

Chairman's AGM Report – 18th October 2021

Aylsham FC Ltd

Introduction

Firstly – welcome and thank you for coming to Youngs Park tonight. A key part of the chairman's report, is to focus my reflections over the past 12 months. However, we have been through unprecedented times with the pandemic and will try to summarise over the last two years. Hopefully, it's informative and I will touch on some of our current challenges, future plans and aspirations.

Although the focus of this report is the football club as a limited company, we are all so invested in and inextricably linked to Youngs Park, I feel it is important to cover some of the highlights of the facility, which is managed through the "Youngs Park Premises Committee" set up by ACS Ltd, which a number of us support. To clarify; ACS Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Charitable Trust that is the custodian of the building and land.

I have split the report as follows - a) key messages to take home b) on the field reflections c) off the field / Youngs Park reflections d) Future Plans & opportunities.

The Key Message(s) to take home

- We should all be very proud of our ability to survive as a club (and business) by navigating everything that covid has thrown at us. It is no surprise, that we have continued to grow and prosper, with no major outbreaks on our watch. It's thanks to the professionalism in the way everyone has managed the situation and always tried to do the right thing.
- We have no Club & Youngs Park is just a building with grass – without the efforts of our volunteer's workforce. That's everyone across the Club and Youngs Park. It's a massive team effort across the board; from the committee members, the managers and coaches, the players and all the volunteers who work behind the scenes to provide a great facility, with great pitches, great food and drink and something to be all be proud.
- It's a big thank you to every volunteer (it never seems enough, but without you we have no club). We really must celebrate this as the volunteer community at the end of the season in some way with a special event.

On the Field (Key Reflections)

- In such a difficult period, we have grown to 31 teams & groups (from 26) thanks to your efforts:
 - o Adult team growth bucking national trend (7 teams including two U18 teams for 21/22 season)
 - o New groups: age 3-5 mini kickers & walking football
 - o focus on womens & girl's football has led to 3 girls youth teams & a new womens team this season
- I believe we are stronger on the pitch through the number of new people joining club with significant management / coaching experience and our continued investment in professional qualifications.
- I am sure we can do more to attract and support existing coaches. This is something for us to work on.
- Graham covers on field activity in more detail in the secretary report

Off the Field & Youngs Park (Key Reflections)

Everyone sees the ice bergs floating in the sea, but would probably be shocked at the scale of effort required to run the football club and Youngs Park as profitable, professional and safe businesses

- Our key challenge has been met head on (covid safe, we did things right), with great credit to managers, coaches & committee members throughout. We sourced both FA & Broadland District Council grants to help us through this difficult time.
- We are financially sound (some clubs struggle) and this takes hard work. Importantly, this means we have choices how we can invest in our future. We hope to know create a major projects fund (specifically for the training lights if more are needed & a starter fund for 3G). This is referenced in the Treasurer update.

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- Even without the Youth Summer tournament profit for last 2 years (normally £10k per annum) we have managed to invest in the infrastructure. With club donations, grants and residual profits we have developed a watering system for the pitches (£15k project) and managed to buy new diesel generator lights and more goals over the last 2 years (despite everything around us) at Youngs Park. FA Grants through AFC & YP jointly in the last few months exceed £80k of commitment for pitch improvement funding (for the next 5 years) & pitch maintenance machinery recently purchased. We also are having CCTV fitted this week to try to safeguard our assets.
- We all should be especially grateful to our business sponsors & advertisers supporting us through these times – what a great community we live in.
- We have renewed our sole kit supplier contract with 99kit.com, extending the deal for a further 2 years with a new kit design, which means everyone across club will continue to wear exactly the same thing; reinforcing the “one club” approach.
- I really must underline all the hard work in running Youngs Park (as a facility business with Steve French & Heidi) as this absolutely benefits us all from a football club perspective. This enables so many people to focus on their passion – the football on the pitch.
- Not resting on our laurels, we are in the process of reviewing all our club policies (to keep us safe) more to follow, but incredibly important as a limited company.
- We have partnered with “The Offside Trust” in recent months to ensure we as a club and our community are raising awareness of safeguarding relating to child sexual abuse. I am proud to say all our new kits will feature the Offside Trust logo, we will have an advertising board on the main pitch highlighting our support have a board on the building to list the key contact numbers for child line etc.

Future Plans, Opportunities & Challenges

- Business Plan (for the next 3-5 years) has been produced in draft for consultation across the club. We need to validate our current vision statement (One Club, On Facility, One Approach) is still it for purpose moving forward and probably need to reduce the number of strategic long-term goals (from 9 to 3; with 3G being top of the list & essential for the future). Our immediate next step is to review this early draft plan at the Exec Committee meeting in early November and agree key actions including how we seek more engagement across the club.
- Hot topics in the Business Plan (probably no surprise to you) include:
 - o What we are describing as “growing pains”; growing from 18 – 31 teams & groups in the last 5 years has created challenges
 - o Our ability to attract “non coaching volunteers” to support running two businesses, three committees & Youngs Park as a flagship community asset. Marketing campaign underway.
 - o How we support continued team growth short term (without 3G) where we are limited by the number of pitches and training lights.
- To end on a high; following in-depth consultation Aylsham FC & Youngs Park has been highlighted as part of Norfolk FA & Football Foundations 10-year strategic plan and have secured commitment to support a major grant application for 3G. We are 1 of only 4 clubs in Norfolk selected. I am currently talking to the NFA investment manager about how we move this forward and potentially access any new funds emerging or consultancy support.

And to close – We have come further as a “one” community club, than most doubters ever expected and to continue this journey at pace, we absolutely sink or swim on attracting new volunteers & working together as one. Thank you for listening.