



# TRUST NEWS

Newport County AFC Supporters' Trust newsletter

• April 2020



## Supporting you in these tough times

IN THESE difficult times Newport County AFC Supporters' Trust starts this latest quarterly newsletter by thanking our members for their important and continuing support.

We know many of our members are facing uncertainty in their personal and professional lives, and are having to make some tough choices.

As the majority shareholder in Newport County AFC, the Trust recognises this because we have also had to make tough choices during the Covid-19 crisis.

As owners, we have taken the decision to 'furlough' the Club's staff and players.

This decision was made in order to protect the long-term financial viability of the Club in what are unprecedented times.

A skeleton staff remains in work during this period to ensure basic Club functions continue to operate. The Club can be contacted via [office@newport-county.co.uk](mailto:office@newport-county.co.uk)

• Members will also be aware Bar Amber remains closed due to government restrictions.

The pub is not just a meeting place for supporters before and after home matches, but has also become an important hub for a number of support groups.

• As you will read in this news-



**VOLUNTEERING: Assistant manager Wayne Hatswell with some of the food parcels he has been delivering**

letter, the Trust's directors and volunteers have continued with much of our work in the community despite the lack of football matches as the usual focal point for these activities.

Various players have sent messages of support and encouragement to supporters, many of which have been shared on social media.

These are targeted at those who are vulnerable and have been in lockdown the longest, people isolating from their immediate families due to underlying health reasons, and supporters who we know to be struggling with mental health issues.

Trust directors have been in contact with other supporters who live away from the area but

also fall into these categories, along with reaching out to volunteers to check on their wellbeing.

Michael Flynn and Wayne Hatswell have both been volunteering in the community with a variety of Trust-coordinated activities.

Both Michael and Wayne have helped deliver food parcels, and Wayne continues to do this at least twice a week.

He collects food from a supermarket and takes it to charity The Bigger Picture, help makes up food parcels and delivers with their volunteers.

• Don't forget you can collect free donations for the Trust (and therefore the Club) every time you buy something online.

It won't cost you a penny extra. Just start your online shopping first at [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ncafcstrust/](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ncafcstrust/), then shop as normal.

Retailers will then make a small donation to say 'thank you'.

There are more than 3,200 retailers to choose from and so far this scheme has raised almost £18,500 for the Trust.

For more information, contact Andrew Perry here: [easytrust1@hotmail.com](mailto:easytrust1@hotmail.com)

• More details about the Trust can be found on our website here: [www.ncafcstrust.org](http://www.ncafcstrust.org)

## How we're keeping in touch with our young fans

CLWB Spytty is the junior section of the Supporters' Trust.

With our young members off school and with no football to attend, the Trust has made sure we have stayed in touch with all of them during the current crisis.

We have been celebrating birthdays with our Clwb Spytty members with a little help from video messages from the first team and we have been sending out birthday cards.

It has also been great to see so many children taking part in all of our #StayAtHomeChallenges on social media.

Clwb Spytty members have also been receiving activity packs via email every Friday during lockdown. The packs include colouring sheets, wordsearches and fun puzzles.

These help to keep youngsters occupied alongside the online

and home schooling they are receiving.

Our colouring competition is still running with prizes to be won.

We are so proud of how all our young members have been staying at home to keep themselves safe.

We know that it isn't always easy when they are missing their friends and family.

We have also been really enjoying seeing the school projects, celebrations and fun that our youngsters have been having at home with their families on social media.

These can be shared with us on Facebook @ClwbSpytty or Twitter @CSpytty

Throughout the lockdown, we have attempted to contact every Clwb Spytty member's family and we've really enjoyed catching up

with them to see how they are doing.

Tuesday, April 20, was National Volunteer Day and we are grateful for all of our fantastic volunteers and the work they do for our junior members.

If anyone is interested in volunteering next season for Clwb Spytty, they can register their interest by emailing [clwbspytty@gmail.com](mailto:clwbspytty@gmail.com)

We're now busy working on next season's membership packages for Clwb Spytty and we can't wait to welcome all of our young members back to Rodney Parade when football is allowed to start again.

The Trust is also working on plans to involve teenage supporters in Clwb Spytty next season. More information on this new project will be available in the near future.



**IN TOUCH: Spytty has enjoyed hearing what Clwb Spytty members have been up to during the lockdown**

**Trust AGM: This will be arranged as soon as lockdown restrictions allow**

# Trust director's blog helps tackle mental health issues

Trust director Colin Faulkner leads on equality and diversity matters. He has been the prime mover in County's support of mental health issues. Below is an extract from a blog Colin has written for one of our charity partners, My Discombobulated Brain, about his own battles with anxiety. You can read the full four-part blog here: [www.mydiscombobulatedbrain.com/blog-posts/](http://www.mydiscombobulatedbrain.com/blog-posts/)

AT A recent media event three Premier League players were asked this question: "How often is mental health discussed at ... [your football club]?" The answer from all three was hardly ever, if at all.

Ask the same question at Newport County AFC and the answer would be every week via a variety of official club channels. I have conversations nearly every day with people linked to the Club on the subject and in relation to their own wellbeing.

It is for these reasons that I have decided to record some thoughts on the topic via this blog, including why it is an important subject to me, my own experience, and some coping mechanisms I have used.

We are all different and so anything I say might not be the case for you, however, I hope by opening up it will give others the courage to start talking themselves.

At this time of national crisis, the game is on hold and rightly so. The safety and health of people are more important than the on-field activities while we fight Covid-19.

However, the off-field part of the game is now getting the attention that most of us involved in the game already knew about.

There is a lot in the media about such-and-such a player helping, or so-and-so club supporting their community. The truth is this happens every day across the industry.

There are people whose lives revolve around matchday and the socialisation and feeling of community that comes with that; the more you are involved with a club the more you see and understand it.

Coronavirus is attacking us on two fronts: physically and mentally. While we can take steps to reduce the chance of contracting the virus, we cannot escape the threat to our mental wellbeing.

I know there are County supporters who have reduced social contact outside of the Club. That may be due to physical restric-



**Trust director Colin Faulkner**

tions or shyness, anxiety, PTSD and other socially debilitating issues that football allows them to overcome even if for a short period of time each week.

The lockdown some of those people must adhere to for the health of their loved ones creates an immense amount of anxiety, worry and, if the situation continues into months, there is a very real possibility of depression.

During this pandemic it will, of course, be difficult if not impossible for those face-to-face services that vulnerable people rely on to function in a normal manner. Social media and telecommunications can help but I would suggest they don't have the same impact in these cases.

Our family has been on virtual lockdown since March 16.

The simple fact is that both myself and my middle son have a diagnosis that puts in the "vulnerable" category regarding the virus.

I am keeping in touch with people I am close to and checking in with people who are isolated or vulnerable.

It's not just for their benefit - it creates a distraction from thinking too much, and helps keep my anxiety at bay.

Anyone who travels to away games regularly will tell you it's pretty much a whole day out in this country (and certainly in League 2).

I usually travel with a small group that often leaves Newport

around 10am as we are required to be at the ground earlier than the majority of supporters and that travel time to and from games is often used to discuss things that come up during the week, often solving many of the problems we all face (in our minds anyway).

It is accompanied with laughter and phone calls to people who haven't travelled but provides an opportunity for us all to speak together and have a laugh.

This is a part of the football experience and cannot be replaced during this time of social distancing.

Most football clubs are taking steps to provide assistance in relation to the impact of the lockdown on mental health in their communities.

As a supporter-owned Club, we are trying to reach out to people who are finding the lockdown period a struggle but we only know of a certain number of people that need support so I would urge anyone who is aware of others who are apart from the Club for whatever reason to contact us and share contact details in order for us to help reduce anxiety.

One thing is for sure; when we come out the other side of this we will have a new-found appreciation of the game we love and those people that stand with us shoulder-to-shoulder each week.

Until that time, it is the responsibility of all of us to look after each other.

## Kidscape links with County

NEWPORT County AFC and the Supporters' Trust are delighted to announce our charity partnership with Kidscape, with midfielder Josh Sheehan becoming an ambassador for the charity.

Lauren Seager-Smith, Kidscape CEO, said: "As a small charity seeking to have a big impact on young lives it means a great deal to us that Josh Sheehan has become a Kidscape Ambassador and that we have the support of Newport County AFC. Together we can give hope and help to many more children and families."

Kidscape are a charity that works closely with children, parents, carers and professionals, delivering high-impact programmes of support throughout the community to prevent bullying and keep children safe.

Trust and Club director Kelly Anderson said: "I am delighted to welcome our partnership with Kidscape."

"Working with young fans and their families is what I enjoy most and to be able to support them when dealing with a situation like this is invaluable."

"I too have attended a ZAP Community Workshop with my daughter and the strategies and support that we were given means that I now have an assertive and resilient child who can deal with anything."

"I felt empowered as a parent during what was an isolating and frustrating time and, above anything, supported to achieve a positive outcome for my daughter."

"With Josh on board too as an ambassador for Kidscape, I am delighted that we can support them with a whole-club approach to help to protect more young lives."

Kidscape are also running online anti-bullying workshops for children and their parent/carer, the next session is May 6.

People can book their place free of charge by visiting [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

## Walk postponed

THE second annual Newport Walk for Dementia, organised by Newport County AFC in partnership with Newport Live, was due to take place on April 5 but had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 crisis.

A new date for the event, which raises money for Alzheimer's Society Cymru, will be announced in due course.