



Members Update Meeting - 27th March 2026

Representing the committee:

- Mark Böckle – Chairman, - Dave Wareham - Secretary
- Jamie Probets – Marketing, - Matt Parfect - Football Secretary

Good evening everybody and welcome to our spring 2026 members update. A particular thank you to those joining us in person here at Grigg Lane!

I would like to begin this evening by formally welcoming some new, yet familiar, faces to the BFC team. Joining the committee are Sarah O'Mara who will help with finances, Carl Bartlett who will be generally helpful and Lisa Stroud who fills the club sponsorship role previously vacated by Marc Flynn. Sarah also takes over from Matt Parfect as our club safeguarding officer.

As previously discussed, in order to support our plans and ambitions for the club a decision was made last autumn to create the new role of full time, salaried, clubhouse manager. The position was advertised online and a short list of four candidates were ultimately interviewed with Dan Cobb emerging victorious and subsequently taking on the role from 5th January. Please join me in welcoming Sarah, Carl, Lisa and Dan to the team!

Despite the wet weather and loss of several lucrative Saturday football games the atmosphere at the club continues to be vibrant. Seven day opening (reintroduced last year) kicked in for the first time this winter to good effect and has helped us ride out the usual winter quiet period. While always stretched during the winter, once again this year finances have held up OK and we are on track to achieve our overall annual budget. Weather permitting, a successful Brockstock should meet our objective of delivering extra funds to support ongoing maintenance and infrastructure investment plans.

The 2026/27 budget has been prepared using the same principles as last year: cost neutral, realistic and event ambivalent. We are pleased to report that the club's investors remain supportive and will supplement our budgets for football and infrastructure projects again next fiscal. As usual there will be a deeper dive into the club's finances at the AGM.

I think it is fair to say that, after a tricky start, it has been a good season on the pitch! Steve and his management team have done a great job with the 1st team fostering a strong team spirit and setting high standards. Good cup runs saw us narrowly miss out on a trip to St Mary's again in the Southampton Senior Cup with defeat to Millbrook in the semi-final and advance to the quarterfinal of the League Cup ultimately losing out to Hamble on Tuesday this week. With an outside chance of sneaking into the playoffs we have an exciting league run-in to look forward to. There is still much to play for!

Elsewhere Matt Walker's Development side have had a good season and currently sit in their highest ever league position! Our u18s form has dipped a little since Christmas but they should still finish a creditable mid-table and had an outstanding 3-1 win the semi-finals of the League Cup against an excellent Cobham Sports side yesterday.



I am delighted to report that several of our u18 players have made successful 1st team debuts since Christmas, most notably 16-year-old Esteban Batista making several appearances along with Will Gales & Elliot Wells debuting recently. It is great to see players progressing through our youth system into the 1st team once again.

The only blot on our copybook has been a poor disciplinary record which is something we are currently reviewing with football management.

I am pleased to announce that we have finally concluded a favourable three-year kit deal with new supplier VX3 for all our senior teams. The deal provides for both home & away kits as well as training wear and enables us to stretch our limited kit budget significantly next season. First team shirts will once again carry the names of all our members and the current shirts will be auctioned at the end of the season as mementos providing further kit funds for next season. I would, however, like to acknowledge that the protracted negotiations have left teams frustrated waiting for kit, particularly our u18s, and thank everyone for their patience.

College training pitch bookings have continued to be an irritant this season with both the 1st and u18 teams having to train away from the college more than planned. Many people have found themselves unwittingly involved in resolving these issues. I would like to apologise once again for the inconvenience and thank everyone for their patience. The conclusion is that block bookings are the only effective solution. These require upfront payment so we are looking into the budget implications for next season. Our youth section are the college's biggest customer and, while they suffer many of the same issues, do have a better arrangement with the college which we are looking into leveraging next season.

On the projects front things are progressing well. As reported in my Xmas message the toilets project is complete and has subsequently been signed off. As a reminder this project was funded equally by contributions from Brockstock 2025, the 500 Club & Badgers draw plus a donation from our investors. No grant or loan funds were required. The project ultimately ran over budget through a combination of the ceiling needing to be replaced, decision to purchase new quality doors throughout, fancy hand driers and some additional plumbing requirements. Lessons learned will inform future projects.

It transpires that maintaining the electrics at Grigg Lane is akin to painting the Forth Bridge! A large number of fixes and improvements have recently been made particularly with regard to lighting & safety. Our five-year electric test was completed this month and has revealed a further list of jobs to be done before a certificate can be issued. The work is being undertaken by a combination of volunteers and, where necessary, qualified electricians funded from our maintenance budget and donations. The floodlights have been certified independently as this is a prerequisite for the floodlight replacement project.



Talking of floodlights, all the required quotations and documents are now in place and our grant application has been submitted. My thanks to Ian and Dave for their hard work in this regard. The grant application process is expected to be quick(ish) and we anticipate the project will be completed this summer as planned in preparation for evening fixtures next season. This is a significant investment with total cost >£40k funded by a grant from the Premier League Stadium Fund and a donation from our investors. The new lights will be a significant improvement for the club and our neighbours and come with a ten-year guarantee.

With the urgent floodlights grant application submitted we can turn our attention to future projects. To this end a three-year infrastructure plan has been developed to help shape our thinking and aid communication. The document is a bit of a read but worthwhile as it pulls many threads together, puts them into context and answers various questions. Our next priority is a kitchen in the clubhouse for which planning has begun. We anticipate bundling this with some smaller projects into an FA grant application to be submitted over the summer.

The punchline is with continued careful management, support from the investors and unlocking of a further £100k of FA grant funds there is potential to undertake the biggest program of improvement at Grigg Lane since the stand was built in 1978. The plan includes the ground improvements needed for Level 4 football should the 1st team secure promotion to what would be the highest level of football played since the club was founded in 1898!

A copy of the infrastructure plan will be posted on the noticeboard after tonight's meeting for the curious and those with trouble sleeping. Whether we deliver all of the projects and the ultimate timing is arguably academic. The key is we grasp the funding opportunities available and improve the club for the long term.

Finally, a word on Brockstock. Once again on the second May bank holiday weekend (23rd-24th) the event is shaping up well with an exciting band lineup and all the big bookings in place. The committee has now expanded and work started on the details. We will of course be reaching out for volunteers shortly and I'd like to thank you for your support in advance. Ticketing goes live online at the end of the month and the member early-bird will be on offer again this year. Fingers crossed for fair weather and another terrific event!

I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM which will be held on Friday 26th June.

Thank you for your time and attention.

We are, of course, happy to take your questions.

Mark Böckle
Chairman