

## Pre-season Message 2016/17

From John Stent

We have a lot to look forward to as the new season beckons!! Last season was brilliant in many ways and next year is looking good.

To recap quickly on last season – the 1st team were promoted as champions back to the Premier!! This was a magnificent achievement and was their 4<sup>th</sup> promotion in 5 seasons ( twice as champions). They also reached another cup final but were again just pipped to the post. Our club captain Northy and his partner in crime Dave Lane deserve great credit for this record of achievement. Now we must see how they fare in the Premier – our best finish ever has been 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Now there is a challenge....

The 2nds under Steve Jenks did really well, finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> with 33 points; Andy Stott led the 3s to a creditable 8<sup>th</sup> but the 4s struggled this time out. The 5s and 6s were both strong performers – finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively – very solid stuff indeed. And - hooray!! – the 7s and 8s both held their own after a couple of difficult seasons. Both finished mid-table and that was a great achievement – well done Liam Hockham and Mike Edis!!

This year Steve Jenkins gives way to Jack Farrelly as skipper of the 2<sup>nd</sup> team. Dan Blackwell moves up to skipper the 4s and Kyle Becklake comes in as skipper of the 5s. Andy Russell will lead the 6s. We will see some movement of players to rebalance the middle of the club – all to be finalised after the pre-season friendlies and trials. So if you are keen to move up the ladder then make sure you show up for the pre-season games. Many thanks to Jenks and to Spencer Davern for their sterling efforts as skippers last year ( and in previous years in the case of Spence).

Just as in 2014/15 – Kev Rollins walked the Golden Boot with 28 goals and Matt Bobbit once again bagged the Golden Gloves with 9 clean sheets. Well done you two!

We are going with 8 teams again and there will be competition for places throughout the club.

Match fees will YET AGAIN be £10 with £5 for under 21s and NO annual subscription. Unbelievable value. Friendlies will be charged at these rates too, except for games between OWFC teams which will be £5 for everyone.

Disciplinary performance was better last year – well done everyone for this. We had a couple of unusual Misconduct Charges to cope with but these were reasonably dealt with by the league after listening to our arguments. The 7s deserve special praise, having picked up NIL disciplinary points last season. Superb.

We improved our Spirit of Football scores – ending above 8.00 as an average – and I was absolutely thrilled ( as you may have seen on Facebook) to pick up the Big Clubs trophy for highest SOF scores at the League Dinner!! We can all be proud of this achievement.

The club's new Disciplinary Code was agreed and is now on the website. As expected it comes down even harder on players showing dissent or disrespect to the referees . We simply don't want that behaviour in our club.

The refurb of the changing rooms and showers went well last year ( thanks go to Dan Blackwell who managed it for us). This year we are going to invest in beefed up security ( we had some nasty vandalism at the clubhouse this summer) and also refurbing the Gents toilets.

The new catering arrangements were well received last year – with the bar and catering being run by Nick and his team.

The annual 6-a-side tournament was held for the third year this June and was once again a huge success. Our first team won it for the second time. A good time was had by all and a useful injection to club funds also resulted – many thanks to Matt Lane and Dan Blackwell ( and also the volunteers who set up on the day before, led by Dave Lane).

The club dinner was great last October and is coming up again this year. Dean Somers, our Social Secretary, will be organising the evening, as well as a Golf Day, a Quiz Night and a Darts Night in due course. We will also be repeating the very popular Last Man Standing competition.

As always – new players are always welcome.

The Committee is strong and committed and the club is in good shape financially . Mike Edis takes over from Terry Rickeard as treasurer – thanks a lot Terry. Special thanks to Warren Smith ( Secretary), Hewie ( Vice chair), Matt Lane ( fixtures – now taken over by Jake Knight) and Deano ( Social Secretary). We also appreciate the effort of our 3 trustees on the joint club board – Dan Blackwell, Dave Lane and Martin Dunkley. I am very pleased that we have welcomed some younger blood onto the committee recently ( Jake Knight and Joe Eke).

Finally – all my challenges were met last year ( 1s promotion, a cup final, better disciplinary performance and 7s/8s to be competitive). So this year let's go again and see the 1s consolidate and at least one other team win promotion. A cup WIN is now our goal and – as ever – another improvement on disciplinary performance. We can do this!!!!

Old Wokingians FC is a magnificent club and I am proud to be your chairman. As I begin my 43<sup>rd</sup> season as a player I do so with the same keen anticipation as I did as an 18 year old in 1973. And when I look around the club now I see many reasons to be confident that there are plenty of great guys who will carry this club forward to still more achievement in the years to come – and have a great time doing so!!!

ENJOY 2016/17.

COME ON YOU WOKES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

John Stent.

