

## **Chairman's Report 2007/8**

It's a great pleasure to report on the activities of Coton FC for the 2007/8 season. Once again it's been a story of growth, in terms of Club members, coaches, players and teams. Coton has completed a season of Colts football for the first time in over 20 years and our investments in coaching, equipment and development are beginning to pay off.

Members will be aware that we ran three teams in 2007/8: Senior, Under 13s and Under 9s. In addition, we offered regular training to a group of children between the ages of 7-11. In terms of results, our Senior team came 3<sup>rd</sup> in Division 1 of the Halls of Cambridge Sunday League and made the quarter finals of two knock out competitions. Our Under 13s progressed significantly (74 goals conceded in our first three games did not auger well!) becoming increasingly competitive as the season progressed and drawing considerable praise from opposition coaches for that improvement. Our Under 9s, under Piero's careful stewardship, remain one of the better sides in their age group, obtaining some highly creditable results against larger and more experienced Clubs.

This development has been reflected off the pitch too, with increasing efficiency evident on administrative matters. Once again, Richard has been a model Club Secretary and Beverley has steered the Club to a degree of financial stability that is, frankly, unprecedented in our recent history. New kit, better equipment and better qualified coaches and officials are all signs of a Club heading in the right direction.

It hasn't all been plain sailing. As a relatively new Club, we are still overly reliant on the efforts of too few and I hope that our repeated calls for additional support prior to this meeting will bear fruit in the elections that follow. Our Treasurer's Report indicates that we have incurred total fines of £170 this year, every penny of which is lost to football in our community. This is a sign not of 'maladministration', as our hugely unhelpful colleagues on League Committees like to term it, but that our overstretched volunteers need more help from Members. I hope that we, individually and collectively, are able to offer it.

Our hopes for next season include offering sides at Senior, U14 and U10 levels. Unfortunately, the demands of offering mid week training to the U14s and U10s mean that it looks as if we will be unable to support a U8 team or offer training to those children not involved with these squads as we had hoped. This is a shame, but a balance must be struck between the competing commitments of our volunteers.

On other fronts, I hope that in 2008/9 we will seek recognition as a Charter Standard Club (our efforts in recent years have laid the foundations for this) and obtain access to its associated funding. I also hope that at least three more Members will avail themselves of the opportunity to take the FA coaching and/or refereeing badges and make our aspirations for a U8 team a reality. At least one existing coach should seek and achieve Level 2. Generally, I hope that our players continue to enjoy their football and develop as footballers and as individuals. Oh, and wouldn't it be wonderful if our Senior team could mark the centenary of football in Coton by winning some silverware? We are seriously overdue!

Finally, to all the members of the Management Committee: Beverley, Richard, Dave, Adam and Andy for their support, commitment and hard work throughout the season; to our coaches, Adam, Piero and Noel, and to those that have run the refreshments stalls or volunteered (ahem!) to referee or run the line at any time - without your efforts we simply don't have a Club. My sincere thanks to you all.

Dr Neil Sparnon  
Chairman, Coton Football Club