



**LEAGUE  
PROGRAMME**  
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

# ***Life as a league secretary***

**Support Guidance**

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## Introduction

*Over the years, grassroots football has improved immeasurably, with the introduction of Mini Soccer in 1999, Charter Standard in 2001, the Respect programme in 2008, the FA Youth Development Review in 2010 and improvements in safeguarding, facilities and coach education. This improvement would not have been possible without volunteers whom The FA recognises as absolutely essential, and your role as League Secretary is a vital one. Leagues are of utmost importance to ensure that structured football can take place.*

*We know that most people get involved in leagues as a result of their passion and desire to see football thrive and ensure that people have the opportunity to play with all the social and health benefits that this brings.*

*Recognising that all leagues are run slightly differently and are operating under different circumstances, we know that for League Secretaries, the key challenges are:*

- Having enough time to do what you need and want to do*
- Ensuring the committee are aware of their roles*
- Ensuring good consistent communication across the league and sometimes communicating unwelcome news*
- Understanding, communicating and implementing rule changes*
- Dealing with clubs*
- Succession planning*

*A modern, fit for purpose league will raise the standards of the game, increase participation, and improve oversight of the issues within football. One of the key challenges for league officials is to have access to the right information at the right time.*

# League Secretary Role

*First and foremost, the secretary is responsible for the day-to-day running of the league and is therefore arguably the most important role in the league's workforce.*

*Not only are there a number of administrative tasks to perform, but League Secretaries field queries about lots of diverse areas ranging from fixtures to player transfers and discipline.*

*Key tasks may include (but not be limited to):*

- *Sanctioning the league*
- *Administration related to running the league*
- *Dealing with complaints and disputes*
- *Organising regular committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting (AGM)*
- *Dealing with day-to-day league correspondence*
- *Arranging and communicating fixtures*
- *Producing and distributing league meeting minutes*
- *Representing the league at external meetings*

*An example job profile for the role of League Secretary can be found on the next page.*

*Other key roles within the league that the Secretary will liaise with could include (not an exhaustive list):*

- *Chair of the League*
- *All League Management Committee members*
- *County FA*
- *Facility providers*
- *Youth League Welfare Officers*
- *All member clubs and club secretaries*
- *League sponsors/partners*
- *Other local leagues*

## League Secretary – Role Profile

Position	Reporting to	Role Purpose
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Chair</i>	<i>The day to day operations of the league</i>
<b>Key Tasks</b>	<i>League affiliation and accreditation; Day-to-day League correspondence; Running the League; League meeting minutes; Representing the League at external meetings.</i>	
<b>Key Skills</b>	<i>Experience and empathy with working with volunteers; Excellent internal and external communication; Ability to engage and build strong relationships; Basic business skills; Influencing skills; Knowledge of FA rules and regulations; Knowledge of FA technology systems; IT Skills;</i>	
<b>Key Relationships</b>	<i>All League Management Committee members; All member clubs; County FA; Club Secretaries; League sponsors/partners (commercial and non-commercial); Local leagues.</i>	

## Benefits of getting involved



**SENSE OF PURPOSE**



**CONNECTING WITH OTHERS**



**BEING PART OF A WIDER COMMUNITY**



**INCREASING SELF-CONFIDENCE**



**MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH**

## Knowledge & Skills Required

*League Secretaries will want to be well organised, conscientious, and good communicators. The ability to foresee problems before they occur is also extremely beneficial. Whilst not necessarily leading, you will be involved in many different areas of league operations from fixtures to sponsorship and dealing with club officials. This requires the following skills and knowledge:*

- *Experience and empathy in working with volunteers*
- *Ability to engage and build strong relationships*
- *Influencing skills*
- *Knowledge of FA technology systems (e.g. WGS, Full Time)*
- *Excellent internal and external communication*
- *Basic business skills*
- *Knowledge of FA rules and regulations.*
- *IT Skills*

*You may already have developed some of these skills through your working life, others you can develop through undertaking the role or through further training and other means.*

*As the league secretary, it is essential that you are calm under pressure, adaptable and able to keep focussed on the bigger picture around the overall health of the league.*

*As well as technical knowledge, we know that it is often the 'soft' skills that are important in this role, for example communication, conflict resolution, time management, influencing, and negotiation. Developing good working relationships with your member clubs will ensure a more positive experience for yourself and for everyone.*

*Good communication is important and many league secretaries are now utilising all of the tools available to them, such as email and Whatsapp groups. This can often speed things up and improve response times, however it is also important to set out boundaries for when you are and are not available, working around your other commitments, otherwise you could end up doing the role 24/7!*

# Knowledge & Skills Required



## *Leadership*

- *Delegation*
- *Decision making*
- *Conflict management*
- *Providing feedback*
- *Collaboration across the league committee*
- *Mentoring*



## *Problem Solving*

- *Prioritisation*
- *Attention to detail*
- *Logical and critical thinking*
- *Research and analysis*



## *Team Working*

- *Hosting meetings*
- *Networking (inside and outside the club)*
- *Establishing lines of communication*
- *Flexibility/adaptability*
- *Commitment*
- *Joining people together*



## *Communication*

- *Active listening*
- *Non-verbal communication*
- *Public speaking e.g. at league meetings*
- *Confidence*
- *Clarity*



# Developing your skills

*In order to develop your skills, some ideas include:*

- *Speaking with your County FA to discuss the role and your needs*
- *Identifying a League Secretary from a neighbouring league or member club to shadow, spend some time or buddy up with*
- *Consider the training courses you have been on or are available in your day job, or learning gained from your studies that could also be useful for your role as league secretary*
- *What reading could you do to help you in your role?*
- *Your local Further Education College may run evening classes in different topics, an internet search will provide lots of information*
- *You may also have expertise within your league, or the clubs within your league, in these areas that you can call upon.*
- *The Grassroots Technology Service Digital Gym has resources and webinar recordings around using FA Technology products (<https://grassrootstechnology.freshdesk.com/support/home> )*

## MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES

*If you are an experienced League Secretary, and you feel you have mastered many or all of these skills, have you considered mentoring other league secretaries to help them in their roles? Likewise, if you would like to speak with an experienced administrator to improve what you already do, get in touch with your County FA to discuss in more detail. When doing any mentoring always refer to FA Safeguarding policies and procedures.*



## USEFUL LINKS:

<https://www.thebalancemoney.com/what-are-soft-skills-2060852>

<https://uk.themindgym.com/topics/>

*Note: The FA is not responsible for the content of external websites*

# Thinking like a Farmer



# Thinking like a Farmer

- *You cannot harvest what you do not sow*
- *Sow as many seeds and you're willing / able to tend to*
- *Rest the soil between yields*
- *Trust the natural process of growth*
- *Even the most fertile soil needs fertiliser*
- *The smallest seed can grow into the biggest tree*

*[inputs>outputs]*

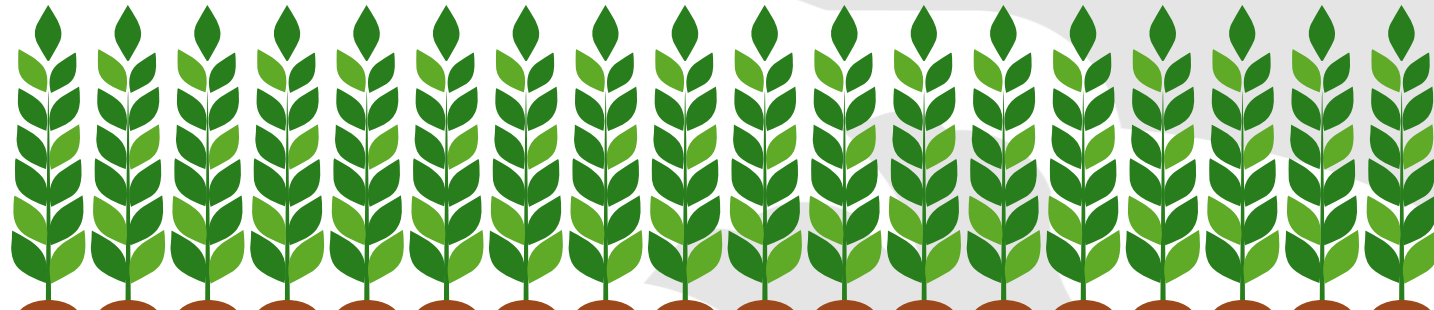
*[focus>spread]*

*[rest is important]*

*[don't obsess over daily gains]*

*[learning>talent]*

*[starting small>starting big]*



*Remember you will have good seasons and bad seasons – you can't control the weather only be prepared for it*



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