

Aylsham FC (Ltd)
Club Secretary (Elect) Report
Annual General Meeting
Monday 18th October 2021

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity thank my predecessor, Mick McCann, for his commitment, dedication and support to the club over many years and state without risk of hesitation he is a remarkable person, true club stalwart and has contributed significantly to the successful running of the football club. Thank you, Mick!

That said, thankfully, Mick is not retiring completely and will continue to register adult players and act as assistant secretary.

On a personal note, I what like to thank Mick for his unswerving support and guidance whilst transitioning into the role of club secretary, without him it would have been extremely difficult position to undertake, thanks again Mick!

Aylsham FC (Ltd) have experienced, like everyone else, a challenging period in it's history due to the COVID pandemic and as we come out of it, the club finds itself in strong position to navigate whatever confronts us in the future.

However, this did mean that our season last year was severely disrupted and not a true reflection of our abilities as great success was in our grasp but snatched away from us by the pandemic.

The Adult section are regularly fielding five teams over the weekend and we have two strong under 18 teams. We are attracting new players and growing, which is contrary to the experiences of other football clubs across the country who are in decline. Something is going very right so congratulations to the managers, coaches and players who have all contributed to this remarkable achievement. The club coach, Asa Saunders, contribution across the adult section needs to be recognised and commended.

On the field, the First team after COVID diminished season finished fourth in the Anglian Combination Division 1 and the Reserves also finished fourth in their division.

The A team and Sunday sides leagues were both cancelled due to the pandemic. The Veterans' league was also cancelled.

Thanks to Graham Gladden and Mick McCann we have a thriving walking football section with over 20+ players and two teams competing in the FDC league.

The bar and kitchen have provided hospitality when allowed through COVID regulations. Thank you to all the volunteers that made this happen. It has been immensely satisfying to see a packed club house enjoying their after-match refreshment this season. Well done to everyone involved.

The Youth Section have also gone from strength to strength expanding to 23 teams including girls and mixed youth teams plus the new mini kickers and wildcats. This is a remarkable achievement but also a logistical challenge as more young people want to play for us than we can cater for. As a consequence, we need to attract even larger number of outstanding volunteers to support this growth but as you are all aware that is a much more difficult task to achieve in reality. We are turning away five or more potential youth players a week, so this is something, collectively, we need to resolve.

The reason for this 'success' is obvious, we have a thriving youth section because of all the hard work and commitment our coaches and managers put into the club and their players. A committed group of people who give up countless volunteer hours, thank you.

We have a new women's team managed by Angie Westgate, who has also volunteered to act as an additional Vice Chair of Youth, focusing on women's and girls football. Vicki Bowman, Hannah Burton and Angie have done a tremendous job promoting girls/women's football with u9s and u11s teams coming online. Angie and Hannah have agreed to start a bespoke Girls/Women section which provides focus for this growing part of the club and provides oversight for both groups.

The kitchen, as always, has been running extremely well with regular lead people backed by volunteer parents from the youth section, again thank you all for your support.

On the field, a massive well done to our U10s mixed who won the Kappa cup final and the U15s girls won NWGFL vase cup final. Congratulations!

The Youth section would like to acknowledge how are grateful they are to our parents' players who demonstrated a considered and pragmatic way forward regarding the payment of fees in a season diminished by COVID.

We are delighted with our partnership arrangements with the Offside Trust and are very grateful for the support they have provided to the club. We continue to support our friends at Boots to Africa with significant donations.

We are proud of our outstanding facilities run by enthusiastic and committed volunteers where children can come and meet friends, make new ones and play the game they love in a safe and enjoyable environment.

I would like to publicly thank our Chairperson, Ian Potter, for all his hard work behind the scenes. Particularly, noteworthy were his endeavours in acquiring substantial grants that will improve our facility and structure. A truly outstanding effort, well done. Also, many thanks to Jeff Lake for maintaining and enhancing the playing pitches and the overall condition of our outstanding facility.

In the most difficult and unprecedented of times the club has gone from strength to strength due to the commitment and endeavour of you all, we have a sound financial base, a clear vision of the way ahead through the development of the three to five year business plan and a team to deliver on those aspirations but it needs to expand to guarantee success.

In concluding my first annual report, I would like to thank our sponsors, advertisers, my fellow officers and members of the Executive Committee for their continued support, without which I could not be doing this role now or in the future.

For the coming season, I wish all players, club officials, match officials and spectators a safe, enjoyable, and successful season.

Graham Grant

Aylsham FC (Ltd)

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