

SUFFOLK COUNTY FA AGM



A THRIVING LOCAL GAME

SUFFOLK COUNTY
FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Dear Sir / Madam,

Suffolk FA AGM – Thursday 29th July 2021

I'm writing to invite you to attend the Suffolk FA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING which will be held using Zoom on Thursday 29th July, 2021 commencing at 7.00 p.m.

By return to richard.neal@suffolkfa.com, please confirm who will be representing your club at the AGM, their position at the club, the name of the club and their email address. Joining instructions will then be sent directly to them.

Apologies for absence should be sent to me at richard.neal@suffolkfa.com

I hope you are able to join us.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Neal

Chief Executive Officer

A g e n d a

1. Opening Remarks
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 9th July 2020 (below)
4. Matters arising from Minutes
5. The Directors' Report of the activities of the Association since the previous Annual General Meeting (below)
6. The Finance Director's Report pursuant to Article 13(a) (Independent Auditor's report, balance sheet and detailed profit and loss from the last audited accounts as separate document)
7. Appointment of Auditors pursuant to Article 13(b)
8. Proposed new articles reflecting The FA's New Code of Governance and the move to become a Charity (separate document)
9. County Cup Competition Dates (separate document)
10. Vote of Thanks

Suffolk County Football Association Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting held on Thursday, 9th July 2020 via Microsoft Teams at 7.00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Phil Lawler (Chair), David Sheepshanks CBE DL (President), Richard Neal (CEO), Nigel Johnson (Finance Director), Bruce Badcock, Geraldine Day, Amy Grantham, Kit Morrison, Julie Mulcahy (F Geraldine Day, Amy Grantham, Kit Morrison, Julie Mulcahy (Directors), Bob Jenkerson, David Porter, Gordon Rayner, Richard Wall (Honorary Life Members), James Brooks, Peter Betts, Allan Girot, Peter Hutchings, Richard Instance, Tony King, Mick Leeds, Adrian Moye, Robert Peace, John Pitts, Mike Powles, David Rose, David Shave, Jonathan Warnock (Council Members), Andy Taylor (FA Regional Manager), Jodie Allard, Alan Dale, Nick Garnham (Members of staff)

LEAGUES/ CLUBS REPRESENTED:

Ellen Coldwell (AFC Kesgrave), Paul Honeywood (Beccles Town FC), Darren Smith (Brantham Athletic FC), Daniel Butcher (Breda FC), Sean Kilbourn (Capel Plough FC), Chris Smyth (Elsmwell Youth FC), Tom Drew (Fat Cat FC), Chris Hewitt (Fat Cat FC), Mike Titchener (Felixstowe & Walton United FC), Fiona Whatling and Dean Warner (Framlingham Town FC), Kieran Doggett (Great Blakenham Chequers FC), Neil Henderson (Hadleigh United FC), Stuart Hayton (Ipswich Town FC), Darren Scoulding (Ipswich Valley Rangers FC), Phil Barber (Ipswich Wanderers FC & Suffolk FA Football Services Officer), Terry Lynes (Lowestoft Town FC), Alan Sparkes (Macron Suffolk & Ipswich League), Simon Barber (Martlesham Youth FC), David Webber (Martlesham Youth FC), Tim Mack (Mendlesham FC), Claire Darkins (Mildenhall Town Youth FC), Roy Balmforth (Old Newton United FC), David Shave (Council Member and Old Newton United FC), Julie Eves (Stowupland Falcons FC), Callum Muttock (Stradbroke Youth FC), Paul Smith (Suffolk Youth Football League), Todd Black and Ashley Gray (Thrasher United FC), Jim Hill (Treadfirst Sudbury & Haverhill District League). Layla Chapman (Westerfield United FC)

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everybody to the meeting being held in unusual circumstances, and in particular thanked everyone for their time and commitment to Suffolk football.

He referred to the sad passing of Gordon Blake, Eric Cousins, Simon Warr and Christopher Cushnahan during the season.

He placed on record his thanks to Roger Peck and Ian Booth who had both stepped down as members of the Board.

He welcomed new directors Amy Grantham, Kit Morrison and Julie Mulcahy to the Board and their first Annual General Meeting, along with David Sheepshanks CBE DL. He thanked Mr Sheepshanks who had agreed to be elected as President of the Association. He recorded his thanks to Ipswich Town Football Club and Graeme McLoughlin and BBC Radio Suffolk colleagues for all their help and support to the County F.A. throughout the season.

He said that the season had been curtailed due to reasons outside our control. Efforts had been made to help clubs in the county continue operations through various funding activities, including Emergency Funds from Suffolk Football Association.

Under the leadership of Richard Neal, the staff had given excellent service to the County F.A.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Brian Gower, Pat Ryan, Barry Spall, Gary Steed, Dave Theobald and Peter Vardon,

Benhall St Mary FC, Bury Town FC, Chantry Grasshoppers FC, Chantry Phoenix FC, Debenham LCFC, Debenham Youth FC, ETC Lowestoft Town FC, Needham Market FC, Southwold Town FC, Sudbury Sports Academy FC, Trimley Red Devil FC and Wickhambrook FC

3. **DAVID SHEEPHANKS CBE DL**

Mr Sheepshanks said that it had been a great honour to be President, and to follow the footsteps of Gordon Blake who had been a great servant to Suffolk Football Association. Although still involved in many activities, as a Suffolk boy he said he had returned to his roots. Times are very tough at the moment, but we have to believe we can bounce back with great resilience.

4. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 11th JULY 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

6. **LIFE MEMBERS**

Mr Roger Cox was unanimously confirmed as newly appointed Life Member of the Association.

7. **THE DIRECTORS' REPORT**

The meeting received a very comprehensive Directors' Report on the activities of the Association since the previous Annual General Meeting.

The Chief Executive Officer was congratulated on the compilation of the excellent report.

8. **THE FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 13(A)**

The Finance Director presented the Finance Director's Report for the financial year ending 30th June 2019. He recorded his thanks to Julie Cole for her work in the office.

It was unanimously agreed the report be adopted.

9. **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 13(B)**

It was agreed that Ensors be re-appointed auditors for the accounts for the financial year ending 30th June 2020.

10. **COUNTY CUP COMPETITION RULES**

The two amendments to the rules of the County Cup competitions as circulated were approved subject to it being noted that Mr Allan Girot voted against the change to Rule 1(b).

11. **COUNTY CUP COMPETITION DATES**

The dates for season 2020/21 County Cup competitions would be circulated as soon as the new season start date was known.

The Chair thanked Mr Adrian Moye for all his work as County Cup Competition Manager.

12. **CLOSURE**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked them keep up all the good work that they were all doing.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 7.42 p.m.

Board Report to the Annual General Meeting 2021

The 2020/21 season will long be remembered! Not only has the Covid-19 pandemic caused untold disruption to all aspects of life, but we also had the death of George Floyd causing a rise in awareness of equality and inclusion in particular through the ensuing Black Lives Matter movement, the release of The Sheldon Report, and the passing of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. It really has been a pretty seismic year.

To reflect the unique (let's hope) 2020/21 season, this Board Report will be more concise than previous years.

Whilst 2019/20 was curtailed early due to the pandemic, the challenges faced throughout this past season have been constant and relentless, as we were all required to adapt to ever-changing restrictions, fluctuating levels of personal comfort and confidence, and circumstances in all aspects of our lives that we've never experienced before. That we managed to get any football played was frankly a minor miracle and testament to the resilience, commitment and expertise of the volunteers who make this great game possible.

To financially support clubs to survive the pandemic, The Football Foundation made a series of funding opportunities available in addition to those awarded at the back end of the 2019/20 season. In total Suffolk clubs have been awarded £537,691 through the Club Preparation Fund, the Matchday Support Fund, the Return to Football Fund, and the Winter and Summer Survival Funds provided by the government through the Football Foundation.

Despite the lack of on-field action, the last season has demonstrated the importance of football to Suffolk society. In the depths of lockdowns, we saw football participants and clubs raise money for local causes, become testing centres for the local community, and go to inspirational lengths to support local residents through the pandemic. We often talk about football clubs being integral community assets, and never has that been proven so correct.

We all hope the 2021/22 season will be closer to plain-sailing, but the reality is we would be naïve to *expect* a full and seamless return to a normal-style season. Competitions have already taken steps to mitigate any disruption, and we will all need to remain flexible and vigilant to ensure football can be played safely and successfully.

This past season should have been the third and final year of delivery against our "A Thriving Local Game" strategy and in accordance with The FAs 2018-2021 National Game Strategy, but like every organisation we have had to adjust and re-prioritise to ensure the organisation, and game as a whole, survives this terrible time. We have made use of the Job Retention Scheme throughout the season, we have employed a full remote-working model for all staff before tentatively re-opening the office on a limited basis, and we have published a new 2021-24 'Reviving the Local Game' strategy to reflect the role of the County FA over the next three years in returning the local game back and above pre-pandemic levels.

Our new strategy has also been developed to reflect a forecast reduction in incomes over the next three years, primarily because of long-term changes to the delivery model of coach education and reductions in FA distribution. We have also had our FA KPIs changed to now focus on six areas; male participation, female participation, disability participation, coach education and development, referee education and development, and quality grass pitches. In addition, all County FAs must continue to adhere to the Safeguarding Operating Standards, work towards adoption of the Code of Governance for CFAs, achieve the Preliminary Level of the Equality Standard for Sport, and work to ensure playing, coaching, refereeing, and governance better reflects local communities.

March 2021 saw the release of The Sheldon Report; an independent inquiry, commissioned by The FA in 2016, following the large numbers of historic cases of abuse in football initially emanating from the professional side of the game but eventually involving every area of football participation in virtually every county in the country. Suffolk was not immune with cases coming forward involving clubs and individuals who operated within our county, and indeed a Suffolk case from the mid-1990s was included within the report.

The report concluded with a series of recommendations. It is anticipated a number of the recommendations will be reflected in the updated Safeguarding Operating Standards which are to be released early in the 2021/22 season.

Throughout 2020/21, because we were not able to physically visit clubs to undertake random, unannounced club visits, Suffolk FA held a number of virtual club visits which included discussions around safeguarding protocols and processes. Prior to these virtual visits, desktop assessments of public club information were undertaken.

In October 2020, Suffolk FA launched the green armband for U18 referee's initiative. Every current and future U18 official would be provided with a green armband to wear during matches, clearly identifying them as an U18 official; the armband is printed with 'U18 REFEREE', along with Suffolk FA and Offside Trust logos. The initiative was introduced after 79.2% of U18 referees stated that they had experienced poor behaviour towards them as the match official in a Suffolk FA survey. It is hoped this clear and obvious sign to all participants that a young, developing official is involved in the game will make a person think twice about how they treat that official if they can see they are a minor. That's not to say abuse of an official of any age is acceptable!

The Suffolk FA staff team has seen some changes over the past season. Darren Scouling left to join AFC Sudbury in August 2020, Lily Chiang's apprenticeship concluded in May 2021, Rebecca Bolton joined East Riding FA in May 2021, and Jodie Allard moved abroad in June 2021. Each departed with our best wishes and remain great friends. These changes of the staff team have resulted in a slightly different workforce structure from July 2021 to account for the new strategy, KPIs, and financial projections. This will inevitably take some time to bed-in but we continue to work towards offering optimal levels of customer service.

The back end of the 2020/21 season saw Euro 2020 finally being played with a number of matches held at Wembley Stadium. Reaching the Final, the performances and conduct of the England national team brought hope, excitement and pride to the whole country (even if some of the scenes and reactions following the Final were incredibly unsavoury and left a very bitter taste in the mouth).

The incident early in Denmark vs Finland game made for shocking and disturbing viewing. Thankfully the medical attention Christian Eriksen received saved his life, but again highlighted the importance of medical provisions at all levels of the game. Grassroots cannot be expected to provide the same level of medical arrangement as an international tournament, but there are steps all levels of the game can make to be as prepared as possible for such an incident, including training, communication, and provision of potentially life-saving equipment.

Although the 2020/21 season is likely to ultimately be remembered for different reasons, on behalf of the Directors and Staff at Suffolk FA I would like to congratulate the Suffolk football community on the following notable achievements:

- Stowmarket Town FC, Lakenheath FC, and ITFC Women respectively awarded promotion for the 2021/22 season.
- Needham Market FC U15 JPL reaching the national final.

- Amber Provan of AFC Sudbury selected for the English Colleges FA national team squad.
- Suffolk FA Referee Observer Martin Chapple observed his 100th match.
- George Byrne appointed as assistant referee for the delayed 2019/20 Buildbase FA Vase Final at Wembley Stadium.
- Abigail Byrne appointed as referee for the The FA WSL Continental Tyres League Cup Final at Vicarage Road.
- Waveney FC awarded charitable status.
- AFC Sudbury reached the second round of the FA Youth Cup.
- Will Davies of Leiston FC finished as the top non-league goalscorer in the 2020/21 Emirates FA Cup.
- Abigail Byrne appointed as fourth official for the delayed 2020/21 Vitality Women's FA Cup Final at Wembley Stadium.
- Carl Fitch-Jackson and George Byrne promoted to the Select Group 2 list of assistant referees on the EFL Championship for the 2020/21 season.
- Abigail Byrne appointed as the fourth official for the 2020/21 Women's FA Community Shield.
- Shirley Whitlow of Lowestoft Town FC won the 2019/20 Suffolk FA Grassroots Photograph of the Year. Second place was awarded to Paul Voller and third place awarded to Dean Warner (Framlingham Town FC).
- Referee's awarded promotion (The FA made the decision that no Level 5 to 4 nominations would be accepted due to there being no movement higher in the Refereeing pyramid):
 - Level 4W to Level 3W
 - Isabel Chaplin
 - Level 7 to Level 6
 - Luke Hammond
 - Level 6 to Level 5
 - Martin Avis
 - Liam Botten
 - Jak Clark
 - Gareth Hayler
 - Joshua Holland
 - Thomas Ling
 - Mark Paget
 - Anthony Reeve
 - Rian Staddon
 - Mark Warden

All other applications have either not been successful or deferred for completion during the 2021/22 season.

- **Grassroots Coach of the Year (Adult team):** Clem Turner (Unity FC)
Highly Commended: Chris Hewett (Lakenheath Casuals FC)
- **Grassroots Coach of the Year (Youth team):** Stuart Gordon (Felixstowe & Walton United FC)
Highly Commended: Jason Day (Bury Town FC), Dave Grimwood (Achilles Youth FC)
- **Grounds Team of the Year:** Tony Adams (Claydon FC)
Highly Commended: Steve Byford (Ipswich Wanderers FC) & Tony Robinson (Coplestonians FC)
- **Grassroots Club of the Year:** Wots Up Warriors FC
Highly Commended: Lakenheath Casuals FC
- **Grassroots League of the Year:** Norfolk & Suffolk Youth League
- **Grassroots Volunteer of the Year:** Jason Day (Bury Town FC)
Highly Commended: Chris Hewett (Lakenheath Casuals FC)

- **Rising Star of the Year:** Luke Fitch (Bacton United '89 FC & Stowmarket United FC)
- **Spirit of Grassroots Football Award:** Gavin Harvey (Wots Up Warriors FC)
Highly Commended: Lee Smith (Wots Up Warriors FC)
- **Grassroots Match Official of the Year:** Lee Wood
- **Grassroots Project of the Year:** Norfolk & Suffolk Youth Football League
Highly Commended: Mike Powles (Walsham-Le-Willows FC)

In addition to the above, quite incredibly considering everything going on in the world, clubs across the county have found the ambition and partner funding to attract £749,704 of Football Foundation investment to undertake £1,075,186 worth of facility improvements. With positive news of investment recently released by the government, our message to clubs is investment continues to be possible, especially in delivery of Suffolk's Local Football Facility Plans, so please get in touch if you have ambitions and plans.

For the start of the 2020/21 season, Suffolk FA launched the Safe Youth Eyewear Fund to ensure any young player needing specialist eyewear can continue to play the game safely. This was linked to the Benevolent Fund. Over the course of the season, this fund has awarded £1,062.50 in addition to £4,704 awarded from the Benevolent Fund to those incurring financial loss due to injury through football participation. Proportionately this is a greater total Benevolent Fund award than a full season, representing a higher-than-normal number of claims. It would seem unlikely the increased number of claims received for the 2020/21 season and the periods of lockdown we've incurred over the last 12-18 months is coincidental. Therefore it would also seem reasonable to expect the number of applications for the 2021/22 season will be higher than average, as the impact of prolonged periods of reduced activity levels will continue to be felt as players regain fitness and muscular-skeletal strength.

Over the course of the season, Suffolk football sadly lost a number of irreplaceable colleagues. These include Lynsey Davies (AFC Sudbury), Joe Langfield (Borussia Martlesham FC, Bramford United FC, Woodbridge Town FC and others), Lenny Godbold (Bramford Road Old Boys), Peter Munford (Stowmarket Referee Association), and Brian Tatum (Suffolk FA Life Member, AFC Sudbury, Essex & Suffolk Border League). Losing members of the Suffolk football family is always tragic, and the local football scene owes all a debt of gratitude for their passion and commitment to their clubs and the game.

Despite the huge challenges faced, with significant support from leagues, and participating and host clubs the Suffolk County Cup Competitions which had been started at the beginning of the season were able to be concluded at the end, apart from the Turners Hyundai Suffolk Premier Cup which will return in 2021/22. Not only were we battling the pandemic and the accompanying restrictions and concerns, but because the NLS league seasons had not restarted, a number of clubs/venues who would usually host latter-stage matches had begun to undertake ground improvement works early in preparation for the new season. We would like to place on record our sincere appreciation to all participating clubs, leagues, those clubs who were able to host especially neutral venues, all of whom did a fantastic job in ensuring the hosting of the game befitted the occasion, and the Suffolk FA County Cup staff team who were tasked with completing the competitions within such a congested timeframe. Huge congratulations to the following winners, runners-up, and match officials:

CNet Training Suffolk Senior Cup – Final hosted by Haverhill Rovers FC

Winners: Lakenheath FC

Runners-up: Bildeston Rangers FC

Officials: Chay Hathway, Mark Potkins, Stephen Henderson-Holmes, Stephen Baldock

HomeStore Suffolk Women's Cup – Final hosted by AFC Sudbury

Winners: Ipswich Town FC Women

Runners-up: Needham Market FC Women

Officials: Daniel Barrack, Gary Nethercott, Michael Hammond, Matthew Austen

Total Football Suffolk Junior Cup – Final hosted by Haverhill Rovers FC

Winners: Stowupland Falcons FC

Runners-up: Mutford & Wrentham FC

Officials: Matthew Oakley, Sheridan Biss, Rian Staddon, Benjamin Greenbank

Portable Space Ltd Suffolk Senior Reserve Cup – Final hosted by Bungay Town FC

Winners: Woodbridge Town FC

Runners-up: Beccles Town FC

Officials: Regan Bradshaw, Patrick Case, Gary Green, Nicholas Johnston

McDonald's Suffolk Primary Cup – Final hosted by Framlingham Town FC

Winners: Bramford United FC

Runners-up: Laxfield FC

Officials: Anthony Coulter, Daryl Butcher, David Primus, Matthew Fear

Blue Square Solutions Suffolk U18 Midweek Cup – Final hosted by Needham Market FC

Winners: AFC Sudbury

Runners-up: Leiston FC

Officials: Kahlan Sannerude, Dean East, Liam Kiddle, Luke Hammond

Rushmere Golf Club Suffolk Sunday Cup – Final hosted by AFC Sudbury

Winners: Kitchener Taverners FC

Runners-up: AFC Bergholt

Officials: Louis Dawson, Martin Avis, Dean Knight, James Tebbit

Veo Suffolk Sunday Shield – Final hosted by AFC Sudbury

Winners: Hardy FC

Runners-up: Gainsborough United FC

Officials: Paul Staddon, George Byrne, Gavin Roberts, Abigail Byrne

Bluefin Sports Suffolk Sunday Trophy – Final hosted by AFC Sudbury

Winners: Wamil Wasps FC

Runners-up: Stoke by Clare FC

Officials: Peter Biggs, Stephen Davill, Ivan Newman, Richard Doorbar

Best Badges Suffolk Veterans Cup- Final hosted by AFC Sudbury

Winners: Whitton United FC

Runners-up: Woodbridge Town FC

Officials: Edward Frazer, Jak Clark, Darren Stobart, Irvin Flaherty

The Suffolk FA Board of Directors would like to place on record our appreciation to the countless volunteers and administrators who have continued to be the heartbeat of the local grassroots game in the face of extraordinary circumstances, the Suffolk FA staff and volunteer team who have shown incredible levels of flexibility and commitment in supporting the game throughout the most difficult of seasons, and our sponsors and partners across all areas of the business who are an integral part of the organisation. We wish everyone the very best as we all carefully and considerately tiptoe our way through the 2021/22 season.