



Hitchin Belles FC

The Home of Female Football in Hitchin
www.hitchinbelles.com



Newsletter Issue #2

December 2019

Happy Christmas!

Well done everyone for nearly making it to the end of the decade! It's been a busy last few months, with a huge amount going on at the club. Now we've reached the Christmas break it's a great chance for us all to recharge our batteries and look forward to the new year.

Our 2nd newsletter provides a further update on what's been going on at the club. As always, a huge amount of thanks goes out to our volunteers, and to you the parents for bringing your daughters to the games week in week out. It feels like it's been a particularly gruelling last couple of months with some pretty atrocious weather conditions. Let's hope we get some sunshine to replace the rain in 2020!

Best wishes to all of you, and have a great Christmas break and new year celebrations.

Gemma Smith
Hitchin Belles Acting Chair

Fundraising

Following on from the successful quiz night, we've had two more events in November and December to help raise additional funds for the club.

- On Sunday 17th November, girls from over 10 teams took part in the bag pack at Sainsbury's Coreys Mill in Stevenage, where they volunteered to pack shoppers' bags in exchange for a small donation. The girls' enthusiasm wooed shoppers and raised an incredible £693 for the club. Many thanks for Hannah for being the mastermind behind the day!
- Our Christmas Disco on Friday 6th December, saw our younger Belles team up with FC Comets for a great night of dancing, sweets, and face painting, raising £155 for the club and having a whole lot of fun along the way! Thanks to Jam and Chris for organising, and to all the volunteers who helped to make the event special for the kids.



We already have a few dates for your diary in 2020, with more details to follow. Thanks as ever for your support!

- 29th February, our Swimafun event for U9s to U12s
- Spring bag pack – date TBC
- Presentation day on 27th June at the Priory School, for all teams with a day full of mini tournaments, BBQ, bar, games and the presentations themselves



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Update from the Committee

We're delighted to announce we have a new team, the U11 Reds! Thanks goes to Chad Whitehead for stepping up to run the team. They will be looking to train, plus play friendlies and tournaments until September 2020 when they will join the league.

Vacancies

The Hitchin Belles FC Committee currently has two vacant roles. So, if you would like to get involved with the club at a committee level and have some spare time to dedicate to helping our fantastic and ever growing club, then please contact Club Secretary Jason Slade to find out more details. The roles currently vacant are:

Chairperson - The chairperson leads the committee and the club, managing the AGM and providing a focal point for the club. Being chairperson doesn't require any previous experience as you would be supported by the committee who manage much of the running of the club. The club is looking to fill this role before the AGM this season (from May 2020)

Grant and Funding Officer - The Grant and Funding officer will help the club submit applications to various bodies for additional grants and funding to support the growth of the club. You'll be given the support and information you need to submit the applications, so this is a relatively small but important role.

If you are interested in either of these roles, then please contact Jason on 07976 671631 / secretary@hitchinbelles.com

Kit

We now have an official club shop, at www.hitchinbelles.com/payments/category/teamwear

You can order many different items of kit direct from the website. Please however be mindful that we use a local supplier who is very flexible in the way they work with us, but some manual intervention behind the scenes is still required when placing orders. Typically, it will take 4-6 weeks from ordering kit to it being ready to collect from your coach, so please plan ahead and be patient!

Meet the volunteer

Name: Gemma Smith
Club Role:
(Acting) Chairwoman
U11 Blues Manager
Ladies team Player



Why did you volunteer?

When my daughter was 6 (2015) she showed an interest in football and after searching for teams we eventually came across Hitchin Belles. Madison started training with Hywel's team, the now U12 Blues. When it came to entering a team into the league Tom Rance and I entered an U8s team. At the time I was working as a police officer so shift work limited the time I had but when I left a couple of years later I was able to get more involved and in 2017 I took over as club chairwoman. It's great that Hitchin Belles can inspire more and more women to get involved in volunteering whether that's in a coaching role or administrative role, you don't need to know everything about football, you just need a passion to help develop girls football in Hitchin!

Favourite football moment:

Couldn't decide so I went for three...

- 1) 1999! Man united winning the treble, can't remember much of it due to slight intoxication!
- 2) Madison taking part in an Arsenal match day experience and half time penalty shootout which has inspired her love for Arsenal, much to my dismay!
- 3) debut for Hitchin Belles ladies and scoring twice.



Worst footballing moment:

When I was 12 years old, being told I wasn't allowed to play football anymore with the boys and as no other girls wanted to play I couldn't play 😞 I didn't play properly again until I was 22! (I'm glad schools now offer so much for girls, it's a great time to be a girl!). And not scoring much else since my HB debut...



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What are you outside of the Belles?

After leaving the police I started a new career in football! I have been with Hertfordshire Football Association for 2 and a half years and I'm now Football Development Officer for North Herts, St Albans and Hertsmere areas and lead on the women and girls' projects, such as Wildcats. I get to work with our amazing clubs and leagues and see first-hand the amazing work everyone is doing. I also get to work alongside some fantastic organisations. I absolutely LOVE my job.

Due to my work commitments, for next season the club is looking for a new Chair to lead into a new decade, could that be you? We have streamlined the role as chair so if you're interested please contact me or Jason Slade.

Merry Christmas to you all. Thank you to everyone for all the amazing work you do with Hitchin Belles and of course thank you to our wonderful players and parents.

Here's to 2020, another great year I am sure.

#COYB

Club contacts

Contact details for all the committee members and team managers are on our website (along with lots of other useful documents including our club ethos, safeguarding policy and code of conduct).

Some of the contacts are also set out below:

Gemma Smith
Acting Chair
07515 444896

Jason Slade
Secretary
07976 671631

Christine White
Welfare Officer
07851 258231

John Martin
Newsletter Editor
07591 571498

The season so far...

In this section you'll see titbits from what some of our teams have been up to so far this season!

Futsal

In December 2019 we launch our very first Futsal for Women session at Hitchin Girls School.

Futsal is a variant of association football played on a hard court, smaller than a football pitch, and mainly indoors. It has similarities to five-a-side football.

The sessions are fortnightly on a Tuesday, 6pm-7pm and to be held in the new sports hall.

- Adults only
- All abilities welcome
- First session free then £2 thereafter
- Fun, friendly and competitive

Our first session was on the 17th December 2019 and we will look to start again on the 14th January 2020. Why not give it a try!

To confirm your attendance please email Gemma Smith gemmasmith@hitchinbelles.com

We hope to see lots of you there!

Other events

November was a busy month, with a number of teams taking a trip to Wembley to see the Lionesses play Germany. While the result was disappointing the girls had a great day out.





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Across the club we also honoured a minutes' silence at our games on 9th November, like many others around the country. Beautifully illustrated by our U10 Blues before their games against Garston:



Looking forward, on 19th January we have the pleasure of attending Arsenal Women vs Chelsea Women at Meadowpark, Borehamwood, for our Arsenal Sister club match day experience.

Interest this year has been phenomenal, with over 100 girls wanting to attend. Unfortunately, only 39 girls are able to take part in the training session before the game, and be a flag bearer or mascot for the match itself. These 39 girls will be chosen at random from those who expressed an interest and your coach will be able to confirm names soon.

All girls who expressed an interest will get a ticket for the match, but because of the sheer numbers we won't be able to offer tickets for parents. If you do want more tickets for the game these can be purchased online from Arsenal.com – they are usually £7 for adults and £3.50 for children if bought in advance. The match is expected to be sell out as it is a top of the table clash, potentially decisive in the race for the Women's Super League title, so please book your tickets soon to avoid disappointment.

U14 Blues



The Under 14 Blues had a challenging start to the 2019 season as 5 of their first 6 games were played against teams that were previously in higher divisions (all part of the new Pre-Season policy or a Cup game). That said, they acquitted themselves and whilst they struggled to score most weeks, it proved a good experience to bed in the 4 new players into the team. They were not heavily defeated in any game and showed real promise.

Since those games, the Belles have performed well in a tight League, winning 3 games and losing 4. All the defeats were very close and could have gone either way on a different weekend so plenty of positives going into 2020. The Belles have the Division's third highest scorer, in Hannah Baynham, who has scored 6 goals, including a recent hat-trick in a 5-3 win over St Albans.

The Christmas break has come at the wrong time as the Belles have started to show real consistency and strength so hopefully this will continue into the rest of the season. As a treat, after the first win in the League, the tradition is now for the entire team to decamp to McDonald's after training which proved very popular as you can see!



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U13 Blues



The U13 Blues ended the year with a win after a tough start to the 2019/20 season in a talented and physical division 1. The team have so far learnt a new formation and style of play that really allows the players to understand new roles and responsibilities within the game. We have recruited well in some positions which in previous years we struggled and have been happy with the progress made.

The girls have worked really well under new management and have adjusted to a higher level of football. The season so far has required us to dig deep and take the defeats as learning and growth opportunities. We are excited for the second half of the season with the main focus being fun and continued development as they progress to 11 a side football next season.

U13 Whites



We're really pleased with the U13's whites season so far; 4 wins, 1 draw and 1 loss putting us 1 point behind the top with a game in hand. We're through to the quarter finals in the county cup and next round of league cup. The girls are also delighted with their new Belles coats which Katie's dad John Boyle Computers has sponsored. Merry Xmas from the Whites!

U12 Reds





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U12 Reds have reached mid-season on a high after a difficult (or "educational", according to the coaches) run of six defeats on the bounce earlier in the autumn. The spirit never dimmed throughout, however, and, after a tactical rethink with increased focus on defensive discipline throughout the team, the Reds have roared back into good form.

Two battling draws against Enfield - the division's best side - and successive cup and league victories left all in good cheer ahead of the Xmas break.

Even a 6-1 defeat in the County cup against division 1 opposition came laden with positives. The quality of football and effort from first to last won high praise from the opposition and the wide smiles from all as the girls left the pitch told the true story.

After a well-earned pizza together following the game the team broke for the holidays full of anticipation for an exciting second half of the season ahead.

U11 Whites



The U11 Whites have been enjoying a confidence boosting season in the Violet division, winning 8 out of their 11 games and scoring a remarkable 67 goals in the process. 33 of those have been shared by Zoe and Ella, who, like over half the team, are playing a year up.

New recruits have settled in to the team well, only boosting the fabulous team spirit. Roll on 2020!

U11 Blues



The U11 Blues continued in the purple division for 2019. With 37 teams divided into 4 divisions they kicked off their league campaign with a competitive away win against Harvesters. The blues have played 14 games totalling 9 wins, 2 draws and 3 losses. Well done to all the girls on a fabulous season so far.

U10 Whites



The U10 Whites have come up against some well-matched opponents in the Lilac league this season. They continue to go from strength to strength as they gain more experience on the pitch. There have been some impressive goals from the girls so far this season and some excellent play in defence.

The New Year sees two new players joining the U10 Whites. Alanna & Lillia have been training with the team since September and the girls are delighted that they will now be joining them for matches. We also welcome Chris Cox (in the turkey hat above...) to our coaching team.



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U10 Blues



The U10 Blues welcomed 4 new players this season to the team, Izzy, Elsie, Imogen and Bea. all 4 have settled in brilliantly to league football and become popular members of the team.

I couldn't have been prouder of the way the girls have started this season. Taking the style of play we practice each week in training into match days resulting in some fantastic football being played every week. Plenty of goals and a really strong defence have given us a successful start to the season, not only in terms of results, but in the progression each girl has shown in their technical and tactical understanding. A really enjoyable first half of the season.

Well done Alethea, Ava K, Ava T, Bea, Charlotte, Caitlyn, Elsie, Esme, Imogen, Izzy, Poppy, Romey, Ruby and Serena.

Ladies team



Life in the top County Division has been tough for the Ladies team with gaining only a point since the beginning of the season, leaving us bottom of the table at Christmas. The enthusiasm within the team though is as high as ever due to a togetherness pulling us all in the right direction and players improving all over the pitch.

The 2nd half of the season should see the team start to climb the table as players return from injury, new players understand our brand of football and three of last season's U16 Belles gain more experience.

Training is on a Thursday evening at HBS 20:00 - 21:00 and matches on a Sunday afternoon (14:00 KO). New players are welcome to just train or be part of the squad.

Off the field, the ladies participated in the clubs fund raising quiz held at Ozinsky's in Hitchin, a quiz at Stotfold Con Club and held their annual Christmas dinner at The Angels. Team bonding will continue in the New Year with a Footgolf competition in February, Go-karting in April and participation in a 6-a-side tournament in Bournemouth and the FA Fives competition.