



Surrey County Football Association Limited

General Meeting

Minutes of the online General Meeting held on Monday 30th January 2023 commencing at 7.00pm.

Present

County Members:

Soye Briggs, Megan Casse, Emma Clarke, Nick Drew, Gordon Harrison, Emily Hobern, Graham Keable, Ray Lewis, Lizzie Liebenhals, Nayan Limbu, Bruce McLaren, Isaac Nsubuga, Victor Olisa, Yvonne Rees, Vic Rolland, Jeremy Taylor, John Wallis, Alex Warner, Bob Woods, John Young

Staff:

Emma Barnes, Anne-Marie Cliffe, Dominic Fairhurst, Richard Garland, Sally Lockyer, David Miller, Nicola Novell, Josh Symmonds

Clubs:

A.F.C. Croydon Town, A.F.C. Whyteleafe Youth, Ash Community, Barnes Eagles, Byfleet Village, Camberley Town Youth, Charlwood, Chertsey Town Juniors, Chessington & Hook United, Clapham Chiefs, Croydon United, ECS Classic XI FC, Frank Muir Lions, Godalming Town, Guildford United, Junior Elite, Kingstonian, Kingswood T, Mytchett Athletic, Ottershaw, Redhill Youth, Walton Casuals Football College, Woking Cougars, Woking Town

Leagues & Competitions:

South Surrey Youth, Surrey County Intermediate League Western (Derek Stovold)

Apologies

County Members:

Sue Aspinwall, Alan Clarke, Mike Jermey, Tony Loveridge, Ray Regester, John Waddelow

Clubs:

Mitcham Park

Leagues:

Guildford & Woking Alliance
Redhill & District

1. Apologies

The Surrey FA Chair, Alex Warner, welcomed those present, outlined the Agenda and then read the apologies as above.

2. To receive and consider the accounts for the year ended 1st July 2021 to 30th June 2022 and the reports of the charity trustees and auditors

Nick Drew reported that the Annual Report is available on the website and he would provide a summary. Once again, it has been a challenging year following the pandemic, but the County ended the year in a strong financial position. The year closed with available funds of £663K as of 30th June 2022 with £140K allocated to replacing the pitch at Meadowbank within the next few years. This cash balance has increased to £737K as of 31st December 2022.

Income levels allowed us to reinvest £1.1 million into grassroots football in Surrey. The surplus for the year was £12K which will be carried forward into the 2022-2023 season. The increase in income levels of 2% year on year was a result of coaching revenue and entry fees for the County Cups. The primary investment is towards the Surrey FA team to enable them to carry out activities and provide support, followed by running costs of the facility at Meadowbank, and the maintenance of the office and premises.

Nick then outlined other key information including changes to the Board of Trustees. He highlighted the auditor's opinions that the financial statements give a true and fair view and have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

Referring to Surrey FA's 10-year strategy to 2030, Nick outlined the 5 goals of more participants, great places to play, exceptional people, excellent organisation and long-term sustainability. In terms of outlook, Surrey FA continues to explore new commercial opportunities with the aim of introducing incremental funding to help maximise reinvestment into the grassroots game across the County. The Board and executive team are continuing to work closely to deliver the new, ambitious 10-year strategy. We are aware of the cost-of-living crisis that continues to present challenges across the County and beyond. Surrey FA, working closely with The FA, will continue to help and support stakeholders impacted by these challenges.

3. Surrey FA 2030 Strategy Update Presentation

Sally Lockyer delivered an update for July to December 2022 on Surrey FA's 10-year strategic plan. The highlights included a continued drive of the female game, growth in the male game and a strong recovery in the number of disability players. There has been sustained delivery of referee courses and CPDs, and a relaunch of the Youth Forum led by Emma Clarke who also became a Trustee. There are discipline challenges and we have taken a collaborative approach with leagues and referees to tackle this ongoing problem and make an impact on behaviours.

Surrey FA were nominated in three categories for the FA's Recognition Awards. These were Employee Engagement, Insights and Data and brand recognition, the last of which we won for the development and delivery of our E-Cup during COVID.

Moving forward, we are driving commercial revenue to reinvest into grassroots football and there will shortly be an announcement regarding a new partnership with a major brand. This season, there have been a record number of entries into the County Cups. In terms of Surrey FA's funding, the FA are undertaking a consultation process with CFAs to review the funding model in line with the FA's strategic cycle. The FA and a joint review is ongoing. We will shortly be recruiting for a new IAG Chair as well as additional Board Trustees.

Emma Barnes, Head of Football Development, then outlined quarter 1 and quarter 2 participation figures for female, male and disability. Referring to the Refugee League, which started at the beginning of the season, Emma advised that these monthly fixtures are hosted at Meadowbank and attended by around 120 players from over 27 countries. The next step will be to organise recreational sessions, which will take place locally to where the refugees live, so that they can play on a more regular basis.

Surrey FA have seven England Accredited Leagues and are working towards further leagues being accredited. We are also looking at the renewal process for clubs who have already achieved this as well as assisting those who are in the process of being accredited.

In terms of facilities, there are 131 high quality grass pitches in Surrey. There was investment by the Football Foundation into facilities in Surrey of over £1.7 million between July and December 2022. This investment includes new 3G pitches at Cobham FC and Glyn School that local clubs will also benefit from.

In terms of workforce, Emma detailed the number of coaches trained and those who attended a CPD delivered by Surrey FA during the first half of the season, along with the number of registered referees (1,097) and those newly recruited.

Eight new members have successfully been appointed to the Youth Forum and we are sharing this best practice with The FA, other County FAs as well as Surrey clubs looking to develop their own youth representation.

David Miller, Head of Governance, outlined discipline figures for 2021-2022 highlighting the number of misconduct charges, discrimination cases, abandoned games and referee threats, as these were the highest statistics recorded. He compared these to the figures for the season to date, which are indicating that these will increase further season on season, and we are looking at areas where these issues can be rectified.

Surrey FA are committed to working with adult and youth leagues to reduce the amount of misconduct within the game. A pledge has recently been published as part of our campaign to deter these levels and create a better environment for all participants. We also published examples of recent serious cases to highlight these issues with behaviour. Lastly, David detailed provisional dates for the County Cup Finals at Meadowbank.

Josh Symmonds, Head of Marcoms & Partnerships presented on Surrey FA's enhanced profile and the regular engagement across the Surrey FA website, e-mail communications and social media with latest projections all above target. We recently launched a new Tik-tok channel and have a Linked-In focus for business to business. We have held several live events with media coverage including the Grassroots Awards, Refugee League and charity matches.

We have increased our visibility and created a better offering towards our clubs and communities, including the relaunch of our podcast Surrey FA TV. In terms of County perception, we have utilised the expertise of our Inclusion & Advisory Group to promote campaigns such as Diversity in Surrey Festival, Ready Set Glow, Refugee League and Rainbow Laces.

Josh updated sustainable revenues and the partnership outreach programme has continued throughout the season. We have retained our key partners and received excellent feedback from them. Josh also advised that a new brand partnership would be announced soon.

Sally then presented on behalf of Andrew Dickinson, Head of Operations and highlighted the importance of our governance code compliance, reiterating that recruitment would take place shortly for an IAG Chair and Board Non-Executive Directors.

Referring to Safeguarding, Surrey FA passed last year's Safeguarding 365 assessment and we will now have an "unannounced" external assessment by the NSPCC. We are carrying out Safeguarding Club Visits throughout the season and Sally thanked the clubs already visited. In terms of embedding inclusive practices, a range of projects around diversity have been delivered. Moving forward, having previously achieved Intermediate Equality Standard, there is a new enhanced standard which we will be submitting for assessment in March 2023.

Sally provided details of our new team members and their roles. Finally, Sally announced a record number of over 41k users playing at Meadowbank Stadium (Jul-Dec 2022), 95% of these are community players and we deliver over 60 hours of grassroots football per week.

4. Special Resolution

Notification of changes to Articles of Association as approved by the Board that with effect from the conclusion of the meeting the draft articles of association produced to the meeting and attached to this resolution be adopted as the articles of association of the Company in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, the Company's existing articles of association.

Articles changes in relation to the IAG representative on the Board.

Our intention is to enact this Special Resolution wholesale.

Alex asked if there were any objections and there were none raised, so the special resolution was passed.

5. Announcement of the appointment of any Life Vice-Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Honorary Members – if appropriate

There were no appointments.

However, Ray Lewis, the Surrey FA President, is coming to the end of term of office, and we are succession planning for when the new President is in place, which should coincide with the AGM. We would like Ray to continue with Surrey FA and are currently reviewing the membership categories. We are also looking to appoint additional trustees to the Board.

6. Any other relevant business as admitted by the Chair

A question was raised in advance of the meeting concerning the current position regarding the potential sale of the freehold of Meadowbank Stadium to Dorking Wanderers. Sally responded that Mole Valley confirmed to Surrey FA that Dorking Wanderers had made an offer to purchase the freehold. Mole Valley has held Surrey FA to confidential and protected conversations, and they continue to do so. Mole Valley have deferred the democratic decision-making process through Scrutiny and Cabinet three times now on 14th November, 6th December and 24th January. The reason given was that Mole Valley continues to recognise that the stadium is subject to discussion involving local communities and stakeholders, and they have recently seen a new range of in-depth questions raised by residents and organisations which require more time to be fully researched.

Mole Valley also reported that Surrey FA has indicated that it is working to finalise a vision for the future of the stadium and Sally confirmed that we are in discussions with the Council.

Therefore, Mole Valley need more time to decide next steps for the future of Meadowbank stadium and they are determined to ensure the best way forward for community football in the district and consequently, with support from Dorking Wanderers, they withdrew the proposal for the consideration at Scrutiny last week and they will be preparing a final report submitted to Scrutiny and Cabinet in future.

Sally reminded the meeting that Surrey FA invested £1.2 million in Meadowbank, which opened in 2018, and our remit here is to deliver affordable community football and elite football, which we do with Dorking Wanderers. As highlighted earlier, SFA has recovered from the impact of Covid, to see record number of over 70,000 players using the facility last season and currently on track to smash that figure this season. Surrey FA absorbed all the losses in the two financial years impacted by the pandemic, but Meadowbank is a highly successful state-of-the-art facility that provides a fantastic service for local communities.

We have two leases with one being a Football Operating Lease with 45 years remaining, that allows us to operate and manage the football facilities, and the second one being our HQ Office Lease with 145 years remaining. A change of freeholder does not impact on our legal right for quiet enjoyment of our leases.

We have built Meadowbank into a thriving community hub and as the governing body for football in Surrey we recognise and acknowledge Dorking Wanderers' success, and we've continued to support their journey through Category B and now category A developments here at Meadowbank.

All Surrey FA surplus from Meadowbank is reinvested directly back into grassroots football, and we are proposing a new vision for Meadowbank to MVDC that will be discussed further at the appropriate time.

7. Closure

Alex thanked those at the meeting for their time, as well as the Surrey FA team and volunteers for their support and contribution.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.