

WESTMORLAND COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION LIMITED



CLUB ADMINISTRATION MANUAL

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Office Opening Hours

Normal office opening hours are:

Monday – Friday
9am – 3.45pm

If you wish to see somebody in particular, it is advisable to ring the office beforehand to check they will be available to see you.

Introduction

This information booklet has been compiled to assist new and existing club secretaries in their duties and responsibilities when dealing with the Westmorland County Football Association. For those who have been secretaries for some time, the information contained herein may be very familiar but, for those who are new and as a refresher for those experienced secretaries, we hope it will prove useful in what is required by ourselves and why. No publication can cover all eventualities and it is therefore important to state at the outset that the County FA is available to assist secretaries wherever possible if situations arise which are not covered in this booklet. The time taken to check things out “before the horse has bolted” can save the club a lot of unnecessary time, trouble and potential financial penalties. This booklet is not exhaustive and should not replace the County FA handbook and/or website. Not all scenarios or questions are addressed and the rules and regulations in the County FA handbook must be read. It is essential that you make the time to familiarise yourself with them, thus ensuring a trouble free season for you and your club.

Please **remember** that the County FA are here to help you – if you have any further queries or need clarification regarding items in this manual, handbook or on our website, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Westmorland County FA

Westmorland County FA are the overall governing body for football within the county of Westmorland. Leagues govern football only within their own league.

This may mean there is some duplication of paperwork, but it is essential that rules and regulations are complied with within each organisation to ensure the smooth running of football within the county.

Communication

All correspondence will be sent either by post or e-mail to the club secretary. However, we would appreciate your help and assistance by ensuring you forward relevant correspondence to your team managers/coaches, club officials, parents and players during the season as quickly as possible.

If the club secretary changes or moves address it is essential that you notify us and the relevant league in writing immediately.

If the club secretary is going away on holiday/business etc we can temporarily arrange to forward correspondence to another individual within your club. Please let the office have your holiday dates together with the temporary secretary's name, address, e-mail and telephone number.

It is important to keep us up to date with any changes as correspondence is sent throughout the season, and often requires urgent attention, particularly discipline and fixtures.

Westmorland County FA has a data protection policy in place. Details of individuals involved with football clubs are not circulated to any companies and organisations independent of the association.

Website

www.WestmorlandFA.com is a valuable resource about local football in Westmorland. A wide range of information is available under the Development, Governance, Fixtures and Results, Get Into Football and News menus. If you want to take a coaching course or referee training, you can now book on-line through the website. During the season don't miss our County Cups pages to see the latest draws and results.

If you would like to see other information published on the website, please let us know.

The Members Section allows any club official to view your club's registered players, suspended players, discipline cases and monies outstanding. The range of services offered here is growing and this section will soon become vital to anyone with an active role in local football.

Club Affiliation

Every club, regardless of which League they play in, must affiliate to their Parent County FA, each season.

Existing affiliated clubs are automatically sent an affiliation form in April/May each year, which provides details of affiliation, cup entry and insurance fees. The affiliation form needs to be completed in full, indicating which cup competitions your club wishes to enter and returned with the appropriate fees by the date specified.

Separate affiliation forms are required for open age and youth clubs. Forms are required to be returned to the Westmorland County FA with the appropriate fee by 10 June each year. Clubs failing to affiliate by this date will receive an additional late fine which must be paid in addition to the affiliation monies.

Your club must enter at least one of our cup competitions.

Your club only pay Public Liability Insurance to their parent county FA – not to every County FA you affiliate with.

Youth Clubs please note that you only need to pay one affiliation fee per club not per team. Although the fee depends on the age group (Youth or Junior) of your oldest team – see table below.

Age Group	Affiliation Type
Under 8 and 10	Junior
Under 12 – 16	Youth

Handbooks

Your club will be sent a supply of our handbooks in August each year. Copies will be provided for the club secretary and team managers.

Player Registration

Whichever league your club compete in you will need to ensure that **ALL** your players are registered with us. Please check with individual leagues on their requirements.

After your club have affiliated each season, the club secretary will be sent a copy of a block registration form, which lists the players registered the previous season. If you are a new club, then for the first season, individual registration forms will be provided.

Each club must complete/amend the block registration form – the form **MUST** be submitted prior to your club's first game. Youth Clubs may, if necessary, photocopy the block registration form to allow copies to be provided to each team/age group.

Any players who do not sign the block registration form must then complete an individual registration form. A supply of these forms are sent with the block registration form. Additional forms are available from your league.

We do not require copies of birth certificates/proof of age with Player Registration forms. However, you should check with your respective league on their rules and regulations.

Any new players to your club must also complete individual registration forms.

Individual Player Registration Forms are in a carbonised/triplicate format. Once completed in full, the white copy should be returned to our office, the yellow copy forwarded to the appropriate league and the pink retained for club records. Forms will be returned to the club secretary if any information is missing – **please before submitting the form ensure that all sections are completed to avoid a delay in registering a player.**

Your club will be fined for playing any unregistered players and eliminated from cup competitions if the unregistered/ineligible player played in one of our competitions.

It is easier for your club, and us, if as many players as possible sign the block registration form.

Remember to ensure all your players are registered with the Westmorland County FA.

Please refer to Rule 18 of our Membership Rules for full Player Registration Rules.

A list of registered players will be sent to clubs to confirm registration.

Transfer of Players

Clubs should check with respective leagues before registering a player who is a member of another club. If your club wishes to sign a player who is currently registered for another club within the same league, the Transfer Section of the Player Registration Form needs to be completed, including the signature of both club secretaries.

Foreign Players

FIFA rules require each player over 12 years old to obtain International Clearance from The FA. However, if a child born abroad comes into the Country before they were 12, they do not need International Clearance.

Details of how to obtain clearance are available on our website, using the following link:

<http://www.westmorlandfa.com/Governance/GuidanceandPolicies/> and then clicking on the related document link

You will need to provide us with a copy of the International Clearance to enable us to register the player. Please note that players requiring International Clearance must **NOT** participate in football until clearance has been granted and registration received by us.

Age Bands

Players are not permitted to play in open age football until they reach the age of 16. Once an individual reaches their 16th birthday, they are immediately eligible to play in open age football.

A child in the age ranges Under 7, Under 8, Under 9, Under 10, Under 11, Under 12, Under 13, Under 14 and Under 15 must not play in any match where any other player is older or younger by 2 years or more. Please remember, Under 6's, Under 7's and Under 8's are not permitted to play in leagues or tournaments where results are collected or published or winner trophies are presented. This is deemed to be detrimental to the development of the player.

Boys and girls aged 12 or over are prohibited from participating in the same match. Mixed gender football can be played in the Under 7, Under 8, Under 9, Under 10 and Under 11 age ranges.

County Cup Competitions

Each club has to enter at least one of our cup competitions. Your club need to indicate on the affiliation form which cup competitions you wish to enter.

Cup competitions fixtures will be notified to your club secretary but can also be found on our website. Please ensure you read and follow the "Important Notes for Club Secretaries" on the front page of the fixtures.

Draws for subsequent rounds will usually be on our website by lunchtime on Monday following the previous round's games.

It is essential that you refer to the rules for each cup competition in our handbook or by checking our website.

Please ensure that your club:

- Registers **ALL** players in accordance with rule to avoid playing unregistered/ineligible players

Please remember to:

- Acknowledge the fixture when received, either by e-mail (info@westmorlandfa.com), telephone or returning the postcard supplied with the fixture paperwork
- Home teams must telephone our office, leaving a message on the answerphone, giving results of the fixture, before 6pm on day of the game

- Ensure the team sheet is completed in full (including first and last names for each player and substitute) and the opposition's result card are returned within 3 days of the game
- Ensure goalscorers are indicated on team sheet
- Ensure you have given the referee a mark from 0 to 100

Postponing of County Cup Competitions

We have a recommended procedure for determining the suitability of grounds in adverse weather conditions. This procedure can be found in our handbook under the General Information section or on our website - www.westmorlandfa.com/FixturesAndResults/CountyCups clicking on the related document link.

It is important that this procedure is followed as disciplinary action may be taken against your club if not.

Payments to Match Officials

Match Officials fees and expenses must be paid before the game in the dressing room by the home club. Details of fees and expenses are available in our handbook (Cup Competition Rules section – Rule 19) or alternatively on our website (www.westmorlandfa.com/FixturesAndResults/CountyCups clicking on the relevant cup competition page and the competition rule link).

Referees

The appointment of registered referees to matches is in the main the responsibility of the respective league or County Cup secretary. Every referee has the duty of reporting incidents of player misconduct to the Westmorland County FA. This can be done without the issuing of red or yellow cards to the individuals involved.

In the event of the non-appearance of an appointed referee or in competitions where the appointment of referees is not organised, both clubs shall agree upon a competent individual to act as match official. Should she/he not be a registered referee, this 'club referee' has the full powers, status and authority of a registered referee and has the responsibility of reporting any misconduct to the Westmorland County FA. Misconduct report forms and advice on completion is available by contacting the Westmorland County FA. Forms are also available to download at <http://www.westmorlandfa.com/GetIntoFootball/Refereeing/ReportingMisconduct/>

Discipline

Please read the relevant pages in our handbook or on our website to familiarise yourself with discipline rules, regulations and procedures. If you have any queries please contact our office for help and advice.

It is the club secretary's responsibility to ensure that all discipline forms are completed and returned to the County FA by the due date. It is also the club's responsibility to pay any associated monies in the first instance. We know that in some cases, secretaries pass the discipline forms to the individual players, or to team managers, trusting that they will send them back on time, correctly completed with the appropriate payment. In the majority of cases this happens. However, on the occasions when they are not returned on time and penalties are imposed, it is not simply acceptable to say that the player/manager is at fault as the onus is on the club secretary to ensure they are returned by the due date, correctly completed and accompanied by any monies due.

How to deal with Cautions

These are the simplest to deal with, and require only the details of the player concerned and payment of the administration fee to be returned to our offices. There is a 14-day period in which to complete this process and the return date is clearly shown on the form. The player does no longer need to sign the caution form. Please note that there is NO right of appeal against an individual caution, other than in a case of mistaken identity, when the offending player must be identified.

How to deal with Send-Offs

There a number of reasons why a player can be sent off and each of these have a recommended punishment that the player is subsequently offered. It is therefore imperative that secretaries read the charge letter very carefully to find out the nature of the charge and who has been charged.

Again there is a 14-day period in which to complete and return the form and payment. The player and club secretary must complete the form indicating the player's choice of action. (see below for details on the four choices available).

How to deal with Misconduct Charges

As with sending off's there are a number of different reasons for a misconduct charge to be preferred. Charges can be raised against players, club officials and/or clubs. It is again imperative that secretaries read the charge letter very carefully to find out the nature of the charge and who has been charged. There may be occasions when a player is sent off and commits further misconduct after the sending off. If this happens then the player will receive an additional charge sheet. Again there is a 14-day period in which to complete and return the form and payment. The player and club secretary must complete the form indicating the player's choice of action. (see below for details on the three choices available).

What do the three choices on sending off or misconduct charge sheets mean?

The charge reply forms have 3 options:

a) **Option 1** – the participant accepts the charge

In many cases the player will be offered The Football Association's recommended suspension and fine based solely on the referees' report. The player can accept the referee's report and punishment by choosing this option. When returning the pro-forma, payment of the stated fine and administration charge must also accompany the form.

b) **Option 2** – the participant accepts the charge but wishes a Disciplinary Commission to consider a plea of mitigation before making a decision on any punishment

If the player has been offered a punishment and then selects this option, the offered suspension dates and fine are set aside, ie they do not come into force. The administration fee of £10 should be sent when returning the forms. Any punishment/suspension dates will be notified to the club after the matter has been considered by a Disciplinary Commission.

In ALL cases, selecting this option requires a written statement, signed by the person charged, giving the reasons for a plea of mitigation.

c) **Option 3** – Charge/report is not accepted and a Personal Hearing is requested

In this case any offered suspension and fine is set aside. Should the person or club wish any correspondence to be considered at the hearing then it must be sent to the

County FA before the date stipulated for the return of the pro-forma. In all cases, a written statement signed by the person charged giving the reasons why the charge is not accepted and for the request for a Personal Hearing should be made. A fee of £25 must accompany the request for a Personal Hearing together with the administration charge of £10.

Appeal Process

If a club and/or player are unhappy with the outcome of a case heard at a Disciplinary Commission, there is an appeal process to The FA; details of the process are included in the letter to the club notifying them of the outcome of the hearing.

Further details are available from our office or The FA website www.thefa.com/discipline.

It is important to remember that an Appeal to The Football Association is not a re-hearing of the case; essentially it is to ensure that the County FA have acted constitutionally and given the correct punishment for the misconduct that has been committed.

Suspension Lists

A weekly list of suspended players is available on our website - www.westmorlandfa.com/Governance/Discipline. Please ensure you check this list to avoid playing suspended players, which could result in further disciplinary action being taken against the club and player.

What happens if a player owes the club some money?

As mentioned earlier, it is the club's responsibility to pay any fines to the County FA in the first instance and then to recover the money from the player. If a player fails or refuses to reimburse the club, the club secretary should contact our office, in writing within 90 days of the offence, giving the full details. We will then write to the player, suspending the player until such time they reimburse the club. The suspension will only be removed when the player pays the total amount of money to the club.

No player below the statutory school leaving age or currently enrolled in higher education shall be required to reimburse their club. The player's club must pay any fine and/or administration charge arising out of misconduct committed by a child. If this is the case the club must make payment and the school or college should be indicated on the relevant pro-forma.

If you are in any doubt about any of these matters or are uncertain as to what can or cannot be reimbursed, please contact our office.

Club Finances

We are aware that for most clubs it is not practical to employ the services of a book-keeper/accountant due to the costs involved. On this basis, we would recommend that:

- Treasurers should keep separate records for income and expenditure. These should be updated on a regular basis and balanced at least on an annual basis.
- Cheques require at least 2 signatures
- All books and vouchers must be retained for at least 2 seasons preceding the current season
- Each club must hold an Annual General Meeting when an audited Income/Expenditure Statement and Balance Sheet should be presented

Club Rules

Although many clubs are merely a group of friends who want to play football together, it is essential to realise that it is necessary to conform to certain regulations. In effect, the “club” must be properly constituted.

A set of Standard Club Rules, which are recommended by The Football Association for adoption by all football clubs are available on our website (www.westmorlandfa.com/Governance/RulesandRegulations). Adoption of these rules by your club should help to ensure a dispute free season and enable the club to be run smoothly.

Annual General Meeting

Your club must send at least one representative to the AGM. Failure to be represented will result in a fine.

Codes of Conduct

Your club should familiarise themselves with the Codes of Conduct detailed in our handbook and on our website (www.westmorlandfa.com/Development/Coaches+Association/Codes+of+Conduct). It is every club’s responsibility for the action of its players, officials and spectators and is required to take all precautions necessary to prevent spectators, threatening, assaulting or using obscene language to officials and players during or after matches.

Free/Vacant Dates

Please remember to apply, in writing, at least 28 days prior to the required date if your club wants a free/vacant date in one of our cup competitions. Your club will only be permitted 2 vacant dates per team each season. Please note that no free dates will be permitted for semi-final and final ties being held on published dates.

Standard Fines

Club secretaries and officials should familiarise themselves with the standard fines listed in our handbook, to assist your club in avoiding fines and to help improve the running of football within the county.

Suggestions, Praise and Complaints

If you have a comment or complaint about our services, we would like to know. We aim to provide the best possible care for our customers and your views will help us to get things right. If you are unhappy with the quality of any element of service you received from Westmorland County FA, please advise the association as soon as possible. If we have done something well or could improve our service to you, please let the association know. Correspondence should be forwarded to the Chief Executive.

FA Charter Standard

The FA Charter Standard Scheme is a core component of The FA Football Development programme. The scheme establishes minimum standards for football development and acts as a quality assurance mechanism recognising well run leagues, clubs and colleges.



In summary the FA Charter Standard rewards clubs who demonstrate a commitment to raising standards in the following areas:

- Administration
- Coaching
- Child Protection

This award is available for both Youth and Adult Clubs. Youth Clubs need to demonstrate management, child protection, qualified coaches, codes of conduct and insurance, whilst Adult Clubs require management, insurance, first aid qualifications and codes of conduct.

For further information please contact the Football Development Officer.

Mixed Football

Please remember that current Football Association Rule C4 prohibits boys and girls aged 12 or over from participating in the same match. Mixed gender football can continue in the under 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 age ranges.

Public Liability Insurance

As part of your club's affiliation, your club make a contribution towards the Association's Public Liability Insurance policy. For further details on what this policy covers, please refer to the relevant pages in our handbook or visit www.sportsquard.co.uk.

Personal Accident Insurance

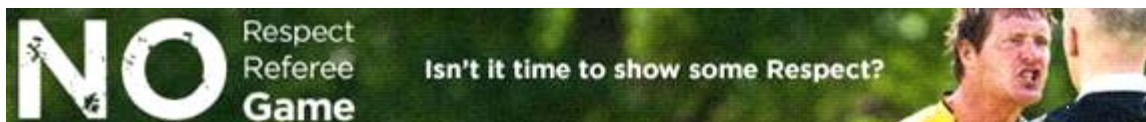
The Association strongly recommends your club consider obtaining Personal Accident Insurance for your players. There have been several cases recently when players have been injured (broken leg etc) whilst playing resulting in long term sickness from work. These players have faced financial difficulties, particularly if they are self-employed. If players/clubs had Personal Accident Insurance they may/would have been able to claim for loss of earnings.

Benevolent Fund

The Association has a Benevolent Fund which makes grants to individuals involved in football who experience financial difficulties. An application form for a grant can be obtained from the Chief Executive.

The Football Association also runs a similar scheme. Further information is also available from the Chief Executive.

Respect



Respect is The FA's programme of activities to combat unacceptable behaviour in our game at every level - on the pitch and from the sidelines

Respect will ensure a safe, positive environment for everyone to enjoy football. From the start it will have an impact on the following areas:

Referee recruitment and retention: By tackling abuse towards match officials, we hope to reduce the stream of referees understandably leaving the game.

Participation within youth football: Abuse and pressure from the sidelines needs to stop if we are to ensure young children enjoy, stay and progress in the game.

Coaching and player development: An encouraging and player-centred approach is vital if we are to improve coaching standards - particularly for the key 5-11 age-group. It's simple: better coaches produce better players.

Safeguarding children: Everyone in football has a duty of care towards children - ensuring they are able to play football in a safe, enjoyable environment free of abuse, bullying and discrimination.

If you would like more information on this programme or would like your club to sign up to it, please contact the Chief Executive.

Membership Services

Have you become a member on our website yet? Becoming a member allows you to view your club's registered and suspended players, discipline cases and monies outstanding.

If you require any help or assistance in registering as a member, please contact Annette or Bridget.

Coach Education Programme

We run Coach Education programme, providing Level 1 and 2 Coaching Courses FA Youth Award, Emergency Aid and Safeguarding Children Workshops throughout the season.



Courses are advertised on our website and through mailshots to clubs.

We can also organise courses for individual club(s), providing the number of participants meet our minimum requirements. Please contact our office for further details.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

From the start of the 2009-10 season, all youth clubs require a qualified Club Welfare Officer. The individual must have attended a FA Safeguarding Children Course and undergone a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check through The FA. Your youth club will be unable to affiliate and participate in football until this process has been completed. During the 2009-10 season, the Club Welfare Officer will also need to attend a Welfare Officers Workshop (WOW) to enable the youth club to affiliate for the 2010-11 season. Don't leave the training of existing or replacement Club Welfare Officers until the last minute and risk your youth teams not being able to affiliate and not being able to play football. CRB checks can be carried out by prior arrangement at the Westmorland County FA offices. For further information, advice and guidance on safeguarding matters and Club Welfare Officer training courses please contact the Chief Executive.

Funding and Facility Development Guide

Playing and enjoying football should not be restricted by a lack of decent football pitches or other facilities. The aim of Westmorland County FA is to increase the quality and quantity of pitches and facilities across the county, providing more opportunities and more enjoyment for all.

For help and advice on many of the funding possibilities please contact the Football Development Officer.

The main funding schemes are:

The Football Foundation Facilities Scheme provides money to develop new or improved facilities for community benefit. There are 2 grants available: under and over £20,000, with the under £20,000 grants, known as “build the Game”, available for smaller projects such as pitch drainage, changing room refurbishment etc. www.footballfoundation.org.uk/apply/facilities-grant/

The Football Foundation ‘Grow the Game’ Small Grants Scheme offers a maximum of £5,000 towards the cost of providing new grassroots football activity and increasing participation in the game. www.footballfoundation.org.uk/apply/community-grants/grow-the-game/

The Football Stadia Improvement Fund (FSIF) provides money to clubs that want to improve their facilities for players, officials and spectators. The maximum grant available is £20,000 for clubs at Step 7 (County League) and below. www.footballfoundation.org.uk/apply/football-stadia-improvement-funding-grants/

The Football Foundation Goalpost Safety Scheme supports the replacement of unsafe goalposts that fail British Goalpost Safety Standards by providing funding of 50% towards the purchase of a pair of goalposts up to a ceiling of £3,000. www.footballfoundation.org.uk/apply/goalpost-safety-grant/

The Sport England Small Grants Programme has been set up to support local community sports projects which seek to increase and sustain participation or develop opportunities for people to excel at a chosen sport. www.sportengland.org/funding/small_grants.aspx

The Sport England Sportsmatch Programme increases the investment in community sport by matching new sponsorship money pound for pound. www.sportengland.org/funding/sportsmatch.aspx

The Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) Scheme distinguishing clubs from businesses for rates and tax purposes, ensuring money is kept in sports clubs. By becoming a CASC, clubs will be entitled to 80% mandatory relief, Gift Aid donations and exemption from some levels of Corporation Tax. www.cascinfo.co.uk

We hope that you find this booklet helpful. We understand and appreciate that the role of a club secretary can be onerous and that you are doing the job voluntarily. Please take comfort though in the fact that you are playing a vital role in grassroots football; clubs cannot function properly without people like yourselves. The more efficient you are, the fewer problems the club has in its day-to-day running.

Remember, we are here to assist you as much as possible; please do not hesitate to contact us if you need any advice or guidance.