

From the Chairman

If you can't be optimistic about the season just before it starts, then the chances are you are never going to be. Even the most downbeat of those following our play off defeat will have spent the summer reflecting and hopefully face the new season with renewed optimism.

The summer has seen yet more activity in the transfer window, our manager busy strengthening the squad further to ensure the season ahead is a success. Due to the amazing support we continue to get from our fans we have been able to provide the manager with what should be a very competitive budget for League 2.

Incredibly we have sold over 12,000 season tickets and so with success on the field we ought to be looking at a number of Fratton Park sell outs throughout the season.

For those of you who are full shareholders we held our annual season KO in the Victory Lounge on July 31st, when Paul Cook, his coaching staff and the majority of the first team squad all turned up to meet the shareholders, and with Dan Windle held an informative and fun Q&A.

Plenty of work has been taking place at Fratton Park over the summer as we continue to maintain and improve safety and facilities. The pitch looks fantastic as do those at the training ground so all credit to the hardworking ground staff.

During the summer the EFL voted to invite academy teams into the EFL Trophy competition, initially this was supposed to be the Cat 1 teams from the Premier League, however a lack of interest has meant that a number of spots have had to be fulfilled by Championship clubs.

As I've written before both the PFC and PST boards oppose this albeit we are bound by our EFL membership to compete. I note that SOS Pompey are organising a walk out of the game against Reading as a protest against these changes. This is an innovative approach as it does not damage the club financially.

We should all be aware of some of the more radical changes proposed as part of the "Whole Game Solution", including the change to five leagues of 20 teams, effectively creating a Premier League 2 by default.

This would be hugely damaging to Pompey, losing game revenue and making it even harder for us to climb to Championship and above, I would urge fans to actively campaign and lobby against this move. There is more detail about this elsewhere in this newsletter.

In line with our commitment to support our academy we have recently partnered with Brilens to create a range of PST leisurewear with all PST profits going towards academy expenses. In fact the PST board continue to work across all of its strategic work streams and we will be presenting our final strategy document prior to the AGM in September. I look forward to seeing you there.

Ashley.