



Hertfordshire Football Association

Report of the Chair for Annual General Meeting 2018

How quickly the time has passed since our last AGM but much has been achieved by the Association in that time. Most notable is securing the approval of the Football Foundation for a grant to allow us to redevelopment the County Ground.

Funding has been agreed to allow us to convert the existing grass pitch into a 3G AGP and to extend the existing changing rooms and clubhouse. This will enable the Association to significantly increase the range of football development opportunities at all levels whilst avoiding the frustration of last minute match cancellations because of weather conditions. Our intention is to start work as soon as the contractors are available so that the facilities can be ready early in the new season. More information on this development will be released shortly on the County website.

The significance of this exciting news, received only in the past few days, has rather overshadowed some of our other achievements. The modernisation of the Association's Corporate Structure continues at this AGM with a number of further changes to our Articles of Association. It is essential that we attract and maintain younger participants of the game onto our Council so that their current knowledge and enthusiasm can be used to influence the direction of the County FA.

Those nominated by their Leagues and Clubs are to be given wider role and recognition within the County FA Committee structure. We especially need those involved in the delivery of youth football to come forward as currently their voices and interests are absent from the deliberations of Council.

The Association recognises the need to ensure that young football participants are adequately protected and safeguarded. Both staff and volunteers have received additional training to ensure that the welfare of young players is our primary concern. The Association has undergone an independent assessment of its working practices and been awarded a conditional pass of its Safeguarding Operational Standards.

Part of our ongoing role is to ensure that good practice is implemented across football in Hertfordshire. Part of this work will be to support clubs and leagues in this process. This will be a continuing and increasing role in the coming years.

Periodically we are challenged by the FA to review and update our overall delivery of football activities within the County. Much of our development work is funded by the FA. They rightly expect to see that their money is spent effectively. They set us challenging performance targets and monitor us regularly to see that those targets are being met. We have recently updated our football and business development plans for the next 3 years. These are to be formally presented and assessed by the FA in mid-June.

We are grateful to all the staff for the tremendous amount of work they have put in in a very short period of time to develop these plans. They have not set themselves easy targets but are all determined that the money received from the FA makes a real difference to the provision of grassroots football in Hertfordshire.

We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented full-time work force. Changes have been made in their working arrangements to allow them to spend more time with local clubs and leagues. This increased contact is beginning to deliver good results and demonstrates a further commitment by the Association to provide active and ongoing support to league and club volunteers. We have seen a few important staff changes since last season.

Adam Jones a most enthusiastic supporter of Futsal has moved to a management position at the Derbyshire FA. Callum Riley our Communication Officer has also moved onto a new challenge in the housing sector. They will both be greatly missed.

They have been adequately replaced by Kieran Fox and Stuart Mugford who we welcome to the team. Lauren Halsey now has expanded responsibilities as our Football Services Manager. Beth Dawes returned from maternity leave and John Jatto has taken a full time appointment. They are joined in the Football Development Team by Beatrice Thirkettle. Gemma Smith joined as Football Services Administrator whilst Laura Majed now provides much needed support as our Coach Education Administrator.

We have been without our Chief Executive, Vicky Askew, for much of this year on maternity leave. George Wells and Karl Lingham have shared this role between them and I thank them most sincerely for all their hard work and the support they have given me and the Board during that time. Their roles have been made easier by the support they have received from all the staff which must be fully acknowledged.

Two of our long serving volunteers are about to receive the FA Award for 50 years' service to Football. Our congratulations go to former President Eddie Dowber, and to former Chairman Martin Bayliss on receiving this prestigious award. We should all thank them both for their long and distinguished service to football in the County.

We also recognise and congratulate a number of our senior Clubs who have achieved promotion to a higher level of football, notably Berkhamsted, Potters Bar Town, Wormley Rovers and Welwyn Garden City.

We also congratulate Boreham Wood FC for reaching the National League play-offs at Wembley Stadium and for having their most successful season to date. Sadly, they will not join the ranks of the Football League just yet. They are a Club that continues to develop and provide important facilities for youth, girls and women's football through their partnership with Arsenal Women FC.

I have already expressed thanks to a number of individuals. There is always a risk of overlooking someone's very substantial contribution. If I have done this I apologise. Finally, on behalf of the County I should acknowledge all the very hard work undertaken by those that make grassroots football possible.

Adapting the memorable quote from Sir Winston Churchill 'Never has so much been owed by so many who play to those few [Club] Officials who through their hard work and dedicated make it all possible'

My commitment for the next season is to continue to work with the staff team to make Hertfordshire one of the best County FA's in the Country and if we are seen to fall short of that objective then come and join us and use your skill and enthusiasm to make us even better.

It is my honour and privilege to serve the Hertfordshire FA for a further season.

Brian Curtis
Chair of the Association

27 May 2018