



Herefordshire Football Association

Annual Report – 2022-23

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Introduction



Chair – Steve Willmot

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report.

It has been another very busy 12 months, with the Board of Directors meeting every 6 weeks to receive reports from the CEO Alan Darfi, together with reports from other members of staff.

We have continued to organise and support the development of football for a wide range of participants, both on our 3G pitch at the SSAFA County Ground and across the County. Over the 2022-23 season this included activities covering male and female adult and junior, walking football, disability football, Man v Fat, Veterans League, Super 6s small-sided, Armed Forces, Wildcats and Schools. We have also run both a Girls and Boys Development centre with Hereford FC and continue to enjoy a close working relationship with the club. It was very pleasing to note that the Girls Development Centre was selected by the FA to form part of their emerging talent pathway, amongst notable names such as Arsenal and Man City, to name but a few.

Numerous festivals were organised during the summer including our now annual Thank You Trophy, a small-sided tournament with all proceeds going to SSAFA Herefordshire the Armed Forces Charity and the NHS. We also ran a successful Refugee Festival and have worked closely with this group over the year. Huge thanks go to all who have made this group feel welcome, including through donating equipment and providing opportunities for participation.

We have continued to develop a portfolio of health and wellbeing initiatives for the good of the County and are regularly attending care homes providing support for Dementia and Alzheimer's sufferers. I would like to thank members of the Inclusion and Diversity Committee for their hard work during the year advising on this and other key projects.

Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is an essential part of the HFA work and our new Designated Safeguarding Officer has settled in quickly. We passed an external NSPCC assessment in this area during the 2022-23 season and are anticipating another audit shortly in line with FA timeframes. Thank you to everyone for their hard work in this key area.

The Herefordshire Football League have been able to appoint a referee to all games despite a number of referees being promoted to Hellenic League matches. Great credit must go to Ian Jervis the League's Appointments Secretary who makes the appointments.

The Premier Division has retained its Step 7 status ensuring we have been able to attract some quality teams from outside Herefordshire, making it a very popular League with the winners able to join the Hellenic League.

Staff surveys have been undertaken which indicate that staff are happier than many other County FAs in England. This is particularly pleasing for the Board and we continue to be impressed with the excellent range of work produced by the team.

Unfortunately, the FA has confirmed that the FA grant to our County will be reducing by £25,000 per year on an ongoing basis. Herefordshire is one of the smaller Counties in England and this is the basis for this reduction. Whilst the Board is clearly disappointed with this outcome, particularly given the excellent work produced by the HFA, which has been acknowledged by the FA who regularly use the HFA as examples of best-practice across the network, it has been confirmed that there is no further opportunity to challenge this decision. The Board of Directors have therefore agreed that all discipline administration will be outsourced from 1 July 2024, in line with a number of other Counties. This will result in some internal workforce changes which the Board were keen to avoid, but have unfortunately become unavoidable. On a positive side, this does enable us to take a more supportive role in terms of advising our members on any discipline action.

We are actively working to be fully compliant with the Governance Code by June 2024. This is a huge piece of work but one that has now been confirmed as being mandatory. Thankfully, the HFA Board had already agreed to be compliant so are quite far along the journey already.

The Development team have been actively supporting teams to improve their facilities and equipment and two more 3G pitch applications are moving forward. These sites will result in increased playing opportunities with better facilities being quoted as the number one thing that people across the game desire.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all members of Council, Board, the HFA staff plus all the many hard-working volunteers who do so much to ensure that football continues to thrive within the County.

Steve Willmot

HFA Chair



CEO– Alan Darfi

As is always the case, it has been another extremely busy year at the HFA SSAFA County Ground, with a number of key successes as we approach the final year of our 2021-24 strategy.

I am always very conscious of the fact that our achievements could not be delivered without the hard work of both the HFA team and wider volunteer network, including our Board, Council and Committee members. We are extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated workforce across the County and I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to all of the volunteers involved in the game, whose hard work and professionalism is essential, ensuring the game continues to thrive across Herefordshire.

As set out in the review of our performance against strategy, we are progressing well and are on-track to meet the vast majority of what were very ambitious targets. Whilst this should be celebrated, we cannot afford to take our eye off the ball and must remain focused on delivering our operational plan for the year, to ensure successful completion.

What is even more pleasing is that all of these successes have been delivered despite ongoing financial challenges, which are set to continue into the next funding cycle. Whilst these continue to add additional pressures, the HFA Board has agreed a plan to offset the reducing FA Grant income, which we are delivering well against. The HFA Board has had to take some very difficult decisions in order to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the organisation and I would like to place on record my thanks for their ongoing leadership and support.

As we approach the end of this strategic cycle, it is clear that there lies ahead another busy year. One of the main projects this year will be achieving the FA's Governance Code, a gold standard award for best-practice governance, which will result in a number of key changes across the organisation, ensuring we continue to develop as a modern, forward-thinking organisation. As part of this, the HFA will also be releasing its first-ever Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, which will further cement the excellent work delivered across this area.

Thank you again to everyone for their support and I hope you enjoy our first public-facing annual review, which you will note now includes much more detail, to assist in terms of

understanding both the structure of the organisation and the work delivered by the HFA Team.

As always, I and the HFA team remain available and are always happy to take on-board feedback and suggestions.

Alan Darfi

HFA CEO

Vision, Mission, Values

Vision -

A community united by the power of football,
with football opportunities For All

Mission -

To develop, promote and support positive, safe and inclusive football
opportunities for the benefit of our community.

Values -

We are Welcoming
We act with Integrity
We are Open
We strive for Excellence
We are Progressive

HFA Team

CEO -

Alan Darfi

Football Development Manager -

Dan Chance

Football Development Officer -

Scott Russell

Football Development Officer -

George Leyshon-James

Football Development Assistant -

Kyle Williams

Football Services Manager -

Paul Cotton

Football Services Officer (Discipline) -

Diane Phillips

Football Services Assistant -

Ben Archer

Referee Appointments Secretary (Herefordshire Football League) -

Ian Jervis

Board, Council and Committee Members

HFA Board

Steve Willmot

(Chair - HFA Council Elected)

Sharon Fellowes

(Vice-Chair - HFA Council Elected)

Fred Lord

(Senior Independent Non-Executive - Independent)

Marian Davis

(Board Safeguarding Champion - Independent)

Steve Field

(Finance - Independent)

Joanie Roberts

(Commercial & Marketing - Independent)

Paul Tompkins

(HFA FA Representative – Council Elected)

Bryan Bouston

(Council Elected)

Kevin Bishop

(Council Elected)

Graham Goodfellow

(Council Elected)

Colin Taylor

(Council Elected)

Alan Darfi

(HFA CEO – Ex Officio)

HFA Council

Steve Willmot - Chair
Sharon Fellowes - Vice-Chair
Paul Tompkins - HFA FA Representative

Grassroots Clubs Representatives

Nigel Bradley - Kington Town FC
Scott Myers - Orleton Youth FC
Sandra Mifflin - Hereford Lads Club Youth
Simon Barrington - Hereford Pegasus FC
Steve Wilson - Hereford Lads Club Youth

National League System (NLS) Representatives

Nik Marsh - Hereford FC
Andy Morris - Westfields FC

Referees Representative

Kevin Morris

Coaches Representatives

Kevin Griffin
Dave Phillips

Players Representative

Stuart Turpin

Other Representatives

Nick Fish - Ledbury Swifts FC
Tom Hutton - Herefordshire Schools Football Association
Nigel Bradley - Herefordshire Football League
Diane Phillips - Herefordshire Junior Football League
Sam Goode - Herefordshire Girls League
Bill Shorten - Herefordshire Schools Football Association
TBC - Herefordshire FA Youth Council
Fred Lord - Herefordshire FA Inclusion Advisory Group

HFA Committees

Inclusion Advisory Group

Fred Lord (Chair)
Joanie Roberts (Vice Chair)
Marcin Jaworski
Sharon Fellowes
Emma Kelly
Jamie Griffiths
Scott Russell

Risk & Audit Committee

Steve Field (Chair)
Alan Darfi
Steve Willmot

Player Development Centre Management Committee

Paul Tompkins (Chair)
Bryan Bouston
Richard Wydenbach
Bill Shorten
Jon Nash
Dan Chance
Scott Russell
George Leyshon-James
Kyle Williams

Football Services Committee (Cups, Affiliation & Discipline)

Bryan Bouston (Chair)
Kevin Bishop (Vice Chair)
Diane Phillips - HJFL Rep
Sandra Mifflin – Grassroots Clubs Rep
Simon Barrington – Grassroots Clubs Rep
Andy Morris – NLS Clubs Rep
Nik Marsh – NLS Clubs Rep
Bill Shorten – HSFA Rep
HFA Football Services Team Rep

Football Development Committee

Colin Taylor (Chair)
Graham Goodfellow (Vice Chair)
Sam Goode – HGL Rep
Steve Wilson – Grassroots Clubs Rep
Dave Phillips – Coaches Rep
Kevin Griffin – Coaches Rep
HFA Football Development Team Rep

Referee Development Group

Sharon Fellowes – HFA Board Rep
Jack Shepherd – HFA Referee Development Officer
Ian Jervis – HFA Referees Appointment Secretary
Diane Phillips - HFA Referees Appointment Secretary
Kevin Morris – HFA Council Referee Rep
Adrian Rooke – HFA Referee Association Rep
Ava Jordan (& Luke Jordan) – Youth Referee Rep (Aged 14-24)

2021-24 Strategy

At the start of the 2021 season, for the very first time the HFA released a public-facing strategy.

This strategy runs until the end of the 2023-24 season (30 June 2024) and progress against our goals is set out below, together with comments.

Please note that the progress below is as at the end of the 2022-23 season (30 June 2023)

Goal	Target (by 30 June 2024)	RAG Rating	Comments
Developing, growing, supporting and administering the game	Retaining existing registered male players	Amber	2022-23 = 4,268 registered male players Target = 4,638 registered male players
	Increasing registered female players by 30%	Amber	2022-23 = 1,007 registered female players Target = 1,091 registered female players
	Increasing registered disabled players by 25%	Amber	2022-23 = 72 registered disability players Target = 98 registered disability players
	95% youth teams with a qualified coach, with 40% of all coaches completing CPD	Amber	The original target was based on a previous FA KPI which was subsequently changed by the FA to 'Coach Development Score' 2022-23 = 100 Coach Development Score Target = 94 Coach Development Score
Creating, championing and facilitating safe and inclusive football environments	Ongoing compliance with the FA Safeguarding operating standard	Green	An external safeguarding assessment conducted by the NSPCC was passed in the 2022-23 season
	Successfully obtaining the preliminary equality standard	Amber	2022-23 status = foundation Preliminary application to be submitted by 31 December 2023
	Suitably qualified referee to every game	Amber	This was a highly ambitious target

			Despite the fact that this target is unlikely to be met, the HFA's referee development score was 82 versus a target of 92 set by the FA and coverage of fixtures has also increased
	Successfully operating an Inclusion Advisory Group	Green	IAG is set up and operating
Managing the investment into and development of facilities	Successful refurbishment of the HFA HQ facilities	Green	Work completed successfully resulting in significant improved facilities and the ability to generate additional income into the HFA for the benefit of football in Herefordshire
	41 'good' quality grass pitches	Green	2022-23 = 49 facilities score Target = 36 facilities score
	Additional two 3G pitches	Red	Belmont project is progressing well but unlikely to be completed until post-strategy cycle. Bromyard project in-progress but will not be completed until post-strategy cycle
	Delivery of an annual programme to assist Clubs with the refurbishment of facilities	Green	2022-23 competition winner = Hinton FC
Strengthening the CFA business to be an inspirational, sustainable & trusted leader	Compliance with the FA's Governance Code	Amber	Governance Code compliant Articles of Association approved – however compliance not planned until 30 June 2024
	Successfully setting up a charitable arm	Amber	Work on-hold pending guidance from the FA
	75% of respondents to an annual survey to rate service of CFA to be 'good' or above	Amber	22-23 results = 73%
	Successful delivery of a portfolio of projects for the benefit of the Herefordshire community	Green	Ongoing

Facilities and Investment

Improving facilities for everyone who takes part in the game in Herefordshire remains a key priority for the HFA with work continuing to secure funding through the Football Foundation and by working with partners to improve football facilities for all players, coaches, volunteers and officials, to help enhance their football experience and provide a strong base for the game to develop.

As well as signposting Clubs and Leagues to a broad range of funding opportunities, the HFA has directly been involved in securing the following during the 2022-23 season.

Total Funds Secured by the HFA in the 2022-23 Season

£121,373

Projects Supported

Changing Rooms (x2)
Portable Floodlights (x2)
Goalposts (x13)
Grassroots Pitch Maintenance Fund (x1)
Machinery (x1)
Pitches

Clubs Supported

Bartestree
Bromyard
Colwall St James
Ewyas Harold
Hereford Lads Club
Hinton
Leominster Town
Marden Fusion
Orleton Juniors
Ross Juniors
Tupsley Girls
Wellington
Wessington Juniors
Westfields

Projects

One of the HFA’s key strategic aims is ‘successful delivery of a portfolio of projects for the benefit of the Herefordshire community’.

Given the HFA’s role as the hub of the Herefordshire football community, these projects allow the organisation to maximise this position, ensuring it plays a key role in supporting both all of the football family and broader Herefordshire community.

A list of key projects delivered during the 2022-23 season are set out below.

Project	Supporter	Details
Alzheimer’s/Dementia Project	Herefordshire Community Foundation	Weekly project supporting those suffering from Alzheimer’s/Dementia and their carers
Flexi Centres	The FA	Weekly flexible drop in and play football sessions
Future Lionesses Talent ID	The FA	Football tournaments
Going For Goal	Hereford FC/West Mercia Police	Weekly football sessions for young people
Herefordshire Football For All	Herefordshire Council	Weekly football sessions for the Ukrainian Refugee Community
High Sheriff Grant	High Sheriff	Equipment for women and girls teams
Referee Association Support and Progression Programme	The FA	Support to the Herefordshire Referee’s Association
Refugee Football Sessions	The FA	Weekly football sessions for the Syrian/Afghan refugee community
Women’s Euro Legacy Project	Hereford City Council	Range of activities aimed at increasing female participation in the Hereford City Council area

Finances

Attached at Appendix 1 are the HFA's externally audited accounts for the 2022-23 season. Whilst not set out in the publicly facing short-form accounts, the HFA profit and loss account demonstrated a loss of £12,848. This was budgeted and does not reflect a cash loss.

The HFA complies with the FA's Finance Standard, a best-practice approach to managing finances of an organisation the size and type of the HFA.

As referred to in the introduction from the HFA CEO Alan Darfi, the HFA has faced significant financial challenges over the past few years.

When Alan Darfi commenced the CEO role in March 2020, the FA Grant provided yearly to the HFA (the 'HFA Grant') was £192,000, representing 49% of the HFA's total income for the year.

The HFA Grant was reduced by £25,000 (13%) in June 2020, due to Covid.

Following a review of the County FA funding model by the FA, the FA confirmed in June 2021 that the HFA Grant would be reducing by a further £32,000 (19%). The FA confirmed this reduction would be staggered and would cross-over into the next FA funding cycle (2024 – 2027). The FA confirmed this was not linked to performance, but the size of the HFA with all similar-sized County FA's ('CFA') receiving similar reductions.

Following both of the above announcements, a significant number of redundancies occurred across the CFA network. The HFA outsourced its RDO services, resulting in a small cost-saving. The HFA Board agreed that the HFA should seek to increase revenue streams as much as possible in an attempt to offset the ongoing reduction in the HFA Grant. The HFA Board agreed that this would be an extremely difficult challenge but noted there was a possibility the FA would confirm an overall increase in monies provided to CFA's from 1 July 2024 onwards, in the next funding cycle, which would help to offset the ongoing reductions.

As part of this diversification strategy the HFA has generated circa £100,000 of non-traditional income yearly. The FA has identified this as being hugely successful and has noted the HFA is delivering over and above the majority of other CFA's in this area of its business, despite its size.

The FA then confirmed that the overall pot provided to CFA's would not be increasing from 1 July 2024. As part of the new funding model part of the HFA Grant is now based on national KPI figures, which will always impact a CFA the size of the HFA. The FA indicated that, following a data cut, the HFA grant is likely to decrease by a further £1,500 yearly, from 1 July 2024. In addition, the FA announced further changes which will further negatively impact the HFA Grant, potentially to the sum of a further £2,500 yearly, from 1 July 2024.

Whilst the HFA has delivered exceptional results in terms of generating additional income, the HFA Board concluded, following a detailed analysis, that a tipping point had been

reached in terms of an ability to generate further significant income streams. The HFA Board also recorded a risk in terms of currently budgeted finance levels.

The HFA is obligated to generate £25,000 per year to invest into a sinking fund, to replace the 3G pitch surface. There is currently a shortfall of £25,000, with the 2023-24 budget indicating a surplus of £12,000, further increasing this shortfall. The HFA Board agreed that this shortfall has to be made up in future years, commencing 1 July 2024.

Following confirmation from the FA in terms of the ongoing reduction in terms of the HFA Grant, an updated cashflow projection was created. This anticipated this shortfall will be £20,000 per year. This however relied on surplus cash generated through depreciation to be invested purely to replace the 3G pitch surface. Put simply, depreciation cash should be set-aside to replace assets as they depreciate (for example, the 3G fencing, office, changing rooms etc) Utilising all of these funds purely for the 3G pitch sinking fund is highly unadvisable and the HFA Board agreed this cannot be a long-term solution, which the FA agreed with. Ultimately, significant items will need replacing in the future and, if this approach was adopted, there would be no funds available to do so. It is anticipated that the actual yearly shortfall in terms of appropriate business planning, factoring in other key areas, would therefore in fact have been £25,000.

A meeting took place with the FA, given the above. The FA confirmed it agreed with the HFA's reasoning as set out above. It was agreed that the HFA unfortunately needed to factor in the potential that redundancies may be needed to remove the ongoing shortfall. The FA confirmed it is updating its recommended workforce structure to further reduce this for smaller CFA's (it should be noted the HFA employed 1 more person than is recommended in this structure and similar-sized CFA's engage far smaller teams than this). The HFA Board reluctantly agreed with this approach.

The HFA Board considered a number of proposals to reduce expenditure as necessary, commencing 1 July 2024. Following discussions with the FA, a proposed structure was agreed. The FA stated recently that it sees the future of CFA's as being development focused. The FA indicated that, particularly for a CFA the size of the HFA, shared services should be explored, particularly in respect of the Football Services team. The FA confirmed that almost 50% of the CFA network outsources some aspect of the discipline function and confirmed that a number of smaller CFA's completely outsource this function, resulting in a significant cost-saving, including Shropshire. The FA confirmed it is currently exploring offering a service whereby it will administer CFA discipline for certain CFA's, providing a significant cost-saving.

A period of consultation on the proposal took place. Following this period of consultation, a new structure from 1 July 2024 was confirmed. This new structure includes the outsourcing of discipline to either another CFA or the FA.

The HFA Board believes the new structure ensures the HFA is best set-up to continue to deliver an excellent service to the Herefordshire football community, whilst ensuring its ongoing sustainability.

2022-23 County Cups

The HFA runs a significant number of County Cup competitions each season, which are always fantastic occasions.

Confirmation of the competition winners are set out below. Many congratulations go to all participants.

Senior Cup –
Cardiff Metropolitan University

County Challenge Cup –
Westfields

Women's Cup –
Hereford Pegasus Ladies

Giantkillers Cup –
Worcester City U18s

Charity Bowl –
Ledbury Town

Junior Cup –
Wellington Colts

Youth Cup –
Ledbury Swifts

U16 Girls Cup –
Ross Juniors U16

U14s Girls Cup –
Tupsley Girls U14

Grassroots Football Award Winners

Each season, the HFA manages an award programme recognising and rewarding outstanding volunteers from across the County.

Whilst each and every volunteer goes above and beyond to ensure the game continues to thrive in the County, in the 2022-23 the following were chosen to be recognised for their outstanding contributions:

Grassroots League of the Year –
Herefordshire Junior Football League

Grassroots Coach of the Year Male Pathway –
Michael Short – Westfields

Grassroots Coach of the Year Female Pathway –
Michael Seabourne – Ledbury Swifts Ladies

Grassroots Team of the Year –
Hereford Lads Club (Youth) – Mike Shaw

Positive Football Environment Award –
Gareth Nut – Ross Juniors

Lioness Award –
Stuart Price – Belmont Wanderers Girls

Grassroots Match Official of the Year –
Geoff Banham

Grassroots Volunteer of the Year –
Cameron Wal – Belmont Wanderers

Inclusion & Diversity

Inclusion and Diversity is both a key pillar of the FA's national strategy and an area of strategic importance for the HFA.

During the 2022-23 season the HFA was awarded the Foundation Level of the Equality Standard for Sport, following an external assessment.

This recognised the HFA's commitment to this important area and was driven by the HFA's Inclusion Advisory Group, a committee formed of external members who oversee this area of work.

The HFA has committed to achieving the Preliminary Level of the Equality Standard for Sport in the 2023-24 season.

Reach and Feedback

The HFA has an extremely wide reach, and it is estimated that 10% of the County of Herefordshire is directly involved in football on a weekly basis.

Website –
10,000 monthly hits

Twitter –
6,400 followers

Facebook –
3,300 followers

Instagram –
1,700 followers

Newsletter –
7,000 sign-ups

Number of Clubs –
52

Number of Teams –
370

Number of Participants –
6,343

Estimated number of Volunteers –
1,127

Customer survey feedback 2022-23 –
73% rate service of CFA
to be 'good' or above

Key Partners

The HFA could not achieve all that it does without the fantastic support of a wide range of key partners.

Whilst the HFA works with a number of partners, key partner details from the 2022-23 season are set out below.

Whilst operated separately to the HFA by their own management committees, the HFA also works closely with the Herefordshire Football League, the Herefordshire Junior Football League and the Herefordshire Girl's League.

Partner	Area	Details
Arthur Oakley	County Cup Final Player of the Match	Transportation company https://www.returnloads.net/members/arthur-oakley-transport-ltd-2/contact-us/
Avara Foods	County Cups Club Makeover competition Thank You Trophy	Avara Foods lead the way in healthy, versatile and great tasting food. Avara Foods is one of the UK's largest food businesses, supplying chicken and turkey to the nation's most popular supermarkets and restaurants. https://www.avarafoods.co.uk/
EweMove Herefordshire	Club Makeover competition	EweMove Herefordshire is proud to be part of the multi-award-winning EweMove network, they are your 5 star rated estate agents in Hereford. https://www.ewemove.com/estate-agents-and-letting-agents/branch/hereford
SSAFA Herefordshire	County Ground Naming Rights Super 6 Competitions Thank You Trophy	SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, is a trusted source of support for serving personnel, veterans and their families in their time of need. Founded in 1885, SSAFA is extremely proud of their long-standing heritage and of all the work they do with inspiring people from Herefordshire, across the UK and around the world. https://www.ssafa.org.uk/herefordshire
VEO	Discounted VEO cameras	Veo's AI-powered capturing solution automatically breaks down your games. Sports teams at all levels can now review footage and match stats to unlock new insights. Improve your game. VEO it. https://www.veo.co/

Appendix 1 –
2022-23 Audited Accounts