



# **Hertfordshire Football Association**

## **Chief Executive Officers Report for Annual General Meeting 2018**

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting of the Hertfordshire Football Association here at the Welwyn Sports and Social Club in Welwyn Garden City.

As many of you will know we have been sharing the CEO responsibilities since the start of Vicki Askew's maternity leave in January.

At the end of last season Vicki Askew wrote about how we are working to create more opportunities to interact with you, our members and at last year's meeting many of you took the opportunity to engage in discussion with members of the team on topics that are key priorities for us all in Hertfordshire.

This year you will see posters around the room highlighting particular areas of work undertaken this season and will add some detail to the work carried out this season, so please take the opportunity to look at the posters and discuss the content with a member of the staff team.

Reviewing the last season from a business perspective we made significant progress and have seen the benefits of many of the improvements brought in by Vicki to enable us to operate effectively. In particular the budgeting and accounts system have enabled us to have clarity in relation to our financial activity.

Coupled with the establishment of a finance committee we believe that we will continue to make progress in this area. The introduction to the Board of Nicola Lucas our Independent Non-Executive Director and Greg Heaton as an observer have added further expertise and fresh perspective to our strategic thinking.

Last season we embarked on important preparation for an external safeguarding assessment as part of our shared commitment to ensuring that football in Hertfordshire is played in a safe and fun environment. The assessment was detailed and thorough and included the assessment team being with us in our offices for two days in January to meet Board members, staff and volunteers.

As a result of the visit in January and the ongoing assessment of our policies and procedures we are delighted to say that on the 22nd of May we were informed that we had passed the assessment. There is still work to do to embed Safeguarding Children across the Associations work and throughout grassroots football in Hertfordshire but as Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility we all have a duty to continue this work.

Many of you have expressed support for the further development of the headquarters facility in Letchworth and we are delighted to say that we were successful in our application to the Football Foundation who have awarded us a grant of £700,000 towards the development of a full size 3G pitch and redevelopment of the clubhouse facility.

This project is an exciting venture for the Association and will open up the facilities for the wider community, Coach and Referee education candidates and players. It will see the transformation of our facility into a real football hub offering improved facilities for all areas of the grassroots game.

Ensuring we are compliant with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) has been another priority for the Association. We have been guided by The Football Association and the legal team at Mucke to ensure we are supplying accurate information to our member clubs and leagues.

Earlier this month we submitted our final three year business plan and one year operations plan to the FA and on the 15th June along with our Chairman Brian Curtis we will deliver our summary version presentation to the FA at Wembley.

The key headings for the strategy are:

1. High quality introduction to football
2. Develop clubs and leagues
3. Embrace all formats, engage all participants
4. Recruit, develop and support the workforce
5. Develop sustainable football facilities

This strategy will take us through to 2021 and focusses on important areas for football development but also keeping a focus on the changing face of the game and the needs of the modern footballer. The game is changing and the needs and requirements of today's players are different to previous years. We realise that the Adult Male 11 v 11 game is trying to adapt to these changes and we have worked hard to support clubs with over £7,000 of funding directly to support the sustainability of clubs who need support.

We know via the FA Grassroots Survey (FAGRS) that quality facilities are a real priority for everyone in the game and in the past season we have seen the development of three new full size 3G pitches supporting both grassroots clubs and Schools football and resulting in over £1.5m of investment into the game in Hertfordshire this season. The grant awarded to our facility in Letchworth we will see total investment into facility development top £23m with a further £8m invested via the Football Stadia Improvement Fund (FSIF).

Work continues to improve our grass pitches via support from our Institute of Groundsmanship Regional Pitch Advisor (RPA). We know access to good quality grass pitches is important and prioritising problem pitches will be the priority for the forthcoming strategy. This work of course has to be placed in context of the financial challenges faced by the ten local authorities who manage and maintain the vast majority of facilities used by our clubs and leagues.

Thank you to the two leagues that took part in the 'Sin Bin' (temporary dismissals) pilot (Herts Senior County League and the Hitchin Sunday League) and have provided us with some informative and useful data. Two more of our leagues have applied to run 'Sin Bins' next season. The FA have reported a 38% reduction in dissent across the country. In a survey of 1400 users 72% of players, 77% of managers and 84% of referees wanted 'Sin Bins' to remain.

This season has seen the introduction of independent disciplinary members. We currently have 10 trained and qualified members regularly taking part in disciplinary hearings.

The reports of the Standing Committees will show the level of hard work required to run football across the County. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Board and Council of the Hertfordshire Football Association for their hard work and commitment over the past 12 months and their ongoing support to the team.

Finally, our thanks to you who work tirelessly to support football at all levels across the County. Your work is very much appreciated.

We hope you enjoy the summer break and the World Cup in Russia and we look forward to working with you all next season.

**George Wells**  
**Acting Joint Chief Executive Officer**

**Karl Lingham**  
**Acting Joint Chief Executive Officer**