



26/03/2023

Football Club Report – Annual Parish Meeting 2023

As we near completion of the 2022/23 season, we can reflect on another 12 months of progress on the pitch, with increased youth participation and improved results throughout the club.

At the end of 2021/22, the senior team finished 8th out of 12 in Duchy League Division Two having introduced many 16–18-year-olds for what was their first taste of senior football. That season of experience has been invaluable in their development, and has been evident in their performances this year. At present the team sits 5th in the table with three games left to play. Two wins and a draw against the teams below them will secure a 4th place finish. Unfortunately, the three teams above us all re-entered the league this season and were reformed using players from a much higher standard. Had they not re-entered, we may well have had a strong chance of winning the league. Nevertheless, the standard of football has been very good and depending on how the leagues get re-shuffled next season, there may still be an outside chance of promotion. We thank Jason and Cindy at the Old Orchard Inn for continuing to provide after match refreshment, and to all the supporters that have come out to watch on a Saturday come rain or shine. This has exceeded 50 people on occasion, which is more than some clubs get at much higher levels.

This season saw us enter 3 youth teams into the East Cornwall Youth League at U13's, U10's, and our newly formed U8's.

The U8's were placed into a very tough league and have found it difficult at times, playing against teams that have already had a year of experience. However, they have picked up a couple of wins and continue to improve with every game. They absolutely love their football and win, lose, or draw always play with plenty of smiles on their faces. This group also has an additional "development" section which consists of players aged 5-6, who are underage for the league squad. It is hoped that they will progress to become a new team in the next year or two. In total there are 11 signed on in the league squad with a further 8/9 training on a Wednesday. We would like to thank Stephen and Micheline Smith for their kind donation towards purchasing an additional set of goals for this group, which enhances our training provision.

The U10's have picked up wins throughout the season and continue to improve. Their squad consists of 12 players signed on to play in the league and a further 5/6 who join in with training. Next season they will move up to 9-a-side, with larger goals and will start to experience the offside rule. Lucinda Tilley and Kyla Horrell continue to assist with stocking the tea shed, and we are regularly complimented on how welcoming a club we are, thank you to both for their support.

The U13's had a barnstorming finish to last season, winning 6 of their last 7 games to finish 3rd and just miss out on promotion. Progress this season has continued to be steady, and a 4th place finish



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seems likely. This group has 18 players signed on, with one further boy who trains. They will move up to 11-a-side next season, using full size goals.

We continue to receive regular enquiries from parents, but with circa 57 youth players, we are currently at capacity for the number of qualified coaches that we possess. In modern-day society where concerns over child mental health and wellbeing, obesity and physical fitness are widely publicised, it is disappointing to have to turn anyone away, but without further volunteers are now limited in what we can provide.

In terms of development, last summer we carried out further verti-draining of the lower pitch complete with the addition of two lorry loads of beach sand to help break down the clay. This coupled with a colder, drier winter has seen less postponements than the last few seasons, but there is still a long way to go to in solving our drainage issues. We have carried out structural repairs to the changing room floor and thank Brent and Helen Nicholson for the donation of their surplus boiler and hot water tank of which is currently awaiting installation. In the close season we will be replacing sections of the fence around the lower pitch and carrying out repairs to the netting. It was naturally disappointing that the goal post was removed from the top pitch, but a way forward has been mutually agreed and should see a nice shiny new goal return in its place. Thank you to Nicky Chopak in offering funding support to achieve this. Barring the covid shutdown, completion of the 2022/23 season will be our 23rd consecutive season since reforming the club which has included 9 seasons with a reserve team, 3 seasons with a ladies team and 12 seasons with at least one youth team. Much of this was played on the top pitch and many memories made going back to the previous team of the '70's, so not only is it important to preserve it as a village amenity, it is also important to retain that history.

With costs continuing to rise we will have to start looking at further fundraising, particularly to cover our winter astroturf hire, but in the meantime, we thank our various match ball, team kit and training wear sponsors including TA Drilling, Edwards Laundry Services, NFU Mutual (Halwill Junction), Phoenix Engineering, Charlie Bears, ETB Tyres, Broomhill Stables and AJ Heywood Contractors. Lastly, thank you to Trevor for continuing to cut the grass at the playing field and for his hard work in keeping the field looking well presented.

Week St Mary FC Committee