



## GILLINGHAM FOOTBALL CLUB LTD

### A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Fellow Supporters,

I'd like to first of all hope that you are all well, taking good care of yourselves and indeed managing to cope with life in these extraordinary and very sad times, and our thoughts go out to all those who have lost loved ones over the past 12 weeks.

Nobody could have predicted when we left, ironically, The Stadium of Light, on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March what lay ahead nor that the players who walked off the pitch after such a fantastic result that day had played their last game for the season, and in some cases for the Club. Nor did we foresee that the following Friday would be the start of a period the likes of which none of us had ever experienced, nor that myself and a couple of staff would begin a process of daily battles to realign our Club with a strategy for survival, a process that began with an eight week period in lockdown at home, and one that has continued over the past four weeks at the stadium.

My primary task has focussed on ensuring we all have a club to follow when normal Football returns and fans are again safe to enjoy their passion from the terraces, this has involved making some tough, painful, but necessary decisions and is an ongoing process, however I feel confident our model will be fit and ready when the return to play card is shown.

Over the years I have endured some criticism in regards to our relatively low cost base in comparison to others, a cost base more forced upon us than designed through choice. Ironically it is that same `cost base` that has allowed us to plan a way through these barren months where income has decreased to almost nothing, and I'd like to thank you all for the many messages of solidarity and support received in relation to financial matters and as importantly just kind words and understanding, true gestures from people who care, love their club and are desperate to see Football again at Priestfield.

This support has focussed and driven me to leave no stone unturned in exploring ways forward, I have enlisted a small group of volunteers who have joined me for a few days each week at Priestfield to assist in the process of re-setting the business, clearing the stadium of unwanted or not required paperwork, tons of it, cleaning public areas, reorganising ways of operating, freshening up the painting, renovating the pitch, writing new operating procedures and generally making sure the `ship` that sailed into Medway on 13<sup>th</sup> March will sail out on `play day` much lighter, more focussed, leaner, keener and more ready to take advantage of the



Main Club Sponsor

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opportunities ahead, opportunities that will present themselves as a result of this sad and awful pandemic.

I have spoken often with our Manager to ensure he is well, he is fully behind my strategy and we have discussed how the next season will look, and although we were bitterly disappointed at the early finish of our season, voted through last week, given we really felt we had a chance of play-offs, we are excited at the prospect of going again and bettering the very credible finish of 10<sup>th</sup> place, ahead of high spending Ipswich and others!

I'd also like to thank our sponsors for continuing to support the club knowing times are difficult and income has been decimated, it's lifting and very humbling to have sponsors that are still offering to send payments for packages on contracts they have entered into, albeit we don't as yet have a start date to next season, such is their commitment to the cause, true supporters – real people, and I will always be indebted to you all.

On the subject of support, we are working on ways our fans can assist from a financial point of view. I have had many offers of financial help from supporters who just want to ensure their club continues, offers of a few pounds to a few thousand pounds, some gifts, some loans.

Whilst I haven't, as yet, taken up these kind offers, it is because I've been working on a couple of more formal plans along the lines of `bonds` or `crowd funding` schemes. There are a few projects and refurbishments we'd like to undertake during this `suspension` period around the stadium, so I'll let you all know what these will be over the next few weeks, and if you'd like to play your part and help that would be fantastic.

In the meantime, take good care of yourselves and your families and of course observe Government guidelines. If any of you would like to volunteer and spend a few hours or days a week helping `Project Cleanse` here at Priestfield then let Tom Lawrence know, send him your contact details to [tlawrence@priestfield.com](mailto:tlawrence@priestfield.com) and we'll let you know what days and times we will be at work, always working to social distancing protocols of course.

We will be in touch again soon.

Kind Regards

Paul D P Scally

Chairman



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