

Coton Football Club: Chairman's Report 2009/10

Welcome to the Coton FC AGM. As you've probably noticed, I've had to send my apologies to Richard this year. A work opportunity in Ireland arose at very short notice last week which means that I will have to miss my last meeting as Chairman. I hope however that, Salman Rushdie like, I can use Dave's stentorian tones to deliver my report.

It has been a good year for the Club starting with the Centenary Celebrations on 6 June. It was great to see so many old friends playing in a (ahem) closely fought game (a least that's how I choose to remember it) between the *Coton Legends* and the current First Team. *The Lads and Lasses v Mums and Dads* match culminated in a nail biting penalty shoot-out, before we adjourned to the marquee for presentations and parties. I thought it was an excellent day which reflected well on us as a Club and underlined the important role that we play in heart of our community.

This season, in addition to Senior team football, we offered mini-soccer league football at Under 11s, Under 10s Under 8s and regular training (and the very occasional friendly) at U7s. It has been a stable year, without the highs of silverware and promotion that we enjoyed in 2008/9, but equally without the trials of teams folding and coaches being reassigned that were also a part of that year.

It has been no less satisfying however. The Senior Team has enjoyed an excellent first season in Senior League, securing the Merit Shield in February (our first since 1996) and, at one point, challenging for the title. Unfortunately a semi-final defeat against Shelford at the end of March proved to be the catalyst for a minor dip in form that has meant that, though the title is now beyond us, we will finish a highly creditable 3rd.

At mini-soccer, the undoubted highlight has been the rapid development of our Under 8s under Adam and Fizz. The team playing at the end of April 2010 is simply unrecognizable from the team that began the season. The Under 11s had another strong season, regularly performing well against teams with access to greater resources. Our Under 10s had a tough time however. A small squad, often weakened further through injuries and illness, had some difficult (and extremely cold!) Saturdays - though these were offset to some degree by a few heartening days in the sun - especially against Girton! The cold however simply couldn't stop Sabine and Pedro's Under 7s' training sessions which continued despite several inches of snow. It was great to see everyone out there.

On the coaching side, congratulations to Fizz for completing her Level 1 Coaching badge, and welcome and thanks to Sabine, Pedro, Owen, Ed and Ross who have all picked up the coaching mantle this year. Thanks too to Piero and Adam for their continued commitment and expertise.

Off the pitch we are in good shape. Beverley's report will demonstrate that financially we have delivered a surplus this year which means that we should be able to continue to meet our current commitments, and invest in the ongoing development of the Club through new teams, training and coaching qualifications, without the need for external support or sponsorship - though we wouldn't say no to offers! The high quality of our CRB checks, record keeping and administration meant that we secured Charter Standard status in December 2009. This is an achievement no less significant than what has occurred on the pitch and my thanks and congratulations go to everyone who has brought us this far.

As ever, it is time to review my report from last year to see how we did against the objectives I set us and to have a think about next year, so...

- Our objective was to offer Senior, U11, U10 and U8 sides. We did that. Next year we hope to offer football at Senior, U12 (9v9), U9 and U8s.
- We hoped that our Senior Team would establish our presence in Senior League. I think 3rd place and an excellent cup run has more than achieved this. Same again for next year I think.
- We hoped to obtain recognition as a Charter Standard Club. We did that. We should seek to ensure that this status is maintained.
- We hoped to have one Level 2 and a total of six Level 1 coaches by the end of the season. We haven't achieved this. Partly because some coaches will be leaving, partly because others are yet to take their badges. I suggest that next season we should look to ensure that all of our teams have at least two Level 1 coaches and that serious thought should be given to how we encourage and support at least one person to take the Level 2.
- And, as ever, we hoped that our players would continue to enjoy their football and develop as footballers and as individuals. Of course these are all immeasurables, but equally I think, their achievement is self-evident.

Finally, this Report is my last act as Chairman of Coton FC. It has been a pleasure and I hope that I, and the others who will be stepping down, have done our bit to ensure the continuing health and development of our Club and the important role that it plays in the community.

With all best wishes,

Dr Neil Sparnon
Chairman, Coton Football Club (Retired!)