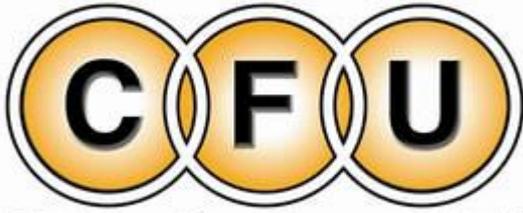


Cambridge Fans United



"Uniting Our Community"



AMBER NEWS

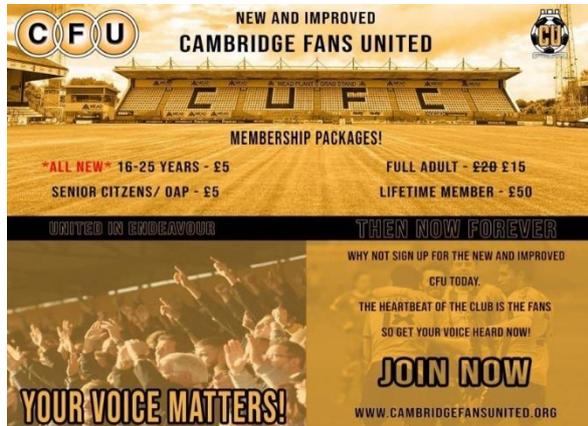


February 2021

"Family is not an important thing.
It's everything."
Michael J Fox

A Word From the Chairman

We should start by remembering all the people who have passed away during the period since last March. During this time it was reported that over 100,000 people had died of Covid and, in addition to that figure, there are many who died from other causes. It is now at the time of writing nearly 120 thousand. We would like to send all the families left behind our sincere condolences and thoughts.



I have often thought of the real value of football during these troubled times and its ability to heal and transform. We are having our most successful season for years, and it is sad that we are not there to see it, but we cannot separate the Lockdown rules and all the sacrifices made

from the need to make sure that there are no more deaths which could have been avoided. The team have done such a lot for the morale of United supporters bringing a ray of happiness into the gloom. It is not lost on me either that for some, football is a lifeline. We go to shout, meet our mates, have a drink and enjoy the company of people we have known for years. As fans we have so much in common and making use of that is close to the heart of everything CFU is about. When the Pandemic is defeated, we may well find that the incidence of poor mental health has shot up. A football club cannot solve all of society's ills but it is a powerful force to tap into.

We are delighted to see that the club have signed up to a Diversity project and are keen to get CFU involved. We all want to see more fans through the gate but this involves being better able to provide for the needs of many different types of people. We are working hard with the club to provide an area for the elderly and vulnerable and to make better provision for those with Autism or have been marginalised by society. We have been in dialogue with the YMCA, the Community Allotment Group, Liam Hughes and others who have far more knowledge and expertise.. In addition, we will be working with the Community Trust to build up contacts and link with various groups who aren't often found amongst football crowds.



We are also keen to enhance the profile of the club in the city. Cambridge is not just a University, a Science Park and a collection of great buildings. There are several communities whose needs are often overlooked. We will be discussing brown signage, better public transport links as well as a new site for a stadium which will be relevant to all and used all year round.

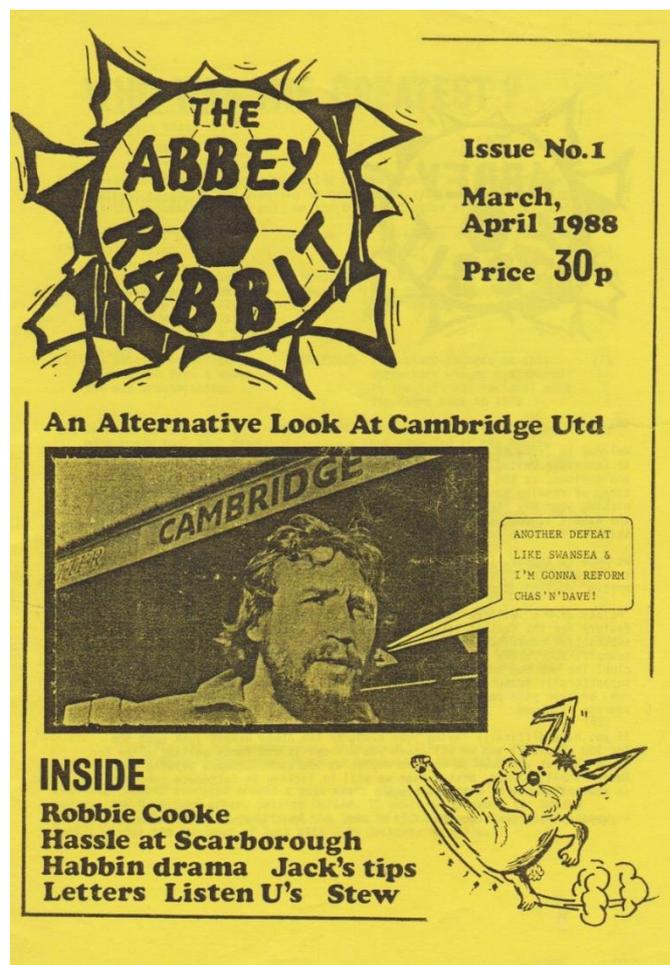
We are delighted that CFU membership is now about 300. Ideally, any influential fans' group should number 10% of the average home gate. We believe that achieving this is possible but we have to earn it. Cambridge United has always styled itself as a family club with good values. We will work as hard as we can to constantly set that bar higher.

Our team is clearly United on the pitch. They believe in their manager and in the way the club is moving. There is a lot to build on and a lot to celebrate. You will see a number of memories celebrated in this newsletter. We all have our own favourites. If we stay United there will be many more great memories to come.

Andrew Stephen

Abbey Rabbit Background

Do-it-yourself magazines produced by fans for fans - fanzines - had been about for



years .They were a huge part of the punk music scene from 1976 onwards. They started to appear in football as a reaction to the hooligan problem in the 1980s. Football was in the doldrums as a result of hooliganism. Crowds were at their lowest since the war. Nobody admitted to being a football fan back then. Fans were treated like animals. Away fans were caged in or surrounded by police from the moment they stepped off their train. The nadir came in 1985 - Millwall fans had rioted at Luton, the Bradford fire and Hysel happened within weeks of each other. Fanzines were a chance to put some humour and enjoyment back into the game. When we started the Rabbit there were around a dozen other football fanzines around the UK. The Hillsborough disaster happened just after we had written a piece for the Rabbit about the horrible and

dangerous fences at the Abbey. Fanzines are credited with playing a role in rebooting

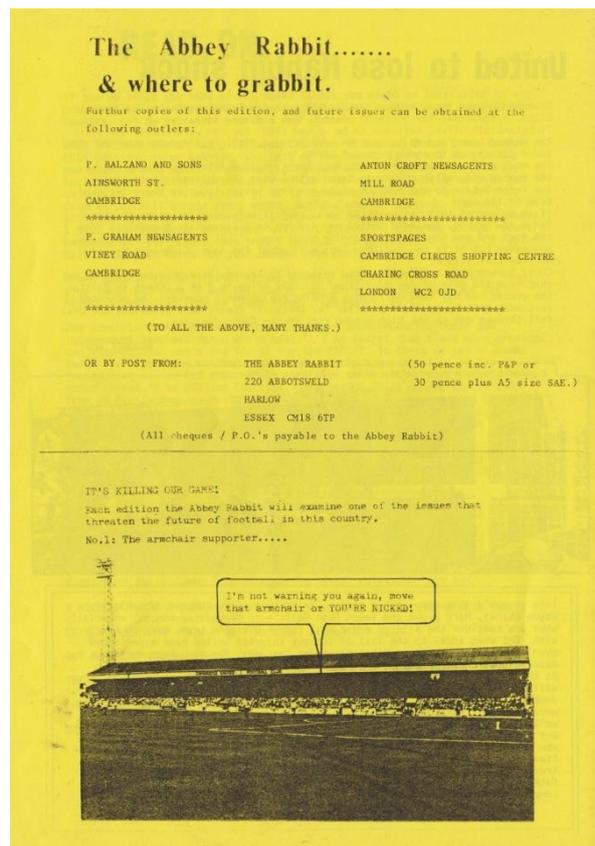
British football, aided by the England success at Italia 90 and the formation of the Premier League. All of a sudden, in the early 90s, football was fashionable again.

Nigel Pearce

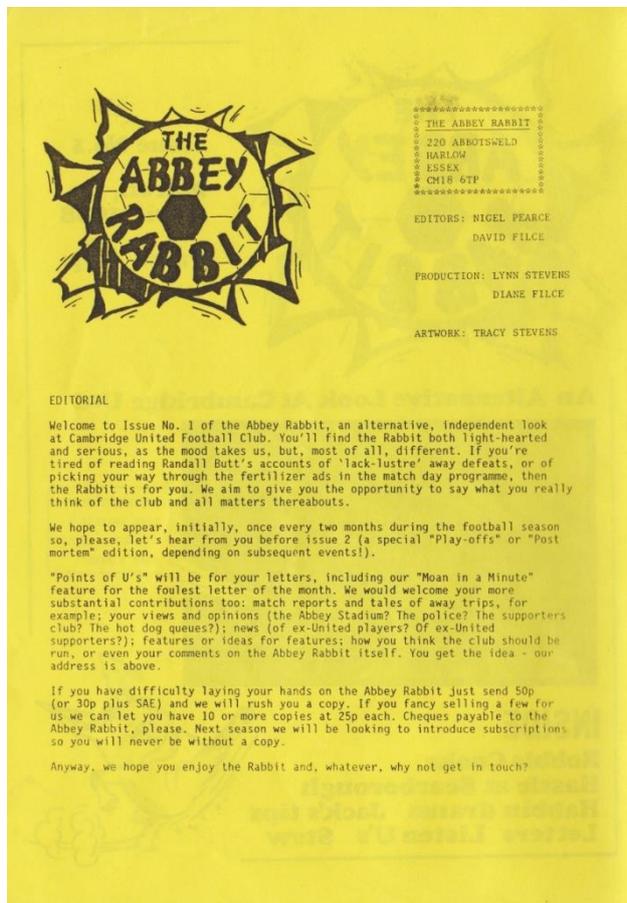
It has taken a long time to change the nature of football crowds and to convince the public at large that not all football fans are right wing neandathals with a thirst for blood.

Actually, very few are. I was very pleased with the reaction of our crowd to the booing of players taking the knee. Football fans have real values and the media, the police and some football clubs have been slow to catch up. We could all learn a lot from fanzines.

Interestingly, Wilfred Zaha has said that he will no longer take the knee because he believes in action rather than words or gestures. Whatever I think about that, CFU will make sure that we are not a kind of 'woke' fad. Real change is what matters. Ed



(backed up by PC Trevor George no less) who accused us of pretending it was the programme and didn't have permission to sell it outside the ground. Fortunately we had permission from Trevor's bosses, provided we didn't cause a crowd! At half-time Mr Carter had an announcement put over the tannoy suggesting people didn't buy it because it wasn't authorised by the Club. Well, we sold out and another print run was hastily organised. I remember issue 2 went on sale at Hereford away. I was holidaying in mid Wales, and I recall fans querying why the mail order ones were postmarked Aberystwyth. Nigel replied "because that's where they were posted". They were. I



I needed something to do while I was there, so stuffing envelopes with AR2 was great! Onwards and upwards. Print runs got larger, we sold more and more to stores all over the country, even non Utd fans were buying. We had really positive reviews all over the place. Contributors and editors changed over time with the likes of Mark Johnson and Steve Jillings all taking part. I loved every minute of producing the fanzine. Something I will always be proud of. Strangely, we think we gave the club a bit of a kick up the backside too, as we started just before that roller coaster ride to the edge of the Premiership. I am sure there are many other tales to tell: Randall Blott. How we first learned of Godric Smith How we handled beating Boro 5-1 Roy Johnson's legal adviser and the Strawberry Blancmange (Mark J may recall that) Fabulous days.

The splendid artwork in the early

Rabbits was created by Tracy Stevens.

Dave Filce

Community Trust News

CAMBRIDGE UNITED COMMUNITY TRUST NEWS – February 2021

UNITED FOR CAMBRIDGE VIRTUAL SLEEPOUT – FRIDAY 26th MARCH 2021

Last year, on 7th February 2020, around 35 brave souls slept out at the Abbey Stadium to raise awareness for homelessness and funds to support Wintercomfort and Cambridge United Community Trust.

This year, with continuing uncertainty around Coronavirus lockdown regulations, CUCT will be holding a Virtual Sleepout, inviting the local community to create their own sleepout experience at home!

There will be lots of fun live activities before snuggling down on the night itself including a virtual quiz, a bedtime story broadcast, competitions and special guest messages of support. With the flexibility to participate as a family or as part of a team with friends, as a school, with local sports team or as a corporate group, they're hoping to make this their biggest sleepout yet, raising vital funds for two important charities.

"Despite the fact we're sleeping apart, this event is all about uniting people with a common cause. It's time to tackle homelessness and this event is a fun, unique and crafty way to do this. Each year we do this, people get up in the morning, knowing that through having given up their bed for one night, they have made a real difference to their local community."

Visit www.cuctrust.co.uk/articles/virtual-sleepout-launches or email simon.wall@cambridge-united.co.uk for more details and information on how to register.



KICK THE HABIT CAMPAIGN

Cambridge United Community Trust have recently launched their 'Kick The Habit Campaign', in collaboration with gambling support charities GamCare and Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust (YGAM). The collaboration will focus initially on two key tracks – awareness and prevention.

The awareness strand of the work will see CUCT use social media channels to promote a series of articles, podcasts and interviews, exploring the consequences of gambling problems and educating on the issue. Cambridge United legend John Taylor is CUCT's lead ambassador in supporting this campaign and he says "Admitting you have a problem is the hardest part. The next steps to recovery are you talking to someone about your addiction and then having people there to listen to you".



The prevention side of the work will be in partnership with YGAM and involve delivering sessions in schools to educate young people on the dangers of problem gambling and gaming addiction. This will touch on the issues surrounding 'loot boxes', virtual treasure chests containing undisclosed items that are paid for with real money, which are now prevalent in many popular games including the FIFA series.

Community Trust Wellbeing Manager Vicky Neal said about 'Kick the Habit' "We want to be able to support individuals that are affected by gambling, either themselves or someone they are close to, by signposting them to the support GamCare offers, as well as educate our younger generations on the topic of addiction & gambling with support from YGAM'.

If the issues raised by our 'Kick the Habit' campaign affect you or someone close to you and think your story could be helpful in raising awareness about problem gambling, please get in touch with Vicky at CUCT via email vicky.neal@cambridge-united.co.uk.

Simon Wall

1970-71

Cambridge United embark on their first season in the Football League

Players and fans celebrate after United's final Sothern League match in 1970.

The first season as a Football League club was a particular one to savour for three members of the board of Directors. A E (Paddy) Harris, Geoff Proctor and Stand Starr were all members of the original board formed over twenty years earlier when United became a limited company. Even more remarkable was the fact that a club formed in 1912 and spent 25 years



in the Cambs County Leagues had now reached the Football League.

United were the first club for 10 years to be elected into the league. It really was a effort on two fronts, the players proving they deserved the promotion by winning the Southern League for the previous two seasons and directors convincing the league

delegates that off field administration and facilities were also worthy of a place. The achievement certainly changed the face of football in Cambridge. For years Cambridge City had provided the biggest local rivals and derby matches between the two clubs had been fiercely contested in front of large crowds. Bedford and Chelmsford had also provided East

Anglian rivals. Now, all of sudden, the local derbys would be against the likes of Peterborough, Northampton and Colchester. A big change for the fans was that instead of working, socialising and going to school with fans of your biggest rivals, you only got to meet opposition fans when the teams played each other. This gave very little opportunity for “friendly” banter. The city of Cambridge is world famous mainly for the achievements of the university. Football League membership gave something for the people of the city to be proud of and put the city on the football map.

Over the summer the Abbey Stadium became a hive of activity as the club prepared for its arrival among England’s football elite. The ground was given a face lift, a new press box was constructed and metal goal posts were replaced by wooden ones to bring it in line with every other league club. Anglia Television erected a permanent camera platform under the roof of the Habbin Stand and a group of volunteers relayed the terracing at the Allotments End. Manager Bill Leivers’ original 3 year contract was up for renewal and, just like three years earlier when he promised league membership within that time, he now promised promotion into Division 3 within the same time.

All of the previous season’s squad, apart from Rodney Slack ,were retained. Slack’s omission came as shock to most people. He had been at the club for nearly ten years and had been Player of the Year on three occasions. To make matters worse, Rodney learnt of his release when he read it in the Cambridge Evening News. Just goes to show there is no room for sentimentality in football, not even in those days. Slack was replaced by Trevor Roberts from Southend.

The squad returned for pre-season training on 13th July. Training was always on Coldhams



Common, which was also used for cattle grazing! A far cry from today’s pristine training ground at Clare College. All the players had been offered a weekly wage of £28 with a bonus of up to £40. The club were also obliged to pay each player £250 for signing Football League contracts. Peter Leggett, the non-league George Best, was the only player not to accept the new terms, holding out until the last moment to sign.

For a fifteen year old football mad school boy in his last year at Comberton Village College these were exciting times. Gone were the days of friendly banter with Cambridge City supporting school mates. We had moved up and City fans had either converted to United or gone very quiet.

I had been following Cambridge United for three years and about a year earlier reached the stage where my parents let me go to matches on my own. I either travelled by bus, number 115 from Trumpington to the city centre and then the 133(?) to the Abbey Stadium or I cycled. I can well remember hanging my amber and black scarf from my handle bar of my Raleigh Bicycle and racing home at a rate of knots whilst singing celebration songs after United had won the Southern League in 1969 & 1970. In those days, as now, every self respecting football mad schoolboy had to follow a first division club. Mine was Leeds United, don't really know why. Probably because my best mate followed Liverpool and along with Leeds they were the best two teams in the country at the time. I have to admit that, being a Norfolk boy, my first football love was Norwich City, but they had yet to reach the top level of English football. I suppose in today's terminology I would be known as a 3CW (you can work that one out yourselves). Anyway Cambridge United getting in the Football League changed all that and I ditched Leeds United and became a 2CW (got it yet?) The mighty U's moving on to an equal standing in my affections with the Canaries of Norfolk.



With all this going on in the local football world and England defending their World Cup in Mexico, what chance was there for me to achieve high academic qualifications in my final school year, especially when you add the extra distraction of all those mini-skirted girls of the late sixties early seventies?

Nigel Pearce

My Favourite Jonnoisms

I first met Mark Johnson and his girlfriend at what was then called Field Mill towards the end of the nineties. As a long term resident of Nottingham I saw a lot of Cambridge games there, most of which were hard fought and most of which we lost, including that one. I had my oldest son with me on that occasion and he was very impressed with Mark's book which described all of the league grounds in England. Paul was less impressed with the away end at Mansfield, although it was a bit of a novelty watching the game standing in the Gents. No doubt the ground would have been described as basic in Mark's book. Indeed it was. The weather there is always wintry at best but Away games have an appeal of their own.

Had I been able to see into the future, I would have known that the redoubtable Mr Johnson would become the voice of what Covid has made the I Follow season. Arguments rage about whether United do better on television than in front of a

crowd...though standing on the Habbin is my favoured option...but I have become used to a few commentary words and phrases which have been used more than once.

Here is a bit of a list. Where possible I have provided a translation.

Summoned to the Headmaster's study= Booked

Bowls it out in an instant

Capricious wind=Difficult playing conditions

They can see blood in the water= Going for a win

Tranche of signings=A lot

Smuggled it out=Cleared

Into the mix=Into the box

Late of this Parish=former player

Momentarily=This doesn't mean in a moment.

Betwixt and Between

So to do

Sees him off=kicks him

In a different Postcode=Not close

Perfunctory

Culturedly=A new verb

Real Estate=Space

Pencils out= Bookings time

Emphaticness=New noun

Eschews

Pick the lock=Break down the defence

Doing his pieces=Getting cross

Minimum thereof.

We are all grateful for entertaining commentary when we can't go to games. Anyone who thinks that it's easy has never tried it. I take my hat off to you chaps!

Andrew





The Challenge of the Pandemic by Ian Mather

On March 13, the 2019/20 Football League season came to an abrupt halt.

All games in the EFL were suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic, as the country headed towards national lockdown.

Whilst the Premier League and Championship were able to resume in June, clubs in League One and Two voted to end their seasons prematurely, with points per game and play-offs determining the outcome of their campaigns.

As was the case with all clubs at their level, Cambridge United faced a difficult period ahead.

“I think it’s been very challenging,” Ian Mather, CEO of the League Two club, said when addressing the financial impact of the pandemic.



“When we were told we were stopping playing, suddenly the income stops, and you’ve still got all of your expenses.

“We were getting to grips with furlough, which we did very quickly. The staff took a 20 per cent pay cut, and we accessed all the help that we could get.

Cambridge United have played 13 of their 18 home matches behind closed doors this season. Photo: Warren Gunn

“We were looking at a future where we didn’t know when we’d start playing again, and what our income would be.

“That all looks quite bleak, but you just have to think your way through it.”

The 2020/21 League Two campaign got underway a month later than usual in September.

Initially there was hope that clubs would be able to have supporters, with the government planning to re-admit fans back into grounds from October 1, but that was unable to go ahead due to rising infection rates.



Consequently, United have had to play 13 of their 18 home matches to date this season without spectators, with fans briefly allowed to attend fixtures in December.

That lack of income is made more significant by United's success on the pitch, with the U's currently topping the

League Two table.

Some of the club's gate receipt losses have been offset by iFollow sales, which allows supporters to pay to watch their team from home.

"The situation without fans, and with no income, would've been really dire and difficult," Mather added.

Cambridge United fans were permitted to attend their EFL Trophy match against Fulham U21s in September. Photo: Catherine Ivill/Getty Images

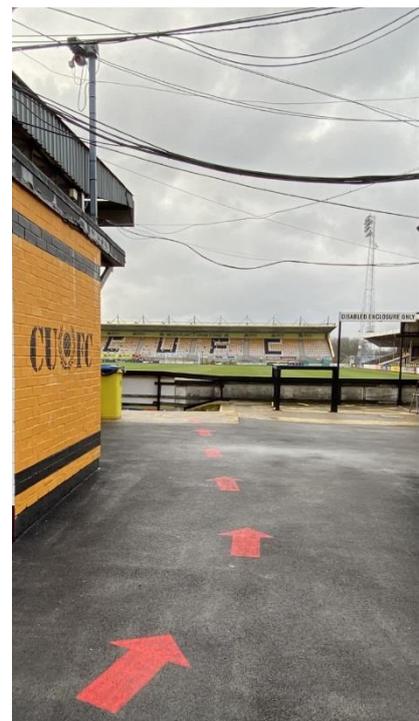
"The iFollow income is going to generate perhaps £200,000-250,000 this year, which is really significant income for us.

"It's significantly less than the gate income we would've had, and given the season we're having, I think our gates would probably have been averaging over 5,000.

"If you look to our best season of 15/16, we were averaging 5,400 a game. If we were hitting that level of gate, we would've had really good, significant income.

"We just hope to manage the situation that's in front of us, and at the moment, iFollow income is really important, and our fans seem to be sticking with it."

In April, the club's majority shareholder, Paul Barry, reassured supporters that he remained "completely committed to Cambridge United" despite the financial impact of the pandemic.



Operating in the travel industry, Barry said his own business had taken a “significant financial hit”, but vowed to continue to invest in the U’s through the tough months ahead.

The club brought two US investors on board in September, with Adam Webb and Mark Green each gaining a 10 per cent stake in the club, whilst Barry retains overall control with an 80 per cent share holding.

Mather feels that bringing in new investors helped to give the club financial stability, and stressed the significance of having a committed majority shareholder in Barry at the helm at such a time.



Paul Barry retains overall control at Cambridge United with an 80 per cent stake. Photo: Warren Gunn

“It’s immensely important, but it’s also risky. We see it in other clubs where the owner gets fed up and walks away,” the CEO said.

“Paul Barry was born and brought up in Cambridge, his mum and brother still live here.

He’s got Cambridge United through his veins, and to have an owner like that who’s completely committed is really important, and we’re very lucky to have him.

“The investors came in the later part of the summer, two individuals in America who have got real interest in football – they call it football. They get what the club is about.

“We’ve had lots of interest over the years, as do lots of football clubs, but these two I think really do understand what we’re about, and are good to work with.

“For this year it’s been really important in particular, because it gave us that comfort over the summer that we could see our way through the season, a season where we looked at possibly having no income.”

Owing to the financial difficulties caused by the pandemic to lower league clubs, the EFL negotiated a rescue package with the Premier League that was announced in December.

The package consists of a fund of £50 million for League One and Two clubs, taking the form of £30 million worth of grants to contribute to lost gate receipts, as well as monitored grant payments amounting to £20 million.

It was agreed that each club in League Two would receive a minimum of £250,000 from the deal, totalling £6 million for the league, whilst League One clubs each received a minimum of £375,000, amounting to £9 million for their division.

The remaining £15 million of the £30 million grant is distributed using a “lost gate revenue share calculation”, with clubs required to apply separately for any of the £20 million of monitored grants on the basis of need.

United’s CEO said that what the club has been given individually from the package



amounts to approximately a third of their loss of gate income for the season.

“The first thing is to say thank you to the Premier League, because in the end, they didn’t have to pay the money. I think it’s right that they did,” Mather said.

“The government clearly weren’t going to pay

anything, so they (the EFL and Premier League) came together and provided this £50 million available to League One and Two.

“Is it what we wanted? No, not exactly, we’d clearly like some more, but we’re grateful for what we’ve got. Will it make a difference? Yes it will. It’s not a complete difference, but it’s part of the jigsaw.

“I’m glad we’ve got it over the line. I think for a long time, there was a question mark of whether anything would be achieved, and you’ve got to say well done to the leadership of the EFL, Rick Parry in particular, for doing the deal.

“You’ve got to draw a line somewhere. We would’ve liked more, the negotiation was around making up lost gate receipts, and it’s covered perhaps 30 per cent of those.

Cambridge United received a minimum of £250,000 from the EFL rescue package.
Photo: Warren Gunn

“It ideally would’ve covered more of them, but in any negotiation, which this clearly was, no side gets everything that they want.”

Even though clubs have received financial support, the pandemic has put added strain on lower league clubs who are already reporting losses.

In Cambridge United’s case, the club recorded a loss of £834,830 for the 2017/18 financial year, as well as a restated loss of £882,691 for 2016/17.

The U’s are facing additional losses due to having no supporters at the Abbey for much of the season, but Mather is hopeful that those aren’t as sizeable as first feared.

“We, like most clubs in the Football League, budget for a loss. That’s the business model, and it’s supported by our owners,” the CEO said.

“That was going to be an additional loss (having no fans). We’re hopeful that we can claw some of that back, and iFollow is an important element of that. Some of the Premier League money will also help us claw some of that back.

“We’re not going to get all of it back, but we’re in a better position now, as we look forward to the end of the season, than we were in the early part of the summer.

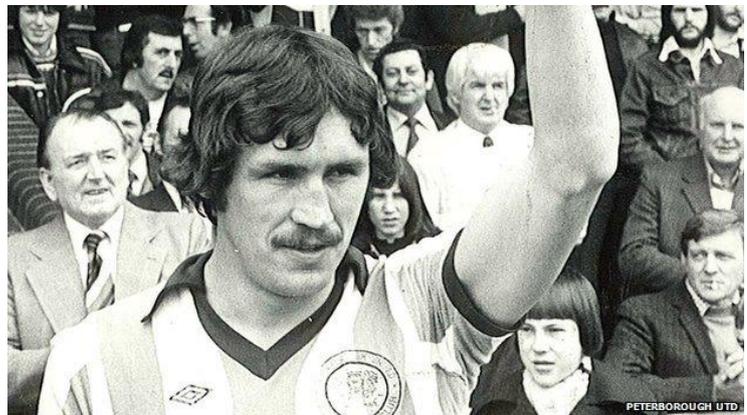
“I’ve worked with businesses for 30 odd years, and there’s only one other type of business in my experience that budgets for a loss, and that’s a start-up business.

“It feels like football is a 100 year start-up. It hasn’t yet got to that point where it’s going to actually be income generating and positive.”

To address the issue of financial sustainability and wage inflation in football, clubs in League One and Two voted to introduce squad salary caps in August.

Clubs are capped at £2.5 million in League One and £1.5 million in League Two, with those figures consisting of basic wages, taxes, bonuses, image rights, agents’ fees and other fees and expenses paid to players.

Mather believes that the introduction of a salary cap is an important step for football to have made, with a need for the industry to become more sustainable.



“That is actually a hugely significant change for football, because it will limit spending,” the CEO said.

“Why do clubs budget for a loss?
Because we all get caught up in the world of chasing promotion.

“I suspect there were clubs in our league who were working to budgets north of £3 million. What does it do? It creates more of a level playing field for all teams.

Ian Mather believes the EFL salary cap will be a 'hugely significant change' for football moving forward. Photo: Warren Gunn

“The players are the same, whether you are paying them X or Y per week, they’re the same players.

“They’re still not going to be badly paid, they’re going to be doing something they love and be very well paid.

“Levelling the playing field then means it’s about the skill of your head coach and how you put a team together, and how they work together, rather than just the size of your wallet.

“One of the things that I think will come out of Covid is more sustainable football and that’s got to be good.”

Whilst continuing to navigate a tricky period, United's CEO gave assurances about the club's financial position.

Mather says that the club is financially stable at present, with the target being to sustain that moving forward.



"We saw a big problem, we managed our way through it calmly, and we're now in a position where, although cash is tight, we'll see through this season and see [ourselves] into next season, and we're confident we can do that," he said.

"I would say that we're in a secure position. We're not a rich club, but we're in a secure, safe place.

"Fans should not be concerned that we're going to go out of business overnight, it's not going to happen, but that requires us all to carry on doing what we're doing.

"[That means] maximising our revenue

where we can, so retail and iFollow sales are important. If we can carry on as we are, then our projections give us a safe haven well into next season.

"The short-term and long-term are the same, to maintain sustainability so that we can have a good team on the pitch, we can maintain the Abbey to a good standard, we can have a good quality training facility, and at the same time be quite sure that we can look forward without fearing that we're going to go out of business.

"That's the model we're working to, and so far it's working."



[#TerraceTalk: fan-led campaign mental health campaign launched](#)

Following on from months of work with fan reps across the EFL, the FSA is pleased to launch #TerraceTalk – a supporter-led mental health initiative.

#TerraceTalk will feature a series of events across 2021 which will include training for staff and volunteers, panel discussions and the publication of shared resources.

The aim of the campaign is to encourage open and honest conversations about mental



health and encourage supporters who need them to seek out mental health support services. A central theme of #TerraceTalk is to also recognise the value that social aspects of the matchday routine provide to fans up and down the country.

As we reported back in December, fan groups across the country [have already begun discussing mental health issues](#), as well as raising awareness of the services and support available.

“The pandemic, and lack of in-person football, has had a serious impact on our collective mental health,” said Deborah Dilworth, the FSA’s EFL network manager.

“It feels like an important moment to establish and develop supporter-led work on a national level around mental health.

“#TerraceTalk will hopefully encourage fans to keep an eye out for each other and check in on a friend or fellow supporter you’d normally see at the match.”

Supported by the [EFL and Mind’s ‘On Your Side’ partnership](#), #TerraceTalk aims to complement existing initiatives in football.

Much of the planning and preparation for the launch of this campaign has been carried out by supporter representatives from the FSA’s EFL Network – aiming to raise awareness

of critical mental health issues and deliver initiatives at club level. The FSA would like to thank those fan reps and volunteers that have helped us shape the national campaign so far.

Gemma Teale, from Brentford Independent Association of Supporters and LGBeTs who has been working on the project's sub-committee, said: "Mental health is important to us all, and especially at a time when so many of the ways we look after ourselves are not available to us, we need to talk and support one another.

"We can't be on the terraces but we can make sure we still have our #TerraceTalk and keep those connections that are what makes being part of the football family great."

Online resources and a social media toolkit are also available for supporter organisations to download and use on their channels to spread the message – and point their own members and other fans to support that is available.

Geoff Bielby from Hull City Supporters' Trust (HCST) said: "Over the last four years HCST and our colleagues at other trusts have been working hard on mental health issues and trying to get people to seek help when they need it.

"Football, and the matchday routine, is a vital social release for so many and a year of behind-closed-door games has really taken its toll. We're acutely aware of how damaging lockdown has been on our mental health – it's so important that supporters come together in whatever way they can to fill that void."



**Do you have Gambling story
you are wiling to share to
help others?**

To support our #kickthehabit campaign email
vicky.neal@cambridge-united.co.uk

GamCare
Speak to an advisor for free on:
0808 8020 133

If you would like to know more about #TerraceTalk or your supporter organisation would like to get involved with the campaign, [contact Deborah Dilworth.](#)

#TerraceTalk

- **Download: [#TerraceTalk social media assets](#). If you would like a bespoke #TerraceTalk image including your group's logo [contact us](#).**
- **Find out more: fan groups highlight mental health support work**

Useful links

Contact [Mind](#) for [dealing with mental health matters](#) during lockdown. Mind also have a partnership with the EFL and run a joint [Have Your Mate's Back](#) campaign. Other useful resources...

- [Age UK](#) – call 0800 678 1602 8am-7pm
- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) or call 0800 9177 650
- [CALMzone](#) – call 0800 585858
- [Childline](#) or call 0800 1111
- [Mental Health First Aid \(England\)](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid \(Wales\)](#)
- [Mental Health Matters](#)
- [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) – call 0808 2000 247
- [National Gambling Helpline](#) or call 0808 8020 133
- [Samaritans](#) – 116 123 call any time for free

For medical advice call the NHS on 111.

Under the Abbey Stand

Over many years we have been extremely fortunate at Cambridge United to have some really talented writers among the fanbase producing some of the best fanzines available. The first fanzine I remember is the Abbey Rabbit, back in the early nineties. Do you remember any of the following? The Globe, One Wonky Antler and Planet Amber. What others have there been? The latest one is Under the Abbey Stand and they are following on with this tradition. However, with the advancement of social media and technology they have now moved onto the next level producing a regular podcast in addition to updating their website with printed copy. You can see more and find out more via their website <https://undertheabbeystand.com> The team that is behind producing everything is Julian Roberts, Jack Swindlehurst, Tom Walker, Jordan Worland and Owen Kiernan.

Abbey Chat ---- Do you need to speak to someone?

We want to check everybody is ok and we are still looking out for each other. As a trust we have been discussing ideas to best help our supporters and vulnerable people at this

difficult time. We decided that in this time when many people are isolating and missing daily contact with others a telephone call would be a great way to stay in touch.

We thought that the idea of a telephone conversation with someone from CFU where we could chat all things Cambridge United players, managers, matches, stadiums, Wembley. Or we can talk about anything you like.

If you would like us to call you please contact us by emailing supportcambridgeunited@btinternet.com

EFL proud to support LGBT+ History Month

The EFL is proud to support LGBT+ History Month, which aims to promote equality and diversity for the benefit of the public. Throughout February, the League will continue to help raise awareness and advance education on matters affecting the LGBT+ community, as well as taking a no-tolerance approach to discrimination in any form. The work forms part of the EFL's wider activity in this area and anti-discrimination campaign, 'Not Today or Any Day', as we promote the message that everyone has the right to feel safe, valued and included, whether we're together, apart, online or on the pitch. Earlier this season, EFL Clubs across the country united in support of LGBT+ inclusivity to raise awareness of Stonewall's Rainbow Laces campaign, with specific matchday activity taking place at all EFL Clubs between Friday 4 December and Sunday 13 December. Keep an eye out for stories throughout the month on our official social media channels.



**WELCOME TO
CAMBRIDGE UNITED**

**We have given violence, racism,
foul language and homophobia the boot.
Enjoy your visit and have a safe journey home.**

If you have an incident to report, please phone or text 0752 247 3291

English football's open letter to social media

Jack Dorsey
CEO – Twitter
1355 Market Street
Suite 900,
San Francisco, California 94103
USA

Mark Zuckerberg
Founder, Chairman and CEO – Facebook
1 Hacker Way,
Menlo Park, California 94025
USA
11 February 2021

Dear Jack and Mark,

Recent weeks have seen the levels of vicious, offensive abuse from users of your services aimed at footballers and match officials rise even further, we write to ask that for reasons of basic human decency you use the power of your global systems to bring this to an end. The language used is debasing, often threatening and illegal. It causes distress to the recipients and the vast majority of people who abhor racism, sexism and discrimination of any kind. We have had many meetings with your executives over the years but the reality is your platforms remain havens for abuse. Your inaction has created the belief in the minds of the anonymous perpetrators that they are beyond reach. The relentless flow of racist and discriminatory messages feeds on itself: the more it is tolerated by Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, platforms with billions of users, the more it becomes normal, accepted behaviour.

The services you provide are of course hugely impressive in their reach, scale and ease of use. Billions of communications every day are enabled by them, but a minority has found protected spaces where they can say whatever they want without regard to the law. We ask you to accept that none of your users should be hounded off your platforms, losing access to the great communications media of our times, because of their gender or the colour of their skin. The targets of abuse should be offered basic protections, and we ask that you accept responsibility for preventing abuse from appearing on your platforms and go further than you have promised to do to date. We ask that:

- Messages and posts should be filtered and blocked before being sent or posted if they contain racist or discriminatory material
- You should operate robust, transparent, and swift measures to take down abusive material if it does get into circulation
- All users should be subject to an improved verification process that (only if required by law enforcement) allows for accurate identification of the person behind the

account. Steps should also be taken to stop a user that has sent abuse previously from re-registering an account

- Your platforms should actively and expeditiously assist the investigating authorities in identifying the originators of illegal discriminatory material

Many footballers in English football receive illegal abuse from accounts all over the world and your companies have the power to bring this to an end. We welcome the comments made on Twitter by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden, that the UK Government is going to change the law to make social media companies more accountable for what happens on their platforms and they should "start showing their duty of care to players today by weeding out racist abuse now."

Players, match officials, managers and coaches of any origin and background and at any level of football should be able to participate in the game without having to endure illegal abuse. We, the leaders of the game in English football, will do everything we can to protect them, but we cannot succeed until you change the ability of offenders to remain anonymous.

We note the current assurances from Facebook that standards will be tightened, but far more is needed to drive change. We call for meetings with your organisations to discuss the evidence of abuse on your platforms, the action you are taking, and how you plan to directly address the matters outlined in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Masters, Chief Executive, Premier League



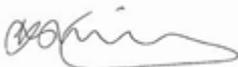
Mark Bullingham, CEO, The FA



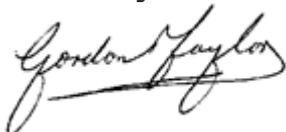
Trevor Birch, CEO, EFL



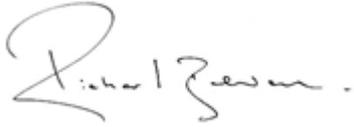
Kelly Simmons, Director of Women's Professional Game



Gordon Taylor OBE, CEO, PFA



Richard Bevan, CEO, LMA



Mike Riley, Managing Director, PGMOL



Sanjay Bhandari, Chair, KIO

My thanks to Dave Matthew Jones for the articles above which are particularly relevant during these troubled times.



Lottery Scheme

PITCHIN' IN

Since retirement I've been volunteering up The Abbey, firstly serving in both the old and new club shops with Gareth and Lorraine, quite a change from my pen pushing days in the NHS; meeting up with supporters and spending too much time chatting I expect.

Anyway, as the system became too technical for me to cope with (Gaz and Lorraine were always doing something on the till and/or computer to bail me out) I moved from the shop into the welcoming arms of Ian Darler and Mick Brown- you know it when Mick gets a grip! Slapping on paint was fine with me although no ladders or steps as I have no head for heights..... with other like minded souls; Dave Matthew-Jones, Terry

O' Dell, Alan (Stanley) Burge, Les Weston, Margaret & Frank, Nigel Browne, Pete Ankin, Mick Radford, Wendy Twinn, Emma Smith and our Italian master craftsman



Ciac Celentano etc. Apologies if I've missed anyone! Some of the group come for the company with no affiliation to football ; we have worked with a smile over the years , indulged in long tea breaks, plenty of cakes and biscuits, plus fish and chip dinners. A great time was had by all with the bonus of doing what we could to spruce up and hopefully improve our beloved Abbey Stadium.

Sadly this came to a stop for reasons we all know about and doesn't need repeating. Rightly the club took the decision to keep a skeleton workforce at the club and from the ground maintenance view and especially doing work on the pitch, all plans were thrown in to disarray.

In particular the lease on the tractor and various accessories came to an end and was removed

from the premises. 'Luckily 'the financial situation at that time prevented the tractor from being sold on to another company but led to an opportunity for the CUFC Lottery to step in and fund the club £10k to buy the tractor. We didn't get the other equipment back but Ian managed to borrow some for a period until the club were able to lease some vital gear (Verti drainer anyone??). We are talking about a period of weeks covering these events)

Anyway, near pre-season we were allowed back and lots of effort was put into the pitch (the CUFC Lottery chipped in £950 for sacks of grass seed) and, by then, preparations were stepped up to turn The Abbey into a Covid safe ground for a limited number of supporters. Recent history testifies to the success of those efforts, even though external situations restricted that achievement.



Just prior to the start of the season, Ian asked us if we would be prepared to volunteer on home match-days to divot the pitch as, to put it in Ian's terms - because we know where you've been - plus we had already undergone Covid protocols and signed off on the club regulatory agreements. Four of us signed up.

Now we jump forward to the last home game against Crawley, apart from rain in the morning, that match was only the second home match this season where it did **not** rain during the 90 minutes.

I'm pointing that out as we have seen the state of the pitch but you may not appreciate the enormous amount of work Ian and Mick put in to getting the pitch playable. We only attend on match days and arrive at our allotted time. We sit in our bubble 2m



apart and try to keep distances when on the pitch.

Mrs Darler has pointed out that Ian might as well take his bed up the Abbey!

At the previous home match, snow arrived 20 mins before ko and the ref was bricking it as it was also his first match in charge. Now he may need to make a decision! Ian and Mick got out the snow blower back packs

(remember Luton?) provided by the CUFC Lottery and CFU and the lines were cleared of snow a few minutes before KO and it didn't snow again.

Probably labouring the point to mention the Newport game, when the drains could not clear the water fast enough from the pitch, so Ian and Mick were sweeping it off.

Lately we don't have to use the forks, as a good stamp on the offending area tends to flatten the offending lumps and bumps!

Due to the very wet weather Ian has dubbed us his Wrinkly Forkers ... or words to that effect.

Needless to say that preparations and contractors for pitch maintenance at the end of this season have already been signed off and ready to start, Covid permitting. So our arrangements are secure as there are only a limited number of specialist contractors in this field.

Up the U's!

Brian Thorby

Few of us know how much we owe to that intrepid band of volunteers. Anyone wanting to know why they should join the Lottery scheme should just ask miracle man Ian Darler.





Introducing Lola a Guide Dog puppy sponsored for two years by the CUFC Lottery.

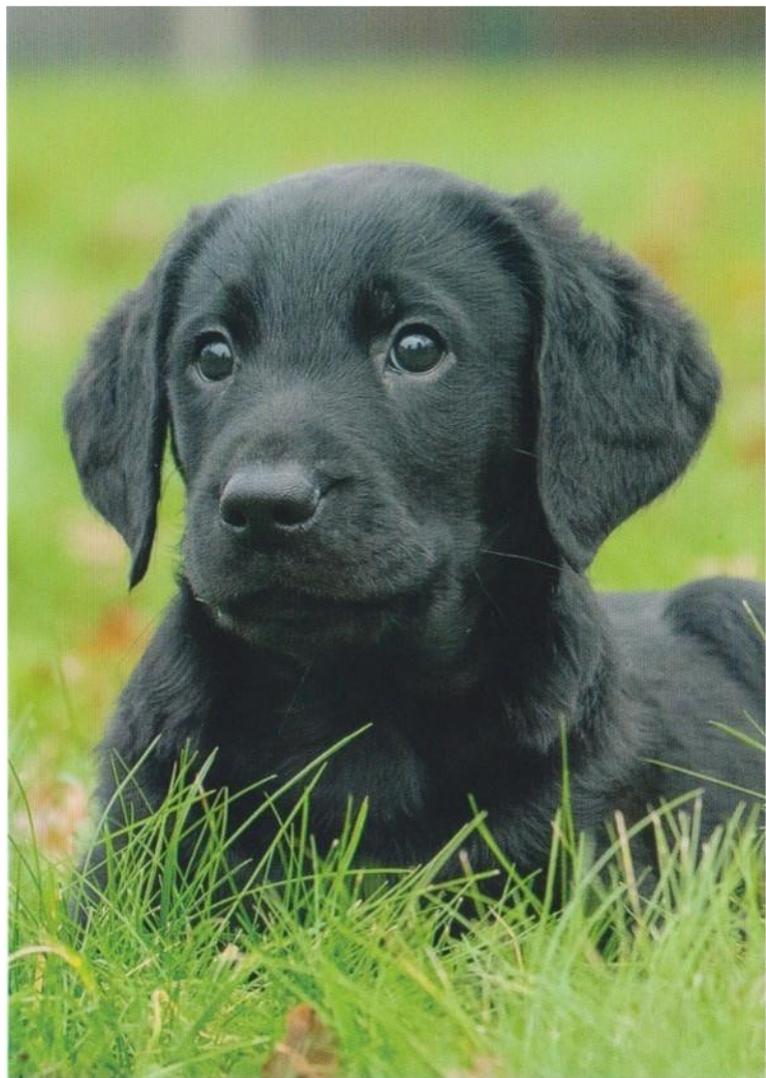
Lola is a fluffy pup who loves snuggling with her siblings. She needs your support to help her grow up to be a life-changer.

Follow Lola's story on the CUFC Lottery website over the next two years and find how she develops throughout the period.

Yours sincerely,

the CUFC Lottery Team

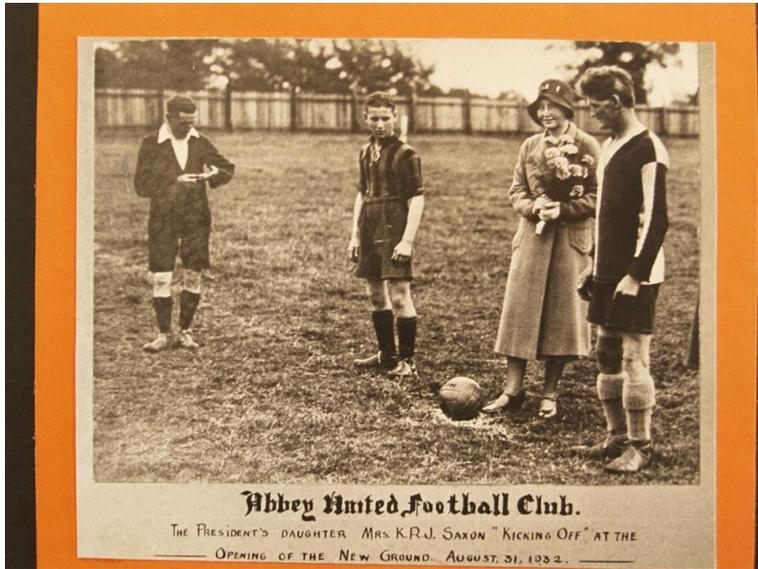
cfulottery@yahoo.com



VAR.....Good or Bad?

The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) was brought in to help the referees and stop errors being made. Now referees need all the help they can get, such as goal line technology which (apart from 1 recent case) has seemed to be pretty good.

But why isn't a referee allowed to make a mistake? If a forward makes a mistake and



misses an open goal we don't let him have another shot. If a defender makes a mistake by mistiming a challenge and commits a foul we don't let him have another go. If a keeper makes a mistake by letting a weak shot through his legs and into the net we don't chalk off the goal.

After any game we have lost invariably on social media there are fans moaning about the referee, sometimes with justification, but usually as a

scapegoat for our own team's failings. Presumably Premier League fans now moan about VAR when they have lost!

Measuring technology is extremely accurate, and there have been goals not given as the last millimetre of the ball had not crossed the line. The same technology applies to offside, where a player can be onside or offside by a millimetre. That is all well and good, but the problem to me is what part of the body is being measured? It seems that any small part of the body can be offside, such as a boot or a hand, but the majority of the body being onside is not enough. To me the "line" should be based on the centre of the players body, or perhaps go back to when there had to be daylight between the 2 players.

The accuracy might be good, but it is based on a person overlaying lines on a screen after deciding which video frame to use, and at a minimum of 24 frames per second there are a lot of frames to check. With enough computer software and processing power I'm sure it could be done in real time to take the human out of the decision and make the process much quicker, but would it be worth it? Probably, to be able to get an instant decision instead of all the waiting that seems to happen at the moment.

Where referees really need help is on the diving/simulation, especially in the penalty area. How often have we heard a pundit said something like "he is entitled to go down if he felt a touch", or "it was a soft penalty". A foul in the penalty area rightly results in a penalty, but would that same foul be given outside of the penalty area? Usually that

same player would not go down so easily! With multiple angles and slow motion VAR can spot the slight touch, but to me it is cheating!

Some years ago, video technology was bought into American Football (which is a stop/start game) and initially any referee decision was reviewed. This really extended the time it took to play a game to over 4 hours for 60 minutes of play, so now each team has a limited number of challenges. Also the referee can request a review if they are not sure what happened.

The modern Laws of the Game have not changed much over the years, yet the guidance to referees on interpretation seems to change very regularly!



VAR is likely to continue and in time will probably be used lower down the football pyramid. The way the game is refereed should be the same at Old Trafford, The Abbey and Coldhams Common. But is it fair that in the FA Cup (and other competitions) some matches have VAR, some do not?

So to answer the question at the start, my answer is Yes and No, but leaning heavily towards No!

Terry Wilby

We were told that it was only to be used when a clear and serious error had been made. If only that were true!

My experience volunteering for CUCT.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a stressful for everyone, but people seem to underestimate the effects the pandemic is having on children. An extended time away from school and friends has an adverse effect on children and it is not easy for them. CUCT have decided to support local children in the area by creating the #CallForTheBall scheme which was established to help local kids in the area. Parents living in the CB1-CB5 areas had the opportunity to fill in a form online giving proof to the Community Trust that they have not got a football for their child and were subsequently entered into a database managed by Ash from the Trust. Then ,with help from Mick George, we got footballs ready for delivery. Between the group of us we all took a separate route and took about 15 balls and went to our separate areas around Cambridge to deliver footballs. My route was to go around the new estate in Trumpington to deliver footballs to the children in that area. I delivered balls to all but one

family; with about half of the kids being home-schooled and free to receive the footballs right there and then. The age range of the children were between 5 and 11 years old and all the children were ecstatic to receive them . My personal highlight was a girl who was celebrating her birthday with her father when I came with the football, and she was absolutely delighted, as it was something she asked for. I also promoted being active during the lockdown; explainin



g that, as much fun as video games are, it is important to be active by playing football, going on walks and going to the park. Kids might never get a better chance to play football with the amount of potential free time available. The final thing I did was to promote the club, encouraging families to visit the Abbey post pandemic, especially

seeing the form we are in this season. A majority of the families were very welcoming and stated how the club had gained new fans with help of the generosity of the Community Trust.

Personally, I absolutely loved helping the Community Trust, seeing the smile on the faces of the kids receiving the footballs was superb, and it is a brilliant experience to see a side of the club you potentially would not see. You will experience great things, meet great people and it can be a great thing to look back on, being able to help the club and community during one of the most difficult periods of its life. I cannot recommend it enough and thoroughly look forward to my next opportunity to volunteer.

Days of our Lives II

Stevenage 0-2 Cambridge United

Anyone else sorely miss away days? The trains packed full of fans with booze getting passed around, walking to the stadium, chatting to mates about the hope of witnessing a memorable day out, the pubs around the ground, walking into the away end, chanting for the whole game and going mental when you score a winner, and normally passing out on the train back. The long journeys such as Carlisle, Plymouth,



Exeter are always fantastic days out, but there is just something special about a local away day, such as Orient, Colchester or Stevenage.

Stevenage especially deserves recognition, being our most local away day, and one of the ones we usually always sell out. We have had our memorable days there in the past, from our battles in the Conference to our Boxing Day clash back in 2016 where we grabbed a late winner. But today, I'm going to reminisce on our clash back in April 2018, also known as "Sir Barry Corr Day".

The date is April 14th 2018. The Commonwealth Games in the Gold Coast are in full flow, Donald Trump is acting like a tit over in the US, and England hasn't prepared for the party that would be the 2018 World Cup. Cambridge and Stevenage were both languishing in mid table

towards the end of disappointing seasons for both sides. Stevenage had professional bodybuilder and part time football manager Dino Maamria leading them ,after sacking Darren Sarll in late March and had nothing left to play for, being too good for relegation but too bad for promotion. United were in a relatively similar situation. The club were in a transition period, having seen Luke Berry, Will Norris, Mark Roberts, and (for the time being) Barry Corr leaving during the summer. The team under Shaun Derry had an inconsistent season, playing poor football and having such highlights such as losing 7-0 to Luton, bottling a 3-0 lead away to Notts County in the space of 15 minutes and embarrassing losses away to the likes of Yeovil, Port Vale and Forest Green Rovers, all who were fighting off relegation. Derry's tenure in charge of United ended at the



start of February after a 0-0 draw to Lincoln and a quite pissed off fanbase rejoiced at seeing Derry finally leave. In stepped Bobble Hat connoisseur Joe Dunne, who was promoted from assistant manager to interim manager whilst the club looked for a suitable replacement. And then something happened. United started playing with passion and pride. They started getting results and winning. Chesterfield away, Notts County and Grimsby at home, getting a point from eventual runners up Luton, outwitting Wycombe at Adams Park with an extremely late equaliser. It was fun watching the U's again, and even though we went to Stevenage with nothing to play for, we went optimistic of a result.

The early trains were packed to go on the short 30-minute journey to Hertfordshire, with The Old Post and Our Mutual Friend starting to fill with Amber and Black shirts. The talk around was about Dino's comments pregame, citing that "he loved beating Cambridge when he played for Stevenage, and how they always beat Cambridge". The fans entered the Lamex

(ironically overlooked by a circus behind the old terrace) with the Stevenage fans lighting pyro in anticipation for the local derby. The first half ended 0-0 with both teams having chances to score without truly testing the keepers. The second half began and then the fun started on the 52nd minute when (after a lot of persuasion from the United faithful) Joe Dunne decided to bring on Barry Corr for Medy Elito.

Barry Corr had been with the U's since 2015 and started his spell with 12 goals in 24 performances, before a game against Hartlepool in January 2016, where he suffered a freak knee injury. His next performances wouldn't come until February 2017, when he scored twice



in three games before another knock kept him out until towards the end of March. His last game was in a 2-1 victory against Crewe before another knock kept him out before being released ahead of the new

season. He had groin surgery during the summer and was allowed to train with the club to improve his fitness, before signing on a game-by-game basis, and then on a contract to the end of the season. He played a couple of times in January and February before another injury delayed his return. He finally returned the week before Stevenage against Exeter and was named on the bench against the Borough.

The Amber Army erupted seeing the Cult Hero come on and stroll into the box in preparation for a free kick George Maris was about to send into the Stevenage box. The ball came in, and who was risen above everyone to head into the net? Barry Corr. His first touch was a header looping over the Stevenage keeper in no man's land and into the back of the net. The away end erupted, people jumping forward to embrace Barry who celebrated in front of the Amber Army. His first goal since February 2017, and the emotions were clear to all. It was a beautiful moment. Stevenage came and attacked in search of an equaliser, but it came to nothing as on the 83rd minute, United scored one of the best goals you'll see at League Two level. A slick passing move involving Maris, Deegan, Brown and Halliday carved open the Stevenage defence, eventually leading to Corr being isolated in front of the open goal to just tap in and grab his second of the game. Cue bedlam. The fans went crazy, chanting Barry's name amongst other songs, before reminding Dino of the score seeing how much he loved seeing his team beat United. Full Time came and United left with 3 points after one of the best performances over the last few years. An interview came later with a tearful Barry Corr telling the media team about how he was so close to calling it a day, reminiscing about kicking a ball round a park in Swindon, dodging dogs, trying to regain fitness, and then saying how that result was the result of months of pain. The sheer joy of being in that away end and seeing

Barry finally score after the toughest period of his career was genuinely beautiful, and to this day its known as Sir Barry Corr Day.

Games like these will forever live in the memory of fans who were there, the amazing atmosphere post the goals, the emotions shown by the team, everything about Barry Corr, they're priceless and magical. Away days can be hit or miss in terms of the result but on a day like that, it's perfection. I think I safely speak for all Cambridge fans in saying thank you Barry for the incredible memories in a Cambridge shirt. You'll forever be a legend and cult hero for the U's.

It's wonderful to relive moments like that. The time I watched a game which seemed almost too good to be true was when we demolished promotion favourites Leicester City 5-1 during the season when we should have been promoted to the Premier League for its inaugural season. Mick Heathcote scored from an unstoppable header....and we were unstoppable that day. We were playing a seriously good team and destroyed them. What could be better?

Both of the above articles were written by Conor Rifo, a 16 to 25 member. We are obviously keen to encourage younger members and to get them involved as volunteers working for the club when conditions allow. Young people are often vilified by the media. I often find that they contribute far more to society than they are given credit for. Ed



Roving Reporter

One day, out of the blue, I received a phone call from a reporter at the Irish Daily Mirror. He was a big fan of Wes Hoolahan and he wanted to know what I thought of him. So I told him. Since then Mark Bonner has one Manager of the Month and Wes has won Player of the Month. He is a joy to watch and even if we can't win every week, we're going up. Ed

BBREY DAYS



Wes still in love with the game at grand old age of 38...& high-flying Cambridge adore having him too

BY PAUL O'HEHIR

OUT of sight doesn't have to mean out of mind.

Wes Hoolahan was never one to crave media spotlight. But revelling in one on the pitch? That's a different matter.

And away from prying eyes in the lower reaches of England's Football League, the man once dubbed the 'Irish Messi' continues to cast his magic spell.

Turning 39 in May, the evergreen playmaker is almost single-handedly dragging Cambridge United towards League Two glory.

Three goals in his last seven appearances has helped the cause but his contribution at the Abbey Stadium has been more than just cold statistics.

"Hunger isn't something exclusive to young players," the club's 35-year-old manager Mark Bonner said of Hoolahan (inset) recently.

Eighth in the table facing into the New Year, the Us now sit top of the pile with Hoolahan the star man and nominated this week for League Two Player of the Month.

It's 13 years since the Dubliner made his Ireland debut under Giovanni Trapattoni in a friendly against Colombia. But he had to wait four more years for a second cap, something the veteran Italian manager later admitted was a mistake.

Hoolahan enjoyed a resurgence under Martin O'Neill, the highlight of which was his goal against Sweden at the Euro 2016 finals in France.

The former Shelbourne star called time on his international career two years later with all but one of his 43 caps coming in his 30s.

When Hoolahan turned down Cambridge in the summer of 2019 to join Australian club Newcastle Jets, many felt it would be his swansong.

But determined to play on, he returned to Cambridge in August on a season-long deal.

"Wes is the best player we've had in over a decade," says Andy Stephen, a supporter since 1967 and chairman of Cambridge Fans United.

"There's nobody here like him and it's no bad thing when you're that bit better than everyone else.

"Wes reminds me of Johnny Giles in his latter years.

"Giles wasn't racing everywhere but he was always there to receive the ball. He had exceptional anticipation and that's Wes in a nutshell."

League Two pitches are taxing to play on at this time of year, but Hoolahan hasn't looked remotely fazed.

And it's a fact not lost on Stephen Page, who has studied Hoolahan up close this season in his role as football reporter with the Cambridge News.

He said: "The pitches are really, really difficult but Wes is always stepping up to take games by the scruff of the neck. He wants the responsibility.

"At 38, he's showing no signs of slowing down and, if anything, his influence on this team is only getting stronger."

It's giddy times at the summit but Cambridge are careful to protect Hoolahan and, by his own admission, he isn't seen around the club too much early in the week.

He sticks to his own fitness plan and Bonner is careful about which games he targets.

Guaranteed to play most Saturdays, a decision is then made on whether to risk him midweek amid League Two's relentless schedule.

For instance, he was rested for last night's clash away to Richie Towell's Salford City.

Cambridge boss Bonner said: "The performances he's given this month - in conditions he's not used to from his Premier League and Championship days - sum him up.

"He just gets on with it and that's good leadership. He raises standards, gets the best out of others and that's how you build a winning culture."

Hoolahan's contract is up this summer and it's unclear if he intends playing on. But those who watch him would be surprised if he doesn't.

United fan Stephen added: "He provides the one thing that League Two teams don't have - time on the ball. And if we go into League One, I think he'll be even better.

"If you're not running a million miles per hour, people assume you're not working hard enough. But Wes works hard. It's just he's doing things nobody else can do."

Time ticks by, but some things never change.

DRAW TALENT
Cambridge fan Colin Proctor has sketched United hero Wes Hoolahan



Hot off the Habbin Crawley

“I could not break records; so I decided to shatter them”. Dhliwayo

Whenever I think of Creepy Crawley, I think of natural charmers Steve Evans and our own Paul Raynor, the agitation twins. Using tricks and tactics honed to perfection at Boston United, Evans made Crawley hard to beat and horrible to watch. In terms of gamesmanship they made Leeds United of the early seventies look like hapless amateurs. Diving, shrieking, off the ball provocation and intimidation of match officials were all part of their repertoire of soccer skills. Of all the teams we saw in the Conference, they were the ones least worth watching.

Of course, much has changed since then and more recent managers have turned them into a decent and highly watchable footballing side. Harry Kewell introduced a cultured brand of football but wasn't particularly successful with it. John Yems has added competitive steel to their attractive style and their FA Cup win over a less savvy



incarnation of Leeds was well deserved. It was achieved so easily that they even had the opportunity to give Reality TV star, Mark Wright, his professional football debut. Will we see him at the Abbey? I wonder. They will have to take us more seriously than Leeds.

Going back to Steve Evans for a moment, if I must, he was obviously so impressed with Rob Cundy when we thrashed Gillingham that he decide to hijack his loan to us from Bristol City. They say class is permanent. Having sold the Franz Beckenbaur of League 2, it seems reasonable to expect the arrival of an experienced centre half this week and maybe one other player. Promotion is on the cards and we need to be as strong as we can be without gambling with money we haven't got. It's a real pleasure to see a couple of Spurs youngsters here. They will do well here. Maybe Jack Roles would have done better coming back?

Social media remains a study in drama. So often this season we see demands that Bonner be sacked, claims that the wheels have come off and that our performances are dire. Then we score a couple and all the nonsense is forgotten. A point against an excellent Bradford team was well won. Where are we in the league?

Finally, our current goal machine is within a whisker of breaking David Crown's record for the most goals scored for United in a season. He will probably smash it. We have waited a long time but this is the season that keeps on giving.

COYU's!

“Mentally strong people overcome setbacks with confidence because adversity makes them better”.

Amy Morrin

As I write, the Beast from the East, or Storm Darcy as it is fashionably named, is bringing snow and icy blasts all the way from the Urals. Icicles hang from rooves in Barton Bendish and yet the weather was not severe enough to postpone the game at Salford yet again. A pity, since I suspect that the difference last night was that they hadn't played for 3 weeks and we have played a lot of games in a short time, travelling miles and playing on terrible pitches. However, I can accept that and the fact that key players were unfit. What I find hard to accept is the hail of criticism, sometimes aimed at individuals, all over social media, when people can't deal rationally with their own disappointment. There is a young forward banging goals at Wimbledon now who might have stayed here had he not been subjected to unending and pointless criticism from so called fans. Sometimes standing on Habbin North is no more pleasant than enduring the Siberian weather but fans pay their money...

So much for fickleness or fickability or whatever it's called nowadays. This feels like a promotion season and when we have our best team out, it looks like one too. Intriguingly, I was interviewed by the Irish Daily Mirror about Wes Hoolahan. They revere him in Dublin and they wanted to know what we thought. Every successful side has a player who, on their day, is better than everyone else, someone with more vision, time on the ball and skill than anyone else. Wes is that man. I remember Hereford coming here in the early seventies with ex England winger Terry Paine in their ranks. He was forty and did nothing but amble around. Oh, and he took every free kick and corner they had. He was wonderful. And Wes is more than that. He plays in front of the back four, gets into the box. He reads situations and displays real leadership skills. We have many other really gifted players but when Wes is missing we are not the same team. He is our Jimmy Anderson and we must keep him for as long as we can.



At least people will stop saying that we only play well on I Follow. The sooner the crowds can come back, the better for us all. During these long unnatural months of the Pandemic the success of our team has been wonderful because of the effect it has had on the City's morale. Cambridge is so much more than a University, however wonderful, great architecture and tourism. There is another side to the City which deserves more attention and better provision. The Community Trust have done a fine job in supporting our community, perhaps in ways that only football

clubs can. It is trying much harder to cater for diversity, disability, disadvantage and need in every way it can. At the end of this season I really hope to see that we are top of the league. As much as that I want to be associated with a club that has got its values right and makes its own contribution to making society better, fairer and more tolerant. I believe that Cambridge United is making great strides in this direction.

Cambridge till I die



and finally....

“The starting point of all ambition is desire.”
Napoleon Hill

As I write, we are about to travel to Mansfield. It will be fascinating to see how we do



with a whole week off behind us. We have looked tired and at Salford and home to Southend we had key men missing. Recruitment in January was excellent and I look forward to great things from the Tottenham pair in particular. We await the return of Hiram Boateng but I think that Paul Digby has been a big loss too. I took a few matches to become convinced but for me he is now a key player. We have a few of those now and a bit of extra pace too. We hope for promotion every year, this time I expect it. We may not have the money that some clubs have but players are happy here and committed. It has been a few years since that happened. Who are the successors to Tom Finney, Alan Biley, Dave Stringer and Steve Spriggs? By the end of the season we may know

and League One will be beginning to worry.

I was sad to see Paul Lambert blasting the Referee who lost his rag with some of the antics of the Ipswich team. The Ref was out of order but they are constantly provoked by cheats who show no respect for authority, the game or the fans. Lambert can't



accept that Ipswich were woeful simply because they were. It wasn't the Referee's fault. He was just a handy scapegoat. I hope that the authorities show understanding. I have been critical of referees in the past, to understate a little, but I know that the job they do is essential and impossible.

Covid has slowed everything down frustratingly but we are moving forward with plans to enhance the Fans' Area with the possible addition of beer, restart the Junior U's and sponsor a football tournament being organised by the YMCA in support of the disadvantaged. We will accompany players on a bridge building exercise to the mosque. We have all been through a rough time but football clubs have the power to win hearts and minds and make life better for all of us. I am proud of my team and I am proud of my

club. Join us and make a difference,

Andrew

Make a difference and join CFU

Your opinions and contributions are always gratefully received. I like to publish the whole range of views and will censor nothing except incorrect or offensive material. The quality and usefulness of the newsletter depends on you!

Please send to: acstephen@hotmail.com

Deadline for next newsletter – March 17th

