

SEASON 2017/18



GILLINGHAM FC

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT
MAY 2018

www.gillinghamfootballclub.com



DEAR FELLOW SUPPORTERS,

As our playing season is now over and we move into the always very busy summer period, I thought it important to offer an overview and update all supporters and stakeholders in the football club on events of the past 12 months, my views as to where the Club currently sits and indeed our plans for the short and longer term, so that everyone can understand the work that is going on behind the scenes by the dedicated staff that work on a daily basis to better our current and future prospects, staff that often go about their duties unnoticed but who are critical to the smooth running of the club you all support and are passionate about.

This report will also outline some of the challenges we face as a business on a daily basis and hopefully will allow you all a better understanding of the realities of running a football club in this modern day society, realities which are often lost in this world of powerful social media and fans forums, which, whilst clearly advancing our understanding of the planet we live on, can also act as our achilles heel if we do not balance speculation with reality. I will touch further on this matter within the fan engagement and communication section.

The report is not intended to be critical, nor inflammatory, just an honest and personal view as to where I believe this fantastic Club, in a year whereby we will be celebrating 125 years of playing football in the English football league, is heading and where I believe we will make most progress over the coming months and years ahead.

THE PLAYING SEASON

The season now passed from a footballing point of view, if described in one word, I would say was 'frustrating', however, the true spirit, resilience and determination of everyone connected to the Club shone through and we can now rest for a short while before embarking on another journey ahead, one which we hope as ever will bring us good football, positive results and an exciting end to the next campaign.

I guess that is the aim each and every year, linked to the hope we all stay well and healthy, and that we all end the year comfortable with the part we have played as individuals in supporting the team we follow and care about.

Ultimately, that is the substance that drives any football club, the loyalty and support it enjoys from its fan base, the passion shown from the terraces match after match, in good times and bad, in sunshine or rain, and it is indeed that loyalty and support we need to build and focus on if we are to progress and develop in the time ahead, a point which will be high on my agenda over the summer months and beyond.

I would like to thank Adrian Pennock for all his hard work and commitment to the Club in the early part of this season, unfortunately results were not with him, despite the best efforts of the playing squad, and change was necessary with the team's position looking very precarious after ten games, and recovery at that stage looking almost impossible.

Ade was always someone I believed could do well in management, and I'm sure in time he will, I had followed his coaching career since he left Priestfield as a player and indeed he did well at Forest Green in the period before coming to us, so I felt he would do well following the dismissal of Justin Edinburgh in January 2017.





Appointing a manager comes with no guarantees, if I had a crystal ball the job would be easy, however at the time I have appointed any manager in my past 23 years, I have always believed it to be the right decision in the moment, always after sounding out stakeholders and people I trust in life.

It was therefore incredibly frustrating to watch the latter part of the 2016/17 season pan out with limited success, but on the basis Ade was working with another manager's players, I felt he should be given the chance to bring his own players to the Club in the last closed season. On that basis I appointed Peter Taylor, a person I totally trust and respect in football, as Director of Football and indeed new players arrived at Priestfield.

It was on the above terms that I agreed to give Ade the chance of continuing his management at the start of this season, and indeed the management team bought some very talented players to the Club, however after about 10 games, an awful day away at Rochdale and few positive results, it was clear the plan was not working and I had to make the change, an unpleasant and difficult part of my job at the best of times.

Steve Lovell and Mark Patterson, great stalwarts of the Club and long time legends, were called upon to steady the ship on an interim basis, whilst the search for a permanent replacement took place, I conducted many interviews in different parts of the Country, however the turnaround in the team's performances, and indeed results under Steve and Mark was remarkable and up until the end of February there was real optimism that the team could survive the poor start, beat the dreaded drop and unbelievably even challenge for a place in the play-offs, something that would have seemed futile just a few months prior.

What was clearly not futile were the incredible victories, mostly away from home, wonderful football, fantastic goals, some of which can be viewed on the Club website, battles against teams challenging

for promotion and of course the "piece de resistance", the double over our rivals Charlton Athletic.

Such an uplift in form, unexpected by many, (including me if I'm honest), was the result of good management linked to honest, determined and hardworking players, who themselves went over the line in effort and commitment, and who all, to a man, wore the shirt with pride.

Steve will also acknowledge the huge role played by every one of his backroom staff, who worked tirelessly every step of the way.

It was an easy choice, given the change in form, to reward both Steve and Mark with longer term management contracts, they both earned the right and I am confident they will continue to build a team we can all be proud of.

I was shown an article from fellow Director Mike Quarrington, written by Mike Holden of "The Sack Race", the subject being, 'which managerial appointment made the biggest impact in League One', an interesting read on the following link, [Which Managerial Appointment Made The Biggest Impact In League One?](#)

LEAGUE ONE APPOINTMENTS						
Manager	Club	Pld	Pts	PPG	Before	Diff
Steve Lovell	Gillingham	34	49	1.44	0.43	1.01
JF Hasselbaink	Northampton	34	34	1.00	0.00	1.00
Richie Wellens	Oldham	37	46	1.24	0.44	0.80
Chris Powell	Southend	18	32	1.78	1.11	0.67
Nick Daws	Scunthorpe	7	15	2.14	1.56	0.58
Ryan Lowe	Bury	22	23	1.05	0.54	0.50
Lee Bowyer	Charlton	10	19	1.90	1.44	0.46
John Sheridan	Fleetwood	13	21	1.62	1.16	0.45
Karl Robinson	Oxford	10	11	1.10	1.31	0.21
Steve Evans	Peterborough	12	14	1.17	1.42	0.26
Dan Micciche	MK Dons	15	12	0.80	1.07	0.27
Dean Keates	Walsall	9	8	0.89	1.19	0.30
Simon Grayson	Bradford	14	14	1.00	1.55	0.55
AVERAGE						0.30

The fact Steve tops the table based on improvement from time of appointment speaks volumes, and indeed bodes well for the future ahead.

Sadly, the train ran out of steam somewhat earlier than hoped, and defeats at Bury, Bradford and then at home to MK Dons, all of which are still the subject of some debate as to how we didn't win them all (considering our total dominance of each game), somewhat summed up our season, however we look forward to again challenging in League One next year, and again will give our full commitment to everyone that cares about this great Club.

... Congratulations to Mark Byrne for winning the Supporters' Player of the Year award for this season, having had some tremendously consistent performances over the season and a worthy winner ...



PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Mark Byrne for winning the Supporters' Player of the Year award for this season, having had some tremendously consistent performances over the season and a worthy winner. He also won the Away Supporters' Player of the Year, The Players' Player of the Year Award as well as the Goal of the Season for that outstanding strike against Bristol Rovers, a volley that we will all remember for a long time to come. Max Ehmer won The Chairman's Cup for the role he played in the back four, a steady and consistent player that leads by example.

The Elliott Scally Cup went to **Eric Hawkins** for his many years of dedication and service to the Club. Eric has been a part of the Gillingham family for over 55 years, operating as a steward for a vast majority of the time and continues to work for us now as he approaches his mid-eighties. His commitment and passion for the club is as apparent now as it was when I first met him 23 years ago, and it's people like Eric that make this club so special. He was a worthy winner and I'm very grateful for the efforts he has put in over the years.

The MEMS Player of the Year went to **Tomas Holy**, another worthy recipient, indeed Tomas has made great progress since coming into the team, and goes from strength to strength.

Well done also to our other award winners, particularly **Millie Waud** who won Ladies' Young Player of the Year and **Courtney Shanly** who won Ladies' Player of Year Awards.

Our presentation player of the year awards evening followed the final game of the season at Priestfield whereby we put on yet another great performance beating Plymouth Argyle by a convincing 5 - 2 score line, and to be honest we could have scored eight or nine goals, such was our dominance, in a game high-flying Plymouth needed to win to keep alive their own promotion hopes. It was a fitting finale to the season, the support was right up there with the best of the season and there is no doubt that when Priestfield rocks, the team performs and the place becomes a fortress. Well done to all those that took part, you were exceptional.



OUR HOME FORM



... after a difficult game the players are exhausted both mentally and physically, they hate, like us all, losing football matches and take it very personally ...

One glaringly obvious matter we must all consider and address, and indeed maybe some brutal heart searching is needed by us all at the club, relates to why the team only managed to gain five league wins at Priestfield all season against eight wins away from home.

I know the team also drew many at home, (eleven home draws and six away), but what has always been one of our many strengths, the atmosphere and passion from the terraces, the fortress of Priestfield, the difficult place for away teams to come to, appeared, at least for parts of the season to be missing, to have given up its soul, and I'm at a loss to understand exactly why.

Please believe me, this is not me being in any way critical of our support, to be fair on most occasions you have been top class and in any event I'd always back you even if you weren't, but there may be other reasons for this statistic, in any event it is worthy of debate, and I'm sure there will be many views as to the reasons.

Psychology is very much part of modern day football, players are definitely much fitter than in past times, technology and sports science is present in most clubs these days, the players train hard during the week and look after their bodies, they are athletes, so what changes between the training ground, then home and away appearances to a team?

Is it some kind of fear factor about playing in front of their own supporters, is it anxiety, nervousness, worry, or a mixture of all these things, is it something unconnected to the venue and atmosphere, or is it something closer to home, something we can control?

I don't have the answers, but I have been concerned at the rhetoric of a few individuals and groups I have heard this season, personal abuse and intimidating comments are heard by all, including the players and I wonder if this has an effect on them mentally.

Are players all mentally strong, can they deal with it or does it worry them, are our young players affected more than the seasoned pro's?

As individuals, and in our daily lives, we cope with matters in different ways, some characters are stronger than others, some are affected by issues which don't affect others.

Can the players solve problems during a game when things aren't going right or do the problems escalate through the draining of physical energy caused by the above?

Are players less pressurised away from home?

As a fan I know it's something we should all think about, and it's nothing to do with how much a player gets paid, that's irrelevant, it's about human beings.

I go into the dressing room after each game to congratulate, or give support to the team. Sometimes it's actually me that needs the lifting but I try to be positive always if I can.

What I can tell you is that after a difficult game the players are exhausted both mentally and physically, they hate, like us all, losing football matches and take it very personally. They care about the club, about your feelings and indeed about their own personal game, these are not Premier League players, some of whom care little about anything other than themselves, picking up obscene amounts of cash each week, our players are normal, honest and hardworking guys trying to make a difference to our lives by playing football, making a living and trying to better their careers by being successful, no problem with that.

I know the old football sayings about, 'we pay our money so we can say what we like', and, 'if the football isn't good, or the team are playing poorly why should we support them', all well and good, but what comes first, the chicken or the egg, and should we not be so much part of the team, so focused, that we encourage to the end at all times, irrespective of what's happening on the pitch? Anyway, some food for thought over the summer.





PLAYING BUDGET

I have seen comment during the year from various sources, not least and remarkably from the Chairman/Chief Exec of Barrow and Furness, (the team Ade Pennock now manages) that our Club is operating on one of the lowest budgets in League One. Not sure how he'd have known that but when I called him and took him to task he did, to be fair, apologize and said his comments were out of order. In fact I think I also read a comment from an ex manager saying the team had over achieved in the past given this so called low budget.

For the purpose of clarification, our playing budget this season past was just over £2.5m, which would be higher than many, if not most in this division, but for sure not amongst the lowest by any means.

This figure is just under 60% of our overall football turnover, working within the 60% maximum allowable under EFL, (The English Football League), financial fair play regulations which are set down to control over spending of the past years and to help clubs' stability.

I spoke to my good friend Pete Winkleman last week, Chairman of MK Dons, I called him because I knew he would be distraught at the relegation of his team, and I wanted to show my support in his difficult time.

He's a good and honest man, works very hard for his Club, like most Chairman I know, but he told me this season was one of his biggest in terms of budget for the playing side, hence why he was even more upset at relegation, my point being that whilst it's nice to have bigger budgets, and I work tirelessly to try and find funds to assist this area, it doesn't guarantee success, and football is littered with such similar stories, we only have to look at Sunderland, who'll be playing at Priestfield this coming season, as a recent example.

A Club is successful when the team is balanced and stable, have depth in numbers and quality, have strong characters and leaders, are lucky with injuries and has positivity throughout the business both on and off the field.

To finish on football matters, it will be a busy summer for us all behind the scenes, there will be players leaving as is normal, and players joining the squad.

Thanks to all those departing, we all wish you well in your future careers and thank you for your efforts on behalf of us all. As supporters, we will welcome our new arrivals and will give them our unconditional support.



... This year we are going with black stripes on our blue home shirts and launching a new black and white striped special edition '125 year anniversary shirt' which will be our first choice away kit ...

NEW PLAYING KIT



This year we are going with black stripes on our blue home shirts and launching a new black and white striped special edition '125 year anniversary shirt', which will be our first choice away kit. It is a direct copy, as close as can be, to the shirt our predecessors wore back in 1893, with no sponsors name and a commemorative badge.

The new shirts, along with a variety of new merchandise is currently being manufactured in Sri Lanka and will be available online and in our retail outlets from early August.

If you want to be amongst the first to own the new shirts, complete the pre order form on our website or attached to Season Ticket application books and we will send out to you as soon as they arrive in the UK.

We expect heavy demand for these items this year so don't be disappointed, order asap. There will be a 3rd kit of white and yellow to compliment the range, all shirts and kits available in children's sizes too.

NEW CLUB SPONSOR

I would like to thank our outgoing Main Club Sponsors MEMS, and in particular owner Colin Jarvis and his son Glen for their support and assistance in their several years of Club Sponsorship.

MEMS have firmly established themselves into the Medway culture, and I have no doubt through their exposure with GFC, and the high profile standing of this type of marketing and association, they have become well known throughout the UK and their business has prospered accordingly. I know everyone connected to the club will be very grateful for their generosity and support. We wish them every success in the future.

I am delighted to report that our new Club Main Sponsors for the coming season will be Medway Council with whom we work very closely on a number of initiatives.

Led by Cllr Alan Jarrett, Medway Council have made huge strides over the past years in developing and expanding Medway as a commercial and residential area and have done a sterling job in raising the profile of Medway for the benefit of us all. It is a great shame in some ways that more people don't see what goes on behind the scenes at The Council, and indeed it is only having spent more time with various departments at Gun Wharf, the Council Offices, that I personally witness just how many services and benefits each department delivers to local residents and the business community alike.

I understand there are around 1200 people directly employed by Medway, so a pretty well-oiled machine, and indeed a machine which will continue to grow and develop as time passes by.

For both parties, this sponsorship works well, as indeed it is to the benefit of all that the profile and awareness of Medway, both Nationally and Internationally continues to grow.

Our stadium will be known as The Medway Priestfield Stadium for the coming year, and I very much look forward to working with Medway Councils Officers and staff alike over the coming months.





FAN ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Fan engagement is something many clubs talk about but few actually get right, and one of my biggest irritations is that I don't think we do it as well as we could, in fact so much so that we are looking at a whole new process of working involving, in some instances, the recruitment of new staff.

As part of that process we are establishing a Customer Engagement Team, (CET), whose roles will be a cross between customer service and direct sales and marketing.

I have never been a fan of automated telephone systems, they drive most of us mad, so we will be using our new CET, once established, to answer all incoming calls and handle all queries, take orders for ticketing, merchandise, events or other functions, as well as develop ideas and concepts to directly market our range of products, and to create opportunities whereby we have more supporters visiting the stadium, and having an improved experience once they are in the stadium, bit of a "one stop shop".

I am also establishing an initiative called Project FOF. I'm sure some of our more creative supporters will have their own views on what FOF will mean, but from the Club side it will stand for two things, "Fans of the Future" and "Find our Fans"

'Fans of the Future' will focus on the young people of Medway and Kent initially, then further beyond, and we will be working much closer with local schools, football teams and Clubs on a variety of initiatives aimed at greater engagement and indeed creating a loyalty for their local club.

We are already working through the Football in the Community in a number of schools, but we must and will do more, and work harder to find and establish the next generation of supporters. We are also involved with, in fact assisted in the creation of, a new association called MELA, (Medway Educational Leaders Association).

MELA has been established by primary school heads and educational leaders to further the improvement of education in Medway, to share best practices and to create a framework of good communication between schools for the betterment of all concerned.



MELA had its launch here at Priestfield last November, and we are delighted to be associated with such a focused group of individuals.

Their success will be our success.

"Find our Fans', basically will do what it says on the label. We know there are a number of fans out there that follow the Club but for a number of reasons don't always come to games. We need to find them and get them back, we need them, their loyalty and their support and we will move heaven and earth to win them back, both on and off the field.

For all our initiatives and to better our communications, we are looking at some fairly sophisticated CRM packages which will allow us to better communicate with our current, past and future fans on a variety of subjects, in the easiest and least obtrusive of ways.

I want you to know what is going on within your Club, I need you to have the real facts, not rely on gossip, and I have to hold my own hands up because I am just as guilty on not communicating as often as I should with fans and stakeholders.

I have never been a user of social media, for all its negatives I now, (reluctantly) accept it has its strengths, the staff at the club, my children, the whole world seems to be talking to each other and communicating by one form of social media or another, so I'm sold on it, I'm going to give it a try.

To that effect, and against my previous principles, I am setting up Twitter and other social media platforms and will use those to get the right stories out, as they happen, as time permits.

I've watched, like I'm sure most of you have, the way President Trump is running his Country, and in particular how he often by passes the media and goes direct to the people, pretty ballsy, but certainly effective, albeit the media still have a big part to play in life and in most cases do a sterling job.

TICKETING SYSTEM / ACCESS TO STADIUM

Over the past six months, our staff have been evaluating the way in which we do our business in regards to ticketing in general. Most people today have smart phones, access to computers and other devices, and are used for booking, paying for and downloading tickets online, whether they be Airline tickets and boarding passes, Theatre, Sport, Hotels etc, and in the comfort of your own home, office or on the move.

We have focused on a Ticketing Company, and are in talks with them, to change our ticketing process, and alleviate the need for our customers to phone the club, come to the ticket office, queue to be served, wait for the post and jump all the other hurdles there have been for years in getting into the stadium.

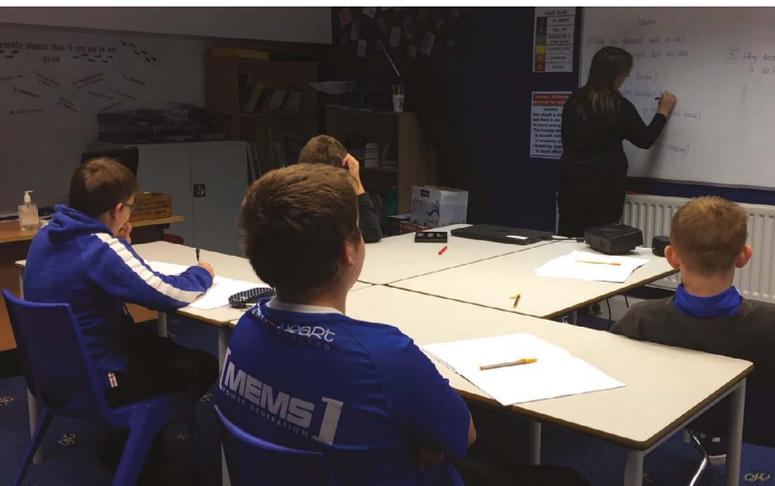
The new technology we will be introducing will send your ticket to your smart phone/device, or you can print at home, then a reader will scan your QR code on your device or home printed ticket when you approach the turnstiles, and will allow you access into the stadium. Very simple and much more efficient.

Season Ticket Holders can also have their tickets on their phone, which can be kept in your e wallet, or indeed you can have a Season Ticket card if preferred.



I'm hoping we can get this up and running before August, lot to do, but if not it will be implemented shortly thereafter.

Over the past weeks, we went to Norway to see the system being used live at a football stadium. I was pleasantly surprised at how well it worked, but even more surprised at how many supporters, of all ages, turned up with their tickets on their phones, I'd guess about 80% of fans, and they had only been using it for one season. In the short term, and until further notice, season ticket holders should apply for this coming seasons tickets in the normal way.



THE GFC SCHOOL



Many supporters may be surprised to know that for the past couple of years we have been developing and running a specialist School here at Priestfield Stadium. To date we have around 50 pupils, many on site, aged between 11 and 16, and on average 18 full time members of staff.

We are hugely proud of our pupils and staff and the way they are improving educational needs, and indeed the relationship between education and sport is further enhanced by this project.

The GFC school has many success stories which we will be sharing with you more in the times ahead.

One of the many pleasing aspects of the development of our school, is indeed the manner in which the players have been able to assist the children's development by in effect 'buddying' with individuals, sharing life experiences and comradery, positive benefits in these challenging times, with our children of today exposed to a world of information, social media and the like, such that a good grounding is even more necessary if our younger ones are to prosper in future years.

Our Director of Education, Mrs Lisa Scott, is engaging with many external partners as the school develops, and indeed our relationship with Medway Council will be further useful as we focus on other educational needs in Medway and beyond over the coming months.

Through expansion, the school is looking to employ a variety of qualified teaching professionals on a full or part-time basis, delivering a variety of subjects. If you feel you have the appropriate qualifications and would like to be involved with this very exciting project, please send your CV to Mrs Scott, her email is lisascott@priestfield.com



... The GFC school has many success stories which we will be sharing with you more in the times ahead ...

IN HOUSE CATERING



The story regarding Centerplate, and the difficulties surrounding that Company which culminated in a High Court case last November are well documented, and need not be discussed any further. As a result we are now running all areas of catering 'In House' with a very capable team, led by Steve Ware, our Director of events and facilities.

Priestfield Banqueting continues to grow, and anyone of the over 5000 people that booked an Xmas party in The Great Hall last December will bear testimony to the quality and style of the events

we are able to host, hugely successful and as that part of the business grows it will make a significant contribution to the Club income.

The Conferencing side of the business is growing steadily, however we are putting more resource into this area in terms of equipment and facilities as we believe there is great potential in this market sector. Again, once at a certain level, we anticipate acceptable returns on investment and good contribution to central income.

The Factory has been received by supporters with great enthusiasm and we are finalizing the budget to finish off the technology within the building so that The Factory can function more efficiently, and open 5 or 6 days a week. We are almost there, and will be including the restaurant in those budgets, so expect positive changes in these areas during the coming season.

We welcome ideas on what you'd like to see in The Factory on a nightly basis, other than match days, so we can focus our marketing on a variety of events, club nights and themed evenings for our supporters and the local residents. Again another facility that feeds into the central budget.

EXTERNAL INVESTMENT

Football has been changing rapidly over the past ten years and the landscape of Club ownership has changed accordingly, generally with overseas investors taking total control, or significant shareholdings in football businesses.

Many have been beneficial to the respective clubs, however a number have created more problems than they have solved, therefore it is essential to ensure any potential investors have the interests of the relevant club at heart and the funds to ensure a brighter and, more importantly, a long term future.

When I came to Gillingham 23 long years ago, worryingly before some of our supporters and players were born, I committed then, as I do today, to always act in the best interests of the Club. I am comfortable that I have delivered on that promise to the best of my ability, and to that effect I am in discussions with several

parties worldwide who have expressed an interest in club part or total ownership, most of whom are capable of assisting in the development of a new stadium here in Medway, essential if the Club is to recognise its true potential in the pyramid of football in this country.

I am as confident as I can be that discussions will lead to investment, in which form as yet I do not know, however it is the case that no club in these modern days of high expectations and huge reward, GFC included, can be run with one person taking sole responsibility for the operation and the entire financial standing of the business.

Until the time of change, if and when it happens, I will continue to explore all options, will keep looking at ways to generate more income, will keep pushing the boat out with new projects and will continue to hold the ship on course.



SEASON TICKETS



As you will all be perfectly aware, our Season Ticket sales underpin the very fabric of the football club, and indeed season ticket holders are the lifeline of a community club like ours, committing their support for the season ahead.

This season we are holding our prices at the same level of last season to reward the loyalty you have again shown to the club. Our 'early bird' offer, discounted even further, expires on the last

day of May at 5pm, so please don't miss the deadline and get your renewals into the Club on time, we very much look forward to having you back on board as we push for a successful season ahead.

We also look forward to welcoming back past supporters, you will not be disappointed with what lies ahead.

Thank you to all those that have already sent in applications, and thanks to everyone that commits to the future of the business.

STAFF RECRUITMENT

As mentioned above, we are in the process of recruiting staff in several areas, but particularly we are seeking interest and CV's from individuals in the following areas:

a/ CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT PERSONNEL:

I believe fan engagement doesn't just rest via social media; we all have a duty to communicate with our customers and ensure we have the correct information to hand for all enquiries. This is a great opportunity for individuals to come in, work alongside our existing team and help improve engagement.

b/ MEDIA AND MARKETING:

We are looking for media and marketing professionals to assist with our digital marketing strategies. Successful applicants will work alongside our Head of Media but be more involved in increasing our brand exposure, coming up with digital marketing campaigns and coming up with innovative advertising methods.

c/ DATA PROCESSING:

Naturally, the Football Club has a lot of data within its various computer systems, whether it be a database of business clients or information relating to season ticket holders or soccer school applications. The successful applicant will be responsible for collating this data and housing appropriately for future use.

d/ ADMINISTRATION:

Successful applicants will work alongside our sales and commercial team, as well as our finance department, assisting with essential administration duties which will include invoicing, liaising with corporate customers and maintaining our business databases.

e/ GRAPHIC DESIGN:

This is a great opportunity for someone with creative design and editing skills (design graduate or non-graduate with similar ability) to join the club to fulfil a variety of design requirements across various platforms including; branding, artwork designs, brochures, print, web, video and multimedia.

f/ QUALIFIED TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

As previously stated, we are looking for a variety of qualified teaching professionals to join our existing team at the GFC School. This includes Tutors, Post-16 mentors and general teaching assists. In this case, the best person to send your CV's to is Head of School, Lisa Scott, on lisascott@priestfield.com

If you feel you could contribute to the club in any of the above areas send in your CV to Gwen Poynter, gpynter@priestfield.com and we will arrange an interview over the coming weeks.

FAMILY FUN DAY

The day after our exciting final day of the playing season, we opened the doors to our fans for a family fun day. The event, which saw around 5000 fans pass through the stadium, was a huge success, with the live music and beer festival of real ales being very popular, not to mention the attendance of the players and management.

We received very positive feedback from our supporters, they loved getting close up and personal with the players, and to be fair the team really enjoyed the interaction with the fans, so well done to all concerned for a great day, a definite on the calendar for next year.





LEGENDS



If ever we needed reminding of our values as a family club it was proved in abundance last Saturday when some close family members returned to play in a charity fixture at Priestfield.

It was great to welcome back so many ex-professionals including Nicky Southall, Guy Butters, Mark Saunders, Patrick Agyemang, Danny Jackman, Mamady Sidibe, Simon Osborn, Adam Birchall, Jimmy Corbett, Kevin James and Richard Carpenter. The legends were up against a celebrity XI and our boys certainly showed their class, with Danny Kedwell scoring a hat-trick in a convincing 8-3 victory.



While on the subject of family members, over the past week I have been traveling in America and have been carrying out discussions with potential investors and, during this time, I managed to see Orlando City's new stadium which was arranged by a certain Paul Shaw, who is the technical director of Orlando City who plays in the MLS. It was great to see him and hopefully one day we'll see him back at Priestfield.

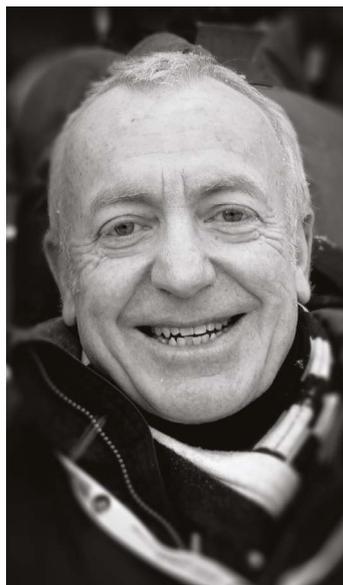
SAD FAREWELLS

Sadly, never a year goes by when we say farewell to friends and loved ones who are no longer with us.

Neil Bell, a dear friend, and BBC journalist passed away in March, and more recently we learned of the tragic death in a car accident of footballer **JLloyd Samuel**, who had a short spell with the club in 2001/2.

My brother in law **Mike Townend** died in April after an illness, he will be much missed. Other fans no longer with us are **George Wollen**, a personal friend of mine and someone who worked for the club in the past, and **Alan Randall**, a supporter living in Derby, ex of Medway, whom the team visited last year on route to a game.

To their families, and indeed the families of all our friends and supporters who have lost loved ones, we offer our condolences and support, we are one big family.



AND FINALLY

I hope I've covered most areas of the business and issues to date, the order of next season is communication and I promise that will improve as time passes.

Many of the new facilities will start to come online shortly, and as soon as we have the appropriate staff on board I think you will all be pleasantly surprised with the improvements.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report, and of course thanks for your commitment, loyalty and support. Without you there is no business.

I feel this will be the year of change, positive change that will lead

us all to a better place, indeed no change will only damage the fabric of the institution that has survived the last 125 years, to do nothing is not an option.

Please continue your support, tomorrow will always be a better day and we can look back on the challenging days and remember we all stayed and sailed with the ship.

Have a great summer

Best Wishes
Paul D P Scally
Chairman

