LOWDOWN



STEPPING UP WITH HELSTON ATHLETIC

The Western League Board very much hope that winning the Premier Division title and being presented with a trophy steeped in footballing history will become a lifetime memory, however as Paul Hendy of Helston Athletic explains, there is little time to celebrate a promotion to The Southern Football League before a clubs attention must turn towards the challenges of what lies ahead. We caught up with Paul for a better understanding of what clubs can expect if looking to step up.

Paul was quick to point out, 'be prepared for change, increased expenditure and a busy inbox'. He continued...

Within hours of The FA releasing the constitution of The Southern League Division 1 South for the 24/ 25 season we soon calculated a required commitment to over seven thousand miles of away day travel. All of a sudden the clubs budget for coach hire had doubled from that of the previous season. This will differ from club to club but something to be taken into account early on.

Annual membership, affiliation and personal accident premiums are higher compared to that of playing at step 5 but savings can be made if a club decides to purchase its public liability insurance through The Southern League. The provision of free match balls and bench-wear kit are similar to that of The Western League.

Within a few days of a clubs Southern League status being confirmed, welcome correspondence is sent to its club Secretary detailing the need to complete a number of pre-season administrative duties. This is followed up with a mandate to join a number of video calls, in addition to attending a half day 'new clubs and secretaries' meeting, last year held at Didcot FC. This is an informative event that introduces you to the many requirements of higher league football as well as that of a commonly used phrase, 'failure to do this will incur a charge'.

Administration wise things are significantly different, particular when it comes to player registrations, transfers, discipline, match-day team sheets and result reporting. All take a bit of getting use to but at the end of the day make things easier in the long run.

Unless a club has previously competed at step 4, a major focus point must be that of ground accreditation. If considering promotion it is important that a club knows what improvements it will be required to undertake. In the case of Helston Athletic the provision of additional covered spectator accommodation, spectator toilets separate to that of the clubhouse, turnstiles, the infilling of the pitch barrier along with additional hardstanding to increase overall ground capacity is costing in the region of £158,000Grant funding opportunities exist but be aware a club is required to demonstrate they can match fund 30% of the overall total before such funding is approved.

Home matches are more demanding than that of the lower leagues, particularly with an increased requirement surrounding hospitality as well ensuring the league web-site is updated in real-time with goal, substitution and yellow / red card information. It is the responsibility of the home club to input this information for both teams. Match officials fees and expenses average £250 / game although the league carryout an end of season exercise to ensure all clubs play an equal amount. Away matches are more relaxing given you are spared more time to be entertained and do what I think we all prefer, watching competitive and entertaining football. All clubs visited to date have been extremely friendly and welcoming.

This is just brief summary of Paul's and Helston Athletic's experiences of competing in The Southern League having been promoted as Western League Champions at the end 23/24 season. Should any club like further information Paul is happy that they get in touch. Paul can be contacted either via e-mail at paul.m.hendy@btinternet.com, alternatively by calling 07740 812555.

League Grant Scheme - Find out successful applications on Page 7

ON YOUR BIKE BRADFORD ... !



On a recent trip to the friendly Bradford Town FC we saw this very impressive team photo in their Club House, Tim Mourant Vice Chairman at Bradford gives us the LOWDOWN on how it came about.

“Since 2017 Bradford Town FC's home shirts have been sponsored by the Moulton Bicycle Company who have manufactured the famous small-wheeled high performance bicycles in the town since the 1960s.

This year's team photo was taken in the stately grounds of The Hall, home of the Moulton family who established the vast rubber works which used to dominate the town and is still the headquarters of Moulton Bicycles.

Our Trowbridge Road ground was established by the Spencer Moulton Rubber Company in 1912 so we are proud to still be associated with the Moulton name and fly the flag for a famous Bradford industry.

The bikes are exported all over the world and have somewhat of a cult following. Subsequently we have had orders for shirts from the USA, Germany and Japan, where the Moulton Owners Club Japan bought 17 and posed in them with their Bradford on Avon built bicycles.

We are also very proud to have Hitatchi Infocon who are another large employer in the town at Kingston Farm sponsoring our away shirts as well as advertising agency Team Eleven who sponsor the back of both shirts. Both have also been great supporters of the club with members of staff buying a consignment of shirts to represent the Town! “





Pictured left: the famous Moulton Bikes with team Eleven and above – the famous Bradford Shirt makes it to Germany !

LET'S TALK PROMOTION & RELEGATION

Step 5 and Step 6 - end of the season. The Football Association will consider lateral movement of clubs between leagues as required.

Promotion

Jewson Western League Premier Division - the number of Clubs automatically relegated from the Southern League Division One South has increased from 2 to 4, and 2 Clubs will be promoted. (one automatic and one via the Play-Off).

The Club finishing in 1st position at the end of the Regular Season will be promoted.

The 2nd place will be determined by a series of Play Off Matches, the ties will be played on a single match basis on Tue 29 and Wed 30 Apr with the final on Sat 3 May. The home Club being the Club with the best points per game ratio in the Regular Season (conventionally the 2nd place team will host the 5th placed team and the 3rd place will host the 4th placed team). The final (3 May) will be hosted by the winning club, of the first ties, with the best points per game ratio.

First Division -

The Club finishing in 1st position at the end of the Regular Season will be promoted.

The 2nd place will be determined by a series of Play Off Matches, the ties will be played on a single match basis on Tue 29 and Wed 30 Apr with the final on Sat 3 May. The home Club being the Club with the best points per game ratio in the Regular Season (conventionally the 2nd place team will host the 5th placed team and the 3rd place will host the 4th placed team). The final (3 May) will be hosted by the winning club, of the first ties, with the best points per game ratio.

The promoted Clubs will be placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 5 for the following Playing Season.

Where a Club finishes in 1st position, of either Division, but does not meet the criteria for promotion to the next Step, the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted and the Club finishing in 3rd position (and so on) shall be the Club in the next eligible position to take part in the Play Off Matches.

Wellington AFC supporting MIND



Supporters and players of Wellington and Nailsea & Tickenham provided a welcome boost to the coffers of Mind in Somerset on Saturday (January 25th).

Representatives of the mental health charity were joined at the Jewson Western League game by Ian Nockolds, the league's podcast presenter and mental health champion.

They held a bucket collection which raised £82.89, taking the total from their two visits to Wellington AFC to £205.89.

In total, 24 collections at Western league member clubs have now raised £4,579.32 for local Mind charities.

Ian Nockolds said afterwards: "I'm incredibly grateful to the kind generosity shown by supporters of Wellington and Nailsea & Tickenham on Saturday. Our support for Mind is now in its third year and the issue of mental wellbeing is more important than it's ever been, not just for players but for supporters and club volunteers as well. We use these collections to raise awareness, but for fans of Western League clubs to have also raised over £4,500 is testament to their generosity and their commitment to support this most important cause."

PHOTO: From left, are Gav Derbe (Mind), Ian Nockolds, Mike Hall (our chairman), Andrew Pritchard (Mind's Chief Opoerating Officer) and Nile Pritchard.

Promotion / Relegation continued...

Where a Club finishes in a Play Off Position but does not meet the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches, the Club finishing in the next eligible position shall take part in the Play Off Matches. Clubs finishing below 7th position will not be eligible to take part in Play Off Matches

Relegation

The Clubs in the bottom two places of the Jewson Western League Premier Division, at the end of the Regular Season, will be relegated and placed a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 6.

The Clubs in the bottom three positions of the Jewson Western League First Division will be liable to relegation. The final number of Clubs to be relegated will be confirmed once promotion candidates from Feeder Leagues and any vacancies are known. If reprieves are required the Clubs third from bottom will be ranked on a points per match basis - the Club(s) with the best points per match will be reprieved. If all third from bottom Clubs are reprieved, and a further reprieve(s) is required, the same process will apply for Clubs in second from bottom (and so on).

If you require more clarification as to what this all means for your club then please talk to either George or Jen who will be happy to help..

EFAIF is the minimum qualification for First Aiders at Step 5 and 6 - are YOU compliant???

A LEAGUE UNITED: THE MARCH TO THE MALLET AND THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

In the heart of the Western League, a remarkable story unfolded, one that transcends the boundaries of the football pitch. It's a story of camaraderie, compassion, and the unwavering spirit of a football family coming together for a cause greater than the game itself. This is the story of the March to the Mallet, a 13-mile trek from Street to Shepton Mallet that not only raised significant funds for the 2Wish charity but also showcased the profound sense of community that lies within non-league football.

The idea for the march was born from a desire to raise awareness and funds for the 2Wish charity, an organisation that offers support to families who have experienced the heartbreaking loss of a child. The event quickly captured the hearts of the non-league football community, across the Western League and beyond. On the day, around 60 individuals, united by their love of the game and a shared commitment to Street forward, Harry Foster, in his support for the 2Wish charity, embarked on the 13-mile walk, each proudly sporting football shirts from various clubs within the Western League and beyond. It was a visual testament to the unity of the footballing family.

The march began with a poignant send-off from Harry Foster and his wife, before Harry prepared for his game later that afternoon. The march was not merely a physical challenge but also an emotional journey. Western League Podcast presenter, Ian Nockolds walked alongside familiar faces, including Matt Huxtable, the chairman of Cheddar FC, Street supporter, Aaron Cribb, and Mr Footywatch, Andy Stone. The conversations that took place along the route were as important as the miles covered. These conversations highlighted the shared humanity that connects fans, players and clubs, with stories and support being shared on the way.
The March to the Mallet was just one element of a broader fundraising effort for the 2Wish charity. The initial target was a commendable £10,000, but the non-league communityexceeded all expectations, with over £13,000 raised from the march and a subsequent charity match. The charity match, which saw Harry Foster's "Strawberry Squad" take on a team from Street FC, drew around 500 spectators and generated further funds through raffles, auctions, and various other activities.

The fundraising spirit extended to other clubs within the league. Cheddar FC organised a special event around their match with Street, creating t-shirts emblazoned with the 2Wish logo on the front and the inspiring phrase "be more like Olivia" on the back. They also organised bucket collections and raffles on the day. The club's efforts raised just over £500 on that one day, a testament to the power of a community united by a common purpose.
The impact of these events extends beyond the monetary value. It is about community. The efforts have raised awareness of the charity and created a space for people to share their stories, further solidifying the bond that ties non-league football together.

The 2Wish charity provides crucial support to families during their darkest times, and it is heartwarming to see the non-league football community rally behind it. The events have not only raised vital funds for the charity but also served as a beautiful tribute to Olivia, keeping her memory alive through the collective actions of a caring community.

The success of the March to the Mallet and other events underscore the true heart of non-league football. It's a world where the love of the game is intertwined with a deep sense of social responsibility and the willingness to support those in need. It's a reminder that the most powerful force for good is people coming together.

A LEAGUE UNITED: THE MARCH TO THE MALLET AND THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

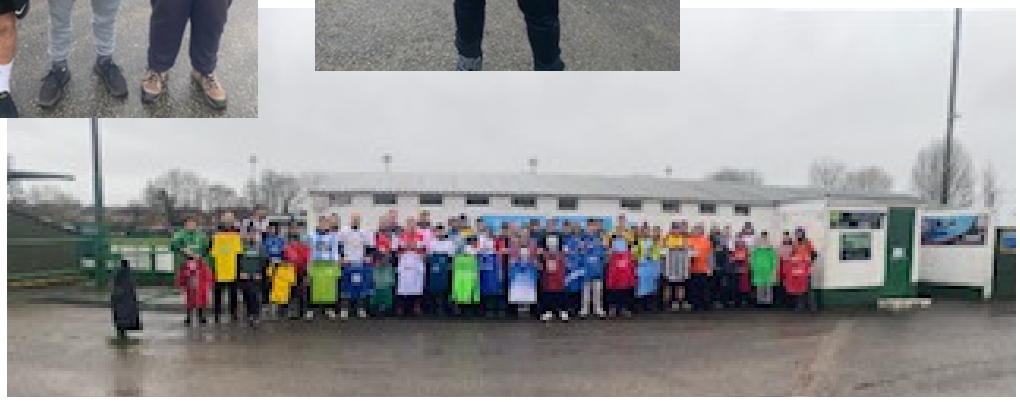












SUCCESSFUL LEAGUE GRANT APPLICATIONS

JEWSON

League grant applications were awarded by the League Finance Sub-Committee on 3rd February - with those successful clubs meeting all the criteria.

Hengrove Athletic FC

HA FC

DULCE EST DESIPERE IN LOCO

Ivybridge Town Football Club

Estd 1925

BITTON A.F.C.

FOUNDED 1892

WELLS CITY FOOTBALL CLUB

STREET FC

18 80

THE COBBLERS

BRADFORD TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

CALNE TOWN F.C.

ESTABLISHED 1886

ODD DOWN A.F.C.

1901

BRISLINGTON FC - THE DESIGNER & ARTISTS RESIDENCY

We are following a new project by Brislington FC and each edition will feature an aspect of what they are doing as part of the Designer and Artists Residency which we will admit is a very innovate project in the Western League .... and a good way of using talented supporters !!

Club Chairman Jack Rogers welcomed Ken and Jonathan to the club: "On behalf of everyone at Brislington Football Club, I am delighted to welcome Ken Borg and Jonathan Kelham to the club as our first ever Designer and Artist in Residence. This innovative partnership represents an exciting chapter for the football club as we look toward our 70th anniversary in the 2026-27 season. Ken and Jonathan, both loyal supporters, bring a unique blend of expertise and creativity to Ironmould Lane. Their ambitious plans align perfectly with our vision to strengthen ties with the community, enhance the matchday experience, and secure a bright future for the football club .The proposed projects - including the refurbishment of the Colin Arnold Grandstand, development of a unified graphic identity, and improved stadium aesthetics - are practical yet bold. These initiatives will help us not only celebrate our heritage but also modernise the club's image and broaden our appeal across South Bristol and beyond.

The refurbishment of the Colin Arnold Grandstand has been created with donated paints and materials from local businesses. Next edition will feature more of Bris ideas that they have put in place to celebrate and sustain themselves for the future.



CURRENT LOOK OF THE GRANDSTAND



WORK IN PROGRESS



A MOCK UP OF THE FINISHED PROJECT



On football pitches across the UK, we're creating a movement. We're bringing together hundreds of clubs who share our determination to get discrimination out of our game. Will your club be next?

Why sign our Equality Charter?

There's no better way to show equality matters at your club. Signing up to the charter means you're ready to take active steps to tackle discrimination. And it means everyone who comes into contact with your club knows there's a warm welcome waiting.

What's involved?

It's simple. Fill in the short application form and a member of the team will get in touch. They'll explain the steps you need to take and share our Equality Charter for you to sign and return it to us. It explains the steps you need to take as a club – things like appointing an equality lead and making sure everyone knows how to report discrimination.

Once you've confirmed your plans and signed our charter, we'll let you know if you've successfully become a chartered club. If you have, it's time to shout about it loud and proud on your website and social media.

As a Grassroots Equality Chartered club, you'll get:

Expert advice from our grassroots team, including info on how to develop your league to support diversity and inclusion

Access to our coach developers who can deliver workshops on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The chance to arrange an equality workshop for league officials

Support for anyone who experiences discrimination, plus help following up with authorities

Discounted Kick It Out kit and merchandise

Kick It Out logos, graphics and adverts to use online and in your programmes.

WWW.KICKITOUT.ORG/TAKE-ACTION/GRASSROOTS/KICK-IT-OUT-YOUR-CLUB


JEWSON
EVERYTHING
YOU NEED FOR
YOUR PROJECT
BUILDING MATERIALS
TIMBER TOOL HIRE
LANDSCAPING
Tell us your local Western League
Football Club to receive preferential rates.
SEARCH JEWSON
Terms and conditions apply.