



English Schools' Football Association

# Membership Matters

## A message from the Chairman

### Don't forget...

Details about the upcoming AGM Part 2 will be circulated shortly

ESFA Champions Cup player registration deadline: Saturday 9th October

I would like to start this edition by paying tribute to and thanking our staff team for their hard work and expertise in organising and delivering the remaining representative football finals from 20/21. A number of excellent venues were secured which helped to make the events memorable for all children involved. It is always great to receive positive feedback and there was certainly lots passed on from those involved during the last month.

Continuing the theme of gratitude, I would also like to recognise the incredible work of our CEO, National Child Welfare Officers, key staff and council colleagues who have all invested so much time in ensuring the ESFA achieved the Safeguarding Operating Standards at the first attempt. This is not an achievement to be taken lightly and is only possible because of the ongoing and genuine commitment of all stakeholders towards the highest standards of safeguarding and keeping children safe.

It was my pleasure earlier in the month to attend (virtually) the AGM of SAFIB (Schools' Association Football International Board). Amongst the agenda items were two rule change proposals brought by other nations. The outcomes of these had potentially serious implications for our association and we were therefore delighted with the outcome of each, ensuring our continued participation in the 2021-22 international competitions.

September has also seen our first council meeting of the new season and although it was regrettably not possible to meet in person, it was still great to engage so positively with my fellow council members and to discuss, amongst other things, the prospect of curriculum, intra-school, inter-school, inter-district, inter-county and international football returning after the enforced pause of the last eighteen months. Schools' football really does cater for all abilities, experiences and interests and it is brilliant to see it back! This meeting also saw the inaugural meetings of our two new sub-committees crucial to the continued success of the ESFA; governance and development.

Finally, I would like to wish all schools' football participants, whether child, staff or volunteer, an enjoyable, productive and positive experience this season. I am sure it will be a long time before any of us take playing football for granted but if the pandemic has taught us anything it is to take all opportunities with both hands and to enjoy our beautiful game for what it is.

Best wishes,  
Mark Hignett



## Report of Council

Mark Hignett, Chair for 2021/22, opened the meeting by welcoming all Members to the first meeting of the season, re-iterating the desire for a face to face meeting once it was safe and practical so to do. The Chair recorded his thanks to the staff for their hard work in putting on the remaining 20/21 national rep football finals and thanked the team for their efforts in ensuring that the Association achieved The FA Safeguarding Operating Standard.

Council received a briefing from the CEO on The FA's strategy for education, their Education Partners' Review and the ESFA's funding contract and KPIs therein. Council Committees would take oversight of the delivery KPIs through the newly created Football Development and Football Governance Committees, whilst Competitions and Rep Football Committees would continue with the responsibilities previously held. Council welcomed Chris Parkin, ESFA Governance Manager, to his first Council and Governance Committee meeting.

Members heard from the Rep Committee that arrangements were now finalised for the Pro-Direct International Schoolboy/Schoolgirl trials, and were reminded of the published process for player nomination. A maximum of 5 nominations per County was expected and they were to be submitted at least 7 days in advance of the trials. Colleagues re-iterated that players must be in full time education to be eligible to trial. The importance of risk assessment for each event was re-iterated. It was reported that the date for the Bob Docherty Cup had been changed to 10 -14 April 2022. With regard to District and County football, Members were reminded of the imperative to keep their Association personnel information on the ESFA portal up to date so that Associations were not unnecessarily suspended. League Republic had been adopted for the Player Passport for this season. The Committee added its thanks to the staff team for the efforts in securing national finals for 19/20.

Competitions Committee had also reviewed the arrangements put in place for 20/21 national finals, and wished to see the Deaf Schools' Trophy, which was not contested, re-instated for 21/22. Again, the importance of child welfare regulation compliance was noted. For 21/22, the first Champions Cups fixtures were due to be played that weekend, with around 1000 players registered within the first few days of registration opening. There had been 4815 entries into the boys inter-school competitions and 1,696 in the girls - a record number of girls' entries – taking inter-school entries to around the same level as pre-pandemic times. PlayStation remain committed to the U12-U15 inter school competitions and planning meetings with them were underway.

Members were advised that the new Football Development Committee had outlined plans for this season's ESFA Development Fund, which would be launched to Members before the end of September. An update on the recruitment of the Football Projects Manager, operational lead for the Committee, was given, and the priorities arising from the FA grant reviewed. Consideration was to be given to a refreshed volunteer recruitment, retention, recognition and reward programme, informed by UCFB research on the ESFA's behalf, and the commitment to developing year 3 and 4 festivals was re-iterated, once funding could be sourced for this work. Disability festivals were to be re-introduced in 2021/22, whilst a wider inclusion strategy was developed.

Continued....



## Report of Council Continued

The Chair of the new Football Governance Committee reported back on negotiations with the FA about the Standard Code of Rules and its application to the schools' game, and reported that guidance for Members was to be published shortly, along with the updated sanctioning process. A list of qualified Discipline Hearing Chairs would need to be created now that personnel needed to complete specific training for dealing with cases for those aged U18. Members heard that the final discipline report from last season had been received. Members thanked the new Governance Manager for his work to support and guide the Committee.

On top of matters already reported elsewhere, Trustees reported on the continuation of the PlayStation sponsorship and the UCFB partnership, and confirmed that Pro:Direct was the new ESFA official kit supplier, having naming rights to the international trials. Investment in staffing to support Player Passport had been scaled back to two part time posts, due for interview in the coming days. New appointments had been made to the international management teams, with James Norton being appointed to the U18 Boys' Goal Keeping Coach position; Paloma Gioia to the U15 Girls' physio position and Chris Baty to the Girls' IPC role. Trustees were pleased to welcome Nick Loftus to the Board, as the Board Safeguarding Champion, and reiterated their thanks to Alan Johnston for acting as Safeguarding Champion for a number of years prior to this.

Reports were received from the FA Council Member and Council representatives on SAFIB, Sport and Recreation Alliance and the National Council for School Sports.

Council noted that the issuing of Handbooks had been delayed due to the workloads involved in running national finals at the start of the season, but that despatch was expected in due course. The Handbook information, excluding the directory, was available on the ESFA website.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking Members for their contribution to the discussions.

## FA's Transgender People in Football Policy

The FA have updated their policy on transgender people in football and have released an FAQ document which can be viewed [here](#).

## Champions Cup – Player Registration Reminder

For Season 21-22, the ESFA has decided to use **League Republic**, as the online management system (and "Player Passport") to deliver the Champions Cup programme.

The ESFA Competitions Committee has decided that the player registration deadline has been extended until **Saturday 9 October**, to allow associations and parents adequate time to get accustomed to the new system.

Once association team managers have hosted trials and selected playing squads for the new season, the association secretary (or otherwise delegated by the association secretary as above) will need to email the following link to parents / carers of the selected players so that they can register their child:

<https://esfachampionscup.leaguerepublic.com/registrations.html>



## FA DBS Applications

There are a large number of FA DBS applications which have been started by rep team coaching staff but have not been progressed. The majority of these are at the verification stage. Until the ID documents are checked and verified and the £10 fee is paid, the DBS check will not progress and the staff member cannot be approved.

ID verification can be done either face to face by contacting one of the verifiers (on the list on our website) if they are local to you, or can be verified by post.

Postal verifications can be completed either by sending original documents (we recommend they are sent using Royal Mail Special Delivery) or alternatively, the original documents can be verified at a main Post Office - the PO verified copies should then be sent to an ESFA verifier. There is a Post Office charge for this service.

Either the original documents or the PO verified copies must be seen by the verifier; they cannot be scanned or emailed to the verifier. Original/PO verified documents are generally returned to the applicant on the day that they are received.

Once the document verification is complete, the applicant will receive an automated email asking them to log back in to their application and pay the £10 admin fee.

There are several outstanding applications on the system which have not progressed because the £10.00 fee has not been paid.

Please can Association Secretaries/Welfare Officers monitor the progress of applications submitted by staff from their Association(s) to ensure they are completed.

There are currently 72 applications in the system which have not progressed, going back as far as March 2021 – If you feel some of these may be your staff please contact Martin Duffield (07852 276416 / 01384 242526) and we will support you to resolve these. After 6 months, these checks are automatically removed from the system and must be re-started.



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