**Lincolnshire FA Inclusion Advisory Group**

**Lincolnshire FA Office, 6pm-8pm, 28/09/2022**

1. Apologies received from Steven.  
   The meeting was chaired by Angela, with Vice-Chair Emma. Also present were Shan, Jennie, Jordan, with Naomi, Charlotte, and Mark joining virtually. Charlotte suggested recording the minutes which was actioned.
2. Minutes of the last meeting were approved. Angela looked at actions and said most were coming up at the meeting.

Shan is asking the LFA commercial director for sponsorship opportunities. Emma is still working on ACL sponsorship through her networks. Jordan is to send Emma some more details on the league to promote the sponsorship opportunities within her networks.

Jordan finalised the LGBTQ+ Accredited programme with Marc. There was valuable feedback from Marc’s (Lowlands FC) club with the initiative launched last Friday, the 24th of September. The LGBTQ+ Programme was launched on the website under the inclusion tab, IAG members were encouraged to review content, share, and give feedback if they wanted to.

1. Lincolnshire FA discipline process.  
   The disciplinary process was discussed following on from AH’s presentation in the last meeting. Shan talked about the Lincolnshire case regarding disabled referees. Jordan remarked the disciplinary process is geared to mainstream football - it needs to be different for disabled referees etc. Fraser Williamson is aware of the case and FA rules need to change. The group discussed how disabled referees can potentially be supported.

Jennie mentioned problems with shortages of referees and policing parents on side-lines. Charlotte asked if we can be more targeted in our approach (now there is a blanket approach) - giving it more supportive service with discipline cases that come in. Jordan said we can take that to Alistair.

Naomi asked if support for victims of abuse or discrimination could go through coaches? Jordan said this can be explored but may be dependent on GDPR and similar, but may provide a useful route for victim support.

Angela then asked about support for young referees? Shan remarked that some counties are particularly good at supporting young referees and some are not. Jordan said we do have support in place in the form of Mental Health Champions, but this is for 16+. Young referees are given contact details of staff members and other contacts in the refereeing landscape for support on weekends if needed.

Emma asked about outcomes of the discipline procedures and whether clubs are notified – this could give clubs some responsibility. Shan said there are club disciplinary respect points which are built up. Jordan said the FA announce case outcomes in the professional game, could something similar be done at local level? Shan pointed out with grassroots zero tolerance is difficult and that we must be careful not to deter volunteers. Marc agreed and stated that just because one coach has been charged, this shouldn’t reflect on the whole club. Emma questioned whether it is worth the risk to deter parents from bad behaviour.

Charlotte asked about cases being brought to clubs' attention, so clubs which have parents’ codes of conducts can hold parents accountable. Shan said the LFA, and clubs can do more regarding codes of conduct and safeguarding. Shan also said we could do more with clubs who have more disrespect points. Angela said we should celebrate clubs which do not cause problems with discipline. Can we do case studies on clubs with few discipline or respect issues, or ones that have dealt with them effectively and proactively?

Charlotte asks if we get enough out there regarding respect material and preventative actions? She said the FA are very much on this post-Covid. Naomi talked about giving positive awards at the end of the season. Marc said his league do have scores for sportsmanship. Angela said about awareness of sportsmanship - is it just the mid Lincs League? Could this be applied county-wide?

Marc said parents are more hostile in step up from development football, (non- competitive, no league tables ‘friendly games’ to competitive football at under 11/12s). Mark gave examples of this as he stepped in to referee a match. The coach should set standards for the team.

Charlotte suggested using the respect/ sportsmanship points from full-time match scores - for example Cambridgeshire’s team of the month. We should promote positive behaviour and see which clubs score high or low comments. Marc said age groups could be monitored to see where bad practices are. Ultimately, respect points might identify clubs that need monitoring or clubs that can act as role models.

Emma suggested publishing success stories to give an element of competition.

Jordan discussed Mark Johnson’s (Deputy Designated safeguarding Officer) idea of a respect committee.

Jordan will feed back this discussion to AH.

1. The Business Creative Audit - Findings and next steps.

Emma gave a presentation outlining her findings whilst reviewing how Lincolnshire FA engages with members, with a priority focus on inclusion. An audit of the website audit suggested 68% positive representation.

The use of pronouns on staff & board pages is a positive step. Group to provide their pronouns to Jordan if they would like theirs added to the IAG page.

Emma had used ethnicity data from JUST Lincolnshire looking at groups and gaps.

We all concluded that it is an incredibly positive presentation with lots of ideas for future actions. Some comments from the presentation are as follows:

Jordan explained that £2500 for an annual subscription to a website plugin that fills gaps in our provision (can change language, colour, font size etc) but this needs to be taken to board level. Is this something the IAG can drive?

The audit uncovered there seems to be some outdated perceptions of the association. Angela commented that perceptions take a long time to change. However, Charlotte said how the organisation has already changed so much. Emma also commented that perceptions are changing all the time. Angela suggested we should monitor perceptions annually. Emma stated we could use “come up with three words about the LFA”.

Jordan talked about an Instagram page for the youth Council ‘plugging the gap’ of audiences we struggle to engage with. Naomi suggested TikTok as a social media platform we should look at and Emma commented that Lincolnshire business groups are reluctant to embrace TikTok.

Emma also talked about wider communication routes and how we should explore and share information on the LFA to different platforms, such as radio or in the press. As regards opportunities positive good news needs celebrating and the LFA should attend events to promote what we do.

Charlotte talked about the changes to the website and how she is collaborating with all staff members to promote the changes. Jordan commented that the discrimination pages have been revamped and there is now a form on the website.

Emma had proposed a series of ideas that the group might approach using the findings from the audit. Jordan concluded that the slides would be sent out to all members, for us to discuss the group’s next steps at the next meeting.

1. Equality Standard Update.

Jordan said that training had been organised for the 8th of November and the 17th of November involving 2 1/2 hours either from 2 to 430 or 6 to 830 The idea is that members would attend one session. The training is mandatory for all members.

As regards policies - Angela and Jordan have read the policies and have made comments but it was suggested that the equal opportunities, recruitment and selection and safer recruitment policies will be emailed to members for comments – with any suggestions or amendments returned to Jordan by the 24th of October.

1. AOB.

Charlotte is on the National youth Council and talked about the relationship with the county FA to promote EDI leadership role.

Marc talked about having an inclusion officer in clubs to help with how we can educate and support. Jordan discussed the possibility of workshops to help this along and working with JUST Lincolnshire on this.

Jordan asked the group to share the Lincolnshire FA LGBTQ+ Inclusive Accredited Club Programme. He is also looking to find someone who can be a role model and support the delivery of the workshop – Emma will connect Jordan with The Scene.

Charlotte would like to sit in on any workshops.

Jordan talked about rainbow laces week at the end of October.

Shan talked about funding and how we must show we are working on and highlighting diversity and inclusion.

Angela suggested we have a Christmas get-together and produce a date and venue. Charlotte will try to organise this.

Jordan updated that Steve sent his apologies but has proposed a format and has expressed an interest in leading on a Football v Homophobia event.

1. The next IAG meeting will be on the 30th of November from 6pm to 8pm, utilising a hybrid model.

Actions:

* Group to discuss the findings of the audit and next steps at the next meeting.
* Group to share the Lincolnshire FA LGBTQ+ Inclusive Accredited Club Programme
* Group to review Angela and Jordan’s comments on the equal opportunities, recruitment and selection and safer recruitment policies – with any suggestions or amendments returned to Jordan by the 24th of October.
* Group to provide their pronouns to Jordan if they would like theirs added to the IAG page.