing for a year and a half.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

I love grassroots football because it gives younger and older generations the opportunity to play locally and enjoy the game.

Personally, I also love the sense of community it creates. When I was 13, I was diagnosed with Achilles tendinitis, and Keith, the chairman of the club I played for at the time, Ashleworth Woodpeckers, was by my side throughout. He also helped me get into refereeing.

Your favourite moment/memory

Being a linesman at Gloucester City stadium In my qualifying period in a Under 13 county cup semi final game.



“He loves refereeing and always wants to make sure every single player on that pitch; coaches and parents all have a **positive attitude** and respect to him and others.”

Nominee | League of the Year

“They run a **brilliant league** emphasising on the child's enjoyment”



Cotswold Youth League

How many years have you been volunteering?

In terms of volunteering, collectively we have over 23 years of service within grassroots football. The Cotswold Youth League (formerly the Cotswold Friendly League) was established by Members of Avonvale United FC in 2003 in order to provide more localised youth football for established clubs within a 10-mile radius of Tetbury, Gloucestershire and from its small beginnings it has continued to go from strength to strength each year. Colin, who was part of that initial team has continued to play a role on the leagues management committee ever since, serving at various times as Chair, Fixture Secretary, Treasurer and occasionally all three at once!

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

Grassroots football is the heartbeat of every community, bringing people together through the game we all love while creating opportunities, friendships and lifelong memories for players, coaches, volunteers and families alike. Seeing children develop both on and off the pitch, while helping clubs and communities thrive, is what makes it all so rewarding.

Your favourite moment/memory

There have been countless fantastic memories over the years, but a few stand out from this season in particular:

1. Receiving our first ever League Accreditation.
2. Being selected as a pilot league for the new 3v3 format, which also gave us the opportunity to take 20 players and parents to St George's Park, a truly unforgettable experience for everyone involved.



Nominee | League of the Year

Severn Valley Youth

How many years have you been volunteering?

As a League Committee we have many years of experience across Youth football as all of our committee have held several volunteering roles within local clubs as well as the Gloucester and Stroud Youth Leagues prior to our merger in 2016.

Your favourite moment/memory

Since forming as the Severn Valley Youth League, we have continued to grow with the number of teams and registered players growing year-on-year. As well as being able to provide a regular U17 division is a success that we have spent a while trying to build. There is no doubt that being responsible for over 5,000 players regularly playing football across Gloucestershire on a Saturday morning is a highlight - Hearing the positive comments made by new clubs who wish to join the league saying what they have heard from our current members makes them want to join gives us the motivation to keep going and provide the best possible offer to everyone involved.



“The league provide support to every team to ensure they achieve their **full potential.**”

Nominee | Positive Behaviour Award

“Her **dedication** over more than a decade has helped shape a **safe, welcoming and inclusive environment** for everyone involved.”



Caroline Hayward

How many years have you been volunteering?

I've been volunteering with City of Gloucester WFC (formerly Gloucester City LFC) for nearly 16 years. What began as helping out on a Saturday morning during my daughter's training sessions quickly grew into a long-term commitment, taking on the role of Welfare and Safeguarding Officer alongside the many responsibilities that come with grassroots football.

Your favourite moment/memory

Our club continues to grow and evolve each year. While it's impossible to choose a single standout moment, what I'm most proud of is the resilience, determination, and commitment of our volunteers. They are the foundation of everything we do for our players, and thanks to them, we look forward to celebrating our 30th anniversary next year.



Why do you love Grassroots Football?

For me, grassroots football is about far more than the game. It's about building confidence, developing social and communication skills, and nurturing leadership - often without players even realising it. I'm especially proud of how our players, across the club, connect through themed training sessions, various celebrations and charity events, creating a strong sense of belonging.

As they progress, we encourage players to give back, becoming young referees or working towards coaching qualifications, so they can continue their journey in the game.

Nominee | Positive Behaviour Award

Helena Cutler

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

It has the power to transform lives. Launching a team for children with learning disabilities and additional needs has been incredibly rewarding - watching players who were previously excluded from mainstream football find their place, build confidence, and grow together is why we do this.

Your favourite moment/memory

Hosting our own pan-disability tournament. Seeing clubs like Aston Villa and West Brom join us for a day of pure joy, where the kids were finally playing the sport they love without barriers, was an unforgettable experience.



“Helena has **always worked several times harder than anyone I** ever seen before all for the reward of seeing our children and soon adults grow, develop skills and have confidence within themselves”



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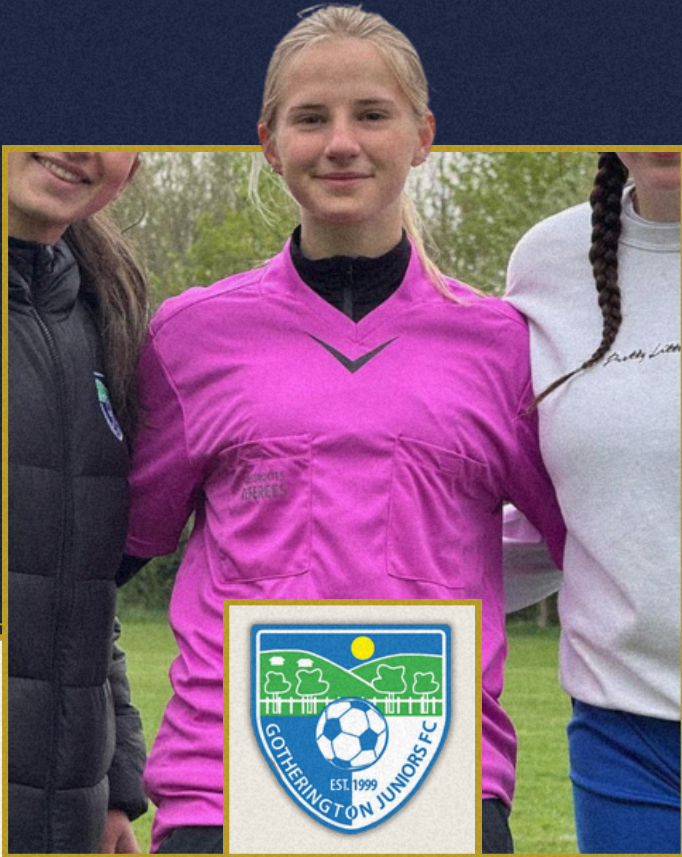
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Nominee | Young Volunteer of the Year

“An incredibly valued asset to our football club”

Award sponsored by



Rosie Hillam

How many years have you been volunteering?

I have been volunteering with Gothington Jaguars for the past three years. During that time, I have supported the coaching of our Under-7 and Under-8 teams every week, regularly referee matches for younger age groups, and volunteer as a linesperson for the club's veterans team whenever required. Alongside my volunteering, I have played grassroots football for the past eight years and remain actively involved in all aspects of club life.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

Grassroots football has been a huge part of my life for the past eight years. It has given me far more than just the opportunity to play football; it has provided friendship, confidence, support, and a real sense of belonging. I enjoy helping younger players develop their skills and confidence, and I love seeing them grow both as footballers and as individuals.

Grassroots football has been a positive and important part of my life and has provided stability, purpose, and support during a challenging period at home. Being involved with the club has had a significant positive impact on my mental wellbeing and has reinforced the values of teamwork, resilience, respect, and helping others.

Your favourite moment/memory

It is difficult to choose just one moment because so many of my favourite memories come from being involved in different areas of the club. Seeing a younger player score their first goal, master a new skill, or grow in confidence after weeks of encouragement is incredibly rewarding and reminds me why I enjoy volunteering so much.

I am also particularly proud of qualifying as a referee and being trusted to officiate matches across the club. Knowing that I can contribute as a player, coach, referee, and volunteer has been a real achievement. Some of my favourite memories are the simple ones—training with teammates, playing football with the coaches, helping younger players on matchdays, and being part of a club community that supports one another both on and off the pitch. Football has given me opportunities, friendships, and experiences that I will always value.

Nominee | Young Volunteer of the Year

“Owen **works tirelessly** during the week managing other volunteers and pulling content together.”

Award sponsored by



Owen Mason

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

Why I enjoy working in grassroots football: It just feels like such a close knit and welcoming community. Building such good friendships with staff, players and fans was very rewarding.

It helped shape me as a person and gave me so much more confidence in myself. Best three years of my life with the best people.

Your favourite moment/memory

Being a part of the media team that was working on Cheltenham Town's fantastic run to the Adobe Women's FA Cup Fourth Round in the 2024/25 season. The buzz around the team around a history making season was just absolutely incredible, and something I'll never forget.



Nominee | Disability Pathway Coach of the Year

Brandon Gardener

How many years have you been volunteering?

I've been volunteering with Bristol Rovers Ability Football Club for the last three or four years in that time we've done and had some amazing times both on and off the pitch.

Your favourite moment/memory

My favourite memory is honestly the joy and happiness the players and others around me have just by simply playing football. Be it winning or losing, they always have a smile on their face, because to me, that's what this is all about. I think back to the moment where the players were receiving their medals after winning the league for the first time and the proud happy, feeling that was around the club was fantastic to see.

I think that's why I love doing what I do in terms of being able to not just provide a place where our players just turn up and play football, but give them something meaningful and memories that they will take and hold onto and cherish forever.



“Brandon's guidance both footballing and personally to players within the complex world of disability football has enabled our players to take part in our Beautiful Game and **enjoy the thrill of competitive sport and achievement of success.**”

Nominee | Disability Pathway Coach of the Year

“Olie is the **epitome** of what it means to be an inclusive coach. The **smiles and laughs** coming from the children within his sessions are second to none.”



Olie Knapman

Your favourite moment/memory

I am new to the volunteer to football with only 2 years under my belt.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

What I love about grassroots football is the new talent coming through to continue the game.

Your favourite moment/memory

My favourite moment/memory is seeing the joy on our comets faces.



GoCardless

About GoCardless

GoCardless is a global leader in bank payment solutions, making it easy for organisations of all sizes to collect recurring and one-off payments directly from bank accounts. Founded in 2011 and trusted by over 100,000 businesses worldwide - from household names to local clubs and charities - GoCardless removes the hassle of chasing payments, handling cash, or managing card fees. We're on a mission to make payments simpler, more reliable, and more affordable for everyone.

What we can offer clubs

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Get In Touch

Getting started with GoCardless is straightforward - clubs can be up and running quickly with no technical expertise required. We integrate with a wide range of club management and accounting tools, so your existing systems keep working seamlessly. And because payments go directly between bank accounts, there are no card networks involved, which means lower fees and greater reliability. If you'd like to find out how GoCardless could work for your club, visit gocardless.com/g/football-clubs or reach out to our team - we'd love to help your club thrive.

**Thank you to GoCardless for sponsoring our
Female Pathway Coach of the Year award**



Nominee | Female Pathway Coach of the Year

Award sponsored by

GoCardless

Steph Hill

How many years have you been volunteering?

I've been volunteering since mid 2018 after I was diagnosed with cancer and struggled to play. I have managed to complete my UEFA B licence last summer.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

I love grassroots football for its inclusiveness, the camaraderie and family feel around the clubs.

Your favourite moment/memory

My favourite memory is actually our last game of the season this year. We were 3-0 down vs Bishops Cleeve at halftime with a bare 11-some of those injured and came back to win the game 4-3! I think I ran the length of the pitch



“Steph is a **ray of sunshine** whatever’s going on, full of humour and will treat everybody equally. She truly shares a **unique connection** with kids. She is always happy to go the extra mile, whether that’s in the kids age groups or with her ladies”

Nominee | Female Pathway Coach of the Year

“Russell has helped shape the club through his **hard work, passion and commitment** to developing girls’ football. From supporting players over nearly a decade to helping the ladies’ team reach their first final this year, his contribution has been incredible. He is a **role model** within the club and someone who truly embodies the values of **inclusion, opportunity and community**”



Your favourite moment/memory

I have lots of great memories and highlights whilst coaching, but seeing players that have been with me at 7 and 8 years old through to U18s, making their debut in women’s football this year was a very proud moment.

Award sponsored by
GoCardless

Russell Flagg

How many years have you been volunteering?

This has been my 10th season coaching in grassroots football, all in the female pathway.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

I love grassroots football because it gives everyone an opportunity to play the best sport in the world regardless of ability or previous experience. Seeing players who are completely new to football progress and also fall in love with the game is the best thing about being a coach. Seeing the bond players develop and the excitement as they attend a training session or match is very rewarding.



Nominee | Male Pathway Coach of the Year

“With his **dedication and commitment** towards the club and the wider community, Liam continues to **raise standards, inspire others, and strengthen the inclusive culture** that defines our football environment”



Liam Smith

Your favourite moment/memory

One of my proudest memories was being part of the committee team that helped shape Bristol Central's development and contributed to the club being recognised as Grassroots Club of the Year in 2015. As both a coach and committee member, it was incredibly rewarding to see the hard work of so many volunteers recognised. Beyond that achievement, my greatest satisfaction comes from seeing the long-term impact grassroots football can have on people's lives.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

Grassroots football has given me the opportunity to help young people develop not only as players, but as confident, resilient individuals. I love seeing players grow over time, build friendships, overcome challenges, and develop a lifelong love for the game. Being part of that journey and supporting families within the local community is incredibly rewarding.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of mentoring players who have progressed into academy football and supporting young coaches on their development journeys into academy environments. Seeing individuals grow in confidence, achieve their goals, and remain involved in the game is what continues to inspire me to volunteer.

Nominee | Male Pathway Coach of the Year

“One of the things that stands out most about Steven as a coach is the **respect he has earned** from the players he works with.”



Steven Woodruff

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

Grassroots football means so much more to me than simply winning matches. It is a privilege to watch children grow, not only into better footballers, but into confident, respectful, and resilient young people. Seeing their personalities develop, their confidence flourish, and their friendships grow is what makes every training session and every match worthwhile. I love the banter, the togetherness, and the sense of belonging that grassroots football creates for players, coaches, and families alike. The victories are unforgettable, but the biggest lessons often come from defeat. Helping young players understand how to lose with dignity, learn from disappointment, and use it as motivation to come back stronger is one of the most rewarding parts of coaching. Knowing I've played even a small part in shaping not just better footballers, but better people, is why I love grassroots football.

Your favourite moment/memory

My favourite grassroots memory was when we (Yate United U14's) won promotion to Div 2, and then followed that up by winning promotion to Div 1 in our U15's season. Competing in the top division in our final year as U16's and not looking out of place. It wasn't just the success of winning two league titles on the bounce, it was the team as a whole becoming young adults as friends, all working together and encouraging each other to succeed. We were subsequently asked to establish the U18's at Chipping Sodbury and play in the mid-week floodlit league against academies like Cheltenham Town. That group of lads are all still best friends to this day, into their early 20's. Seeing those decent young men in the pub and them always having time to have a chat and a banter is what coaching is all about.

Nominee | Bobby Moore Award

“Nobody forgets Lyn, in fact, Lyn may be the reason people stay and remember Wessex for what it is!”



Lyn Hughes



Why do you love Grassroots Football?

I love grassroots football because it's more than just a game to me. It's about giving people a place to belong, to grow and to feel proud of something.

I've seen players develop, friendships form and confidence grow.

Grassroots football is where passion lives, and being part of that, helping it run and watching it thrive, is something I genuinely care deeply about.



Your favourite moment/memory

My favourite moment was when the lads updated our club shield, placed it on the wall at our home ground and invited me to the unveiling.

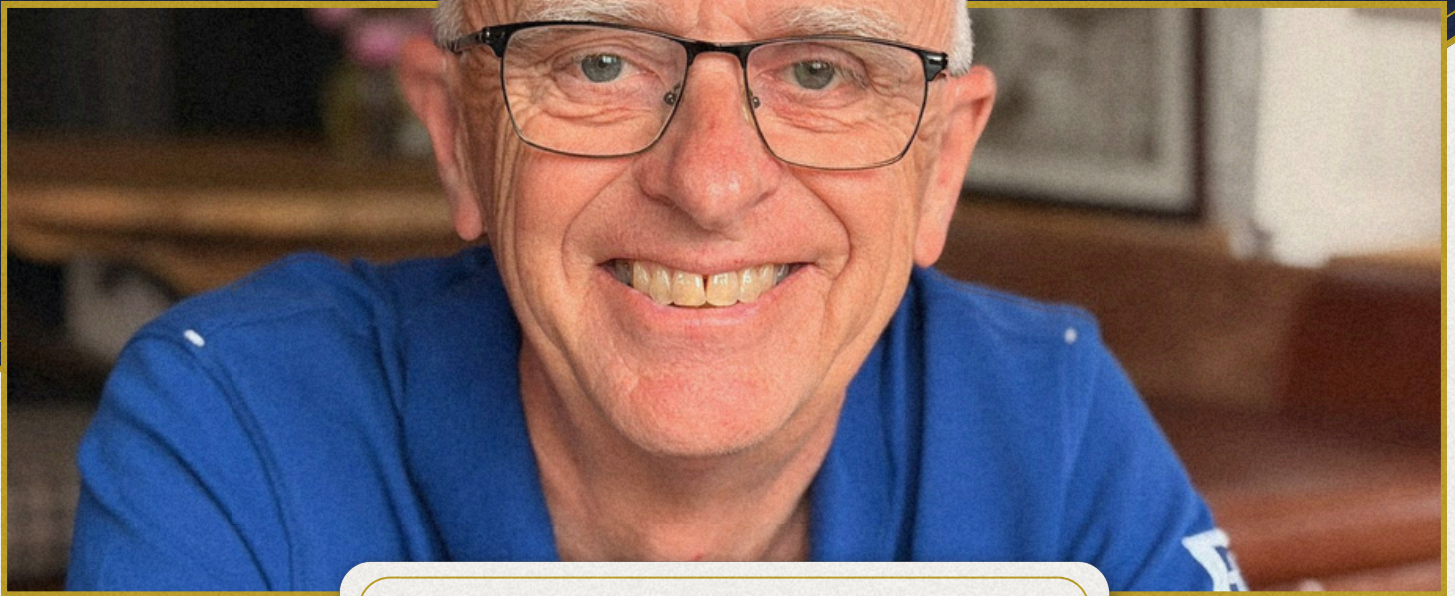
I was expecting to see the wyvern looking more up to date, and there had been a discussion about adding the year the club was formed. But then they pointed out something I hadn't immediately spotted. Within the loop of the wyvern's tail, they had added my initials!

I felt so loved, respected and accepted.

33 Years Volunteering

Nominee | Bobby Moore Award

“He is simply the **epitome** of what a great grassroots volunteer should be”



David Pitts

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

Grassroots football gives children and adults of all abilities the opportunity to enjoy football and belong to a team building friendships that sometimes last a lifetime.

It's about helping players improve, not just as footballers but as people. They learn so many skills: teamwork, confidence, respect, discipline and more.

Your favourite moment/memory

I don't have a favourite moment as such, but my greatest pleasure has been seeing Leckhampton Rovers grow from a single team to the sixty teams registered for the forthcoming season, to include Veterans, Men's, Women's, Youth and more recently our all-inclusive Comets team.

30 Years Volunteering

Nominee | Lioness Award



Helen Brain

How many years have you been volunteering?

I have been volunteering since the start of the 2009/2010 season. Below is a background of the different volunteer roles I have done in that time.

I have played with Bristol and West LFC since September 2002 after finishing University. I started volunteering for the club as club secretary at the start of the 2009/10 season. I continued in this role for the club until the end of the 2024/25 season.

Part of the club secretary role meant I had dealings with the league and so in 2009 I also volunteered to join the Gloucestershire County Women's League committee as player registration secretary. At the start of the 2016 season my role changed on the league committee and I became secretary which is a role I have held since.

When my boy was old enough to play club football (2019/2020) I had a brief 2 season spell as a coach with the U6 and U7 squad before he decided to stop playing.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

I love grassroots football because of the community atmosphere and its inclusion of everyone. It provides such an amazing opportunity for anyone to meet a whole host of people who you would not otherwise have the opportunity to do.

Your favourite moment/memory

I have had a lot of good memories but I think my favourite would be winning the League Cup with my Club. I have chosen this one as it combines both my team and the league. It meant I could be proud of both my volunteer roles at the same time.

“Helen Brain has been a **role model** and **change maker** for grassroots women's football for over 20 years. Her contribution spans playing, leadership, league development and coaching, **making her impact both immediate and long-lasting.**”



GLoucestershire County
WOMENS FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Nominee | Lioness Award

“Ian is quite **simply amazing**. He wears so many different hats for our club and girls’ football in general, it’s difficult to convey in words the extent of what he does and who for. He works **tirelessly** to ensure everything runs smoothly and genuinely helps a multitude of people (both children and adults) every day.”



Your favourite moment/memory

Tonight of course, seeing years of progression culminating in Charlton Rovers entering the 2026/27 with a full collective of girls in every age from u7 to u16.

Ian Swales

How many years have you been volunteering?

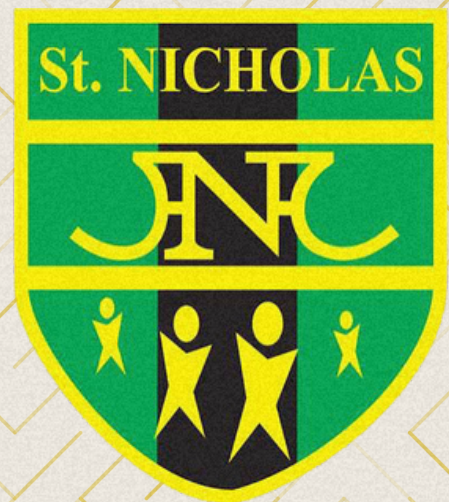
24 years and counting, across a wide range of roles, including Mixed Youth, Girls Youth, Men’s football, refereeing, and various League administrative positions. Most recently, heading up the Girls’ section at Charlton Rovers, for over 200 girls across 15 teams, supporting their development and participation in the game.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

Having been involved in 'the game' since a young age, it is solely about people—the smiles, the friendships, and life-skills the game brings is invaluable. Being part of it and watching players grow both as footballers and more importantly as individuals over time is incredibly rewarding.

Nominee | Club of the Year

“We are extremely proud that this club acts as a **beacon within the local community**”



St Nicholas Youth FC

Your favourite moment/memory

Last season saw the club have representation for both boys and girls in every age group, from u6 through to u18. We are extremely proud of our girls section, and next season we will have more girls teams than boys.

Our partnership with Chipping Sodbury Town will only enhance the player pathway, allowing all players to continue into adult football, whilst benefitting from a similar culture and ethos - it truly will feel like one club.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

The club Philosophy is built around fun, enjoyment and participation for all, regardless of ability.

We are a community focused club, all are welcome and we aim to provide the best possible grassroots football journey for every member.

How many years have you been volunteering?

Club was formed in 1979, with 2 boys teams. Over the years the club has grown to 38 teams, 620 members and over 180 volunteers.

Words from Andy Paget

Nominee | Club of the Year

“Parents describe S.O.F.C. as ‘**the heart of the village**’ and ‘**a place where every child feels seen.**’”



Stoke Orchard Youth FC

How many years have you been volunteering?

I have volunteered in grassroots football for 12 years across two spells, first managing and coaching my sons' youth teams and local youth club sides, and now proudly involved with my grandchildren's teams. Throughout that time, I've focused on helping provide good-quality, local football for young players.

Why do you love Grassroots Football?

Grassroots football gives children a place to be active, learn new skills and feel part of a team. I believe every community should have accessible opportunities for young people to play and develop. Being able to help create that locally is what keeps me committed to volunteering.

Words from David Cooper

Your favourite moment/memory

My most significant moment has been helping to create Stoke Orchard Youth FC as a legacy to my late grandson, Ezra. After his passing, and recognising the lack of local opportunities for children, we chose to establish a club that would offer something positive for the community. Watching it grow into a thriving part of village life is something I'm very proud of.

