



## Penicuik Athletic Youth Football Club Annual Chairman Report 2017/18



I am pleased to share my maiden Chairman's Report which signifies the completion of a rapid 12 months in post. Luckily for me, I can thank the previous Chair (Jason Hewitt together with his vice chair Shaun Millican) and the committee for all the hard work done previously, especially on the Quality Mark accreditation and facilities, which has allowed me to settle in following my step up from a coaching only role.

The last year at Penicuik Athletic Youth Football Club has been a very successful one with two cup wins and a league championship success for our 2002 and 2005 boys teams respectively. Off the field the club has been working hard on partnerships. Within the club improving internal and external communications, highlighting the importance of teamwork, and trying to reduce the number of vacant posts on a stretched and overburdened committee. Partnerships out with the club including increasing our community projects, new sponsor links, and creating a working link with Penicuik Athletic Football Club to ensure a pathway is created from early touches to adult.

### **Participation**

The number of players in the club continues to remain high, with our 'Early Touches' section consistently increasing in numbers complimented by some great new coaches. We are grateful to Brian Christie was his unwavering enthusiasm bringing these kids through. The non-competitive group of 5s and 7s remain strong also and we look forward to a first full season of 9s.

The 2005s, in their first season at 11s (U13s) finished with a league and cup double. Congratulations to the players and coaches involved. In fact, only a narrow defeat to Haddington in an earlier cup final denied them a hat trick of trophies. Our three 2004 teams who started U13s have finished U14s and look to be continuing into U15s. A good example of player participation at an age when numbers can drop off due to afternoon kick offs and alternative activities. We hope this is repeated in future years with the number of younger players starting with the club. Thanks goes to Stewart Shepherd and Iain Crail who leave coaching duties at the 2004 level for all their help over the years - although Stewart will remain with 2007s. Our oldest team (2002s) finished their U16s season with cup success having beaten St. Bernard's in an exciting cup final at the Penicuik Juniors ground. A great performance from a much-improved set of players that will no doubt have other clubs interested. You are damned if you and you are damned if you don't. The joys of good coaching!

Our girls section remains strong and competitive and this is something we remain proud of despite the 2003 team folding due to a coach resignation. I know some of the coaches personally, but my one regret is that I have yet to get involved in a development capacity. To add to this, I was unable to make their presentation night in November. We must ensure the girls feel every bit as part of the club development as the boys do.

We welcomed John Menzies as our new goalie coach which is available to all first team goalies from 2008 upwards. We look forward to seeing an increase in clean sheets in the season ahead.

The club also continues to run the SFA Midnight League programme which takes place in the first quarter of the year and is now regularly supported and run solely by SFA and PAYFC coaches. The programme consists of 10-week sessions and attendance at the Midnight League

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remain strong with numbers breaching 60 on some Friday nights. Only negative was the withdrawal of the Bank of Scotland sponsorship which put an end to the programme finals held last year at Falkirk FC.

In addition to child and youth football, the club supports our over 35s team with new kit, continues to organise weekly 7s game for club coaches, supports and promotes walking football for the over 50s and is discussion with coaches and former players to establish an U21s team for next season.

### **Volunteers**

Whilst we revel in the glory and success of the cup wins we must appreciate that none of that would have been possible without the hard and often un-thanked work behind the scenes by the committee, volunteers, and parents.

We continue to have vacant posts on the committee and across the club. As a result, we have had to reduce number of fundraising activities. When events have been arranged, these are generally great successes, but we are conscious that it is still a small few trying to complete the work of many and we wish to avoid volunteer “burnout”. The committee aims to expand the volunteer base to represent the age diversity of the club and benefit the community where it can. We are committed to remain a friendly and open community focused group of volunteers ensuring that we communicate well internally and externally. We are particularly dependant on a lot of 2004 parents and there is clearly a danger to future club governance should any of the 2004 teams fold.

The number of volunteer coaches is still high, and we remain well covered across most teams, particularly at the younger age groups. Again, it is at the older age groups where we seem to have greatest difficulty in retaining cover, so the shortage of 11s teams is likely to be a combination of the lack of both coaches and players.

As part of the Legacy Quality Mark accreditation, and with our re-accreditation due in the summer, we remain committed to the highest possible education and mentoring of our coaches and volunteers. We remain committed to the player pathway and will do all we can to ensure players are playing and players are developing at the appropriate levels.

We saw some changes in important roles in the committee this year. We welcomed Carol Laird as our new secretary last summer replacing Catherine Boal, and over the winter our welfare officer Karen O’Hanlon moved away, so we welcomed Sabrina McManus as her replacement. Fraser Bertram combined his coaching role with a Procurement role following another departure. We are thankful for their efforts and they have hit the ground running to ensure full compliance and governance is met.

### **Facilities**

We have enjoyed another year on the Beeslack Astro and are thankful for past efforts getting this built. Although the term “all weather pitch” was severely tested when we received the Beast from the East over the winter. The astro was beneficial over the winter as we ran a weekly Saturday morning festival during the season’s break. Thanks, must be given to the admin-heavy duties undertaken by John Mooney and Keith Thompson in booking all our pitches and training sessions. We can only hope Midlothian Council don’t think of any new ideas to complicate their bookings systems any further.

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Efforts have now turned to the Penicuik Astro and the committee remain in negotiations with Midlothian Council on resurfacing the old carpet.

Success was made with the council on the car parking at Bog Road and with the introduction of speed bumps we have at least made the area that bit safer for the players crossing the road.

Our thanks also to the council for the prompt installation of our 9s pitch opposite Penicuik High School. Seemingly it was the first one in Midlothian and I appreciate the help of the volunteers making this game ready.

### **Supporting Our Community**

PAYFC remain committed to the local community and we are keen to increase our involvement in projects. Evidence has shown the power of football and sporting clubs in their local communities and we plan to increase our activities in the next year on the assumption some of our vacant community posts are filled.

In the meantime, the club has continued to be involved with donations for the local food banks, litter picks, supporting the 10k road race and remains a major presence in the annual Hunter and Lass celebrations including our famous “beat the goalie” competition and home baking and merchandise stall.

Our relationship continues to grow with Penicuik Athletic Juniors, where all our playing members are offered free entry to their matches through a season ticket. The club also provides mascot opportunities for individual players and teams playing on the pitch at half-time. We continue to sell raffle tickets on their behalf with a good percentage being donated back to the club and promoted and attended their well-received sportsman’s lunch. We were happy to celebrate with them on their recent cup win with some of our players as their lucky mascots!

Our partnership with Box Soccer continues to flourish with players able to take part in further development sessions at an extra cost.

We remain in regular dialogue with local councillors and MSP which is helping them appreciate the role our club plays in the local community. In fact, Louise Shepherd and Lynn Bertram were invited to the Scottish Parliament to discuss the issue of funding in the grassroots games and this may carry on as a quarterly working party.

We also play an active role in supporting the Penicuik Community Sports Hub to assist in driving forward the opportunities that sport can benefit the children and adults of Penicuik.

We were saddened by the recent death of Adam Montgomery, a local councillor and provost, who was a great supporter and friend of the club and assisted so much with the recent facility improvements we enjoy today. As a mark of respect/celebration we provided all our players with a memorial trophy and arranged a football festival in June all in his name.

### **Media and communications**

We remain committed to improving our internal and external comms. We currently use Facebook and our website for external communication and information. We seek additional volunteers to maximise the benefits of this media and plans for a regular newsletter remain

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still in the planning stage. The club enjoys the busy interaction of Facebook and finds it is popular with parents for events, publications, and enquiries. Internally, we aim to improve so we may communicate with all coaches and volunteers as one. A selection of apps and email is currently used but we will continue to explore additional methods.

### Club Events and News

Due to the lack of volunteer capacity the committee have been forced to concentrate on governance tasks and football activities. As a result, fundraising and events have been limited to our multiple player presentation nights across the calendar year. Individual teams have held their own fundraising events such as the 2005/6 joint race night which raised funds for the 2005s trip to Blackpool and kit for 2006s. Christmas parties were limited to individual teams organising their own, but the club remains committed to future joint events – if only to save on volunteer hours.

No teams travelled abroad for tournaments this year, but this is something the club is still keen to encourage across all teams, giving that opportunity of experiencing a trip abroad to play football at least once in their time with the club.

Thanks is given to Louise Shepherd on the exhaustive task of uploading all our governance documents together with our 3-5 strategic plan to the SFA as part of our Legacy Quality Mark status. I attended the last awards with Scott MacDonald (another 2004 coach) at Livingston FC and was very impressed with the dedication and innovation shown by teams throughout the country. An earlier event at Stirling University for the SFA annual conference was similarly inspirational and I would recommend attendance at future events. Most of the clubs offer community projects from a hub or base and we always look to achieve this in future.

In terms of branding, the club continue to improve. Following the purchase of the gazebo we have purchased new flags, pop up banners and table cloths together with merchandise which was on sale for the first time at the Hunter and Lass event. Even today reading this out I may try and sell you a wristband or water bottle. Our containers at Bog Road are now painted blue, with ideas of a third and fourth container, and perhaps this was the first step on the long road of having a permanent base there.

Thanks also to Leigh Hawthorn and the many many volunteers (coaches included) who organised the football festival held last weekend which saw 400 children from across the south east region play 4s, 5s, and 7s. Not even the weather detracted from a great event which would placed PAYFC in great standing from the visitors who attended. Hopefully this can turn into an annual or regular event.

### Finances

The club ends 2017/18 in a similarly healthy financial position as it did 2016/17 and praise must be given to our Lynn Bertram, our Treasurer with Shaun Millican also providing financial assistance. The level of subs received remain high together now with the benefit of Gift Aid.

The club has benefitted from increased sponsorship revenues, specifically coaches obtaining sponsorship for their individual teams along with additional grants applied for and attained by the committee.

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We are pleased to report a surplus of just over £3K. The committee will continue to review subs and will monitor other clubs in the area to ensure we are both competitive, fair and that how kit and training kit is issued/provided. Whether this model changes in the future with the club issuing kit as part of subs, rather than seeking sponsorship, is something that will be reviewed, and input is always encouraged.

Although not in the accounts due to differing financial periods, we were successful in obtaining the £4k funding from Tesco and this will be spent in the next financial year on new goals. Thanks to everyone for taking part and saving those blue tokens for us.

### 2018/19 Objectives

With the limited resources the club has at present the areas where I believe we should focus our attention have not massively changed from last year:

- Volunteers Education – Maintaining and building our coaching qualifications to increase the quality of coaching our members receive, keeping First Aid qualifications up to date and up-skilling in the appropriate areas of child welfare
- Volunteers Recruitment – Drive to bring new volunteers to the club both in coaching positions and non-football roles. Ensure the committee is an approachable and workable body of volunteers
- A proposed club survey across all volunteers, coaches, parents and stakeholders on how the club is run, communicates, develops players and benefits the local community.
- Player Retention – A focus on the member package ensuring that what the club offers is attractive to players in our local community. These include regular tournament trips, long service awards, high quality coaching, excellent facilities, and competitive fees and subsidised kit contribution
- Finances – Continuing the great work that has been done around maintaining monthly subs payments. Also applying for the various ‘Grants’ that are available to charities
- Facilities – Focus on seeking the support from local councillors in attempts to replace the Penicuik Park 3G surface and investigate or obtain funding to create a feasibility study on the benefits of ownership of a hub or asset transfer of the bog road unit on the club and wider community
- Events – Support a small and focused number of club events including Player Presentations, Race Night or similar and Christmas parties
- Partnerships – Maintain and improve on community and commercial partnerships
- Chose a charity of the year on an annual basis

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In conclusion I would like to thank everyone who has been a part of PAYFC over the last year.

This was a successful year on the park but a consolidating one off the park and our aims are to seek and retain a higher level of committee members and volunteers to increase the range of tasks we can undertake. If we are losing volunteers as they are being asked to do too much, feel undervalued or feel bombarded then we are failing and must be better and more considerate. We are many voices together as one rather than just one voice.

The people in this club make it what it is, and we must continue the hard work, so we can provide the tools for more match, cup and league wins for the boys and girls that turn up for training in the wind, sleet and snow that our own unique climate provides. With every Minecraft and Fortnite making it harder for us - we too must innovate and educate ourselves to ensure football remains number one.

A review of every post should be undertaken annually, and my post is no different - should anyone think they can improve on the role. Whether I remain as chair or not I would like to wish everyone good luck for the season ahead.

Paul Mills  
Chairman

Note:

The vacant roles we are looking to fill to maximise the potential of the club, further develop the football side and benefit the community are:

- Website & social media
- Vice Chairman
- Coaches and Training co-ordinator
- Fundraising co-ordinator
- Fundraising sub-committee
- Community liaison officer
- Volunteer co-ordinator
- Head of girls
- Head of 4's
- Head of 7's
- Head of 11's
- Head of youth section
- Head of child section
- Standard committee members

For more information of job descriptions and club governance please visit  
<https://www.payfc.net/our-committee.php>

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