



Hilton Harriers FC – Annual General Meeting – 26 January 2026

The 2026 Annual General Meeting marked an important moment for Hilton Harriers Football Club — not simply as a review of the year gone by, but as a reflection on how far the club has come and how deliberately it is preparing for the future.

The meeting opened with a simple acknowledgement: time is precious. Families, work, football and volunteering all compete for attention, and the fact that so many people gave their evening to the club mattered. The AGM was therefore not just about reporting back, but about making the time worthwhile — sharing progress, listening to feedback, and looking ahead with clarity.

Hilton Harriers has always been a special club. What has changed is its scale and complexity. From humble beginnings — a few children, a second-hand kit and determined parents — the club has grown into one of the most active grassroots organisations in Derbyshire. Today, Hilton Harriers supports 483 registered players across 37 teams, is powered by 110 registered officials and volunteers, manages its own pavilion, and operates under FA, safeguarding and financial governance standards. The club is FA 3-Star Accredited and part of the FA's Thriving Clubs in the Community programme.

With that growth comes opportunity — but also responsibility. The club is no longer simply running teams; it is running a community sports organisation. How it is organised, how work is shared, and how people are protected matters just as much as results on the pitch.

Over the past year, much of the club's focus has therefore been on getting the foundations right. Supported by the Thriving Clubs programme, Hilton Harriers has deliberately shifted away from a model that relied on goodwill, long hours and knowledge living in people's heads. Instead, the emphasis has been on creating clear processes, reducing individual workload, and putting systems in place that support volunteers rather than overwhelm them.

One of the most important steps in this journey has been the creation of the [Managers' Handbook](#). As the club has grown, it has become clear that consistency, clarity and shared ways of working are essential. The handbook brings together how the club operates, protects volunteers, and ensures standards are applied fairly across all teams. Just as importantly, it makes it easier for people to step into roles without feeling daunted — preserving the heart of Hilton Harriers while making the club easier to run.

Alongside this, the club has embraced technology where it genuinely adds value. [A Managers' Digital Assistant](#) allows volunteers to access guidance directly from the handbook without trawling documents or sending emails. [Online player enquiry forms](#), virtual committee meetings with automated notes and actions, and [centralised access to club documents](#) through the website have all helped reduce administration and friction. The aim has been simple: give volunteers more time to focus on players, coaching and enjoyment.

Another significant change has been the deliberate move towards micro-roles — small, clearly defined volunteer roles that fit realistically around people's lives and spread responsibility more fairly across the club. Rather than relying on a small number of individuals to carry everything, Hilton Harriers has broken delivery into manageable areas of ownership.



A number of these roles are already well established and making a tangible difference. League Representatives, the Mease and Back Lane Fixtures Secretary, Training Coordinator, Purchasing Lead, Social Media Lead and the Grounds Maintenance Team all play a vital part in keeping the club running smoothly. The impact has been immediate: coordination is stronger, purchasing is quicker and better value, communication is clearer, fixtures and training are better managed, and pitches are safer and better presented week in, week out. Just as importantly, pressure has been taken off individuals and more people have been brought into the heart of the club.

Looking ahead, this approach will continue to evolve. Alongside these existing micro-roles, new specialist roles are being introduced in areas where workload and risk are highest, including Player Registration Lead, TeamFeePay Platform Lead, Safeguarding Compliance Coordinator and Coach Development Lead. Together, these roles ensure that critical functions are properly owned and supported, while reinforcing the principle that no single volunteer should carry too much.

The way the club is organised is underpinned by a strong and balanced Committee, whose role is to provide governance, oversight and long-term direction. For 2026, the Committee structure includes a Chairperson, Club Secretary, Club Treasurer, Club Welfare Lead, Club Development Lead, Club Partnership Lead and a Parent Lead. In addition, the club benefits from associate representation from Hilton Parish Council and South Derbyshire District Council, ensuring it remains closely connected to key community stakeholders and local decision-makers.

This structure ensures the club is well governed, financially responsible, properly safeguarded, strategically focused and firmly embedded within the wider community. It also provides continuity and resilience as individuals step back or new volunteers step forward.

The AGM included a clear and transparent review of the club's financial position. Over the 2024–25 financial year, the club recorded a deficit of £17,195 compared with a surplus the previous year, with reserves reducing from £50,775 to £33,580. While this represents a step back year-on-year, the club remains financially stable, with healthy cash balances and the ability to meet its current commitments.

Importantly, the drivers behind this position are understood and deliberate. Income remains strong, driven primarily by subscriptions and registrations and supported by sponsorship and fundraising. The deficit largely reflects increased costs — particularly kit, equipment and pitch hire — as the club invested to support growth, raise standards and relieve pressure on volunteers.

Over the past year, a number of important financial and operational changes have been made to improve consistency and control. These include moving to a single kit supplier, removing individual team “pots” of money, and clearly setting out what the club funds centrally, including playing kit, coaches' kit and equipment. Alongside this, targeted investments have been made in facilities and infrastructure, including new goals at The Mease, a club Veo camera, new guttering and signage, and drainage improvements.



While income remains strong, cost control will be a key focus for 2025–26, particularly in relation to kit and pitch hire. The club's financial position provides stability, but not complacency — reinforcing the importance of the governance and structural changes already in place.

A significant part of the AGM also focused on welfare, safeguarding and club culture. As a club supporting 37 teams, 110 registered officials and 483 registered players, welfare and behavioural challenges are an inevitable reality that must be actively managed.

The Welfare Officer outlined her role in safeguarding the welfare, wellbeing and safety of all children and young people at the club. This includes acting as the first point of contact for welfare and safeguarding concerns, promoting best practice across teams, and ensuring the club remains fully compliant with FA safeguarding requirements.

The most significant and recurring welfare pressure point continues to be parent conduct. While the vast majority of parents are supportive and respectful, a small minority create unnecessary pressure through touchline behaviour that does not align with FA Respect expectations, by challenging coaches' authority, or through inappropriate communication with volunteers after training sessions or matches. This behaviour places additional strain on volunteers and detracts from the positive, child-centred environment the club is committed to providing.

From a safeguarding and compliance perspective, the club's standards are clear and non-negotiable. Any volunteer coaching, managing or regularly helping with children must have a valid DBS in place, completed through the FA system and linked to their FAN. All youth officials must complete the FA Safeguarding Children Workshop, and coaching roles — particularly lead coaches — must hold an in-date First Aid qualification. Without these, individuals cannot undertake pitch-side roles.

It was also reinforced that each team must have at least one FA Level One qualified coach in place in order to train and play. Looking ahead, the aspiration is to have two Level One coaches per team wherever possible, helping to ensure continuity, reduce pressure on individuals, and strengthen both safeguarding and player development.

The FA Club Portal was highlighted as working effectively, with player registrations, official records and safeguarding compliance managed centrally by the Welfare Officer and Club Secretary. This has ensured accuracy, consistency and appropriate handling of sensitive information, while also highlighting the level of responsibility carried by a small number of volunteers — reinforcing the importance of the club's evolving structure.

Alongside organisational, financial and welfare stewardship, the club continues to plan for its physical future. Facilities remain one of the biggest challenges and opportunities facing Hilton Harriers. In the short to medium term, progress continues at both The Mease and Back Lane, supported by funded improvements and a six-year joint investment approach involving Hilton Parish Council and the Football Foundation. These developments help relieve immediate pressure and support current demand.



At the same time, the club's long-term ambition remains clear. The Hilton Sports Village represents a permanent home for sport in Hilton — bringing training and matchday facilities together around a modern 3G pitch and community-focused infrastructure. This is complex work and progress takes time, but it is being approached responsibly. The club is clear about its direction, with Plan A focused on delivering the Sports Village and Plan B ensuring continued investment in existing facilities if required. Ambition is matched with realism.

Coach Development and FA Support - The AGM also included an update from Derbyshire FA, delivered by Steve Pritchard, outlining the FA's renewed focus on coach development within Thriving Community Clubs and what this means for Hilton Harriers.

The session explained why the FA is investing in dedicated Coach Development Officer roles — recognising that well-supported coaches, positive behaviours and consistent standards are fundamental to improving player experience at grassroots level. Rather than a one-size-fits-all model, the approach is centred on tailored, club-specific support that reflects a club's size, structure and needs.

For Hilton Harriers, this will begin with an initial club and officials assessment to identify where targeted support would add the most value. From this, Derbyshire FA will work with the club to develop an individualised coach development action plan, aligned to both current pressures and longer-term ambitions.

The offer includes access to qualified FA Coach Developers, support in identifying and developing Club Coach Development Leads within Hilton Harriers, and the delivery of internal CPD workshops for coaches. The emphasis is on building sustainable capability within the club, embedding knowledge and confidence internally rather than relying solely on external input.

The wider FA support network was also highlighted, including county-wide CPD programmes, women's coach development groups, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and leadership pathways. Together, these opportunities provide ongoing development routes for coaches at all stages of their journey.

Next steps will involve further engagement with Derbyshire FA to agree priorities, identify potential Coach Development Leads, and plan initial CPD activity. This work closely aligns with the club's broader focus on volunteer support, safeguarding, behaviour standards and creating a positive, player-centred football environment.

In closing, the message was simple but important. Hilton Harriers Football Club is in a strong place — and not by accident. The club is trusted by the organisations that matter because it does things the right way. At its core, this is about people: creating a safe, fun environment where players can develop and enjoy their football. And it is about legacy: leaving behind a well-run, sustainable club that others can step into with confidence, and that continues to meet the needs of both the club and the wider community for years to come.