

2019/20... the football season that never really happened!

Last summer the Football Club was in a great position with four teams (two adult, two junior) raring to go and the facilities at the Recreation Ground in very good condition. The season started very well with each team progressing nicely and the adult Saturday team in particular reaching top of the table winning game after game. However, nobody could foresee what would happen in the coming months.



Unfortunately the extremely wet Winter meant the vast majority of scheduled matches between December and March were postponed to prevent players from drowning. Resulting in a big backlog of matches to be played between March and the end of the season in May, the weather was looking good when a more significant issue arose with Coronavirus forcing the cancellation of all football (matches and training). Of course understandable and in the best interests of all, the outcome is only a small handful of matches were played since December.

Prior to the cancellation of the football season, the adult Saturday team was top of its league and looking very strong for promotion. The outcome of the league is still to be decided so promotion is still a possibility (potentially using points per game to calculate final positions) and would be just reward for a brilliant first half of the season. The adult Sunday team was having a challenging season with relegation a danger, however there were a large number of games remaining therefore significant progress could have been made. No more games will be played this season so we wait to see what the league will decide.

The Club's junior teams (U9s and U11s) have had a similarly frustrating season also only managing to play a handful of matches. Fortunately both teams were able to train through most of the Winter months so were still developing skills despite not being able to play many games. Despite this the players have remained positive and the support from parents has been as good as ever. Everyone is understandably keen to start playing football again as soon as it is safe to do so.

On the non-playing side, the Club has continued to work with the Parish Council to enhance the quality of facilities at the Recreation Ground. The work to improve drainage of the pitch has had a significant positive impact with standing-water clearing away very quickly – unfortunately the wet weather meant the ground was just too soft to play on over winter. A large amount of effort has also been made to the regular 'divotting' and cutting of the pitches which has resulted in smooth and widely-regarded playing surface. The Football Club has applied for further grant funding towards the maintenance of the Rec with the aim of achieving further improvements.

Although waiting guidance from the government / Football Association on when football can resume, the Club has been planning as best possible for next season. The current aim is to maintain two adult teams and two junior teams ensuring Chiseldon remains a stable and encouraging Club to play football. Without much football being played last season, the Clubs income took a significant dip meaning a key objective is to identify opportunities for raising funds to help keep costs for players / parents as low as possible. If any local organisations are in a position to assist in any way possible, the Club would be very appreciating of support.

Fingers crossed the 2020/21 football season will be more regular!