

CLUB CHAIRMAN

BY RORY FITZGERALD



From the

Club Chairman Rory outlines our progress so far and his visions for a bright Wealdstone future

Good afternoon and welcome back to the Vale. I write these notes after what I felt was a dominant 1 – 0 win against FC Halifax and as we sit in 2nd place in the Vanarama National league table. I know its early days but the standard of football we have played against 3 of the more fancied teams in the league, Bromley the FA Trophy holders, Halifax play off quarter finalists and just relegated Oldham tells me this going to be an unforgettable season.

These things don't happen by accident and as a part time team it really is the result of so much hard work by the playing staff, directors, staff, volunteers and supporters. Dominic thanked many people

who have contributed over recent months in the Bromley programme, but I would like to reiterate his comments, this club functions because of the time and effort so many of you put in so thank you.

The summer for any football club is a busy period but for us this has been one of the hottest, craziest periods in my time involved. On the playing side the most important business was delivered early with Stuart and Matt committing their future to the club. They are a pleasure to deal with and carry the clubs values with them.

We were delighted with the transfer business over the summer, I know it's difficult for fans as



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Boardroom



former favourites leave but over this period as a club it's impossible to communicate our plans as this would simply alert other teams to our targets. My job as chairman is to ensure Stuart starts the season with the players he wants, and I know hes delighted with the current squad with its exciting blend of experience and youth.

Off the field there is renewed energy around the Vale and things are progressing well. The stadium improvements, primarily on the Vale club side, were costly but unavoidable following the incidences that led to the ground closure last year. Our capacity now sits uncomfortably close to the minimum stadium capacity of 4k for this level of football and plans are now being developed to increase the capacity further. The construction work that was undertaken takes time and we started the season with elements around the dugouts and a new disabled area still to be completed but this will be resolved shortly. As many of you know the lease with our current landlord ends in 2023 but we remain confident that a new agreement will be signed in good time and we will keep you updated as things develop.

As a board we are continuously working on developing relationships with both businesses and other football clubs. We are delighted that Watford Womens team have chosen to play their matches at the Vale this season. The season started in style with a 3-2 victory over Gillingham in front of an impressive 330 fans with a team that includes former England International, Arsenal and Chelsea forward Gemma Davidson. The atmosphere was terrific and I would encourage fans to come along to experience high level women's football with entry for Wealdstone season ticket holders just £1.

We were also excited to host QPR for a pre-season friendly with over 2,5k in the Vale followed a few days later by over 1,7k fans in to watch Watford v Southampton. We received tremendous feedback from both QPR and Watford for the efforts put in to host the games and I would like to extend a special thanks to

Adam and his team from the Turf Doctors who have done an amazing job in preparing the pitch for this season in the most difficult of circumstances.

These games as well as being financially important make you realise how as a club we are growing, and it was great to see BT sports presenting pitchside during the FC Halifax game and they will be back to broadcast our upcoming game against Woking live.

On the commercial side so many of our partners continue to support us including our main club and stand sponsors gpf Lewis, Rolfe East, Ruislip Windows and Doors, Hollywell and Nagle Flooring and we have also been delighted to announce significant new partnerships with amongst others OSMO and Shots Sports. We continue to develop partnerships with local businesses and this season have a record number of companies sponsoring the club in one way or another, these are the partnerships that enable us to progress as a club.

Improving the match day experience for supporters remains a top objective and we were pleased to welcome in The Manhattan Grill Company to run the Match Day catering, initial feedback from the FC Halifax game suggests that they will be a real success.

Can I finish by thanking all fans who managed to travel to our away games. Your support has been great and the noise you make really helps the players.

There are many ways to get involved and support your club whether it's to give an hour of your time before kick-off, simply using our bar before and after games or attending one of the many events that take place in the Vale. Without volunteers the club simply could not function so if you are interested please reach out to any of the directors or Richard our General Manager.

Rory

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