*Embargoed until 17:00 on Friday 24th April*

To: Club Chairs, Secretaries & Treasurers
Cc: Suffolk FA Council Members, League Secretaries

Dear colleague,

Firstly, there is a much bigger picture than football to be mindful of at the moment, bought home by the tragic recent news from Stonham Aspal FC. It was lovely to read the messages from the rest of the Suffolk football community; Eric will be sorely, sorely missed. This is a deeply worrying time and everyone’s priority is undoubtedly the safety and well-being of families, friends and colleagues.

But clearly football plays an important role in people’s lives, whether that be as an administrator, match official, player, manager, coach, physio, spectator, employee, or any other of the numerous indispensable roles in the game. Football clubs have long been pillars of their communities, and that has been showcased by the amazing response from players and clubs across the county as fundraising and donations for national and local causes continue, and club resources are used to help those most in need locally. The response from Suffolk football to this pandemic has truly been heart-warming.

We understand that this period may jeopardise the existence of clubs, especially those with significant overheads and liabilities. The government schemes have now begun to provide important financial assistance to complement local initiatives to secure futures, but with key summer fundraising events at best postponed or worst cancelled, for some the future remains concerning. Whether it be a single team club with no liabilities or a club with facilities and employees whose cashflow has stalled, the Suffolk FA Board is committed to ensuring that clubs survive this period and thrive on the other side.

Therefore the Suffolk FA Board of Directors are introducing a series of measures to ensure all clubs are supported through this exceptional period.

**Emergency Grants**
An initial total pot of £40,000 will be made available to clubs in immediate danger of ceasing because of financial reasons. Full details of this fund will be communicated to clubs by Tuesday 28th April.

**“Back to Football” Loans**
An initial total pot of £30,000 will be made available to clubs on a short-term, interest free loan basis, in order to support clubs in their efforts to restart as soon as possible. Full details of this fund will be communicated to clubs once the start of the new season becomes clearer.

**Affiliation**
When the 2020/21 season can start remains unknown. But when that date comes, we want to ensure football can begin as soon as government measures allow. Therefore, we will be opening the affiliation window as originally planned on Wednesday 6th May. We appreciate that knowing finalised teams / age groups may be unlikely, but the process can at least begin for those in a position to do so.

Compared to other associations, Suffolk FA’s annual affiliation fees are extremely competitive. However, to further help clubs and players the Suffolk FA Board of Directors have agreed the following measures for the 2020/21 season:
• Reaffiliation for all Charter Standard Clubs, or clubs who would have achieved Charter Standard if not for this period, will be **FREE**.
• Reaffiliation for all non-Charter Standard Clubs will be **£30**; a reduction of 50% from last season.
• Affiliation for any new clubs will be frozen at **£60**, as per 2019/20 prices.
• The per team registration fee will be frozen at **£2** per team, as per 2019/20 prices.

**National Game Insurance Scheme**

We continue to partner with Bluefin Sport to offer Personal Accident Insurance and Public Liability Insurance under the National Game Insurance Scheme (NGIS), offering a group package which already provides reduced prices to Suffolk clubs. Bluefin Sport will soon launch a new NGIS website which will be available throughout the new season [https://ngis.bluefinsport.co.uk/](https://ngis.bluefinsport.co.uk/).

As the 2019/20 season was concluded early, meaning Personal Accident Insurance was not in use for a portion of the season, Bluefin Sport have kindly offered a discount on all 2020/21 Personal Accident Insurance policies.

• **For adult teams**, the cost of Personal Accident Insurance ‘Intermediate’ cover will be **£30**, reduced from **£36** last season. A top-up option is available.

When reviewing the buying patterns of Personal Accident Insurance for youth teams, the significant majority of teams were choosing to top-up from “Basic” cover to “Superior Gold”; which is higher in price but offers significantly increased cover. From the start of the 2020/21 season, the Suffolk FA Board has decided the minimum level of Personal Accident Insurance required by youth teams will increase to Superior Gold of the NGIS or equivalent.

In recognition of this increase in minimum cover requirement, the Suffolk FA Board will supplement the cost of Personal Accident Insurance by **£2** per youth team for the 2020/21 season, in addition to the discount offered by Bluefin Sport. This means Personal Accident Insurance for youth teams will remain at the same price as the 2019/20 season, despite the enhanced cover.

• **For ≤U12 youth teams**, the cost of Personal Accident Insurance ‘Superior Gold’ cover will be **£14**, reduced from **£16** by Suffolk FA and **£19** by Bluefin Sport. A top-up option is available.
• **For ≥U13 youth teams**, the cost of Personal Accident Insurance ‘Superior Gold’ cover will be **£19**, reduced from **£21** by Suffolk FA and **£25** by Bluefin Sport. A top-up option is available.

We appreciate the new minimum Personal Accident Insurance requirement for youth teams could lead to an increase in costs for the 2021/22 season; however, with the significant majority of youth teams choosing to top-up to this level of cover in previous years, we hope that any impact for clubs will be minimal.

Brochures detailing the enhancements and amendments to covers will be made available in due course, with an overview of the additional covers available through the NGIS website.

It should be noted that your 2019/20 club Public Liability Insurance extends until 30th June 2020 despite the early conclusion to the season; therefore
no similar discount can be offered and the price for a club policy has increased by £1 compared to 2019/20 prices.

- The cost of club Public Liability Insurance ‘Countycover’ will be £25, increased from £24 last season.

A ‘player-to-player’ legal case made national headlines in November 2019, involving Ossett United. Bluefin Sport do offer "Countycover Plus" at a total cost of £54 per club which can be selected in replace of ‘Countycover’ and includes ‘player-to-player’ awards cover.

Detail of all covers included in ‘Countycover’ and ‘Countycover Plus’ will also be included in the brochure, allowing all information to be considered before selecting your clubs Liability package.

**Suffolk County Cup Entry Fees**

It remains our hope to be able to conclude 2019/20 Suffolk County Cups as 2020/21 pre-season fixtures, appreciating player eligibility rules would need to be given serious consideration beforehand. Regardless of whether the 2019/20 competitions can be concluded, the entry fee for all 2020/21 Suffolk County Cups will remain frozen at the 2019/20 price. Exemption fees (where applicable) will also remain frozen as per 2019/20.

We appreciate that cashflow may be a problem for some, despite the measures to reduce the costs of affiliation. With that in mind, Suffolk FA will not require fees associated with affiliation to be settled until 30th September 2020, providing the new season can start within a relatively normal timescale - although teams will be able to train and play as affiliated and therefore insured before this date should government measures allow. This date will be reviewed if the commencement of 2020/21 is delayed.

**Sports Safety Goggles for Youth Players**

For 1st July 2020, Suffolk FA will launch a fund to support the purchase of sports goggles for youth players only. Applications will be invited from clubs and they must have made a contribution to the Suffolk FA Benevolent Fund. Full details will be issued to clubs in due course.

Like most organisations, Suffolk FA has incurred significant financial loss as a result of this period. We are a not-for-profit organisation, meaning that any surplus we do make is constantly reinvested to achieve our vision of A Thriving Local Game; however, we recognise that action must be taken now to ensure that our local game survives this period and recovers as quickly as possible. The measures we are introducing total a potential investment of over £84,000, with a further £6,000 from our partners at Bluefin Sport, and we continue to maintain a staffing structure which allows us to continue servicing all aspects of the grassroots game. Please call 01449 616606 and follow the automated system to access the individual most appropriate to deal with your enquiry. We continue to use www.SuffolkFA.com and our Twitter and Facebook accounts to publish information including any updates to the ‘Support for Suffolk Clubs’ advice guide and our COVID-19 FAQs.

I wish you and your loved ones the very best during this period and look forward to a time when football can resume.

Best wishes

Phil Lawler
Chair, Suffolk FA

On behalf of the Suffolk FA Board of Directors