



FGIF INBOX NEWS UPDATES 2024-25

shown on posting date...

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR 2024-25 - please note that as per last season all new additions covering club photos, reports, programmes etc are found on the relevant on-site pages. Alternatively, you can also check out the latest club/ground updates as they come in by referring to the yellow panel shown on the *FGIF* Home page...

AUGUST 2024

26/08/24: Bob Powell writes - a word of caution for travellers who use trains for getting to matches...the **ASLEF union has announced strike action** on all LNER services out of King's Cross station for 11 weekends starting on Saturday 31st August until Sunday 10th November.

The draw was made on Monday 19/08 for the **FA Cup 1st Qualifying round** matches to be played over the weekend of Saturday 31st August. Winners will get £2250 with losers receiving £750.

Gloucester County League side **Hanham Athletic** (address Vicarage Road Hanham Bristol BS153AH) - I am not certain if programmes are available at the ground but they did a very good electronic issue for Tuesday's 20/8 game v Bromley Heath that can easily be downloaded.

Congratulations to **Silsden AFC** who are through to the FA Cup 1st Qualifying round for the first time in 20 years after beating 8th tier opponents Atherton Collieries 2-0. Their reward is an away trip to NWCL side West Disbury & Chorlton on Saturday 31st August (ko 3.00pm).

Great news re **Newbury FC**. The club are returning to Faraday Road after 6 years away. They will be playing in the Thames Valley Premier League this season. West Berkshire Council have procured portable changing facilities, alongside a portable clubhouse (where the former clubhouse stood) and a (soon to be added) portable spectator stand. The club hope to play their first home game at Faraday Road in September. Club members are hopeful in time the club can get back to former glories.

FA Cup Preliminary round replay on Tuesday 20th August at **Millbrook FC** v AFC Stoneham (1-1) was abandoned due to floodlight failure. After a long delay the FA have announced that will it now be played at Millbrook's Test Park ground on Tuesday 27th August (ko 7.45pm).

Eastern Counties League side **Enfield Borough** have sacked their manager with immediate effect after he was convicted of causing grievous bodily harm and child cruelty.

The BBC will show the FA Cup 1st Qualifying round tie between NECL side **Campion AFC** (Bradford) v Blyth Spartans (NPL) on Saturday 31st August (ko 12.30pm). The match will be shown on I-player (via the red button). Both teams will receive a £1k fee from the FA for being chosen for tv.

I hope no travellers got caught out today (24/08) attending the NWCL Premier division match between **Goole AFC** and Penistone Church (3-2). The game was played behind closed doors after a ruling by the West Riding FA following crowd trouble at previous games. I hope that there is no more punishment in the pipeline to add to Goole's troubles as manager Nathan Heliwell resigned on Friday 23/08 after the club's poor start to the season.

21/08/24: Steve Hardy - **UK Non-League Football Programme Database** - Our outstanding contributor, programme guru, super hopper and dedicated archivist has now COMPLETELY UPDATED all sections of his extensive UK Non-League Football Programme Database featuring 1000's of clubs covering English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish, Ladies, School and Youth and Sunday football. The impressive catalogue lists include EVERY KNOWN CLUB THAT HAS ISSUED up to the end of the 2023-24 season. Reference to all alterations/additions since last year's database are handily highlighted in red ink for ease of identification. Check out the selection of new programmes (including covers) Steve has tracked down since last season. As you will appreciate an incredible amount of work has gone into making this possible and we are indebted once again to Steve for his painstaking efforts. You'll agree it's an absolutely fantastic resource for programme collectors and ground hoppers alike. To find out more simply click on the following link shown below. Enjoy browsing! footballgroundsinfocus.com/UKPDBHome.htm

19/08/24: Jon T Green - writes: *'A proper exciting FA Cup tie for me over the weekend, and a bit of a giant killing to boot. Nice to see that the competition is alive and well in the lower reaches of the game, if not in the professional ranks'*.

WebEd - Jon attended the Town Ground as **Heanor Town** (UCL 1N) beat Hinckley Leicester Road (NPL Midland Division) 3-2 in a Preliminary Round tie.

18/08/24: Bob Powell - writes: Saturday August 10th - **Romford** v Benfleet (Essex Senior League), this match was postponed after an unnamed Benfleet player on his way to training on Thursday 08/08 was involved in a serious car crash. He

underwent surgery and now thankfully has regained consciousness. Everybody in the football world wishes him well.

Southend United FC can confirm following a successful appeal, against the requirements for the club to provide a £1m bond, has been formally withdrawn. Despite their match being chosen for live TV under the new Dazn deal (Southend 1 v York City 1), it still attracted a very good gate of 7962.

Truro City returned home after 4 years away. They lost their first game at their new stadium 1-2 to Dorking Wanderers in front of a healthy attendance of 2676.

Isthmian Premier Division side **Lewes FC** have left themselves open to ridicule and being the butt of jokes after signing a 2-year deal with their new shirt sponsors " *Who gives a crap* " an eco-friendly toilet paper brand.

The BBC will show **Champions League** highlights for the next three years from 22.00pm on Wednesday. Of Champions League match weeks there will be match-by-match highlights on BBC i-Player and the BBC website and app, plus highlights shown on BBC 1 at 22.40 pm. TNT Sports and Amazon Prime video will continue to show the games live in the UK.

Witchford 96 FC of the Cambridgeshire League have been given a helping hand from Witchford Parish Council who have donated £10k to Witchford Sports & Social Club to erect fencing on the village playing fields to prevent people from using the land for unauthorised encampments, after gypsies broke the gates to set up camp.

NECL Division 1 side **Wakefield AFC** have announced a return to Featherstone Rovers Rugby League ground. The decision was driven by increased costs to meet ground safety certificate requirements and the planned long-term maintenance following the rugby season. Gus Decca the chairman of Wakefield AFC said for the club's long-term viability, it is essential to develop our own facilities.

Please note the FA Vase game on Saturday 24th August - Wakefield AFC v 1874 Northwich will be played at Wakefield Trinity's ground due to the unavailability of Featherstone Rovers' ground.

Matchroom Sports (Barry Hearn) are to sponsor **Brentwood Town** of the Isthmian Division 1 North for two more years. The club have have extended their bar area and unveiled a new 3g pitch which will be used by the local community.

For those interested in Women's football, please note that Reading WFC will train and play their home games at Slough Town FC. The club have dropped to the fifth tier of women's football after they withdrew from the Championship.

19/08/24: Gary Spooner writes - *'Yesterday I ended up down the road at Leicester St Andrews 2 Gornal Athletic 4. It was certainly a game of two halves as Gornal were 4 up at half time...'*

18/08/24: John Walker (St Neots Town FC) writes: The weekly Non-League Football Paper has selected yesterday's home FA Cup match with Edgware & Kingsbury to be featured in this week's edition.

16/08/24: WebEd - PLEASE NOTE THE LATEST FGIF WEBSITE UPDATES:

(1) All outstanding **photos** from the end of last season have now been uploaded to the *FGIF* Flickr Photo Album gallery,

(2) All outstanding **TT reports** from the end of last season have been added to the *FGIF* TT Reports & Reviews Archive and can be found [HERE](#),

(3) All the **photo albums** from last season have now been arranged alphabetically and added to the 2023-24 *FGIF* Photo Album Index and

(4) The **Complete FGIF A2Z Photo Album Index** covering all the clubs/grounds from season 2012-13 up to and including the end of last season has now been fully revised and updated. This contains albums from over 2000 clubs. Click [HERE](#) for more.

Many thanks to ALL contributors for your continued help and support...

11/08/24: Bob Powell - the NCEL Division 1 game on Saturday 17th August between **Maltby Main** and Selby Town will be switched and played at Selby Town (ko 3.00pm) due to pitch renovation work. This should be ready in time by the end of August.

Accrington Stanley are the first club to get a £100k grant from the Skybet EFL Building Foundation fund. The money will go towards a 3g pitch for community and training purposes.

Strange goings on in the Wearside League - **Durham City** were due play Newton Aycliffe YFC Senior at Leyburn Grove Houghton (on Wed 07/08). The visitors say they are not turning up with no reason given. **Durham FC Corinthians** will be playing at Consett FC this season and **Belmont United** will be playing at Durham City's old ground at New Ferens Park this season.

Last night's FA Cup Extra Preliminary round replay at **Walsall Wood** (v Worcester City) was abandoned early in the second half due to floodlight failure. So far everybody is remaining tight lipped about what will happen as the next round of the competition is due to be played on Saturday 17th August. It's been a bad start to the season for Walsall Wood with drainage problems and having power supply problems as cash only admissions were in use away from the turnstiles last night.

Latest News - The FA have made a decision due to the problems to replay the game on Tuesday 13th August at Worcester City's ground (ko 7.45 pm) which means that both clubs scheduled midweek league fixtures are now postponed.

The **FA of Wales** will invest £3m in North Wales facilities as it prepares to host the 2026 UEFA Men's under 19 Championships. The aim is to improve four match venues and seven training facilities which include venues at: Nantporth Stadium (**Bangor City FC**); Central Park (**Denbigh Town FC**); The Oval (**Caernarfon Town FC**) and Stoke Cae Ras Racecourse ground (**Wrexham AFC**) and training facilities at: Llanelian Road (**Colwyn Bay FC**); Colliers Park Gresford (**Wrexham AFC** training ground); The Globe (**Buckley Town FC**); Memorial playing fields (**Ruthin Town FC**); Belle Vue Rhyl home of **CPDY Rhyl** who play in the North West Coast League (third tier of Welsh football) replacing the old Rhyl team who folded two years ago; The New Oval (**Holyhead Hotspur FC**) and Cae Sling (**Penmaenmawr Phoenix FC** who also play in the North West Coast League).

Caversham United and **FC Bracknell** who are now running Saturday sides are joining the East Berks League for season 24/25. Another new club is **Bracknell Aces** all three clubs will be playing in Division 1 which starts on Saturday August 17th, with the Premier Division starting on Saturday 31st August.

Bury FC of the NWCL Premier Division played their first home game of the season at their Gigg Lane ground (result was Bury 2 v Irlam 2). Their new state of the art 3g pitch was in operation and manager Dave McNabb described the pitch as brilliant and said it can be in use seven days a week.

Plans for a new London overground station next to **Millwall FC** stadium have been renewed after a developer building homes in the area has pledged £17m for the project. It will be called the Surrey Canal railway station.

Harborough Town who were promoted to the Southern League Premier Division Central have submitted plans to Harborough District Council to increase the capacity of its ground including a 154-seater stand, installing new turnstiles, building a new directors box (some of these improvements are mandatory requirements by the FA as failure to complete them by March 2025 could mean automatic relegation)

11/08/24: Silvia Tuson - writes: Just to let you know that entry to Peterborough Sports FC is now card only. Apparently, there's been some money going missing and to make sure that this can't happen again they are now card only starting at the beginning of this season. They are now charging £18 for an adult and £14 for an OAP.

11/08/24: Peter Francis (Chairman of the Bedfordshire County League) writes:

The BCFL joins forces with HBC Logistics. The Bedfordshire County Football League is pleased to announce agreement has been reached with HBC Logistics for them to become the leagues mainline sponsor for season 2024-25. Peter said, *"We are delighted to welcome HBC Logistics aboard for the 2024-25 season being our first*

mainline sponsor in its 120-year history and look forward to the positive impact this partnership will have on our clubs.”

The revenue raised from this sponsorship will be distributed back to our clubs in various forms of rewards at the leagues 2025 Annual General Meeting.

11/08/24 - Hatfield Town - the club has resigned from the Herts Senior County League and since folded. It cites the local authority’s inability to find them a suitable venue to play at to progress up through the leagues as being the main reason.

07/08/24: Keith Aslan writes - ‘All being well I will be attending **Avery FC** on Saturday. First season in the West Midlands League. Their first two games have been 0-9 and 1-8 so I'm getting in there quick before the enthusiasm for programmes (and football) disappears. Two weeks ago, I went to **Thornton Cleveleys** and didn't get home until the early hours of Sunday. Waiting on Preston station for a non-existent train with no information. There was a stage when I was worried that I'd get home at all. Turned out the train was only 2 hours late! Avanti eh...’.

04/08/24: Jon T Green - writes: ‘With the local Sunday Leagues not having started yet and no cricket available today I thought I'd send you the pictures from yesterday's hop to **Stapenhill**. The town itself is really just an overspill from Burton-on-Trent but the walk between the two over a gorgeous old black and white bridge across the river and flood plain is just beautiful’.

04/08/24: Bob Powell writes - **Deeping United FC** are playing in the Peterborough & District League Premier Division, have put in a planning application to change the use of 10.62 acres of farmland into a new football ground, with South Kesteven District Council. The club has 450 playing members and share facilities with the Deeping School.

Southern League **Leiston** have got much improved new floodlights and dugouts thanks to a grant from the Football Foundation.

Rochester United of the Southern Counties East League Division 1 who lost in last season's play-offs are planning to build a new clubhouse with more ground improvements to follow. The club hope to climb the non-league pyramid in time.

Epsom & Ewell FC have left Cobham FC and will this season be ground sharing with Corinthian Casuals at Kings George's Field in Tolworth.

Gravesham Borough Council has given the green light for Northfleet Harbourside Development to go-ahead. This means that **Ebbsfleet United** will have a new £40m 8000-seater multi use community stadium and event facilities. The development will mean up to 3500 new homes will be built including a 800-room hotel.

Cefn Druids will return to Welsh football for season 24/25 at tier 5. Druids withdrew from the 2nd tier Cymru North for the 2023/24 season. The Wrexham based side played in the Europa league qualifiers in 2012 and 2018.

It's a sad state of our times that the **South Shields FC** clubhouse was broken into with bottles of spirits, items from a vending machine, sweets and money from a children's charity tins being stolen!

Midland League Division 1 side **Coventry Copsewood** have put in a planning application for new floodlights. Chairman Craig Watson said the lights are 30 years old and need replacing. The new led floodlights are more energy efficient.

FA Cup replays are scrapped from the 1st round proper, but apply during the qualifying rounds so there are may be many changes to this week's mid-week fixtures.

JULY 2024

28/07/24: Bob Powell writes - the **Midland League Premier Division** will be an 18-team division this season, down from 20 teams previously.

Romulus FC have left the CV Stadium and will be ground sharing with Sutton Coldfield Town (Coles Lane) this season. One interesting fixture - FA Cup Extra Preliminary Round on Sat 3rd August (ko 3.00 pm) Sutton Coldfield Town v FC Romulus.

Southern League **Royston Town** has unveiled a new home shirt featuring a design inspired by cave carvings linked to the Knights Templar, found by accident in 1792 in Royston Cave. The site said it was a wonderful way to celebrate its unique heritage.

Champions League 2nd Qualifying round - Ferencvaros 5 v **TNS** 0 - barring a miracle comeback in next week's home leg (Tuesday 30th July) Saints will drop into the Europa League 3rd Qualifying round where they will face either Cypriot side Apoel or Moldova's FC Petrocub (1st leg Apoel lead 1-0).

Ilkeston Rutland Sports Park is to have a new £450k 3g pitch with new led floodlights, fencing and divider nets. Work begins on 29th July and should be completed by early October. The sports park is home to various sports indoor and outdoor and with the improved facilities some clubs may be interested in playing there if we get a repeat of last season's wet weather.

Blackpool FC plan to build an elite training ground and academy. The council are backing the plan and the scheme will include 10 outdoor pitches, an indoor pitch, a two storey training building for use by Blackpool's first and academy teams.

The FA Cup Extra Preliminary Round - five games will be played on Friday 2nd August. They are as follows:

Great Yarmouth v Kirkley (ko 7.45 pm); **Spelthorne Sports** v Burgess Hill (ko 7.45 pm); **Heaton Stannington** v Easington Colliery (ko 7.45 pm, admission adults £9.00 and concessions £6.00); **AFC Liverpool** v Abbey Hey (ko 8.00 pm) and **Albion Sports** v Trafford (ko 8.00 pm).

FA Cup Extra Preliminary round on Saturday 3rd August: anybody intending to watch **Binfield** v Wokingham Town (formerly Wokingham & Embrook) please note the match will ko at 12.30 pm. This venue is a cashless venue with admission for adults £10.00, concessions £6.00 and u16's £1.00.

There are four new teams in the **Northern League** this season:

Kendal Town who were moved from the NWCL; **Marske United** who resigned from the Northern Premier League; **Darlington Town** (address Eastbourne Community Stadium 19 Bourne Avenue Darlington DL1 1LJ); note this is a multi-sports venue with an 8 lane running track and 3g pitch and **Grangetown Boys Club** (address B & W Lifting Stadium, Grange Farm Road Middlesbrough TS6 7HP).

Note that here are five FA Cup ties on Sunday 4th August in the Extra Preliminary round:

Berks County v Clevedon ko 13.00 pm (they groundshare with Ascot United) tickets adults £7.50, concessions £5.00 and u16's £2.00; **Cambridge City** v Lakenheath at Histon FC (ko 14.00 pm). Cambridge should have moved into their new stadium at Sawston by now and are being delayed because they have no electrical connections to the national grid due to legal delays); **Hallam** v Lower Breck ko 14.00pm; **Beverley Town** v Whitley Bay (ko 15.00pm) and **Littlehampton** v Tooting & Mitcham (ko 15.00pm).

The National League has announced a seven-year deal with Dazn, Europe's largest sports broadcaster. They haven't said what the deal is worth. It could be a lifeline to several clubs with matches being shown in up to 200 countries.

Bedford Town - as work on Bedford Town's 3G pitch yet to be completed, **Hitchin Town** have sent me the following information:

'Just to clarify: We have an agreement in place for Bedford Town to play two of their pre-season friendlies at Top Field. Beyond that, there has as yet been no formal approach from, or agreement with Bedford Town regarding a formal ground share once the season proper begins. Of course, any such ground share would require ratification by the Southern League'.

21/07/24: WedEd writes - **IMPORTANT NOTICE - SITE UPDATE JULY 2024** - as keen readers and visitors to the site you may have been aware that there has been a lack of regular updates to FGIF since the beginning of April. Having felt unwell shortly after the Easter break, I was admitted into hospital for tests and subsequently placed on a two-week waiting list for surgery. Despite two cancellations and a further three months wait for treatment, I am pleased to say I that I underwent a successful operation last week and am now back at home enjoying some much-needed rest and relaxation.

Although I have been told by my consultant to take things easy for the next four to six weeks (with an enforced ban on any heavy lifting, driving, playing sport and groundhopping), I am thankfully able to resume some normal web editing duties once again (in between doing the easier chores and watching the Olympics on TV, of course). As a result, I would encourage all those of you who are no doubt chomping at the bit in readiness for the forthcoming football season to send in your latest photos, reports, programme and ground news so we can publicise your travels in the normal way. Yes, I am delighted to say that FGIF is back up and running once again as the 2024-25 campaign fast approaches.

You may have also noticed that I have already started adding the outstanding photos carried over from the end of last season into the album gallery. Once I've completed this, the remaining reports from your 'hopping trips will then be uploaded onto the TT pages for 23-24. If you still have any further pictures or ground reviews from last season or maybe some from the start of this one (I know that many of you enjoy watching friendlies), then please send them in and I will upload them to the appropriate pages. Hopefully it won't take too long before normal service is resumed.

And finally, I would just like to say a massive thank you to all those of you who contacted me over the last few months either by phone, E-Mail or text with your many get-well messages and words of encouragement. It certainly meant a great deal to me, Fran and the girls to hear from every one of you. I intend to catch up with you all very soon.

As always, I hope that you have an enjoyable and successful season whichever roped off pitch or stadium you decide to visit on your travels. I can't thank you enough for your valuable contributions in helping to make FGIF such a wonderful football resource, one that has appealed to so many ground collectors over the last twenty years. Without your support none of this would be at all possible. May the joys of hopping long continue!

21/07/24: Bob Powell writes - There are three new clubs in the **NWCL Div North**. All three are at home on the opening day of the season Saturday 27th July (all 3.00pm ko's)

Maghull v Darwen FC at Old Hall Lane (L31 3DY). This ground is 1 mile from their old ground at Deyes Lane and they join the league from the West Cheshire League where they played 25 years ago),

Thornton Cleveleys v Nelson at Gamble Road and

Skelmersdale United v Atherton LR (they ground share with Burscough FC at the Burscough Community Stadium (Bobby Langton Way Burscough/Ormskirk. This ground replaces Burscough's Old Victoria Park ground which was demolished in 2020).

The **NCEL** has four new teams in Division 1 for season 24/25. The clubs are as follows:

Appleby Frodingham promoted from the Lincolnshire League - address Brumby Hall, Scunthorpe,

Club Thorne Colliery promoted from the Humber Premier League - address Welfare Ground Moorends in Doncaster,

Deane & District promoted from the Central Midlands Alliance League Premier Division North - address Welfare Community Ground Furlong Road Goldthorpe (Rotherham) S63 9EH and

South Leeds FC (previously known as Middleton) promoted from the Yorkshire Amateur League Supreme Division - address South Leeds Stadium Belle Isle Leeds S11 5DJ. It is also the home of Hunslet RL Club.

Note that two of the four clubs are at home on Sat 27th July 2024:

Club Thorne Colliery v Wakefield AFC (ko 3.00 pm) and Deane & District v Swallownest (ko 3.00 pm).

Isthmian League Division 1 North side **Redbridge** have installed a 3g pitch and the club's ground will be known as the techsoc.com stadium in future.

National League **Woking** are facing a financial crisis. Owner Drew Volpe said that only a loan from his parents has kept the club afloat in recent weeks, adding that the club will go into administration unless a new buyer can be found.

The **Northern Premier League** fixtures were released late on Thursday 18/07 and the season starts on Saturday August 10th 2024.

Bristol Rovers FC are consulting residents about plans to build student flats next to the Memorial Stadium. 350 students to be accommodated in a six-storey building adjacent to the stadium. The east and north stands would then be upgraded increasing the stadium's capacity from 12,534 to 17,000.

The Southern League are to launch a Saturday evening e-newspaper. It will be free to download every Saturday evening at 6.45pm throughout the season starting on Saturday August 10th. It will have all the scores and match reports etc.

Potters Bar Town - the club have announced a temporary groundshare with Kings Langley while the Isthmian League side are having an artificial surface laid at their home.

Bedford Town and Biggleswade - while both clubs are waiting for work on Bedford Town's 3G pitch to be completed they have arranged for temporary groundshares, should the need arise, with Bedford Town playing at Hitchin Town and Biggleswade at Barton Rovers.

-End-