

### **Chairman Report (September 2020):**

Standing down as Chairman (and Secretary) has not been an easy decision to make. Having set the Senior Team up in 2015 and then see the club grow from 10 junior players to around 100 as it stands has been an absolute pleasure. The aim was to offer our village a friendly and relaxed opportunity for local children and adults to access the game. To say it has exceeded expectations is an understatement. I would just like to thank everyone who has been on board throughout the years and contributed so much. Without everyone's enthusiasm and support this would not have been possible to achieve alone. Unlike other clubs, the coaches and volunteer support does really make the club unique and gives our players an accessible club to play football. Not many club coaches would be caught cutting pitches and line marking on a weekly basis. By doing this our children can play the game at an affordable cost. The level of activity that I have been involved has made it difficult for me to disengage with so many aspects of running the club. I think by stepping away I can watch from afar and remove my involvement so that the club can continue to thrive on the energy of others. I hope the club will continue to support the wide range of children, from in and around the local community, and ensure every player is valued, treated fairly and everyone is given the opportunities to develop across the club.

### **Development:**

The club is still regarded as a Charter Standard Club with the County FA and has recently become a Wildcats Centre in the County (providing workshop sessions for Girls football). I hope James Baker can grow this to be another valuable aspect of the local community. Thank you to Paul Shakespeare also who has taken on the temporary role of training the Girls team. With James involved with the U7s development team, this structure could be an area where the introduction to football at Ashton 88 is developed and a progression into structured matches as a team is explored for future progression.

Mark has conducted Goalkeeping Coaching for children from all teams this season. Having external coaches come in from Worcester City FC inspired the children and gives them a fresh take on ideas from a new set of coaches. A good CPD opportunity was achieved for coaches also.

Moving forward the club is looking at the opportunity to provide Futsal for all age groups.

### **Fixtures:**

The club has grown so much that we have expanded to use pitches at Beckford alongside Ashton. The Senior Team now also play from EUFC. This provides opportunity for the club to exist more comfortably with flexibility over matches and training.

A massive thank you to Gary and Chris for ensuring Covid-19 procedures have been implemented promptly and professionally for the club. It has ensured the children have been able to return to football safely. Competitive matches returned on the 1<sup>st</sup> August and opposition teams have been

complementary on the clubs approach, professionalism and consideration for the safety of everyone involved.

Again, thank you to Gary for ensuring pitches are being prepared for training and matches through liaising with fellow coaches. As mentioned, the coaches give up a lot of time for things prior to training or matches to make them possible. For future development the club is looking at ways of easing this burden and will be the next challenge to make this element more manageable.

Fixtures started on Saturday (5<sup>th</sup> September) and in this role Gary has recruited Karen Paxford to oversee and evaluate fixtures to ensure all matches are scheduled correctly and no clashes occur at either ground. Welcome Karen to the team who will work behind the scenes with Gary.

### **Welfare:**

Thank you to Emily Key who took over the role of Welfare Officer last year. Emily has completed all the training and regularly attends training sessions and matches to make sure she is visible to the members of the club. This is a really important role and ensures that procedures are in place, being followed and we are keeping the children and everyone involved safe within the club.

### **Finance:**

Thank you to Paul Shakespeare who keeps a hold on the club finances. Paul will provide his own report but the club is in its best financial position since 2015 which is comforting to know that the provision of a football club in the village is safe financially (especially during the current times). The club relies heavily on sourcing sponsorship and accessing grant funds to supplement player subs, again keeping football accessible to the community.

### **Incoming Chair:**

Although the position of chair has few overarching responsibilities it also carries the biggest weight. As chair there is an invested interest in every member of the committee's role to ensure the direction of the club is in the best interests of all members (players, coaches and parent/carers).

Over the five years the club has been extremely successful because we are an accessible club to the community, having a good balance of developing the players and providing a fun environment to play in. This ethos has been important throughout the club, from u6s through to the senior team. Providing these opportunities fairly through the club has also been an important factor to ensure that every child at the club, no matter the age group they are attached to, gain the same value for money and opportunities.

Over the past 6 months I have seen a slight shift in the balance of provision we offer across the club and I have some fears that this could have a negative impact on the club's ethos for the future if it is not addressed. For the new chair this will be the biggest challenge moving forward; gaining a balance of involvement from team to team to ensure we retain coach involvement at the level they wish to be involved and at the same time not discouraging the involvement of those striving for better

things. The development opportunities need to also be balanced and carefully implemented for all teams to ensure everyone feels important in the club.

The committee and volunteers involved behind the scene in non-coaching capacities has always been a further concern. The club wouldn't be what it is without the current group of amazing volunteers but I feel the club is very light on the ground with active committee members. The challenge for the incoming Chair will also be the recruitment drive to gain a balanced committee which has always been my desire. This will ensure a range of values and opinions can be generated to drive the club forward in the best interest of all of the club's members. This balance needs to be between coaches/non-coaches and draw a pool of volunteers from all age groups.

It has been identified that there is likely to be a need for further areas of support on the committee with; purchasing stock, event co-ordinating, funding and possibly additional welfare support.