

# Upper Beeding Football Club

## Chairman's report – June 2021

With the world suffering from the COVID pandemic, grass roots football has necessarily come lower down in the nation's priorities. As a result it was another largely frustrating year for the club which saw many of its fixtures cancelled and its results voided. However, the Under 13s provided a bright spot by winning the top division of the Horsham & District Youth league while remaining undefeated.

### Football review

For the second season in a row the Men's First Team were lying in a strong second place in the Southern Combination League's Division 2 when the government's lockdown led to the league declaring the season null and void. As with the 2019-2020 season the team was still in with a chance of winning the league when everything was stopped, and was unbeaten at that point, despite (or perhaps because of) having played most of their matches away from home. This unbeaten run continued for 3 more group matches when a mini end-of-season competition was created in April, but sadly the last group match and semi-final saw two defeats to local rivals. Nevertheless the team continues to develop under the leadership of Jamie and Tom and rates highly for the style and fairness of its play.

It was surprising and disappointing therefore that despite two seasons of excellent results, plus a ground-sharing agreement with Steyning, the league chose not put us forward for automatic promotion into Division 1.

The Reserve team had been promoted to the top division of the West Sussex league at the start of the season, (the same league the firsts were in not too long ago) and demonstrated they fully deserved to be there with some strong results against good quality opponents. With a strong squad and great encouragement from manager Jamie, the team can be proud of their achievements and look forward to the 2021-22 season with optimism.

The Under 18's, managed by Dan, also had a much truncated season. As always there is a big difference between a side mainly formed of 18 year olds and one mainly formed of 17 year olds (unless they have Jude Bellingham!) and so we expect the team to benefit from the experiences of this year and flourish as the older boys in the age bracket next season.

Many congratulations go to Jamie and Matt for their side's tremendous season which saw them lift the league title. They finished a full 12 points ahead of the second placed team Faygate and conceded only 8 goals in 14 games while notching up an incredible 72 of their own. This makes them the club's most successful team ever. Sadly the pandemic and break in the season has led a number of boys to look elsewhere for their football for next season and so the side will look a little different going forward.

My thanks go to Andy and John for running the Under 11s in this past year. Their sides played with great energy and increasing levels of skill which demonstrated the value of the coaching they had received. Unfortunately Andy has decided he is unable to continue to run the team and as yet we have not been able to find anyone to work with John to keep it going to under 12 level for next season.

### 6-a-side tournament

The 2020 6-a-side tournament had to be cancelled due to COVID which was heartbreaking after all the work that Ally and Jamie had put in to arrange it. Pleasingly the 2021 event was able to go ahead this year in June - a month earlier than our traditional mid-July time. 69 teams attended on a beautiful summer day and the event was a great success, enjoyed by all, thanks to excellent planning and organisation by Ally and the hard work of volunteers who came along to ensure the event went well on the day.

### Pitch-sharing

At the start of last season, we entered into an agreement with Steyning Community FC to share their ground for our first team games and this has worked well to-date, and has led us to extend the agreement through into the 2021-22 season. The only downside is the regular loss of match balls kicked out of the small stadium.

### Officers and volunteers

It is easy to forget that everyone who helps out at the club – whether on the committee, as team managers, coaches or as a tea-maker is a volunteer and so I would like to take this opportunity to salute you and thank you for the time you have put in over the past season.

Foremost of these is Dave Rowland, who combines the onerous job of club secretary with a host of other less formal roles, but which are essential in ensuring the club prospers. Thanks also to Jamie who has not only been Deputy Chair but has helped organise the tournament and been instrumental in pitch preparation. Tom Warren has done wonders with our new club website while David Beatty is a wise and reassuring presence as Welfare Officer. A huge thank you to them and to our team managers.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank Dave Butchers who is retiring as treasurer after a number of years of service to the club. Dave always made sure we were in a good financial position, has been incredibly conscientious with his collection of money due and paying our bills and done it all with a smile – thank you Dave.

### Handing over

This is my last report as Chairman, after 10 years or so in the post, and a total of 21 years' continuous active involvement with the club. My family and I have had a great deal of pleasure from this association and I have been privileged to have worked with many excellent and committed officials and players over this period.

While our Under 13s had the best season ever by a Beeding junior team, my one regret is that the number of teams in our junior section has declined in recent times. In the absence of local volunteers prepared to come forward and run teams for their own children, it is hard to know how we can turn this around.

On a brighter note, the men's teams have never been more successful than at present, the club's reputation remains high for our style of play, our fair play and our friendliness and these are all things I have sought to promote. We are in a strong financial position and have an excellent relationship with our landlords, Upper Beeding Parish Council and Steyning FC, so are well placed for the future.

I am delighted that Jamie Plummer has agreed to take over as Chairman (subject to his election at the AGM) and I know he has the energy, drive and tenacity to make sure the club goes from strength to strength.

I wish everyone associated with Upper Beeding FC well for the future. I will always remain a supporter!