

Royal Air Force Football Association

Trustees Report 2016-18



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Chairman of the RAF FA Air Cdre Rich Pratley



With the change of the financial reporting period, I find myself in a unique position this year with the Trustee Report as this report covers two seasons. Having watched the England team progress further than expected in the World Cup and the enthusiasm the team created across the country it reminded that success on the pitch is not just about the 11 players on the pitch but goes far deeper than that. The support staff, administrators, physiotherapists, coaches, drivers, website team, analysis and the executive team all contribute significantly to the output. RAF Football is no different here, albeit on a vastly smaller scale and with far less resources.

On the pitch the Ladies Representative Team secured the Women's Inter-Services on goal difference (2017). After drawing with 1-1 with the Navy and the Army. With the Army and Navy drawing 0-0 this saw the LRT lift the trophy at RAF Cosford which was a fitting end to a very successful season. Unfortunately, in the 2018 competition the LRT were unable to capitalise on their dominance in the first half against a fit Army side and were unlucky to concede a late goal which saw the Army reclaim the Inter-Service crown as they had already beaten the Royal Navy.

The Army ran out worthy winners of the Men's IS competitions in 2017 and 2018. A strong run of fixtures in the 17/18 season raised expectations that we would break the barren run but mistakes cost us dearly. Despite the lack of silverware from the LRT and SRT, there are positive signs that things are improving and I remain optimistic that if we continue to work hard and develop the players involved we will be firmly in the mix again across all competitions. The U23s under a new manager went exceptionally close to winning their competition. With the Army and RAF beating the reigning RN team, they played in a tight match at Aldershot which ended in a 1-1 draw, with both keepers excelling. With a few players progressing to the senior team and one graduating to the UK Armed Forces team, there is a lot of talent progressing through the system. Our challenge is to harness it and provide the polish.

In the Keith Christie Trophy (RAF Challenge Cup), Honington ran out clear winners against a frustrated Waddington side in 2017 and Coningsby beat Brize Norton in the RAF 100 Cup Final played at Vicarage Road, the home of Watford Football Club. This proved to be a fitting venue for event and reinforced our strong links with the club, who also hosted a number of service personnel at a Premier League fixture. In the 2017 Plate, Benson won once again. In 2018, Honington proved too strong for a decent Odiham side and for a short period were the holders of both Cup and Plate trophies.

Maximum participation continues at all levels with RAF Football used as a great vehicle for engagement through a number of RAF 100 events with the most spectacular being the FA Cup Final. Normally the 3 Services would provide personnel to support the event but the RN FA and Army FA kindly allowed this year's final to be a purely RAF effort in recognition of our 100th year.

The 2018 season saw the retirement of a stalwart member of the RAFFA HQ Staff as John Duff hung up his bench coat to enjoy a well-earned rest and retirement. John has been a driving force for the RAFFA for many years and his contribution cannot be underestimated. John is replaced by Scott Bury who joins us as the new Football Development Officer. Every year I am amazed by the zeal and commitment shown by those involved in RAF football, particular when you consider the 'ask' from our primary roles continues unabated. The activities taking place across the breadth of the Association demonstrates the level of support provided by a large number of volunteers in all areas. I am grateful for the efforts of my Board of Trustees and Executive Committee as well as the support of Officers in Charge of Football through the RAF. Lastly, I must thank our sponsors and the RAF Sports Board. Our sponsors fantastic contribution is an enabler to all we achieve. So, I thank the RAF Association, RAF Benevolent Fund, ISS, SecureCloud+, Thales UK, and Cool Water Direct.



**Director of Representative Teams
Wg Cdr John Hetherington**

The Senior Representative Teams (RT) secured some superb results this season, but ultimately fell short in the inter-Services (IS), although both the U23s and Ladies were very unlucky. As with last season, one of the biggest challenges remains the recruitment of players and ensuring that we have the very best players within the RAF playing at the top level. Some progress has been made, but more needs to be done and this will be a major focus going forward as we look to ensure that new players are blooded to provide competition and fresh style.



The Senior Men's RT (SRT) under Team Manager (TM) Flight Sergeant Kev Barry developed a diverse fixtures list, playing some high-quality young sides as well as, for the first time in recent years, entering a competitive cup competition. The thinking behind this is to provide the players with a more competitive environment to prepare for the intensity of inter-Service competition.

The media coverage has been excellent this season and the introduction of SRT-TV and the live streaming through twitter has been an outstanding success. We have also had excellent support from both the RAF FA Comms Team, RAF News and Forces TV, which has increased the profile of the team – and RAF Football.

The fixture list has seen the SRT playing sides such as FC United of Manchester, Tamworth FC and Halesowen FC. Being accepted into

the Birmingham Senior Cup was also a great achievement for our Association. We lost the game but have strengthened our relationship with the wider civilian community and we are exploring an invitation into the Walsall Senior Cup and the Staffordshire Senior Cup competitions. The training camp in Guernsey was a success and will now serve as a template for the foreseeable future.

The TM, me and all the staff were extremely disappointed with the way we performed in the IS fixtures, losing to both the Army and the RN. However, this is not reflective of the season and hopefully the performance and victory against a strong Airbus FC a few weeks later was a better indication of the levels we can reach. There will be many challenges in the build up to the new season, player recruitment is key as mentioned above.



The Ladies Representative Team (RAF LRT) started the season still buoyed from the IS success the previous March. The fixtures were planned to give tough games to prepare the squad for the IS competition. In September, the squad travelled to Dublin to play the Irish Defence Forces. This is a fiercely competitive game and one that compares to the intensity of an IS fixture. The training camp to Gibraltar, whilst achieving its aims, was not as successful as previous years due to the weather. This was further impacted by having to postpone the final work up game at the end of the camp. The staff are investigating new options for a training camp next season.

The key challenge that remains for the LRT is a lack of footballing opportunities within the Service. This is being mitigated by encouraging players to play civilian football but, again out of a squad of 18 players, 5 play civilian football regularly which compared to the other services is not enough. The staff and squad were disappointed in the IS results, but the team performed very well and deserved much more than they got. Next season's planning is already underway and it has been identified that, whilst playing technically gifted teams presents a challenge, the intensity and physicality of an IS game has been missing from some of our fixtures and this will be corrected in the upcoming season.

The Men's Development Squad (MDS) freshened up their coaching staff after the appointment of Corporal Leon Duke, bringing in people with different ideas. The Squad has a clear ethos and philosophy that every player understands and has bought into. Early in the season during the trials period the management were proactive as a group and physically watched as many players as possible as the model of "working with the players given" wasn't working. Efforts have been made to go out and identify new talent that maybe has gone under the radar or perhaps was not top of station managers list to send to the trials. An example of this approach is Corporal Goddard, promoted straight from U23 level to UKAF. He's not someone recommended or sent forward to trials by anyone, it was the MDS staff who identified him.

The MDS have implemented a tutor scheme; they have players on 1-to-1 schemes with specified coaches. The player identification pioneered by the MDS should have a direct benefit to the SRT and the issues identified above over the coming season.



Icarus FC had another successful season. Highlights included playing CSKA Sofia in their stadium in Belgium. The game was live streamed by the CSKA to over 10,000 people. The fixture was lost 1-0, but was an outstanding experience for all the players and staff. Icarus beat the Army Officers 10-0 at Aldershot and enjoyed a 2-2 draw with the MDS in November – a superb occasion for RAF Football with 35 players and staff competing at a civilian club (Oxhey Jets), who hosted the RAF in great style. The season ended on a high, with victory in the Middlesex Cup Final, a late comeback securing a 3-2 win against Old Meadonians. The Club are considering entering the Southern Amateur League next season to provide a new challenge after winning the Middlesex Cup 3 times in the last 8 years and the AFA Challenge Cup once.



Finally, Sqn Ldr Damion Weir steps down as Men's General Manager. Damion has been outstanding in the role, leading from the front, dedicated to RAF Football and respected throughout the game. He will, no doubt, continue to play an important role in the RAF FA.

Veterans Report Mr Geoff Hancocks

The 2017/18 season was met with excitement, enthusiasm and true anticipation for many reasons. With the season over lapping into the centenary year of the Royal Air Force, and the fixture list chosen strategically to embrace and include as many of our playing and supporting participants as possible, the RAFFA Veterans Team had a very full and competitive fixture list, leading up to this year's Inter Service's competition (RAF Vets 3 Army Vets 6 – RN Vets 1 – RAF Vets 2). In addition to the fixtures, the family aspiration to 'embrace and be fully inclusive' to include family members, play against very challenging opposition and chose desirable stadiums with superb facilities to play within only added to the challenge to raise funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund.



- Pic 1 v England Vets FC Sep 2017 at St Georges Park

With a total of 15 events organised from the outset, the RAFFA vets family set an ambitious target to raise of £10,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund in this season until year end 2018. Due to the extreme bad weather, 2 events have been cancelled however, we are still quietly confident of achieving our target of £10,000 by year end. The RAFFA Vets have purposely tried to engage with as many locations as possible as part of the RAF100 celebrations. This has seen us play in Cyprus at the Akrotiri 7's in Cyprus, against a Highland League select team at Forres in Scotland, and also against the Welsh FA Veterans at Caerphilly in Wales. Other locations have seen us compete in



Pic 2 v Wales Vets FC Nov 2017 at CCB Centre For sporting Excellence, Hengoed, Caerphilly

Cobham London, Lilleshall Telford, Portsmouth, Royal Wooton Bassett and at St George's Park (on 4 occasions). Currently with 274 Facebook members taking an active interest in the goings on of the family and from that 79 committed paid up members, which includes both playing and non-playing personnel, (support staff), the RAFFA Veterans 'family' continues to go from strength to strength under the guidance and leadership of Matt Beattie.

A key to this success is the 'inclusion of all players aged over 35', whether they are still serving or retired, and who have, or have not represented the Senior Representative Team. Another key supporting element to the success of the RAFFA Vets this year has been support and dedication of the wives, girlfriends and support staff. They have continually supported the Vets team in all weathers, helping to try and raise funds for the RAFBF through bake a cake sales and raffles at each and every game we have participated in.



- Pic 3 v Army Vets FC Mar 18 at Lilleshall – Mr Ambassador presenting Dinger Bell Army Manager, with the RAF Vets RAF 100 memento
- Pic 4 v Navy Vets FC Mar 18 at Burnaby Road, Portsmouth – The President presenting Hughie Doyle Royal Navy Manager, with the RAF Vets RAF100 memento

In summary, this has been our most dynamic and successful year and to date with the future is extremely bright for the RAFFA Vets team, and for those supporting it. The presentation to a further 2 personnel of RAFFA colours for achievements, commitment and dedication, in addition to another RAFFA Lifetime Achievement award the presentation night will be another evening to be fondly remembered on this exciting, history making journey.

With a full fixture list already being finalised for next season 2018/19, our focus firmly remains on winning the Inter Service competition as well as raising as much money for charitable commitments, whilst including those that wish to be included to promote our friendship and comradery.

Our thanks must also go to the RAFFA Board of Trustees for their continued financial and administrative support of the RAFFA Veterans Team, which they have embraced and helped move this family forward.

With RAF Football being the largest participation sport in the RAF, the range and scale of activity which the Association conducts is significant; much of which is outlined within this report. To make this happen requires a notable amount of support. This comes in many forms; from the army of behind the scenes committee members and backroom helpers, through to pitch side supporters and, crucially, financial assistance. The provision of the latter comes from many sources, with the English Football Association and the RAF Sports Federation both providing the mainstay of support to RAF Football. However, to enable the Board of Trustees to develop the RAF FA along the pillar of Excellence, Participation and Community, additional financial support is required. This is where the RAF FA's commercial and charitable supporters are vital.

The RAF FA is extremely fortunate in that it still enjoys an extremely strong base of financial support from a number of organisations. Without this support, the RAF would simply not be able to play, coach and referee football in the way that it does today. Whether funding equipment for referees, training camps for representative players or facility hire for mass participation events, our team of supporters underpin the backbone of RAF Football.

The organisations that provided this support, and the areas of the Association with whom they are affiliated, are as follows:

The RAF Association.

RAFA have continued as RAF Football's primary sponsor, offering an extremely generous package, which included dedicated support to both the RAF Ladies Representative Team and the RAF Referees. This support was key to the ladies' successful participation in the NATO Air Comp football tournament in Germany and has allowed the Referees to grow their numbers significantly.



The charity that supports the RAF family

RAF Benevolent Fund.

In recognition of the support that RAF Football provides to the RAF Community, the RAF Benevolent Fund sponsor the RAF Festival of Football; the largest single day mass participation sporting event in Defence. They also support the Senior Representative Team, enabling them to add new levels of professionalism to their training regime.



SecureCloud+.

Always seen at RAF FA events and true members of the RAF Football family, SecureCloud+ have continued to support the Keith Christie RAF Cup competition and the Annual Awards Dinner. Crucially their financial support subsidises the attendance of junior personnel to the dinner, to ensure that the Association can celebrate its achievements in style.



SecureCloud+

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Cool Water Direct.

By far the longest serving supporter of RAF Football, Mr Alan Fish of Cool Water Direct and the Tiger Moth Experience has provided extremely valuable support in the form of a car for the RAF FA HQ staff, which enables them to get around the country to deliver RAF Football. A true sign of his selflessness is that he was happy for the logos of the RAF Charities to also be emblazoned on the car.



coolwaterdirect

Thales.

Keen to invest in the future of RAF Football, Thales have provided much needed support to the RAF Men's Under 23 Development Squad, whose strong performance in the inter-services proves it has been money well spent!

THALES

ISS.

Sponsors of the RAF Senior Representative Team, ISS have been supporters of RAF Football in the truest sense, with their executives often seen in the stands cheering the team on. It is with great sadness therefore that ISS will be moving on as a sponsor of RAF Football, but we take this public opportunity to thank them for their generous support over the past 5 years.



**FA Council Member
Wg Cdr Neil Hope MBE RAFR**

The RAF FA is a member of the FA as an Associate County. This allows the RAF FA to take a full part in the running of football in England through its County FA Staff and through its sitting member of the FA Council. The Council is a body of elected members from the National Game Board, Professional Game Board and Independents. There are currently 132 Council members who sit 4 times a year at Wembley and deliberate and vote on measures directly pertaining to English football from Grassroots football to the senior England teams. In addition, Council members sit on Committees which work on various areas of English football.



Wg Cdr Neil Hope has been the RAF FA Council member since 2008 and sits on 4 FA Committees and the National Game Board. He is currently the Vice Chairman of the Football Development Committee and also a member of the FA Youth, FA Disability and FA Sanctions and Registrations Committees. He has just completed his second year as a member of the National Game Board. This is the Board representing grass roots football that sits immediately below the main FA Board. Neil is the first Military representative in history to gain a position at this level of the FA and he regularly represents the FA at fixtures at home and also abroad with the England Youth and Disability teams.



Neil also runs the hugely successful Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Appeal which is based at RAF Shawbury. The Appeal began in May 2006 with the intent of providing aid through football. It collects unwanted and donated football kits and redistributes them worldwide. The Appeal also runs regular delivery visits to Kenya, in East Africa. In the last year the Neil has led on 2 Appeal visits. Over Christmas 2017 a team of 13 travelled to Nepal to make deliveries across the country working with the Gurkha Welfare Scheme including in completing the short Annapurna Trail.



Over Easter 2018 a team of 11 travelled to Kenya to make deliveries in and around the slum areas of Nairobi and in other parts of the country. Both visits linked into the RAF100 anniversary. Donations come from clubs across the country with recent donations received from England (FA), Manchester United, Leicester City, Hampshire FA, QPR, Shrewsbury Town and many clubs from Sheffield and Hallamshire CFA amongst others. Since 2006 the Appeal has delivered over 197000 items, including over 57000 football shirts to 56 countries worldwide. In 2017 the Appeal delivered over 26000 items to 14 countries. Details on the Appeal are available at <http://www.royalairforcefa.com/shirts-appeal>

Wg Cdr Hope has also taken the lead on organising the RAF FA implementation of the RAF100 celebrations for RAF football resulting in around 16 events over the year including massive input at the FA Cup Finals in England, Scotland and Wales.

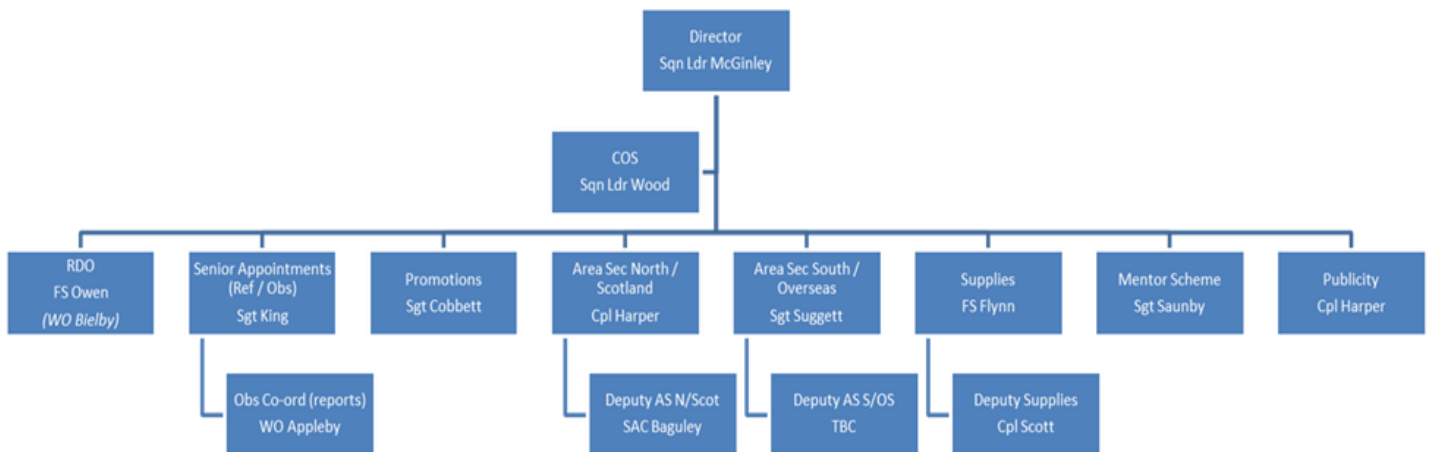
RAFFA Director of Referees Sqn Ldr Danny McGinley

The RAF FA Referees have had another challenging, but successful season. The Referee 'Season' runs from 1 Mar to 28 Feb at the end of the 2016/17 Season the RAF FA had 93 referees registered; levels ranging from Level 1 through to Trainee and Developers. At the end of the 2017/18 season the RAF FA had 118 referees registered; the break down on levels is shown below. These figures also include the 1 female referee that was officiating during this period.

Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Y	T	D	TOTAL
2017/18	2	-	3	13	38	10	28	-	19	5	118

Referees Committee

The Referees Committee (RC) meeting each quarter under the new directorship of Sqn Ldr Danny McGinley, having taken over from Wg Cdr Garry Winwright in Sep 17. The newly appointed COS is Sqn Ldr Stu Wood. The dedicated team continued to work in their respective roles to administer referees, aid development and promote best practice. The committee has undergone some changes; personalities and function changes as can be seen below:



The only two changes that will occur that are not reflected above the assumption of the publicity role by CT McIntyre when he returns from overseas and also the creation of a Sponsorship LO post which will be filled by Fg Off Martyn Mitchell.



Referee Development

During the period Jun 16 – Dec 17 the RAF FA has held 3 training Seminars at RAF Halton; these events are routinely attended by over 35 referees. The Referee Development Officer (RDO) and his team of Tutors have provided varied training topics from their own knowledge or through the use of high profile Guest Speakers from the FA and from the PGM. The RDO also provides our referees who are seeking promotion to the National Leagues with the opportunity to pass the mandated National FA fitness test. During the Summer Seminars the fitness session provided challenges the referees in different ways the last 2 have been orienteering in Wendover Woods and Hoop Aerobics.

The mentoring scheme established by Sgt Kevin Saunby at the end of the 2014/15 season progresses successfully. Additionally, referees advancing through the promotion scheme at Level 6 and Level 5 have also been mentored by more senior referees. We have already seen the benefits of this scheme due to significant momentum that has been put behind it.

The RDO provides 2 courses a year to train new referees, normally February/March and October/November. The courses vary in attendance levels; as a result of the courses the number of RAF Referees has risen and we have 19 referees working through the post course elements prior to gaining their full status which will be achieved if they attend the mandated CPD in June.

Referee Promotion

2016/2017 has been another successful year for RAF FA Referees. These achievements will hopefully encourage more to follow in future seasons.

Senior Appointments

The “Plum” end of season appointments recognises the consistent performance of the referees who are selected to represent the RAF FA RC at the showcase games listed below:

Inter-Services:

Referee – Tony Wingate
Assistant Referees – John Flynn & Adam Baguley
4th Official – Liam Hewitt

RAF Cup Final:

Referee – Lee Suggett
Assistant Referees – Steve O’Neil & James Astley
4th Official – Dan Cobbett

RAF Plate Final:

Referee – Richard King
Assistant Referees – Chris Arnell & Danny Curle
4th Official – Martyn Mitchell

Sponsorship

With continued sponsorship from RAFA it is important we make the best of the opportunities this presents; therefore, we are introducing a sponsorship liaison officer to the committee to coordinate articles on events such as the USA Cup, Referee of the Year, benefits realised by the local communities as a consequence of our engagement and recruitment and retention. RAFA membership will be encouraged to attend alongside Referees during the Basic Refereeing Courses and also at our bi-annual seminars. There is also a plan for the Sponsorship Liaison Officer to arrange a fund-raiser for RAFA during 2018.





A particularly trying and frustrating 18 months for the RAF Football Development Department (FDD). During the first 6-months of 2017, the department had to overcome many difficulties caused by the introduction of the new FA coaching, medical and referee courses. The problems were further compounded when at the same time, FA Education, the FA Department responsible for overseeing all football related qualifications, decided to introduce an all singing all dancing new computer system called the FA Learning Management System (LMS) which was supposed to speed up and simplify the administration of the new courses. Unfortunately, LMS went live without being tested and it failed to live up to the hype surrounding its launch in Sep 2016 and within 6-months was declared unfit for

purpose by the FA. The failure of the new LMS computer programme resulted in many hours of additional work for the RAF FA HQ Development Staff, who had to revert to manually inputting every aspect of every Learners progression from their initial registration through to the completion of the qualification. Although there has been some improvement in LMS during the latter half of 2017, there're still many reliability problems to be overcome before confidence is restored in the new system.

The new L1/L2/L3 (UEFAB) coaching courses are now delivered as modular courses as follows:

New FA L1 Coaching Course – a 4-day course designed to be delivered over a 4-week period to enable Learners to practice what they learn as they progress through the course. RAF FA has negotiated a special dispensation from the FA to allow us to deliver the L1 course in a 4-day block because it's not practical to expect RAF personnel to travel long distances to attend 4 individual days spread over 4-weeks.

New FA L2 Coaching Course - a 9-day course designed to be delivered over a 9-month period in 3 separate blocks of: 3 x days, 3 x days and 3 x days. The new L2 course also requires Learners to have 2 compulsory observation tutor visits (after blocks 2 and 3) whilst coaching their own team at their own club before an individual can be declared competent as L2 qualified coach. Once again, RAF FA has negotiated a special dispensation from the FA which allows us to replace the compulsory tutor club visits with tutor central observation days whereby; Learners are brought back to a central venue (i.e. RAF Halton) where we provide additional players to allow the Learners to demonstrate their coaching abilities to their tutor. This has worked extremely well over the past 3 x L2 courses.

New FA L3 (UEFA B) Coaching Course – another 9-day course designed to be delivered over 9-months in 3 separate blocks of: 3 x days, 2 x days and 2 x days. The new UEFA B course also requires Learners to have 3 compulsory observation tutor visits (after blocks 2, 3 and 4) whilst coaching their own team at their own club before they can be declared competent as L3 (UEFA B) qualified coaches.

Unfortunately, despite trying, RAF FA have not been given dispensation by the FA to replace the 3 compulsory tutor club visits with tutor central observation days. Having to arrange compulsory

tutor club visits (3 x learner) to learners football clubs across the UK will cause the Football Development Department a major logistical headache. It's certainly a major challenge which I'm very confident we'll find a way to overcome the problem and produce some talented RAF UEFA B qualified coaches who'll go on to coach and lead our 3 Representative Teams to Inter Service success.

Our first new UEFA B coaching course is scheduled to commence in Sep 2018 and we are currently trawling for Learners. This course will be delivered as a joint UK Armed Forces Course with our colleague from the Royal Navy and Army to ensure we get the minimum of 24 Learners that are required to register a course with the FA. Each of the 3 Armed Forces FA's have been initially allocated 8 places each. All applicants for the new UEFA B Course must be coaching regularly (weekly) at the appropriate level to be allocated a place on the UEFA B coaching course.

Course Numbers - during the period 1 Jan 2017 – 31 Mar 2018 a total of 514 personnel attended football related courses (coaching, medical, safeguarding, referee) with the RAF Football Development Department.

Community Engagement – RAF Corporate Coaches Kit

Regretfully, the HQ RAF Recruiting & Selection (HQ R&S) sponsored coaching kit provided to our L1 Learners since May 2016 and which proved to be extremely popular with our newly qualified coaches was not renewed by HQ R&S in 2017 due to funding issues. This is a real shame because this kit was given to our newly qualified RAF coaches once they successfully completed the qualification. The vast majority of RAF coaches work with Youth Football in their local community wherever they are based across the UK and the feedback we received from our coaches on the impact the RAF Corporate Clothing had on their youth players and parents was very positive.



2017 Goalkeeping Course

Senior Coaches - Continued Professional Development (CPD).

To renew their FA Licensed Coaches Club membership, all coaches are expected to attend a minimum number of CPD hours annually (L1 = 3 hours, L2/L3/L4 = 5 hours). With the assistance of Senior Tutors provided by the Football Association (Wembley), RAFFA traditionally have organised 4 annual CPD Events since 2008. These events were always well attended because we delivered the required numbers of hours in a single session which RAF coaches found very appealing. Unfortunately, towards the end of 2016 the FA issued a directive that a single CPD event could not be longer than a 2-hour session which resulted in L1 coaches having to attend a minimum of 2 CPD events and L2/L3/L4 coaches had to attend a minimum of 3 CPD events to achieve their compulsory CPD hours. RAF Coaches therefore found it more cost effective and less time consuming to attend CPD events organised/delivered by their local County FA rather than have to travel several times a year to RAF Halton.

Notwithstanding the above statement; at the beginning of the current season (2017/18) the Football Development Department in conjunction with our allocated FA 'County Coach Developer' (FA CCD) introduced mentoring opportunities for our Senior Coaches who work with our 3 Representative Teams (SRT, LRT and MDS). The senior coaches were all given the opportunity to be observed delivering coaching session to their respective teams in the build up to this season's Inter Services Championship.

The FA CCD debriefed coaches after their practical coaching session and provided each coach with a detailed Action Plan which will be used to measure each coach's progress next season. These mentoring opportunities, specifically for our Representative Team Coaches, has now been programmed as an annual event into the RAF Football Development planner. It's also been arranged with FA Education that these FA Tutor led mentoring sessions will count towards the compulsory CPD hours for FA Licensed Coaches Club Membership renewal. This is an exciting new initiative which we plan to develop further next season.

Finally, after 12 very enjoyable years as the RAF's 1st full-time Football Development Officer I've decided to retire and start working on my bucket list of places to visit before I die.

There are absolutely hundreds of dedicated football people from across the RAF who, over the past 12 years have helped me to successfully achieve our football Development goals. However, there are far too many individuals to mention individually, however, there are a few without whose outstanding support, I would not have achieved what has been achieved during my time in post: I'd like to formally thank my HQ colleagues Vince Williams and Sheila Haining; our RAF lead tutors WO Tony Dunn (medical) and WO Martin Wilkinson (coach & medical).



A special thank you must go to retired RAF WO Mark Haining who after discharge from the RAF took up fulltime employment with the Football Association in 2014 as one of their 16 County Coach Developers with specific responsibility for looking after the development of RAF Coaches. RAF FA are extremely fortunate to have such an understanding and extremely talented well qualified ex RAF WO filling this key Football Association (St George's Park) Coach Development position.

Retired RAF WO Mark Haining who now works for the Football Association as a County Coach Developer



Festival of Football – Manchester - Oct 2017



Winners of the 2018 Inter Station Masters (formerly Vet's) over 35 Tournament
RAF Coningsby - John Duff and Sgt Gavin Hutchinson

**RAF FA Headquarters
Mr Vince Williams, County Secretary**



Life at RAF FA HQ continues to be move at a pace as we support all areas of RAF football whilst satisfying the delivery and governance requirements of both The FA, our national governing body who fund our staff, and the RAF Sports Federation who provide part of our delivery funding and the all-important Duty Status for all serving personnel playing our great game.

To help us communicate and deliver we use both military and FA servers and systems whether that is MOSS/SharePoint, Whole Game System, website or email systems. This means that the x3 staff all use two computers each and having to do this is something which other County FAs do not have to do.

A major piece of work during 2017 has been the roll out of the new RAF Football website (www.royalairforcefa.com) a platform provided by The FA. The process started with a day's training at Sussex FA for Vince Williams and Sqn Ldr Garf Parker (Dir of Comms) to start learning the Sitecore Management System. There then followed a review of the old site and transfer of required data.

The new site template was a one size fits all for all County FAs and either had or did not have pillars that fully suited our requirements, however we shaped as best we could. We also had



technical issues during the process, the workload was considerable and we noted that some other County FAs had dedicated Marcom Officers solely dealing with the project and/or outsourced the work to independent companies.

The new website certainly views better on smart phones and tablets whilst it has more layers and information on it. However, it will need more man hours to maintain and we need to continue learning the new system and our skill set to maximise the viewers experience and its capabilities.

Our team numbers remain positive although there has been a drop in female participation and getting Clubs (Units) to use the FA Whole Game System (www.wholegame.thefa.com) remains a major issue. As we move towards the end of our current FA Strategy cycle attention will turn towards the new 2018-21 plan these issues will be highlighted and we will need to try and get them resolved over the coming couple of years.

As ever we will rely heavily on the volunteer workforce, all the individuals running Leagues and Clubs, we thank everyone's efforts and acknowledge the issue of primary duties and postings.

The Headquarters has also been supporting RAF100 events where we can, including securing the use of Vicarage Road, the home of Premiership Watford FC who will kindly host the 2017-18 RAF Cup Final.



We have seen an increase from 82 to 100 fixtures / events that we can have authorised (provides Duty Status) by the RAF Sports Federation with over 35s football (RAF Masters / Veterans) being a particular success during the past eighteen months.

As we move towards the end of 2017, which is 12 years since the setting up of the RAF FA HQ offices at RAF Brize Norton, we face our first change of staff. Our Football

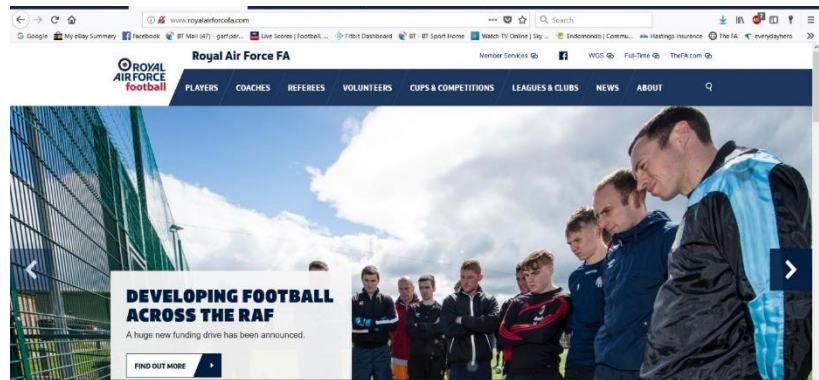
Development Officer John Duff MBE announcing in October 17 his intention to retire. I'm sure John's achievements and dedication to RAF Football will be recorded and rewarded appropriately whilst the process for his replacement will start. Busier than ever we will endeavour to serve and support everything RAF Football with communication being key so stay in touch with your headquarters.



Director of Communications Sqn Ldr Garf Parker

With the build of a new FA website mandated by the English FA, the Comms Team were fully engaged in this activity with the RAF FA Secretary. With training, numerous visits to Wembley to discuss the requirements it is imperative that the RAF FA delivered a polish product on time and to the standard

expected by the English FA. With many other FAs employing external support, it cannot be understated the scale of the task. Thankfully it was completed just prior to the start of the Inter-Services competition where Comms output was already maxed out.



The perennial problem of volunteers remains. Thankfully Sqn Ldr Paul Harrap has continued to provide communications support to the SRT and produced the RAF 100 Team for the programme of the Inter-Service match which was widely shared, including in the build up to the FA Cup Final.

Cpl Scott Styles has delivered in spades for the U23/MDS and contributed significantly to the wider RAF FA communications delivery. Scott even fulfilled the MOD Comms requirement at the FA Cup Final.



In addition to the regular updates on matches and events on the RAF FA Facebook page we have also seen several other newsworthy stories published on the main RAF Facebook page. Events such as the visit of the Burnley Academy to RAF Shawbury and creation of links with professional clubs such as Burton Albion, Lincoln City FC and Shrewsbury Town FC has helped promote the RAF is a positive light outside of football.



Posters and match advertising continue to be developed to allow sharing of fixtures and trying new ways to capture people’s attention. A mixture of self-produced and professional posters during the RAF 100 campaign have helped the Comms Team analyse what is working and what isn’t worth progressing. With Twitter feeds providing almost live coverage of Representative fixtures, the reliance on match reports has diminished but for major fixtures and the historical record, there will always be a need to complete them, something that is hard to do without the resources available. However, through the contribution of the Rep Team staff, short summary reports continue to flow to the RAF News, Facebook Page, RAF FA Twitter feed and other communications outlets.

The RAF FA continues to utilise our strong links with RAF Cosford Photographic Section who contributed significantly over the season with hundreds of high-quality digital images.

The printing and graphical support from the Air Media Centre has seen several high-quality programmes produced in their masses for the key events of the Inter-Services and RAF Cup and



The Digital Archive continues to grow and Mr John Blackmore is working through the various archives and sources of material to add more to our own historical record.

The accessible links has been shared but measurement of traffic is something that will have to be investigated.

Communication for the RAF FA is not just about football though, the wider side of the RAF FA including Awards Dinners, community engagement and the cross over between sport and professional lives are also captured.

These wider engagement opportunities continue to be grasped with the purchase of the RAF FA Football dartboard inflatable. This was used at RIAT with a collection of RAF FA representatives manning the display.

With the RAF FA Veterans playing more and more fixtures and generating significant funds for charity, there has also been a push to bring their communications output to the wider audience. The Vets is one area where volunteers are not lacking and match reports, posters and photos are all flowing through.



RAF FA Veterans
Shifnal Town FC Veterans

ROYAL AIR FORCE football

St George's Park, National Football Centre
Tutenhill
Burton on Trent
DE13 9RN

RAF Centenary 1918-2018

The RAF FA Veterans in association with St George's Park and Shifnal Town FC Veterans are pleased to announce a charity game in aid of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

Sunday
25 February 2018
KO 12.00pm

Entrance FREE
 (charitable donations gratefully accepted)

www.rafshifnal.com/fundraising/raf-fa-veterans

Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund



Director of Diversity and Inclusion Wg Cdr Louise Hancock

As a new post on the Executive Committee, the first task that the D&I Team were given was to achieve the Foundation Level of the 'Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport'. This is an FA requirement for all County FAs, however none of the military CFAs had yet achieved this. 'The Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport' was launched by the UK sports councils in November 2004 to help address the inequalities that exist within the sports sector. It is a framework to guide sports organisations towards achieving equality. Achievement of the Foundation Level will demonstrate that the RAF FA is committed to equality and that that commitment is communicated to all staff and volunteers.

 <p>Support Sources/Networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Station Equality & Diversity Advisor (EDA) • Padre/Chaplain – details of Muslim/Hindu/Buddhist/Jewish/Sikh Chaplains, call 502 D&I Policy 55221 5482 • SSAFA • Citizens Advice Bureau (www.citizensadvice.org.uk) • Stonewall (www.stonewall.org.uk) • Transgender: The Gender Trust (www.gendertrust.org.uk) • Legal Services Commission (www.legalservices.gov.uk) • Army Servicewomen's Network (Army-Servicewomen-DMailbox@mod.uk) • Army LGBT (www.armylgbt.org.uk) • RAF D&I Portal • Navy D&I Portal • Army D&I Portal • Civilians in Air • Service Complaints Ombudsman • Defence Disability Network • Defence Stammering Network • MOD Dyslexia Network • MOD LGBT Network • Ethnic Minority Steering Committee (EMSC) 	<p>Equality statement: The RAF FA is committed to promoting and developing equality and diversity in all its activities and for everyone involved with RAF Football, irrespective of race, gender, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age or socio-economic circumstances.</p>  <p>Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Act 2010 (www.equalities.gov.uk/equalities_act_2010) • AP 3392, Vol 5, Leaflet 109 (accessed through the Defence Intranet) • JSP 887 109 (accessed through the Defence Intranet) • JSP 913 Tri-Service Policy on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 	 <p>Diversity & Inclusion</p>  <p>The FA FOR ALL</p>
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There are 3 elements to the Foundation Level:

- Demonstration of a clear commitment to equality;
- An Equality Policy that has been communicated to staff, the Board of Trustees, coaches, officials and members/participants;
- Awareness of the Organisation's current profile and position in terms of equality.

The RAF's current policies and attitude to D&I gave us a huge head start in that all personnel are already required to undertake mandatory D&I training every 3 years, and a wide network of advisors and information already exists. We simply had to evidence this to our Assessor and put a few other policies, information and self-audits in place. Working towards the Equality Standard has led the Team to develop and publish an RAF FA D&I Policy, a D&I trifold leaflet for dissemination across the Association, and an Equality Statement which is now published on the RAF FA's website. We also conducted an audit of the Board of Trustees to measure its diversity, which will now be conducted on an annual basis to measure changes, and will be gradually widened across the Association. And finally, the Team conducted an internal audit of the

Association's communication and HR policies and activities to ensure that they were up-to-date in terms of the latest equality legislation.

RAF FA Diversity & Inclusion Statement:
Gp Capt R Pratley, Chairman RAF FA

Vision

As the Chairman of the RAF FA, I am responsible for ensuring that everyone involved with RAF Football is aware of, and complies with, the MOD and RAF D&I policies and directives. I consider the basic tenet that all personnel deserve to be treated with respect and dignity to be at the heart of what we do. All personnel have a direct liability to comply with equalities legislation and with D&I law. The RAF FA directive is based on the following 3 principal tenets of D&I:

Leadership, Knowledge and Confidence



Leadership

I expect all personnel involved with RAF Football to treat everyone, both military and civilian, fairly, with dignity and respect. Our behaviour to one another must reflect best practice and encompass the aims and goals of the RAF. The promotion of D&I is an essential element of good leadership and management, and crucial to enhancing team cohesion and effectiveness. We must embrace the diversity of our personnel and use individuals' different experiences and backgrounds to our advantage.



Knowledge

I expect Football leaders at all levels to take full responsibility to ensure that attitudes are challenged and unacceptable behaviour is eradicated. Training and education is critical to the success of our D&I directive. Individuals are therefore to take personal responsibility for completing their mandatory RAF D&I training. Furthermore, leaders are to ensure that all staff are aware of the Service's Core Values and Standards and who their respective unit Equality and Diversity & Inclusion Advisor (EDIA) is.

The RAF FA lead for D&I is Wg Cdr Louise Hancock (louise.hancock906@mod.gov.uk) and any general queries on D&I policy should be addressed to her.

Confidence

All personnel involved with RAF Football have the right to be treated fairly in an environment free from harassment, intimidation, prejudice or malice. I expect Football leaders to create a positive climate whereby individuals have the confidence to speak out if they hear or see any inappropriate behaviour. They must instil a culture to allow their subordinates to provide feedback and constructive comment or criticism. Such confidence will be created out of knowledge of policy and, more importantly, of our values and standards and how they are relevant in all that we do. All personnel involved with RAF Football must be reassured that should they wish to report inappropriate behaviour that they will be taken seriously, dealt with in a timely manner and treated in confidence.

Valuing Difference:

The RAF FA is an inclusive association which supports and values difference at all levels. The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal protection in place for personnel who fall into the following 9 Protected Characteristics:



You may not consider that you fall into any of the Protected Characteristics but most people fit into one, forming part of a diverse organisation. As part of the MOD's commitment to its people the RAF FA want to ensure that everyone has the help and support they need to enjoy the game.

If you would like more information on getting involved with the RAF FA please contact:

Mr Vince Williams

County Secretary
RAF FA
RAF Brize Norton
www.royalairforcefa.com
(GPTN) 95461 5704
/ 01993 895704



We are currently waiting to find out whether we have been successful in achieving the Foundation Level, after which the Team will be concentrating on our own Action Plan to continue improving D&I in RAF Football, and on achieving the next level of the Equality Standard.



**Director of Football Delivery
Sqn Ldr Martin Blagojevic**

Football's status as the largest participation sport in the RAF endures and whilst the 11-a-side format has less prominence, in the wider context, grass roots football continues to thrive through inter-section leagues, the Festival of Football and small-sided games. From a Station perspective what we continue to see is that those teams supported by a strong network of managers, backroom staff and OICs reap the rewards, and achieve far more than the sum of their parts. High performing teams are inevitably those that are the best organised and supported by a chain of command that understands the importance of sport; I welcome potential OICs, Team Managers and support staff to test this theory in the forthcoming season. Certainly, this season's recipient of the 'Contribution to Grassroots Award', Flight Sergeant Steve Harrison, the RAF Honington Team Manager was the embodiment of this, winning both the RAF Cup and Plate competition in two consecutive years.



There have been myriad challenges faced in the 2017-2018 season; many of these challenges have been addressed through communication and flexibility. Notwithstanding, there are areas of the game where we recognise there are considerable challenges to overcome. The results of the FA's Grassroots survey reflect our own analysis; the quality of grass pitches puts players off playing more and in particular those players who play weekend football. As a consequence, we have developed links with non-league teams and local sports facilities as we seek to find ways of addressing this in the short term.

Regional Directors

Football delivery remains split by region – a format that continues to prove effective, with relationship management being key to this success. Our 2017-18 season Regional Directors were: Flight Lieutenant James Maguire (North Region), Flight Sergeant Si Waldock (East Region), Flight Sergeant Andy Oakley (Central Region) and Squadron Leader Prince Ubhi (West Region).

RAF Challenge Cup and Plate Competition

The RAF Cup and Plate competition remains the premier football competition in the Royal Air Force and the Champions League format sees the top team in each group competing for the Cup whilst the runners up play in the Plate Competition. This year's competition saw involvement from the vast majority of RAF units and the ever-present link between a good management structure and success on the field was apparent.

As part of the RAF FA's wider RAF 100 celebrations we sought to increase the profile of this year's competition. Rather than use neutral (RAF) venues, the semi-finals were competed between RAF Coningsby, RAF Marham, RAF Valley, RAF Odiham, RAF Honington, RAF Brize Norton, RAF Waddington and MoD St Athan and were held at Leek Town FC, Oxford City FC and Boston Utd.



The competition culminated with the Plate Final being played at Thame FC; this enabled the RAF FA to further develop our links with the Club. The final was played on 8th May and RAF Coningsby claimed the 2018 centenary RAF Cup after its footballers beat their rivals RAF Brize Norton 3-2 in a thrilling final.

The players had the honour of battling it out for the Keith Christie Trophy at Premier League side Watford's Vicarage Road ground. Despite the 27°C heat, both teams created plenty of chances - but in the end a last-minute penalty decided the tie with Cpl Steve Norton striking it home with almost the last kick of the game and picking up the Man of the Match Award in the process.



The result gives Coningsby its first Cup win since 2012-13 and leaves Brize Norton still waiting for the best part of three decades for their moment of glory.



**Director of Football Finance Report
Sqn Ldr Joan Ochuodho**

For the FY ended 31 December 2017, the Board of Trustees were satisfied that the audit requirement of Section 144(1) of the Charities Act 2011 (The Act) does not apply to the RAF FA.

Thus, there is no requirement in the governing document or constitution of the RAF FA for the conducting of an audit. As a consequence, the Board of Trustees elected that the Financial Statements should be subject to an Independent Examination, which was completed in Sep 18. The Independent Examiner's Statement follows below:

"In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material aspect, the trustees requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and

- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006, and with the methods and principles of the Statement of recommended Practice: Accounting and reporting by Charities have not been met or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached."

RAF FA also appointed a Director of Strategy towards the end of the last FY. This role will help shape the structure of the business delivery aspect of FA activity. The aspiration is to have a better governance structure to aid more streamlined delivery of the business aspects of the Association.



The Royal Air Force Football Association (a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales) Company no. 06641135

**Registered Office: Alexandra House, St Johns Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2SB.
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Registered Charity no. 11 29 4 60.

Royal Air Force Trustee Report 2016-2018.

Produced by Sqn Ldr Garf Parker CMgr FCMI GCGI RAF