

# SOMERSET FA ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



*"Football for Everyone  
Everyone for Football"*

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## Chairman's Report

The season when we felt able to put Covid firmly behind us saw new challenges in the deepening cost of living crisis and probably the least helpful winter weather for a number of years. Thanks in particular to the indefatigable Fixtures Secretaries, most leagues and cups were able to complete, albeit a little later than normal.

As a County FA we continue to work towards the Code of Governance Gold Standard. The FA have now determined that all CFAs must achieve this by 2025 season. We are well on the way to meeting the requirements, although one which we have sidestepped until now is the imposition of term limits for both Board and Council members. Under the Code they cannot serve more than 9 years in total, and while this may seem a good way to keep membership turning over, offering new opportunities and fresh ideas we have always felt it was a blunt tool that risks losing expertise at the wrong times.

Under the new articles which we adopted last year our Board continues to evolve. This year will see at least one new recruit join, although final selection is ongoing as I write. Definitely stepping down is Dave Braithwaite, who has served as a director since 2013. He has been a source of wise counsel and challenge, and I have particularly valued his role as Deputy Chair since 2020. Safeguarding remains foremost in the values we aim to uphold as a governing body. We once again achieved a clean bill of health in our Biennial Inspection, which also recognised our efforts in taking initiatives over and above the minimum standard required. Congratulations to all the staff especially who hold safeguarding to the fore of their duties.

Diversity is another area where we have made steady progress. Our submission for the Preliminary Equality Standard will be submitted in July. We are quietly confident of achieving it due to the work which Rachael Lawler-Edwards has led, again supported by many of our staff and also by the IAG (Inclusion Advisory Group) under Lee Ballard. As part of the work of the IAG, we will very shortly be launching the Somerset FA Individual Access to Football Fund: Somerset FA would like to remove all barriers to playing football. We recognise that finance is one of those, a situation exacerbated by the current financial position. Our fund is open to individuals who are at risk of not being able to participate in football as a result of significant financial hardship. If you as an individual (or the individual you care for) are unable to afford the essential costs of playing football, this fund is here to help you play the game.

Progress on the 3G site project which we began evaluating prior to lockdowns continues to be slow. This has been partly derailed by changes in management at the school site, and wider Unitary changes in Council structures across that part of our county. But the project is still alive! Costs will also have increased significantly (what costs have not?) so some further re-evaluation is taking place, but we are optimistic that we can move onto the next stage, which would be tendering for construction, during the course of next season.

The FA works on a cycle of 4 year Strategies. We are in the last year of the current cycle, where we have done well in meeting or exceeding most of our targets and KPIs. The exception is around Disability participation, but that is in common with most of the country, where recovery since Covid has been much slower, for fairly obvious reasons. Planning for the 2024-2028 Strategy now begins in earnest. We hope many of our members will contribute to the national 'Conversation About Our Game' consultations, either in person or digitally. The FA have already intimated that funding to CFAs is likely to be flat, citing uncertainty about the revenues they will receive from TV and sponsorship deals which are due for renewal. So it will be important that we focus our efforts on the most effective ways to grow and support the game within Somerset.

We are able to continue ongoing support in a number of areas. The insurance subsidy which we have provided for some years now will be retained. The new affiliation model necessitated by the FA renewing and streamlining that aspect of the national Whole Game System (now Platform for Football) means clubs now pay per team not by Club. Some CFAs have chosen to increase their revenue from affiliation on the back of this, but we have devised a charging structure whereby the overall revenue to us will be unchanged and thus we aim to have levelled out the impact on Clubs as fairly as possible.

Referee recruitment and development is another area where we have seen changes in the system, which are still in the early days of bedding down. It would help retention of referees if behaviours across the game improved. Fortunately the extreme incidents and stories which make the wider news are very rare, but even one is too many. The Respect campaigns will be relaunched, please watch out for them and try to apply them across your league and clubs.

Oh – and we played some football! Or rather you did, thanks in no small part to the volunteers on club and league committees who are the lifeblood of the grassroots game. As ever, congratulations to those clubs who won promotion or cups, avoided relegation or otherwise exceeded their expectations from this time last year. If you are one of those clubs whose season was not as successful as hoped – better luck next season, and let us hope it is a drier one..

**Phil Chaplin**  
**Chairman**



## Chief Executive's Report

The 2022-2023 season was the first for three seasons where there was no disruption from Covid, and it was welcome to have a "normal" season.

Staff have returned to working in the office on a more regular basis, however we have not returned to the pre-pandemic way of everyone attending the office daily, instead we now have a hybrid system with staff working two to three days in the office with the rest of the week at home. This has proved popular with staff and has seen no drop in performance (if anything the opposite) so the Directors were happy to sanction that this continue.

Last year I told you that The FA would be introducing a new Affiliation system for all county FA that would standardise the way all county FA affiliate their clubs, at the time we did not have advance notice of what this would look like and how big the changes would be for Somerset. In the end the new system is a fundamental change as it is based on team affiliation instead of the club affiliation model that we have used. This change would also necessitate a new fees structure, as each team would now pay to affiliate that individual team rather than one club rate. The Board of Directors decided that any new pricing structure would not be used to generate extra income with the aim being that affiliation revenue would be the same as previous years. After much work the new structure will see fees based on the level of football in the respective men's and women's pyramid for adults and fees determined by the format of football (i.e. mini soccer, 11v11) for youth; as directed by the board if the number of teams affiliation this year are the same as last year, affiliation income will not increase in the coming season.

However, this does mean that clubs will face different bills this season than last, in the past a club with one team would pay the same affiliation fee as a club with a dozen, while that system is inherently unfair on smaller clubs as they were paying far more per team than larger clubs, it did mean that larger clubs will face larger bills this coming season. The FA also introduced new requirements for clubs to be affiliated, including a welfare officer for adult clubs and completion of the safeguarding for committee members for all named committee members for youth clubs. The new affiliation model would however make life simpler, adult and youth clubs that had previously been affiliated as separate entities would be able to be linked, thus reducing the number of Public Liability policies required and the new PFF would allow us to sell Personal accident Insurance from Marsh (formerly Bluefin) at affiliation as we do with PL; in short this should considerably speed up the process. And with a team affiliation model, one team not meeting requirements would not stop the rest of the club completing affiliation.

With the new platform, affiliation model, fees and requirements this presented the biggest change to affiliation certainly within memory and possibly ever. Therefore, we kept clubs abreast of the changes with regular communications from early in 2023, released the new pricing structure in April and attended all league AGM to deliver training sessions on the new affiliation system; these have been augmented by several short "how too" videos demonstrating different aspects of affiliation. While not wishing to tempt fate, at time of writing the system seems to be working well. This is in large part due to the club secretaries who have attended our sessions, asked questions and ultimately doing a really good job in adopting the system; thank you to all of them.



Once again, the board of directors decided to subsidise all Personal accident policies taken out by all teams, adult and youth, through the National Game Insurance Scheme (NGIS) with Marsh (Bluefin), overall this will be a financial commitment of nearly £19,000 into grass roots football. Due to us offering the policies at affiliation, Marsh have offered a further discount of £16 for adult policies; combined with the County FA subsidy of £25 per team this has resulted in the policy costing only £67 (less than last year's £75 even though the policy has increased by £6 in gross price).

### Company

New Articles of Association were adopted at the last AGM, these were largely based on the FA Code of Governance Articles, the differences largely relating to term limits (which we don't have) and Life Members (which we have retained). The first year of the articles have been relatively uneventful and they appear more than fit for purpose. The FA have informed all county FA that the Code of Governance will become mandatory, with all counties to have done by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025; consequently, we will be amending our articles again sometime in the next two years.

As a result of the new articles the Chair and Deputy Chair were elected by the directors, at their first meeting after the AGM rather than previously at council, Phil Chaplin and David Braithwaite were elected to the respective posts and served for the season. David was elected not to stand again as a director for the coming season so there will be a change to that position in the summer.

After the adoption of the new articles the Board had three new independent members, Richie Horton as Finance director, Danni Laing HR director and Kim Johnson director for Marcoms; this board comprised of 6 independent directors, that is not from the SFA Council, and three directors appointed from Council and met the aim to have at least 1/3 of directors' female and 1/3 male.

In line with the new articles 1/3 of that number stood down at the end of this season, Alan Hurford, Dave Braithwaite and Kim Johnson. For the coming season Alan Hurford along with two new directors, Liam Woodward and Rob Dyer, have been recommended by the nomination committee to be adopted at the AGM to serve three year terms. We would like to place on record our thanks to Dave Braithwaite and Kim Johnson for their service to Somerset FA

The new articles saw substantive changes to the constitution of council; its maximum number would be 45 (previously there was no limit in numbers), comprising 1/3 Life members, 1/3 League Representatives and 1/3 Football Community representatives. 10 Life Members elected to serve while all 15 League Representative spots were taken. The response for the Football Community positions was disappointingly low although of a very high quality, resulting in three being appointed.

In line with the articles 1/3 of League representatives stood down at the end of this season (there was no reason for any of the Football Community representatives to stand down as the one third retiring were deemed to have come from untaken places), As all councillors started the same three year term simultaneously none had reached the three year period to retire, the 1/3 standing down was therefore determined by drawing lots. Of the those standing down three were renominated by their respective leagues with 4 new nominations being received. A subsequent reduction of one further councillor left six spaces available for seven nominations, so in line with the articles an election of the affiliated leagues was held. Following that election the following have been elected representing the leagues shown, to serve on council for the period 2023-2026:

- CHRIS DONALD - Woodspring Junior League
- GRACE CHANNING - Somerset Girls League
- KARL LINDSAY - Somerset League
- MARTYN LEVER - Taunton Youth League
- NEIL MARKLEW - Midsomer Norton & District Youth League
- SEAN CLARKE - Yeovil & District Youth League

Positions for the Football Community vacancies were advertised, the response was far better than last year and at time of writing the nominations committee are assessing those applications. There will be 10 Life Members serving on council again in 2023-24.

There are no new Life Members of Council for the forthcoming season.



No nominations have been received for the post of President aside from the incumbent, Francis Hillier, consequently he will be returned unopposed at the AGM; the post no longer makes the incumbent a director in line with the provisions of the new articles. This will be Francis's 27<sup>th</sup> year in office and will see him equal the record as the longest serving President of the association.

There are no new nominations for Vice President at the forthcoming AGM.

Phil Chaplin will continue to serve as the Associations representative on the Council of the Football Association, beginning a new three year term in 2023.

All chairs and deputy chairs of the various committees and subcommittees were elected at the council meeting following the AGM.

The Board of Appeal did not meet in the 2022-23 season. The Leagues' Board of Appeal heard three appeals over the season.

The Youth Council completed its tenth season; with over half of the incumbents being new members for the season. They have produced several interesting projects including a podcast on mental health and are planning an end of season CPD day for young people in July.

After a gap of four years, we once again held the County Awards Ceremony; this took place at the Canalside conference centre on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, recognising those winners from the 2021-22 season. The full list of winners can be found in the FDO Male Pathway report below; thanks to Aaron and Bex for organising the event that was well received by everyone. We are aiming to hold this year's ceremony for 2022-23 winners in early autumn.

### **Wadham School**

The aim of delivering a 3g pitch in partnership with Wadham School in Crewkerne, has been a long-held ambition of the county. Unfortunately, the start of this project coincided with the pandemic and following that we have experienced further delay, most notably in the last 12 months determining the ownership of the land where the pitch will be located. We had always been led to believe the land belonged to the school, however Somerset County Council then claimed they were the owners, this necessitated a long process of determining if this was the case by the council. Perhaps because of the upcoming amalgamation of SCC into the new Somerset unitary authority, this proved to be a very long and frustrating problem, however in the last year we have had confirmation that this is council land. Furthermore, the council indicated that they would be willing to lease the land to us for the pitch, however they made clear that they have absolutely no budget for this so would not contribute any money or indeed risk any possible financial liability to the project. This would mean that they would not be prepared to be the applicant for the project bid to the Football Foundation, nor would they allow the school which is still authority controlled, so we would have to pick up this role. This does pose questions in terms of VAT; we are not currently VAT registered so could not reclaim any VAT associated with building it, therefore making the project significantly higher in cost. We are currently exploring the way forward along with revisiting costs, after 4 years unsurprisingly they will have increased, and are about to review the projected use of the site with community groups. We are still hopeful the project will happen and remain committed to it.

### **Finance**

The accounts circulated for approval at the AGM are for the financial year running to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and are once again produced by Old Mill accountants. This period relates to the 2021-22 season, (July 2021 – June 2022). Following an end of year deficit in the previous year, a surplus of £69,287 was recorded for this financial year. This was augmented by a revaluation of the Hobbs House property seeing an uplift of £60,000 in the valuation. The full financial statements have been circulated along with AGM information.

Most areas of income were above the previous set of accounts, largely due to the previous year being affected by Covid. The increase in affiliation fees were largely due to the restoration of county cup entry fees after being free for the season before. There was also an increase in course income, not least because the previous year was badly disrupted by Covid, furthermore



there was latent demand from learners unable to take courses during covid which will also explain this increase; consequently, demand and the resultant income is not expected to be as great next year. The biggest increase over budget was discipline; this cannot be explained simply as a return to a normal season after the covid disruptions of the previous two; as we had budgeted as for a regular pre-covid season, instead we received 20% over that budget and almost £20k more than we have ever received in the past. Sadly, the only explanation would seem to be an increase in poor behaviour across the game in the county. Our FA grant income was augmented by an increase due to a recalculation that saw our grant increase due to performance.

Most expenses were greater than the previous year, largely as a "normal" season expenses would be greater than those in the covid interrupted previous years; meeting expenses, staff travel, venue costs and match and cup expenses being some of those reflecting that. Power light and heat were also increased reflecting the greater occupancy of CLH, although this will likely rise again next year due to increasing energy costs married to the end of a long term fixed rate.

We continued to receive rental income from tenants at the flat at Hobbs House, the rents were reviewed by the board during the season. All 5 car parking places in the adjacent car park have been let. As mentioned above, the board carried out a revaluation of the property that saw a significant increase in the value.

### **Staff**

There have been no changes in staff over the last 12 months in terms of personnel however there was some amendment to job roles. Increased funding for facilities allowed us to add responsibility for this to Aaron Clements and Nick Hawkins roles where they will support the FDM, Rob Allan. Rachael Lawler-Edwards and Jess Humphry's increased their hours and assumed some responsibilities from Aaron and Nick so they could accommodate the new facility work. These new arrangements are working well for all concerned.

Funding from ESFA that allowed us to provide administrative support to Somerset Schools was discontinued (as of 30<sup>th</sup> June) in spite of this the Board of Directors decided that we would continue to offer this support to the SSFA.

During the year we received funding for a Women's and Girls Football Ambassador; this allows us to employ someone to deliver 50 hours of support to the W&G game over the year. Following interviews late last year we have appointed Abigail White who began delivery in February of this year. A similar grant was received for a Disability Football Ambassador, we have recruited Caroline White who will commence delivery shortly.

### **Safeguarding**

This was the second year of the new Safeguarding Operating Standard, Safeguarding 365 (SG365) for the 2021-22 season. There was a significant change with county FA were only given 1 week's notice to upload all evidence for the assessors instead of the previous 28 days. The NSPCC CPSU remain the independent assessors and they attended the county offices on 16<sup>th</sup> March, once again we were one of the first county FA to be assessed in this round of visits (it would seem the "running order" matched that used last year). Once again the county was signed off on the day with no further action required.

Safeguarding validation visits were carried out physically during the winter months and again these were augmented by a virtual meeting to review of club's online presence.

The FA held the second Play Safe weekend in October 2021, (this was delayed due to the Queen's funeral). This year every club were offered a Play Safe Captains Armband which we distributed and were worn by many clubs over the weekend. (Due to us receiving a second delivery of the armbands, we still have a number on stock, if any clubs want some for their teams, please contact us).

### **County Strategy**

The 2022-23 season was the second year of the current 3 year FA National Strategy and our own strategy, "Uniting Somerset Football" to deliver national targets specific in Somerset. A full list of our KPI's are listed in the Football Development Managers report later.

At time of writing, we are completing our one year operational plan to run concurrent with the business strategy, as this is the last year of a national three strategy there are no surprises in its content, although there will be focus on areas where we are below target on KPI's, not east disability provision.

## IT

Pleasingly the player registration system (finally) worked in an acceptable way, while there were a few isolated issues in general it worked well, and we did not witness any horror stories as had been experienced over the last two years. The fact this system worked gave some confidence as we approached the new affiliation system. This would be run on Platform For Football (PFF) and would be a new platform for clubs even though it had already been used for referee registration. Allied to the fact that the new platform would also coincide with a new affiliation system, there was some trepidation as we approached June. However, the new system is simpler than before and quite intuitive to use and, at time of writing when we are approaching three weeks since the affiliation window opened, the system has worked well with a large number of teams affiliating with few if any problems reported. All Education courses continue to be provided centrally through FA Education with a large amount, if not all content, delivered online.

Microsoft Teams continues to grow in its use for online meeting, both for staff working from home and for various council and committee meetings. Given this increase in its use, we are looking at upgrading the technology we use for those meetings, currently the web cam and microphone on a standard laptop, to augment delivery. This season we received a FA IT Health Check visit, from that is apparent that a number of our staff laptops are out of warranty ad will need to be replaced.

## Representative teams

There has been no representative football since the pandemic, our last game was literally weeks before lockdown started in spring 2020. The South West Counties Championship, the competition that our teams enter, called an EGM, last summer to debate the future of the competition. Following that meeting three counties, Cornwall, Devon and ourselves agreed to entered the competition for the 2022-23 season at Women's open age and Boys under 16, with matches provisionally scheduled for the start of 2023. Unfortunately, Cornwall were unable to take part, ending the prospects of a competition for the season. The future of representative football remains in doubt although the SFA Board have committed to taking part in the two categories mentioned above as long as at least two other counties are also taking part; another EGM has been called by the SWCC for July to discuss what happens next.

## County Cups

2022-23 was the second season of county cup competitions after resumption of competitions last season post pandemic although this season after free entry last year, entrance fees were reinstated albeit at the same rates as in 2019. In spite of this entry levels were broadly in line with last year, which were higher than previous competitions. The later start of October instead of September, for the Men's Junior and Intermediate cups proved popular with leagues and was retained. However, there was a change to finals with all adult cup final dates and venues being published prior to the competitions commencing and three weekends being allocated for the 6 youth competition finals although the actual date of each specific competition was to be determined. One change was made to the selected venues, although not the date of the match; a further two had to be rescheduled after weather postponements. The clarity of knowing the date of a final far in advance has worked well and we intend to repeat next season, and this time include youth finals. The county cup finals took place between March and June, for the first time we were able to offer electronic payment at the gate. In all six different venues were used, thanks to all of our host clubs who did a magnificent job in accommodating us.

## County Cup Finals 2023 results

### MEN'S PREMIER CUP

Paulton Rovers 1-4 Bath City @ Weston Super Mare FC, 2<sup>nd</sup> May

### UES MEN'S SENIOR CUP



Timsbury Athletic	1-3	Middlezoy Rovers	@ Paulton Rovers FC, 3 <sup>rd</sup> May
<b>UES WOMEN'S SENIOR CUP</b>			
Keynsham Town Ladies	0-2	Bridgwater United	@ Street FC, 13 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>MEN'S JUNIOR CUP</b>			
Broad Plain House	2-3	Sporting Weston	@ Street FC, 26 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>WOMEN'S JUNIOR CUP</b>			
Paulton Rovers	2-1	Frampton Rovers	@ Brislington FC, 4 <sup>th</sup> May
	aet (1-1 @90 mins)		
<b>Carrier Pigeon MEN'S INTERMEDIATE CUP</b>			
Haydon Sports	2-4	Haywood Village	@ Shepton Mallet FC, 11 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>Greensward Sports Consultancy MEN'S SUNDAY CHALLENGE</b>			
Mariners	0-1	Kingsmead	@ Shepton Mallet FC 20 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>Koolpak LEGENDS LEAGUE CUP</b>			
Middlezoy Rovers	4-1	Bathpool	@ Bishop Sutton FC, 23 <sup>rd</sup> April
<b>Replay Maintenance BOYS YOUTH SHIELD</b>			
Bridgwater Victoria Park Rangers	1-0	Sporting Weston	@ Shepton Mallet FC, 14 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>Playerdata GIRLS UNDER 16 CUP</b>			
Bridgwater United	8-1	Keynsham Town	@ Street FC, 21 <sup>st</sup> May
<b>BOYS UNDER 15 CUP</b>			
Nailsea United	0-1	Yatton Athletic	@ Brislington FC, 7 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>BOYS LEWIN CUP</b>			
Ilchester Youth Trojans	0-3	Bath City	@ Shepton Mallet FC, 14 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>VEO GIRLS UNDER 14 CUP</b>			
Keynsham Town	6-2	Weston Mendip	@ Street FC, 21 <sup>st</sup> May
<b>SNAP Sponsorship UNDER 13 CUP</b>			
Portishead Town Whites	1-4	Witham Friary	@ Brislington FC, 21 <sup>st</sup> May

We would like to record our thanks to our partners for their support of the competitions this season and look forward to working with them again next season.

### Equality

The IAG continues to meet regularly, under the leadership of our equality Director Lee Ballard, for the coming year the Terms of Reference for the group will be changed to help it advise staff in a better way.

In last year's report I mentioned that we had begun the process of achieving the Inclusion in Sport, Preliminary Level with the aim of submitting the application by the end of June 2023. This has proved to be a huge piece of work, however at time of writing we have met our deadline and submitted before the end of this month. Thanks must go to Rachael Lawler-Edwards who has led on this piece and undertaken the vast majority of work to provide an excellent application. Hopefully next year's report will be able to report a positive outcome to the submission.

**Jon Pike**

*Chief Executive*



### Football Services & Discipline

The start of season 2022-23 started with a repeat of previous system issues, this time surrounding Club's Affiliation, whereby it was delayed by a further 3 days, leaving our step 5 & 6 Clubs circa 7 days to complete their affiliation and submit their minimum players to the respective Leagues. There were



also further issues, whereby players were showing within the Clubs & Competitions Portal that they were suspended, when in fact they weren't, this led to many queries coming into the County Office.

During the season, there has been work undertaken to move the Clubs Affiliation from WGS and into the Clubs Portal. Martin Peters was involved with the Working Group for our region so that we had the opportunity to feed into this. A number of Clubs, and all the Leagues were asked if they wanted to be involved with the testing of the system, with all Clubs agreeing, with also a number of Leagues doing this as well, thank you to all involved with this testing. Another of the main changes for Clubs Affiliation this season, is that it is now a Team based fee instead of a Club based one, Bradley Welch has worked on several scenarios, to get a structure the Board approved. Another change is that Clubs are now able to purchase their Personal Accident Insurance through Affiliation, meaning that they could complete the whole process without intervention from the County FA, they are also able to affiliate Teams as they become eligible, meaning that they don't have to wait until the Whole Club is ready to affiliate.

The Staff have been attending several League AGM's to deliver information and/or training on the new affiliation system, which seems to have been appreciated. We have also produced some short videos which have been sent out to the Clubs, which gives a demo on how to do the affiliation, the feedback we have received on these are been really good. We will be looking at producing some other short videos in relation to other administration parts that need to be completed either in WGS or the Clubs Portal.

The FA are continuing with the Pilot for the Regional Discipline Panels, of which they have now opened this wider for more County FA's to enter, at present we are reviewing whether we now enter this.

We have had a high number of Misconduct Charges raised this season, this has seen to be the trend Nationally, this has had an impact on the workload in getting these investigated, charged and heard, all being done on a priority basis of Abandoned Matches (which have to heard within 42 days of the fixture), Serious Cases and then County FA Cases. With the Threatening Behaviour towards Match Officials, now being classified as a Serious Case, Somerset FA Discipline Panels are still seeing a high amount of other Misconduct Charges.

We have had 14 Abandoned Matches, of which 7 of these were within Youth Football.

There have been 54 Serious Cases investigated this season, of which 27 were within Youth Football. 24 Cases were found Proven, 2 were Not-Proven, 6 were closed with the Complainant not Pursuing, 12 there was insufficient evidence, 4 were not an aggravated charge, 6 are currently still under investigation, charged or awaiting to be heard.

There have been 17 Red Card Appeals this season, 1 was Upheld and 16 were Dismissed. There have also been 2 Misconduct Charge Result Appeal, which was dismissed.

	Cautions	Standard	Total Misconduct offences	Threatening Behaviour Towards Match Officials	Physical Contact / Assaults on Match Officials	Matters with the Police	Individual Misconduct	Multiplayer Offences	Respect 6 offences	Respect 10 offences	Respect 15 Offences	Non-Playing Participant Offences
16/17	7752	719	222	Data Not available	10 Charged 2 not proven 1 ongoing 7 proven	3  2 proven  1 not proven	13	24	116	46	14	140



17/18	7861	717	208	Data Not available	6 charged 2 not proven 2 Proven 2 Ongoing	8 Proven 3 Education 1 Refused Ed 6 not charged 5 ongoing	9	24	121	39	9	254
18/19	7648	758	236	Data Not available	5 Charged 1 Appealed NP 4 Proven 1 to Charge	9 charged 7 Proven 1 Education 1 awaiting FA 2 ongoing	15	23	122	49	7	178
20/21	4142	453	131	Data Not available		0		6	7	0	0	51
21/22	7838	755	297	16 Charged 1 Appealed NP 15 Proven 2 awaiting FA	9 Charged 2 Appealed NP 7 Proven 1 to Charge	15 charged 11 Proven 11 Education 2 awaiting FA 1 ongoing		8	60	8	3	110
22/23	7945	763	254	10 Charged 1 Not Proven 7 Proven 2 awaiting FA	0 Charged	2 Charged 1 Proven 1 awaiting FA	6	18	58	8	1	137

7945 Cautions of which 890 were Sin Bin Cautions

98 Club Misconducts Raised

150 Individual Misconducts Raised

74 Misconduct Charges raised were In Youth Football

**Megan Buller**

## Football Services & Discipline Manger



### Football Development Manager Report

#### SFA Grants

Somerset FA have provided £12k of funding to grassroots club since opening the Club Maintenance Scheme and New Team Grants on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023. The club maintenance scheme has seen 23 grants awarded to clubs, with the maximum amount being £350. These grants cover a wide range of areas to support clubs carry out maintenance or purchase items to support their club and/or facility. Example are purchasing line markers, goal nets or decorating clubhouses.

The new team grants have seen Somerset FA support 26 clubs with a grant of £150 to create a new team.

These new team grants have supported club to create new teams in youth, female, adult, and disability football.

#### Football Foundation Grants

- 47 Grants offered since July 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 to clubs in Somerset.
- £526k offered to clubs in Somerset towards projects totalling £797K
- Grants breakdown
  - 30 small grants (under £25k)
  - 10 Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund Grants
  - 5 FSIF grants (Football Stadium Improvement Fund – Steps 1-6)
  - 1 Enhanced Grass Pitch Maintenance grants
  - 1 playzone
- A further 69 applications have been submitted totalling £646k. These are either awaiting assessment, have been rejected or are awaiting further information.

#### Facilities Update

##### 3G Pitches

The Richard Huish College 3G pitch started construction on May 1<sup>st</sup> and is expected to be completed and available for college and community use on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2023.

Portishead FC and Backwell School are both in at a similar stage with their projects and expect to submit funding applications in January and April 2024 respectively.

Wellsway school are a little further behind than the two sites above and are working towards entering the Football Foundation framework during the 23/24 season, no funding application timeframe has been designated yet.

Somerset FA's own Wadham school 3G project remains slow moving and complex. Land ownership issues appear to be resolved but other barriers remain, most notably spiralling construction costs, VAT issues and match funding. All parties (Somerset FA, Somerset Council, Wadham School, Football Foundation) all remain committed to the cause.

Larkhall FC have put in a planning application to convert their stadia pitch into a 3G. Some challenges lie ahead with this project, mainly around access and match funding, although they did put an EOI to the Football Foundation in summer 2022 and should they be successful there could be a healthy amount of Foundation funding. The project is in the early stages and development will likely happen over late 2023.

Bath City FC have also started the process of converting their stadium pitch into a 3G pitch although they are not looking for Football Foundation funding for this. There is demand for a new 3G pitch in Bath and there are several interested parties so it could be an interesting and complex situation as to where these eventually materialise.

Bath University is another party applying to have a 3G pitch and this will be privately funded. The complications here lie in the loss of grass pitches and vastly reduced community usage outside of the university own students.



### **Other Facilities**

Nether Stowey are progressing their plans to have a new build changing room and community hub building on site. Match funding applications are submitted, and they expect responses shortly to these. A funding application to the Football Foundation is being lined up for July 2024.

Wembdon are looking to add two additional changing to the Green, these were part of their original development before the builder went bust and the plans had to be altered. The new changing rooms would hugely support the club's adult and junior female teams. SFA and the Football Foundation are working with the club to support this project.

Weston Mendip looks increasingly likely to lose their St John's ground to housing developers and work has already begun on finding a new home at Hutton Moor Leisure Centre. SFA, Football Foundation and North Somerset Council are all working with the club to ensure their new home can accommodate them and meet ground requirements.

Chard FC's ambition to relocate to Mount Hinderance has largely been at a standstill this season due to phosphate levels. Some progression was recently made, and the hope is this can start to move in the coming months.

Wellington FC appear to have dropped their ambition to relocate their first team ground to Longforth Farm due to a shortfall in funding. Some progression was made in the moving of a relief road that would have prohibited a ground development and it remains to be seen whether the club may be interested in developing the site for youth football.

Bath City Youth have very recently successfully taken on the Lansdown South site as their new home base. Initially on a short-term lease which will be extended, the club have successfully gained funding for goalposts and grass pitch maintenance and are investing other funding for machinery and storage. There is huge potential at this site for a club and this is a far better alternative for local football than the Somerset FA running it which looked like a real possibility last summer to avoid it being taken out of use.

The Banwell bypass has now been agreed and the club are happy at this stage with the mitigation of gaining ownership of the adjoining land via compulsory purchase order. Work is being done ensure the current agricultural land is handed to the club in a condition fit for football. Other work is being done with the club to try to secure funds to redevelop their clubhouse following a flood over the winter months.

### **KPI's**

In general, we are in a reasonably good position as far as the KPI's go. Disability football remains a challenge and this is mirrored in other counties and sports. Whilst being 74 short of our season target this represents a huge improvement from 6-months ago, so we have done well to recover to this position. Plans are in place to increase the disability number through the ability counts league and a new youth section of the league with some FA funding.

Whilst referee numbers are down on their target these are marginal numbers and not a concern. We are currently looking at the numbers being reported are correct as there has been some discrepancies all season in the referee figures.

For full KPI numbers please refer to the diagrams below.



Somerset FA	End of Season 2022/23	2022/23 Target	vs Target	% vs Target
<b>MALE PARTICIPATION</b>	30,850	28,519	2,331	8.2%
<b>FEMALE PARTICIPATION</b>	4,543	3,591	952	26.5%
<b>DISABILITY PARTICIPATION</b>	308	382	-74	-19.4%
<b>COACH DEVELOPMENT SCORE</b>	100	94	6.00	6.4%
<b>REFEREE DEVELOPMENT SCORE</b>	88	92	-4	-4.7%
<b>FACILITIES</b>	169	182	-13	-7.3%

Somerset FA	End of Season 2022/23	2022/23 Target	vs Target	% Against Target
<b>CPD INSTANCES</b>	608	502	106	21.1%
<b>%YTWQC</b>	90.3%	89.5%	0.8%	0.9%
<b>RECRUITMENT</b>	129	119	10	8.4%
<b>RETENTION</b>	313	382	-69	-18.1%
<b>CONVERSION</b>	73	72	1	1.4%
<b>PROGRESSION</b>	25	35	-10	-28.6%

**Rob Allan**  
Football Development Manger



### Football Development - Male Pathway Report

This season once again seems to show huge growth across our "Non Traditional" formats of football in Somerset.



### **Legends League**

The Somerset FA Legends (Over 35's) League has proven hugely popular again this season, with 8 new teams entering for the 2022/23 season. The league is now at 41 teams across 4 regional groups. Plus this season we have introduced a brand new "Legends Cup" to our County Cup programme.

From the 2022/23 season onwards, we wanted to honour key individuals involved in football in Somerset and as a result, came up with the idea of naming each regional division in the Legends League. Rather than simply just naming them 1,2,3,4 or Taunton and District division, Weston and District division etc, we now name each division/league after influential past/present individuals, who have given many years of service to football across Somerset and specifically in those particular areas.

Each regional league is named as the following:

- Weston and District area division is the Alan Cumner Division: Named after Alan Cumner who sadly passed away last year. Alan gave many years of service to the Weston and District League serving in numerous roles, not least Chairman. This season's Winners were Sporting Weston Vets.
- Mid Somerset/BANES area division is the Bryan Wells Division. Named after one of our life members and more recently the chair of our cups committee Bryan Wells. Bryan has been involved in football within the Mid Somerset area for over 50 years. He was League Chairman for many years and remains the league President and has been a key individual for a number of clubs in the area over this time. This season's Winners were Coleford Athletic Vets.
- Taunton/Bridgwater and District area division is the Bob Hemburrow Division. Named after Bob Hemburrow who has been involved in football in the Taunton area for almost 50 years and up until recently, sat on the Somerset FA board. Bob has recently stepped down from his vice chair role within the Taunton and District Men's League and will now become a vice president of the league. He also sat on the Taunton Youth League for many years too. This season's Winners were Street Vets.
- South Somerset area division is the Peter Hockley Division. Peter has been a great servant to football in Somerset and the Somerset FA. Over the last 40 years he has served on the Somerset FA council in almost every role, before eventually becoming our chair, as well as serving on the Yeovil & District league with a number of those as Chairman. Peter retired from his role as Somerset FA Chairman in 2020. This season's Winners were Westland Sports Vets.

The first ever Legends County Cup saw over 25 teams take part this season. The final took place in May, with Middlezoy Rovers running out the county cup winners.

It's clear that the appetite for Over 35's football is getting bigger and bigger each season!

Team entry for the 2023/24 season is now open.

### **Walking Football**

Both leagues saw the biggest number of teams enter this season, since they were set up back in 2018/19. Our Over 50's League had 8 teams but our Over 60's League has saw the biggest growth this season, with 4 new teams and now up to 11 teams in this league. Weston ran out Clear winners in both leagues, winning both the Over 50's and Over 60's titles.

Team entry for both Walking Football leagues for the 2022/23 season is now open.

We also made more history this season and ran our first ever Walking Football County Cup Competitions. With 10 teams in each (20 in total) taking part across the Over 50's and Over 60's competitions. Again, Weston ran out winners in both of these two competitions, to win the league and cup double for the Over 50's and also Over 60's.

Our Friendly Festivals for the 2022/23 season are also now complete, with the final one taking place in April. We once again had a record number of teams taking part in these across the season, with each of the festivals being full to capacity.

The friendly festivals are for all those walking football teams/players who just wish to play some friendly games and nothing competitive. We run 3 or 4 of these events across each season, to ensure we are providing opportunities for all participants (competitive and non competitive).

Again, the appetite for Walking Football continues to grow each season.



### Awards Evening

Somerset FA held its annual 'County Awards Evening' in November 2022, the first one since 2019/post lockdown. This season it was held at a new venue (Canalside in Bridgwater) which proved successful.

The evening was an opportunity for Somerset FA to recognise and reward outstanding contribution and achievement to football from Leagues, Clubs, Referees and Volunteers within Somerset over the last 12 months. Categories/nominations were split across The FA's Grassroots Football Awards and also our own Somerset FA awards.

With over 120 people in attendance, 29 awards were presented across 19 different categories on the evening.

### Somerset FA County Award Winners, 2022

Grassroots Coach of the Year - Adults	Jason Horne (Porlock FC)
Grassroots Coach of the Year - Youth	Spencer Warren (Cotford Saints Youth)
The Spirit of Grassroots Football	Gavin Step (Huish Tigers)
Grassroots Volunteer of the Year	Glenn Seymour (Odcombe)
Grassroots League of the Year	Somerset Junior Premier League
Grassroots Club of the Year	Uphill Juniors FC
Rising Star of the Year	Niesha Mogg
Grassroots Match Official of the Year	Shaun Thorne
Keith Buller Award, Outstanding Contribution to Refereeing	Kevin Johnson
Young Referee Of The Year	Jake Richards
Contribution To Refereeing	Taffy Long
	Stuart Gravenell
	Lee Baker
Secretary of the Year (Youth Club)	Chris Wilkinson (Frome Town United Youth FC)
Secretary of the Year (Adult Club)	Ian Wiltshire (Weston FC)
Digital Engagement Award Sponsored by ASG UK	Swiss Valley Rangers FC
SSE Wildcats Centre of The Year	Weston Mendip Wildcats FC
Disability Club of The	Weston Ability FC
Disability Coach of The Year	David Edmonds (Weston Ability FC)
Disability Volunteer of The Year	Nick Dewfall
Services To Football Award	Veronica Gilbert (Bath & District League)
	Howard Parke (Bath & District League)
	Ken Templeman (Referee)
	Pauline Smith (Burnham Utd FC)
	Glenn Seymour (Odcombe FC)
	Keith Ingram (Referee)
	Vince Davis (Bath & District League)
	Paul White (Banwell FC)
	Nick Stilton (Staplegrove FC)

*Held at the Canalside, 3<sup>rd</sup> November*

We would like to record our thanks to our sponsors on the evening for their support and our congratulations to all of our winners on their thoroughly well-deserved recognition for their service to the game.

**Aaron Clements**

**Senior Football Development Officer (Male Pathway)**





## Football Development Officers' Women's & Girls and Inclusion Report

### Women & Girls

#### Affiliations

### Women & Girls

#### Affiliations

Youth Female: 125 teams

Adult Female: 52 teams

### Wildcats Programme

The Wildcats programme is for 5-11-year-old girls who want to try football, either for the first time, or as an extra playing opportunity. The programme is now in its 5th Season and still have many Wildcat programmes operating across the County. Within Somerset we have 38 Weetabix Wildcat Centres spread across the County. To date and for this season there will remain application windows for clubs to apply to become a Weetabix Wildcats provider, however moving forward this process will become 'on demand' to enable a club to apply when they are ready.

Geoff Stevens is Somerset FA's Women & Girls Community Champion for Somerset and will be supporting / mentoring Wildcat programmes as part of his role within Somerset. Geoff's main role will be to support on pitch; coach support; deliver Wildcats specific CPD opportunities and help identify new partners for future programmes. Somerset FA and Geoff hosted a Weetabix Wildcats & Squad Girls CPD session on 7<sup>th</sup> June which was an opportunity to give practical on pitch support to new and existing centres wanting more ideas and to network with other programmes. This was an excellent workshop which will be repeated in the 23/24 season.

The Wildcats programme for the County is very good, and in terms of the geographical spread around the County, we have very good provision and access for young girls to access a programme and play football.

### Squad Girls Football Programme

Squad Girls Football has now been running for 2 seasons and can either be a follow on recreational programme to the Weetabix Wildcats or its own stand along rec programme for 12 – 14 year old female players. Somerset FA now have 10 approved Centres in Somerset. Each of the Centres have been strategically placed within key Girls School Football Partnership areas and help to fill gaps in the playing pathway for girls.

Similar to Weetabix Wildcats, currently Squad Girls Football is applied for through an application window, however this will be changing to 'on demand' applications very soon.

### Women's World Cup 2023

We are promoting and supporting the Women's World Cup campaign, whilst at local level, we will be encouraging clubs to sign up to the #LetGirlsPlay initiative to create more opportunities for females to enjoy the game and an opportunity for clubs to run summer sessions to create more interest around their club and engage with more players ahead of the new season. Bath City Community Sports Trust in partnership with Larkhall Athletic will be hosting a full day of events on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July to promote football opportunities and girls provision.

### Somerset Women's Football Fixtures

The Somerset Women's County League has had a full season, with all divisions completing by early May. At the start of the season, the league had a restructure to accommodate an increase of 11 new teams at the start of 22/23 season. The league restructured into a Division 1 and Division 2 (North and South). This has worked well to try and limit the amount of travelling for teams, particularly within Division 2 via the geographical split.

Division 1 Winners – Pen Mill Ladies (who have been promoted into the South West Regional League, together with Bath City who applied for promotion via the JLC)



- Division 2 North Winners – Burnham United Ladies
- Division 2 South Winners – Wellington Wildcats (Women)

The league has operated well throughout the season with a hard-working committee running the league behind the scenes. Looking ahead to the new season, there are 4-5 teams looking to join the league which is excellent. The league AGM is on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 7pm at Somerset FA HQ.

### **Somerset Girls League**

The Somerset Girls League hosted a full season, delivering an U10s Development League, U11s Development League, U12s, U13s, U14s, U15s and U16s. On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May, we hosted the Girls League Cup Finals for U12s, U13s, U14s and U15s age groups, hosted at Street FC. This was an excellent day full of great football and a real showcase event.

The forecast for Season 2023/2024 is looking very positive, with 9 new clubs looking to join the league. We have full divisions in all age groups which is a credit to the clubs providing more teams each season and giving more players an opportunity to play football and compete in the league. The League will be operating the following age groups for Season 2023/2024:

- U10s Development League
- U11s
- U12s
- U13s
- U14s
- U15s
- U16s

The League AGM is being held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June and the league are providing a Manager's Meeting and CPD opportunity in early September, ahead of the new season starting on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The league is developing really well, and for the new season has seen an increase from 55 teams to 76 (subject to affiliation).

### **Equal Game Ambassador**

In November 2022, the FA launched the programme 'Equal Game Ambassador' for counties to identify an ambassador to support their women and girls' provision within Counties. WE are delighted to have appointed Abi White as our Ambassador. Abi's role is to help support clubs looking to develop or create new female provision. Abi has a brilliant understand of sports development and has supported 4 clubs to develop female provision, since she started in her role in January. Abi, together with Somerset FA has hosted 2 x Equal Game Workshop, providing clubs with key information on how to create, develop and sustain female football opportunities within their clubs. The Equal Game Ambassador role will continue into 23/24 season and Abi will continue to support clubs and we will look to host another 2 workshops during the season.

### **Emerging Talent Centre**

Somerset FA hosted the first season of the ETC in 22/23. This programme is now in place across the South West and for 23/24 will be in place across the Country to complete the change in the female talent pathway from The FA. Somerset FA's ETC has worked well over 30 weeks of provision. We have supported 72 players through the programme (which is an increase of 30 players from our previous talent programme). We have an excellent team of coaches / staff who operate the programme and support our 8-12s (Foundation Phase), U14s and U16s.

The season has run from August 22 to May 23, we've played training fixtures each month, together with fixtures against other South West ETC programmes during half term and school breaks. Somerset FA hosted the South West ETC festival on 14<sup>th</sup> April at Kingweston playing fields, and although it was a very wet day, it was an excellent event showcasing talented female players competing at a high level.

The ETC will operate again in 23/24 season and trials take place to identify players in early July, ready for preseason in August and officially starting the season on 6<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Somerset Schools U16s**

At the start of 22/23 season, we developed a partnership with Somerset Schools to support delivery of the U16s representative squad for the season. As we operate the ETC, this enabled us access to players and parents to support this programme. We hosted trials in early October and identified a squad for fixtures in October and November. Due to poor weather after Christmas, games were postponed, and fixtures did not get rearranged (player's then had exam prep and exams taking place).



The fixtures we hosted and took part in were very good and a great opportunity for the players. Season 23/24 will be managed by Bridgwater & Taunton College.

### Inclusion & Equality

The IAG group has had a successful season of meetings, working on various projects and linking with new partners to develop areas of work in the County. Here are some of the areas of work we have been developing:

- Individual Access Fund – offering financial assistance to individuals to access football
- Refugee Football within Bath (partnership with Bath City Community Sports Trust)
- Preliminary Level of the Equality Standard – Submission 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023
- Somerset FA Equality Action Plan
- Somerset FA County Planning
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Calendar

From September 2023 here is a snapshot of the group’s immediate priorities:

- Creation of a new & improved ‘Inclusion’ Webpage’ and content
- Promotion of Somerset FA’s Equality Action Plan & ED&I Calendar
- Partnerships & IAG Recruitment
- Female Walking Football Project & Pathway (FA Delivery Fund)
- Refugee countywide football opportunities

**Rachael Lawler-Edwards**

**Football Development Officer (Female Participation & Inclusion)**



## Football Development Officers’ Leagues & Clubs Report

### England Football Accredited

Overall, the implementation of England Football Accreditation has been a success, with the new Clubs Portal system providing an intuitive platform for clubs to access their information and complete the accreditation checklist.

83% of clubs successfully renewed their accreditation, showcasing the effectiveness of the Clubs Portal and smooth transition from Charter Standard. Notably, 85% of these clubs were able to auto-renew their accreditation. The auto-renew feature streamlined the process, enabling clubs to complete their renewals without requiring staff input.

The final number and star rating of EFA clubs are listed in the table below:

3 Star ★★★	12 clubs
2 Star ★★	47 clubs
1 Star ★	124 clubs

To support clubs with the renewal process, several webinars were held on how to navigate the Clubs Portal. These weren’t attended well, but for those clubs that did engage proved helpful. Regular email updates were sent to Club Secretaries to remind them of the renewal window and emphasise the benefits of England Football Accreditation. Not surprisingly, accreditation renewal figures went from 27% to 83% between the 26<sup>th</sup> March and the 9<sup>th</sup> May meaning most clubs completed in the last week before the deadline. Hopefully, clubs will now be familiar with the system and next season will be even more successful. Tailored support for clubs to become accredited and improve their star ratings will continue into the 23/24 season.

Whilst the star ratings above list where we currently are, we were advised not to downgrade any star ratings until the end of the 23/24 season. Therefore, many of our 2- and 3-star clubs are not yet meeting the criteria. Focus will be on these clubs next season to support them with meeting these player pathways and providing more opportunities for people to play football at their club.

We still have several EFA Leagues, and we hope to support the Taunton Youth League in receiving tailored support from the Leagues Programme with applications for next season underway. The Midsomer Norton Youth League have also engaged with the EFA application and more support is needed to ensure the league can achieve its accredited status.



### **Coach Development**

The Somerset FA 'Coaches Corner' continued to support coaches, with several CPD events taking place throughout the season. The CPD offer from the FA consisted of 6 workshops, 4 of which have been delivered with 2 remaining for an end of season conference.

Events have taken place across several locations in the county; it has been great to see coaches engaging with these events and being able to offer them face-to-face support, particularly with the move to online courses. The success of these events has only emphasised the need to engage with coaches as much as possible, in turn having a positive influence on matchday behaviours and environments for players across Somerset.

Numbers have increased, with an average attendance of 26 across all FA led events. We have also seen an increase in the number of coaches attending CPD events in conjunction with external partners which has allowed us to broaden our CPD offer. The new Female Coaches Group has experienced initial success in the 22/23 season, with over 30 coaches signing up from different levels of experience in the game. This group aims to provide a supportive community for female coaches and enhance their professional development.

The participation and engagement of the coaches during these events highlighted the success of coach CPD and we look forward to organising more next season.

### **Grants/Funding**

The New Team Fund was successful yet again this season, with £3900 being shared amongst 26 clubs. All 26 clubs were granted £150 to contribute to the start of a new team, whether that be affiliation fees, equipment, or kit.

The most popular new teams were U7s and it is great to support clubs expand with new age groups coming in. We also saw several grants given to new youth female/mixed teams, adult male, and adult female teams.

### **Youth Council**

The Youth Council has had another successful season, with the integration of 4 new members who have all settled in well and made an impact on some of the Youth Council projects.

Some highlights include the Somerset FA Young Referee Newsletter. Put together by our young referees on Youth Council, this newsletter provides advice and support for young referees and has gained good social media attention. Several members have also continued the Club Youth Council network which aims to create club Youth Councils that can feedback to club committees and improve youth voice.

Most notably, the Youth Council are preparing for their SFA Future Leaders Day. 40 young people aged 11-14 from schools across Somerset will be attending, with several workshops delivered by Youth Council members covering a wide range of employability/football related skills.

It has been enjoyable working with the Youth Council this season and recruitment will take place for next years cohort in late July/early August. With several of our long-standing members leaving, the Youth Council will be undergoing a transition period over the 23/24 season. A huge thank you to Tom Bond and Elliot Saunders who have contributed massively to the Youth Council since its inception and will unfortunately be leaving us this summer.

### **RESPECT / Matchday Experience**

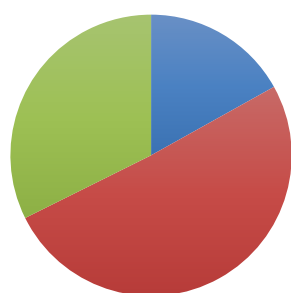
Whilst the benefits of children playing football in a positive matchday environment are clear, this is not always seen by volunteers and unfortunately, we have had numerous incidents of poor side-line behaviour again this season.

After successful funding granted through the Football Delivery Fund, we were able to deliver the Matchday Monitor scheme. Initially, 10 monitors were recruited who were spread out across the county to cover all youth leagues. This proved successful in the early season, with games being monitored and forms being filled out on the behaviour of players, coaches, and spectators. Unfortunately, we saw a significant decrease in the number of games being monitored leading up to Christmas and the monitor programme has never fully got underway. It is hoped that the remaining funding can be used again in the 23/24 season to deliver a more robust Matchday Monitor programme.

Additionally, the Matchday Experience forms were launched to all clubs at the start of the season. Forms were shared with all youth and mini soccer clubs; we have not yet expanded to adult clubs. Forms were printed and displayed by clubs at their training and match grounds and included a QR code that could be scanned by spectators to report on their matchday experience. We posed the question, 'Did you have a positive or negative matchday experience?' and the form included space to tell us why.

Data collected via the Matchday Experience proved valuable and supported with a number of poor practice cases. In the 22/23 season, a total of **234 reports** were received. Of these reports, **118** were positive and **113** negative. Although initially pleasing to see more positive reports, **this means that 48% of forms reported a negative matchday experience.**

### Reasons for a negative Matchday Experience



■ Spectators ■ Coaches ■ Players

Data collected via the Matchday Experience shows that the **biggest factor for negative matchday experiences were coaches**. This is disappointing to see and shows that there is lots of work to be done to improve coaching standards and create a positive environment.

To try and raise standards, a 'Club of the week' was selected to receive a shout out across our social media for creating a positive matchday experience. Due to the increase in negative reports there was not always a 'club of the week' – it is hoped that next season we can continue to promote clubs for positive reasons.

The success of reporting via the Matchday Experience has enabled us to gain valuable data and it is hoped that the number of negative reports decrease next season. Clearly, more work is needed to improve the matchday experience for our young players

**Rebecca Snelling**

**Football Development Officer (Leagues & Clubs)**

## Disability Football Development Report



### Grassroots Disability Football

#### Affiliated Teams

Current disability affiliation figures for 2022/23 season:

Adult male: 12

Adult female: 0

Adult mixed: 5

Youth: 8

Total affiliated teams: 25 (increased by 2 from 21/22)

#### Disability Football

We have now returned to a more healthier level of teams affiliated for this season and are looking to introduce even more for the 23/24 season.

Recreational football has once again been a struggle to relaunch however we have had an exciting announcement by the FA to help potentially address this with a centrally funded program for 5-11 recreational football.

### Ability Counts League

We have managed to host 6 festivals of fixtures for entered teams with our last meeting on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June at Strode College with 12 teams competing across 3 divisions. After some initial discussions with other clubs, we may have an additional 2 teams to enter into the league for next season.



We have also been successful in obtaining some funding from the FA to run our first ever Youth Ability Counts division. This division will sit within the Ability Counts League structure. Discussions have already taken place with interested clubs to see how they would like the competition to look like going forward with the first draft about to be completed.

### **England Talent Day**

The FA has now shifted these events from being county led to now being hosted on a regional basis. We have two currently being held in the South West, one in Devon and the other in Gloucestershire. We have promoted this opportunity across our social media.

### **Recreational Football**

Recreational football will look a lot different next year. The FA have announced the creation of Comets. Comets is a mixed recreational program for 5-11 year disabled children. The program will work a lot like Wildcats and Squad Girls where bespoke training will be offered to all providers as well as an equipment bundle to be used at the centres. On top of that, the FA will fund £500 to providers to help cover any costs.

With this program to be introduced in December/January this will mean that England Disability Football Recreation Centres (Turn Up and Play) will now only cater for the 12-16 age bands. These will still be funded by Somerset FA with clubs/providers already engaged to deliver these sessions across the county.

### **Inclusive Schools League**

This season has seen the most competition entries in over 10 years with two U16 divisions and one U12 division being created. We had 3 scheduled fixture tournaments (March, April and May) in which nearly all teams took part in. We also introduced the competition into the Somerset Schools FA competition structure in which they very kindly gave trophies and medals to all winners and runners up.

### **CPD Event**

We are awaiting for the launch of the newly refreshed Coaching Disabled Footballers course (due June 2023) in which a CPD event is offered to all attendees of this course to provide additional face to face learning to allow coaches to view real life examples to take back into their clubs.

### **Impairment Specific Football**

All of our impairment specific disability football clubs are still going strong.

Bristol City CP continue to train weekly and engaging other CP clubs to play friendlies against across their U12, U14 and U18 team.

Bristol Frame Football are still going strong training on Saturday mornings and once again looking to play friendlies against other Frame Football clubs within the region.

Frome Falcons Powerchair Football Club have now returned to the South West Powerchair League which has thankfully returned for this season. With help from the Football Foundation, ourselves and other external partners we have managed to obtain funding for the league to buy a new Speed Test machine which is an essential piece of equipment for the league.

### **Disability Football Apprenticeship**

In partnership with Bridgwater United Community Trust we have secured funding from the Somerset Community Foundation to employ a Disability Football Development Officer – Apprentice through the community trust. The trust will be the direct employer of the apprentice with the course being undertaken through Bridgwater College.

The apprentice will create, sustain and transition disability football activities within Bridgwater and its surrounding areas. They will deliver in school and community sessions for disabled children and adults with impairment specific sessions to be introduced in year 2 of the project.

The project will run across 3 years with the first 18 months being an apprentice and then if all KPIs are met then they will move into full time employment through the trust on an 18 month contract.

**Nick Hawkins**

**Football Development Officer – Disability**



## Referee's Development Officer Report

The return to a 'normal' football season has been very welcome – while the habits of referees has changed slightly – some are now refereeing less, or in alternative formats of the game, things have settled back down after a season of disruption.

Despite the changes that many of our officials faced, it was great to be able to provide our local league with almost the same number of referees as the previous season. At the end of the 22/23 season, there were more than 500 registered referees across the county, serving the male, female, youth and alternative format games. This includes over 100 new recruits from 7 referee courses held in Somerset during the season. We have also gained some officials from the newly created relationship with SASP, who are currently working with secondary school children aged 11-14 and introducing them into officiating.

We have continued with some of the successes of previous seasons – we are still supporting our young referees with the purple shirt initiative, and the feedback from them continues to be very positive. We have re-introduced our 'live match' development sessions, where we take groups of officials to watch a game alongside their colleagues, and discuss the incidents as they unfold.

The new promotion pathway has provided both challenge and opportunity for the referees and the CFA. The increased flexibility in the criteria, and the multiple windows in which to join throughout the season have certainly given the promotion system a long overdue revamp. We would not have been able to support record numbers of promotion candidates without the help of our newly formed group of Matchday Coaches, and we thank them for the time and effort they have put in over the course of the season.

A special mention should go to the officials that took charge of our County Cup Finals this year. It was fantastic to see so many officials take part in their first ever County Cup Final, including some officials over the age of 50, which is fantastic – appointments to these matches were a fine reward for a successful season of performance, effort and commitment, and all 13 finals were managed and delivered in the professional manner that was never in doubt.

Finally, no review of a season is complete without acknowledging the wider refereeing team across the county. Newly qualified referees don't tend to stay in the game long without the right support, so thanks go to the mentors that gave up their time to voluntarily support the new referees during their early matches. None of our Level 5 referees can get promoted without the work of our observing team, who provide detailed support, feedback and developmental advice to help them progress. Attending matches, making notes and writing reports takes a lot of time, and we are grateful to those that do this for us across then course of the season.

Looking ahead to 23/24, there are some really exciting things happening in refereeing. Changes to the structure within the refereeing department at the FA are geared up to a progressive and forward-thinking approach to referee support and development. In Somerset, we have 7 more courses planned between the start of the season and February 2024, with many spaces already booked up. We are seeing more people coming forward from within football itself – current and former players and coaches are taking up refereeing, which is fantastic.

**Matt Eva**

**Referee Development Officer**



## Designated Safeguarding Officer Report

As we come to the end of the season I hope that it's been overall a positive and enjoyable experience.

All our courses are now available [online](#). This season we saw the addition of the Safeguarding Awareness for Parents & Carers, a great opportunity to understand what safeguarding should look like and what behaviours are expected whilst attending football activities. The module takes around 30 minutes and is free. The Safeguarding Children Course and the Recertification are both valid for two years now and for youth team officials is a requirement for affiliation so must always remain in date – this will be monitored for compliance throughout the season. The Welfare Officer tutor lead course continues to be delivered around twice a week making it an easy process for new incumbents to get themselves qualified in a timely manner. There are usually a few weeks to wait as the course is in high demand. Early September we expect the new Player Welfare course (module) to be launched, this will be a requirement for all adult club welfare officers and team officials. This again will be free to complete and will take less than an hour to complete. This will be accompanied by a host of resources that will help to support player welfare across a number of topics.

As we move into the new season, we will be checking compliance of open age team officials in the adult game where teams have 16/17-year-old players. FA regulations already state that if you are working with players that are U18 on a regular basis then you must hold an FA in-date, accepted DBS check. If you require any support with this process, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing [safeguarding@somersetfa.com](mailto:safeguarding@somersetfa.com). We are looking to support clubs with this requirement however if there's a failure to engage we will need to sanction and ultimately suspend teams as it is an FA Regulation that this is in place.

Referees registering for the new season will all now have an in date safeguarding qualification which helps to keep our game a safer place. All those officiating in youth football must always have an in date accepted DBS check.

Safeguarding Adults in Disability football is now a key part of our safeguarding program. You can find information and resources about this [here](#). Nick Hawkins and myself are also available to support and if there are concerns that need addressing.

Throughout this season we have been encouraging the use of our Matchday Experience QR code to report experiences of anyone involved in the game. Essentially, we want to hear about your match day experience – good or not. The good stuff we want to share and highlight, the not so good we'll look to see how we can support a club/individual or referee to improve appreciating that some behaviours will need to be dealt with through the discipline process.

The other aspect we're addressing is the offensive, insulting, or abusive behaviour towards anyone under 18 whether that be a referee or a player where the adult is in a position of trust and therefore broken the code of conduct. I'm sure you'd agree that a young person coming off the pitch in tears because of an adult's behaviour towards them isn't acceptable.

Throughout the season we have requested that 4 individuals be removed immediately for a period of two weeks, following their alleged behaviour towards a young person, all clubs have agreed. Leagues have been informed of this and when the individual can return to their role. We will continue with both these initiatives through 23/24.

To finish I'd like to thank all our volunteers for their continued commitment and hard work ensuring we all play our part in keeping football safe. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if we can help in anyway.

**Shirley Needham**

**Designated Safeguarding Officer**





## Communications, Marketing and Partnerships

### Communication

Social Media Data 2022/2023

Facebook/Instagram

- Reach - 2'080'342
- Engagement - 37'273
- Engagement Rate - 1.79%

### Twitter

- Reach - 1'525'900
- Engagement - 7925
- Engagement Rate - 0.52%

### LinkedIn

- Reach - 52787
- Engagement - 4017
- Engagement Rate - 0.76%
- Website Stats - [https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/1iFIaw5Zjirky1kU\\_r\\_xNtlieWPLxQfk/page/QZLJ](https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/1iFIaw5Zjirky1kU_r_xNtlieWPLxQfk/page/QZLJ)

### Marketing

The 2022/23 season in SFA marketing has been tremendous, the brand and audience have grown and developed, with more leagues, clubs, players, fans and partners interacting and engaging with SFA marketing activities than ever before, and as a result, we have seen an increase in other areas of the organisation.

We have explored other avenues and platforms for SFA marketing and have partnered with local radio, local press and local businesses to expand the reach of SFA to a broader audience and network. This has been another huge success and the CMP team looks forward to developing that during the 2023/24 season and beyond.

The CMP team are still developing our links and networks through events, both in the football/sports scene and also in more comprehensive public events. This is a point for further work and something the CMP team will continue to develop in and during the 2023/24 season.

The CMP team is now being used more efficiently by other SFA departments to advertise and promote their events and activities. There are still improvements that can be made and the CMP team will continue to develop collaborative operations to maximise the marketing for those departments of SFA.

### Partnerships

SFA commercial partnerships have been a huge success in 2022/23, with more active partners than any previous season and more commercial activity as a result of the partnerships.

The partnerships have seen a great level of investment, including financial, products and services that have enabled SFA to develop and reinvestment across the organisation.

The partners have benefited in a number of ways and all have seen positive outcomes from the partnership, and most are looking forward to continuing/extending their deals with SFA into and beyond 2023/24.

The CMP team has already highlighted a number of improvements to implement in the coming weeks/months/seasons but we are in a very positive position and are encouraged by the growth and development in this section of CMP.



### **Overall Review**

The SFA CMP in 2022/23 has been a success, with audiences, engagement and partnerships growing and developing positively throughout the season.

This has seen mirrored successes in connected events and activities from across SFA and beyond.

It is in no way a perfect situation and there are a number of avenues and areas for development and improvement but 2022/23 has built upon the foundations set out in the previous season and the CMP team is ready to continue to build and develop in all aspect to make communication, SFA marketing and our partnerships better in 2023/24.

A major area for improvement is in communication engagement, now this is not solely down to SFA and our communication as we need to manage that in conjunction with the various platform's algorithms, which are constantly changing suit trends and current affairs.

***Paul Coltman***

***Communications, Marketing and Partnerships Manager***

***Somerset FA / ASGUK***



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