



## 2025/26 Club Secretary's Report

At the end of last season I thought I'd learned a fair bit after becoming Club Secretary, but I think it's fair to say there is always something new to understand or get to grips with. So, with the season now over for most, save for the odd tournament and end of season parties, it's perhaps a good time to reflect on how the season has gone, what went well, and what could have gone better.

First off the good stuff.

### **Team Successes**

Lets not forget why we're all here - playing football. Whether your teams are super competitive or you're just interested in having a bit of fun, well done to everyone for making it to the end of another season. As always we've had some amazing successes on the pitch which demonstrate the amazing work you all do, so much so that I've lost count of the number of league and cup victories for our teams this season.

### **Training & Qualifications**

Ensuring the Club abides by all the various FA and league rules remains the single biggest part of my job as Secretary and I'm sure you've all been on the receiving end of me chasing you to do or renew something at some point by now as a result.

A big priority, as you might expect, is ensuring our new coaches all have the required qualifications, in particular for the youngest age groups. It's been particularly pleasing to see them making great progress meaning we can really start to see a pipeline of new fully qualified coaches being in place well before they're unleashed as U7s managers and coaches.

That said, I don't want to get complacent, so please, please, please make sure you have what you need and that the same is true for all the coaches and helpers in your team - and if I do chase you, that you act on it quickly! The FA have upped their game and are now moving to suspend teams when coaches qualifications lapse. If it happens to your team, it will mean the cancellation of all games and training until it's resolved. You have been warned.

### **Accreditation**

Thanks in no small part to our great levels of training compliance, our re-accreditation as a 2\* FA Charter Club was completed promptly in December, again making us one of the first clubs in West Riding to be accredited and several months ahead of the deadline.

Our accreditation status demonstrates our ongoing commitment to player development and progression through designated player pathways as well as our commitment to the local community, further development of girls football and generally being run sustainably.

While all that is great, it also has some more practical benefits. It means we get some free equipment, vouchers to spend on further equipment and, perhaps most excitingly, means we get offered free tickets to England matches - something we've really managed to take advantage of this season - as well as the opportunity to apply for tickets to the Men's and Women's Cup Finals and Community Shields.

### **Affiliation & League Entries**

Team affiliations for next season are already complete for all our teams, and in the coming weeks I'll be finalising the remaining individual team entries into respective leagues and cups ready for the start of 2026-27 season.

### **Club Development Plan**

Although it's never easy to move things along, we have made further progress on the Club's Development Plan. I'm really pleased to say the two Open Age Women's Teams have been an amazing success and,



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after a tentative foray into Men's football last season with an entry into the Wharfedale Cup, we will be entering a full Men's team into the Yorkshire Amateur league next season.

Although these are adult teams, and we are a Junior football Club, they demonstrate our commitment to ensuring those players who wish to do so, can continue enjoying playing football in the local community post-18. They also form a big part of the social outcomes we committed to when receiving the Football Foundation funding to support the construction of the 4G pitch at Guiseley School.

However, we can't pull the Club Development Plan together in isolation, so it's really important that you have your say on the things we're working on to ensure it's aligned to what's important to all our members - so please tell us what you'd like us to be doing.

### **Match Tickets**

As much as it creates a fair amount of work for me, being able to give out tickets to our members is one of the more rewarding things I get to do and something I'm very keen we do more of. We have given away hundreds of tickets to an assortment of Lionesses and England Men's games, but by far and away the most popular has been the Guiseley AFC Season Tickets.

I'm really pleased to say that Guiseley AFC have kindly agreed to repeat the offer for players in the U14's and below for this coming season. They have also offered all our coaches, and our Lionesses teams and their families, a 50% discount - something I would encourage as many of you as possible to take advantage of!

### **Future Fit & 3v3**

After two years of build up and communication the 2026/27 season will see the transition to the new Future Fit formats. For those that don't know, it will see all those sides not yet playing 11v11 football remain in their current format with the exception of the new U7s who will play 3v3.

The current U6's (next season's U7s) have been preparing for this and recently attended a 3v3 festival in Skipton. I'm sure there will be much for us to learn about how best to make this work over the next season, but I'm confident that this is the most progressive change introduced by the FA since the introduction of 5v5 and 7v7 football 15 years ago.

And now for the less fun stuff...

### **Craven, Aire & Wharfe Junior League**

I think it's fair to say that the Craven, Aire & Wharfe Junior League's decision to offer out the adoption of the FA's Future Fit changes as optional has caused a disproportionate amount of disruption. Thankfully, they have now agreed to run a full set of Future Fit compliant divisions which means the league will have a full set of FA sanctioned divisions. However, the repercussions of the previous votes are likely to have an ongoing impact for the impacted age groups with an unknown number of teams / clubs entering each of the formats they intend to offer.

Ensuring we have a full set of fully compliant teams, playing in the FA's prescribed format is without question the least problematic, lowest risk and most sensible thing to do. The Craven league's suggestion of misusing the rule which enables individual players to play up a year and applying this to whole teams, Clubs and divisions is viewed very poorly by the FA. It seems likely that further rule changes will be introduced to remove this as an option and effectively force adoption of the changes by anyone attempting to circumvent the changes. At this point, we will just have to see how next season progresses but will have the option to review things at Christmas in the event that the league ceases to run as smoothly as it has previously for those age groups impacted by the changes.



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### **Fines & Suspensions**

We continue to see teams fined for not submitting scores, stats, lineups, unauthorised postponements as well as the usual fines and suspensions for players. I appreciate that the admin can sometimes get forgotten and that it's never intentional, but fines can quickly build up and I can certainly think of better ways for the Club to spend what could easily end up being a couple of thousand pounds a year, so please try to keep on top of it!

### **Matchday Conduct**

This season we have continued to see an uptick in the number of poor conduct reports. This has included both instances reported by our teams, but also reports made against our players, parents and coaches. Even more alarmingly, some of what has been reported has been extremely serious. As well as being completely unacceptable, dealing with poor conduct reports is disproportionately time consuming and, quite frankly, depressing. I need everyone associated with the Club to take personal ownership to ensure everyone's conduct remains in line with the Club's Code. We have a complaints and disciplinary process but I'd like to avoid having to use it!

### **Departing Managers & Teams**

As the season draws to a close, we sadly have a small number of managers and other volunteers stepping down from their roles, so I would like to say a big thank you to Phil Tierney, Ewen Welsh, John Costello, James Fearnley, Dan Spiers, Justin Chadwick, Dan Wright, John Standhaven, Steve Hiley, Neil O'Connor, Neil Burton and Kylie Horne. There is no doubting the brilliant contribution they've all made to the Club over multiple years. And apologies if I've missed anyone off the list.

With John Standhaven stepping down, we are still looking for volunteers to support Boys pitch allocations. The plan is to have one person look after each format rather than one person looking after the whole lot. We have Nick Duerden lined up to help with 11v11, but I'm still after people to support with the other formats - I'm not doing it!

Finally, I'd like to give an extra special mention to our U18 Oranges and U18 Lionesses who have just completed their final seasons. It's no mean feat to make it to this age group so a massive congratulations to everyone involved!

### **The Management Committee**

In my role I get to see the Club for what it is - a brilliant Club, full of wonderful volunteers, all of whom are passionate about providing opportunities for kids to play football - none more so than the other members of the Management Committee who spend an untold number of hours not only keeping everything ticking over but striving to help everyone and improve the Club.

Chris will sadly be stepping down as Chair after many years of incredible service to the Club. His contribution will never be forgotten, not least because of his role in securing funding for the 4G pitch at Guiseley School and his tireless work on the Committee which oversees its running. Chris will be a huge miss, but I'm pleased to say we've had an excellent candidate put their name forward to take up the role.

In signing off for 2025/26, I'd like to give my particular thanks to Mark Stitson and Kevin Harrison for all your help. You both do a brilliant job and the Club would be lost without you!


And if anyone else would like to get involved there are always other things we could do with a hand on!

Here's to a successful 2025/26 and hopefully even more in 2026/27.

Many thanks,

Sam

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