

# Christmas Message from the Chairman

Dear Members,

As we approach the festive season and the end of our first six months at the helm (how time flies!), I wanted to take a moment to reflect on our progress and provide you with an update.

First and foremost, a huge thank you to all members who provided invaluable feedback following our previous letters and meetings, particularly those who attended the 100-Day Review. The committee is dedicated to open and direct engagement, and it was heartening to see such strong attendance, active listening, and thoughtful questions. It's truly encouraging to witness our members' commitment to the club's recovery and understanding of the challenges we've faced.

On the pitch, the first team is holding steady just below mid-table. Danny has the squad playing some attractive football, and recent performances have been promising. A special mention to Matt Parfect, who predicted this turnaround once our squad returned to (nearly) full strength after an early spate of injuries.

The Development Team is thriving under their new manager, Matt Walker, who has settled in seamlessly and received glowing feedback from the players. Meanwhile, Paul Legg continues to strengthen the U18s, delighting us with their exciting attacking play. Weather and pitch conditions permitting, we aim to host as many U18 and older BYFC age group matches as possible at Grigg Lane.

Off the pitch, our pool and darts teams are thriving. Looking ahead, we plan to introduce a Monday darts league team in the new year—a step toward achieving our goal of restoring seven-day clubhouse opening.

Since the 100-Day Review, where we outlined financial progress, we've seen further success. Our fireworks evening was a resounding triumph, home games have drawn strong attendance, and private functions have provided a valuable financial boost. As a result, I am delighted to report that we no longer face the prospect of significant further debt—or, perish the thought, insolvency. Another step forward on our road to recovery!

The last remaining legacy issue is the historic £2,400 utility bill, which we aim to tackle in the new year.

We've also enhanced our relationship with St Austell, which has enabled us to complete a front-of-bar upgrade. This project was primarily funded by Heineken and supported by countless volunteer hours. I hope you enjoy our new range of beers and real ales, which cater to all tastes and are anticipated to save the club around £10k annually. For our real ale enthusiasts, we now offer a weekly guest ale and have added a second pump for double the enjoyment!

On the practical side, cellar refurbishment works are underway following enforcement action from the local authority two years ago. Heineken has replaced the cellar installation, and a major clear-out has created more capacity. Thanks to Carl Cleal, who is replacing the flooring—a project expected to be completed over Christmas. Budget permitting, we aim to add insulation to the cellar, reducing electricity costs and ending the era of “chilling the village.”

We are also excited to announce the launch of the “500 Club”, our lifetime membership programme designed to fund significant projects such as cellar upgrades, improved ladies’ loos, and floodlight enhancements. More details can be found on our website and will be emailed to members soon.

In terms of sponsorship, Marc Flynn and Hannah Robbins have made great strides with renewals, and advertising banners are now appearing around the pitch. Our groundworks team, led by Ian Allen with support from Steve and Chris, continues to save the club substantial costs by handling much of the work in-house. Additionally, we’ve invested in winter pitch treatment to maintain the playing surface throughout the season.

Looking ahead, my focus now turns to football training facilities. We’re working to create a package that enables all teams to train together while reducing reliance on the expensive Brockenhurst College.

Operationally, we’ve introduced a new role: Clubhouse Manager. After considering external candidates, we’re pleased to announce that Kevin Daynes has taken on the position. I look forward to collaborating with Kevin to align our clubhouse, events, changing room, and cleaning operations.

Breaking news! Both BFC and BYFC have achieved FA accreditation—a testament to the hard work of everyone involved. This opens up access to FA grants and elevates us to a two-star club, recognising our adult, boys’, and girls’ football programmes. This enhanced status should, in theory, improve our chances of securing future grants—a promising opportunity for next year.

Finally, John Kelly and I are starting to build the budget for next year, aiming for a neutral position without reliance on Brockstock proceeds. We’ve ring-fenced funds to ensure Brockstock goes ahead in May, and planning is already underway.

Wow—this message turned out longer than expected! But it’s all good news. I want to thank each of you—Committee, Staff, Volunteers, and Members—for your continued support. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Why not join us for some fresh air and football at our match against AFC Stoneham on Saturday, 28th December at 3 pm?

Warm regards,  
**Maj Mark Böckle**  
Chairman