



TONBRIDGE
ANGELS FC



19th May 2020

Dear Angels Season Ticket Holder

I do hope you, your families and loved ones are all keeping well and safe during these extraordinary times.

I'm sure that none of us could have imagined that as we gathered for the match against Hungerford Town on 15th February at a very wet Halcyon Wealth Longmead Stadium that it would prove to be our final home game of the season.

There were a handful of away games played after that, but the campaign for the Angels came to a sudden end at Concord Rangers on 14th March.

Of course, it was perfectly correct that the footballing authorities called a halt to competitions at that point and as far as non-league is concerned all outstanding league games have now been cancelled.

Most of you will know that the Coronavirus pandemic was one of two major crises to hit the club in 2019/20. The other was the discovery that the drainage system underneath the pitch had become badly degraded over time and this combined with the record winter rains meant that the ground was unplayable for long periods. Apart from that 1-1 draw against Hungerford Town there was only one other home game possible in 2020, a 3-2 win against Chippenham Town on 4th January.

This lack of home games had a devastating effect on our finances, in particular the Boxing Day derby against Maidstone Utd and a Saturday fixture versus league leaders Wealdstone when we would have expected to have drawn large crowds with all the added potential of catering and bar sales.

Then of course along with all other clubs we were hit with the Coronavirus crisis in March and so we completed a season with no less than eight home games written off.

But it isn't simply football matches from which clubs are able to balance the books. Over the years events have become an increasingly important part of our finances with The Marquee particularly popular and so the temporary ending of all general socialising in the community has hit us very hard. The Garden Show, AngelFest, The Skatonics Evening and a number of other private events such as wedding receptions and birthday parties for which we hire out our premises have all had to be either cancelled or postponed.

I've never been one for over dramatizing situations but I have to say the financial situation for the club along with all other non-league clubs is now very serious. Quite apart from all that I've outlined above we have absolutely no idea when the 2020/21 season might start but so long as social distancing measures are maintained, and the experts suggest these could last into 2021, then it's

difficult to see how non-league football would be able to operate. In the rarefied heights of the Premier League people may bang on about 'playing behind closed doors' but that's simply not an option for this level.

Of course, we recognise that your season ticket entitles you to 21 home games admission and that as we only managed to play 13 of those, 8 are effectively missing. I would ask due to the potentially serious financial situation outlined above whether you would be prepared to forego those 8 games to help the club in its hour of need. I do appreciate however that some of you may be short of money during these very difficult times and so if you wish for a pro-rata refund then please contact me in strictest confidence with details of type of ticket purchased to davandmar@waitrose.com or 16 Albany close, Tonbridge, TN9 2EY and I can arrange for the appropriate amount to be forwarded to you.

Two pieces of good news are that the Board intends to broadly hold admission prices at this seasons level for 2020/21. Actual season ticket rates are still very uncertain at this stage. The planned increase in clubs in National South now it seems won't be taking place as there is no promotion from Step 3, but on the other hand there may be even less games than in 2019/20 due possibly to a truncated season. Watch this space!

The other piece of good news that you may have seen on the website is that Steve McKimm is staying as 1st team manager. This has given everyone involved with the club a real lift at this difficult time. Steve is a genuine Angel and has a real love for this club. We are very fortunate to have him.

Finally, it just remains for me to say a sincere thanks to you all for your fantastic support – it really made a difference last season – and please I do hope you can continue to support your local community-based club, Tonbridge Angels.

Thank you and Stay Safe

Dave Netherstreet

Chair of Tonbridge Angels FC