

ONE ARGYLE

Plymouth Argyle FC & Argyle Community Trust response to the COVID-19 pandemic



FOREWORD

Plymouth Argyle and its official charity, Argyle Community Trust, has long been associated with their strong community links within the city of Plymouth and throughout Devon and Cornwall.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a huge test of these aspects of our identity and our core values as a club and I am proud of the way we have responded to these challenges.

Since early in March 2020 when the UK entered lockdown and football halted, we immediately focused our attention on both how the club could survive and how we could play our part in the region, in meeting the unprecedented challenges within our local community.

Within this report we highlight the contributions and efforts we have made and assess the impacts.

Of course, we know that up and down the country so many people and organisations have come together to tackle the challenges communities have faced and that our efforts are modest when compared to the unbelievable

commitment and contribution made by frontline health care staff and workers.

Our focus has been centred around supporting the NHS operation wherever we can, reaching out and supporting the community that we serve and looking after the staff employed at the club.

From the beginning of the pandemic right through until January 2021, Home Park was utilised by the NHS to provide the non-critical services of phlebotomy and antenatal screening which were moved away from Derriford Hospital as the virus took hold. From the beginning of 2021 it has become the site for a mass vaccination centre for the Plymouth area with over fifteen thousand people a week receiving vaccinations. It isn't of course how we saw the new Mayflower Grandstand being used so soon after its redevelopment however we have been honoured to be the key location within the city for this critical community service.

Throughout Plymouth, Devon and Cornwall, our charity has actively been involved in supporting our communities in a time of need.

This has ranged from undertaking prescription drops, food shopping for those shielding, creation of sport engagement packs for young people, delivery of virtual provisions to staff being redeployed into schools supporting key workers. The work undertaken has varied as we went through the pandemic and whilst we know COVID-19 will have impacted many, it is our aim to ensure we can support those after the pandemic too.



OUR FOCUS HAS BEEN CENTRED AROUND SUPPORTING THE NHS OPERATION WHEREVER WE CAN, REACHING OUT AND SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY THAT WE SERVE AND LOOKING AFTER THE STAFF EMPLOYED AT THE CLUB."



During these unpredictable and uncertain times, a priority has been looking after our employees by ensuring that if they have not been able to work and carry out their normal duties, that they receive a topped-up wage over and above the government's furlough scheme. PAFC staff including players and management, as well as our charity's workforce, have volunteered to carry out numerous community initiatives and have undertaken phone calls to support local residents.

These are just some of the highlights from the club and charity wide effort documented in this report and I would like to personally thank everyone who has been involved from Plymouth Argyle who has contributed. What it does show to underline is how in these worst of times the club and the Trust have been able to demonstrate and live by the values it has set out and the importance it places on the community it is part of.

Andrew Parkinson
Club CEO

INTRO

Halfway through the 2019/2020 season, we never imagined that football would come to a halt, let alone the world. In February 2020, we were in the process of developing a strategy for Plymouth Argyle Football Club. This strategy had a huge focus on community connectivity, however this was placed on hold due to the pandemic.

Whilst the charity launched its strategy in 2019, when the pandemic hit we knew some of our strategic aims could not be fulfilled. With daily announcements being made by the Government we worked tirelessly behind the scenes to understand how we could continue to support our communities during this unprecedented time.

The following report details the areas we worked on that we feel would help keep us connected, provide support during the pandemic, and care for our staff.



METHODOLOGY

This report has been created using effective evaluation software to analyse the impact of the work of Plymouth Argyle Football Club and Argyle Community Trust during the period affected by COVID-19, a global pandemic.

All the data captured in this report has been registered on Substance Views, software designed by national partners such as the Premier League, to register the strength and impact of organisations. In the absence of a large-scale impact study, it is not possible to know how many people improved or maintained their physical or mental health through the COVID-19 response work, or what would have happened to young people's educational outcomes if they had not been supported by the Trust. This means, of course, that it is also not possible to put a social value on the work. We do know that the annual cost of treating someone with anxiety or depression is £12,000. This signifies that if Plymouth Argyle Football Club and Argyle Community Trust can positively impact a fraction of the people who we have worked with during this pandemic then the value of that work will be extremely significant.



ONE ARGYLE IN NUMBERS

Community Engagement

1484

CAF Relief Food, education and wellbeing programme to support families around cookery and budgeting. 300 people supported between 62 families across 7 different communities in the city. 1,484 hours of engagement.

500

Cultural Exchange Packs
100 families engaged in our cultural pen pal project.

50 Migrant families received quintessentially British food hampers and sports equipment.
50 British families received traditional Nigerian food and literature.
Over 500 people supported in total.

247

PL Kicks Intergenerational pen-pals
247 local elderly residents sent 'Football Trivia' and 'Hello' letters written by PL Kicks participants.

2916

School Support NCS Staff worked across 4 local schools, delivering Careers and Progression Guidance support sessions for Year 10, 11 & 12. Staff had seen a total of 1,061 young people equalling 2,916 hours of individual engagement during a 4 month period in Autumn 2020.

Disability

216

Junior Ability Counts
Juniors ages 5-16 and adults 16 plus with a disability, whether physical, learning, behavioural or mental health take part in fun and inclusive football activity sessions in a safe and supportive environment.

216 sustained participants over the 12 month period.

34

ACT staff delivered lockdown activity packs to 34 individual participants of Junior Ability Counts. These packs were designed to keep participants active and engaged during lockdown.

Health & Wellbeing

1256

Tackling Loneliness Together
1,256 people supported.

6716

6,716 hours of engagement activities, including: online catch ups, telephone calls and COVID-19 safe activities.

1750

Lockdown Community Support
1,750 Phone calls made to fans and season-ticket holders.

146 Garden gate visits.

124 Food shops delivered for those isolating.

185 Hours supporting our community partners.

300 Staffing hours contributed to supporting local charities.

31 Hours of online activities delivered.

200 Pharmacy collections delivered to the most clinical vulnerable.

45 Electronic tablets provided to overcome digital exclusion.

1,000 Keep-in-touch letters & snoods sent to local people.

Participation

550

Q&As with professional staff/players
8 Q&A sessions hosted with professional players, including Ryan Hardie and Club Captain Gary Sawyer.

Over 550 local children joined in a session to quiz their favourite players about a range of topics. Over 300 questions were sent in by budding young players and answered by our first-team squad, including how to stay fit and healthy from home.

580

Online ADC/LTPD Sessions
PAFC and ACT coaches provided 3 online sessions each week, giving local children the chance to sharpen their skills from the safety of their back gardens.

Nearly 30 hours of skills, drills and training advice was shared by our professional coaches.

580 participants engaged in sessions, which also provided health, well-being and resilience learning alongside practical sport.



Club

£500k

Value of support for the NHS through vaccinations at Home Park.

360

Owner and Chairman Simon Hallett gifted over 360 staff with a £20 amazon voucher each, totalling £6,000. The generous gesture from Simon and his wife Jane was to say thank you and lift morale.

10k

The concourse of the Lyndhurst stand at Home Park was transformed into a temporary food distribution site to ensure that 10,000 Plymothians received a Christmas Dinner.

Academy

15

Ex-Academy graduates involved in the first team squad during season 2020/2021.

TIMELINE of events and demographic reach

2020

MAR

- NHS Home Park takeover
- Fans' eSports team launched
- Start of E-Learning
- John Lucas Green Army Stay Fit Programme
- PAFC Stay Home Weekly Challenges
- Virtual Sessions start
- Manadon stock donation to Shekinah

APR

- Staff remain on full pay
- Support local council & charities with medical prescription & food deliveries
- Phone calls to season ticket holders start
- Manadon opens to NHS
- Supporting our over 55's (iPad, calls, check-in)
- Thank You NHS pitch pattern
- Online Virtual FITFANS

MAY

- Learn, Play, Succeed packs for Plymouth school children
- Players donate shirts for charity
- Pilgrim Pete Pizza Packs for secondary school children
- PL Primary Stars design a kit for the NHS
- Picnic Packs for local families
- Partnership with Nurse Plus

JUN

- Manadon reopens
- Unify Plymouth packages bringing communities together
- EFL Extra Time Hub continued support within the community

JUL

- Plymouth City Council ACT food parcels to local schools
- Trust undertook a SWOT analysis of its operations during COVID-19 relief
- Get Set to Shine relaunch

AUG

- NCS Keep Doing Good goes live to help post Lockdown
- Start of Tackling Loneliness Together project with EFL Trust
- Education scholars on NCS KDG supporting Tackling Loneliness project putting together 1000 letters for over 70's season ticket holders





SEPT

- Mayflower 400 Get Active campaign of sport, health and wellbeing restarted
- Mayflower 400 volunteers and Trust staff supported Active Devon with the #STEPtember Get Active campaign
- Education scholars lead on their Social Action for NCS Keep Doing Good summer programme supporting the Tackling Loneliness Together project
- Tackling Loneliness Together socially distanced Walk and Talk for over 50's

OCT

- Tackling Loneliness Project Activity and Wellbeing Packs
- October Half Term packed lunches for local school children on Free School Meals

NOV

- Argyle Veterans project starts
- Donation of Electronic devices to help keep ex-service personnel connected during lockdown

DEC

- With Love This Christmas hampers
- PAFC Academy Christmas carols at a local care home
- Christmas packs for Tackling Loneliness Together

2021 JAN

- PL Kicks staff delivering weekly food and activity packs across the city
- PAFC stadium Home Park opens as a vaccination centre
- John Lucas' 'Lockdown with Lucas' fitness video sessions

FEB

- Argyle Memories online for over 60's
- Education Stadium to Stadium charity
- Online activity packs
- CAF programme

MAR-OCT

- Vaccination centre operations extended at Home Park





FROM THESE SEATS, YOU HAVE
SUPPORTED US. NOW, WE
SUPPORT YOU."

SUPPORT
THE NHS

Nationally the NHS has been under huge pressure during the pandemic. With NHS staff putting their lives at risk, we felt honoured to help support them as much as possible. We did this in multiple ways but the main support was by way of providing our infrastructure to help vaccinate our communities on a large scale.

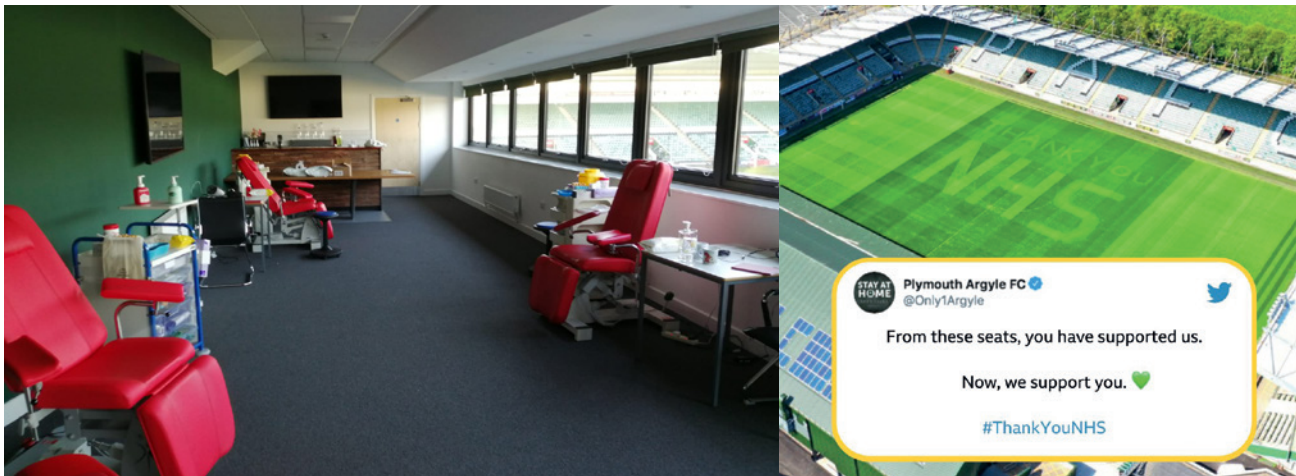
CASE STUDY

One of the first steps we took during the COVID-19 pandemic was to offer our support, facilities and services to the NHS who were in a time of need. We responded by offering our Home Park Stadium facility and Manadon Sports Hub to the NHS to use as needed. This saw us welcome the Phlebotomy and Antenatal departments to our grounds. By moving these busy services off-site from the main hospital, it allowed the NHS to focus and secure the main site for COVID-19 treatment, whilst other essential services were able to continue.

Free parking was made available for NHS staff and patients and the club provided storage for essential

equipment that included over thirty beds and sixty IT units for three months. In the height of the first lockdown the club displayed a unique dedication to the NHS on the Home Park Stadium pitch - "From these seats, you have supported us. Now, we support you."

In line with our vision and values, the club was eager to help in any way that we could with the assistance of facilities and services to the NHS. Then from December 2020, Home Park became one of 20 large vaccination centres in the UK. Set up for 6 months, NHS staff administered vaccinations to 15,000 people per week. Christian Kent, Head of Conferencing and Events, said, "Plymouth Argyle has been delighted to be able to offer Home Park stadium to the NHS during the pandemic. It has been vitally important for everyone that throughout such an important time services have remained constant. To be able to provide our stadium alongside the conferencing and events facility aligns perfectly with our vision and values as a community-focused club."



THE IMPACT



Phlebotomy and antenatal services operating from the site utilising 5 rooms



150-200 people using these services per week



Additional revenue stream for the facility, providing financial security during the pandemic and creating work demand for staff



1 April 2020 – 10 June 2021

- 72 weeks
- 5,208 supported
- £500,000 of support for the NHS through vaccinations at Home Park



Number of patients seen = 870,000



**20 December - 30 September
90,000 people x 2 = 180,000 vaccinations**



SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY

During national lockdowns and restrictions we worked to ensure that we supported our own fans but also the wider communities. Through multiple programmes we ensured we could stay involved with people, but also help those most at need. This ranged from delivering essentials and prescriptions to those shielding, contacting fans regularly, to developing COVID-19 sports equipment packs to help people stay physically and mentally active through the lockdowns, setting challenges and using professionals to ensure people remained positive.

THE IMPACT



CAF Relief - Food, education and wellbeing programme to support families around cookery and budgeting. 300 people supported between 62 families across 7 different communities in the city. 1484 hours of engagement



Cultural Exchange Project - 100 families engaged in our cultural pen pal project. 50 Migrant families received quintessentially British food hampers and sports equipment. 50 British families received traditional Nigerian food and literature. Over-500 people supported in total. Invested over £2500 in supporting the cities aim of improving community cohesion at a time when people were being kept apart.



Argyle Fit - Total weight lost: 141kg
Combined waste width loss - 135cms.
An average of 2.38 reduction in BMI score. Over the 12 weeks, we saw a 65% reduction in alcohol consumption per week. 74% of participants felt happier after finishing the programme. 68% of participants felt greater life satisfaction upon completion. 74% of participants felt their lives were more worthwhile upon finishing the programme. 31% reported that their anxiety levels had been reduced since this programme.



Learn & Play packs - Supported 50 Plymouth schools by providing food hampers and lunch packs to those local families in need of support. A team of 6 Argyle drivers delivered 100 packs each week, In total, Argyle staff drove a combined 423.8 miles to ensure children had access to nutritious food during school closures. 6000 packs, including food ingredients, sports equipment, reading books and learning sheets were delivered to local homes for children to enjoy during lockdown.

CASE STUDY



Christmas Donation to the hospital
In previous years, the football club has been known to visit the children's ward at Derriford Hospital to bring some festive cheer to those unfortunate enough to be in hospital for treatment during the holidays.

Sadly, due to the pandemic, the team and Pilgrim Pete were unable to attend this year. The club instead donated over £400 of gifts from the Argyle club shop which were delivered to the children. The first-team players were eager to ensure there were lots of gifts presented so donated half the money themselves.

There were five giant Christmas sacks filled with cuddly Rudolph bears, mini footballs, foam fingers, scarves, gloves, hats, stationery and keyrings plus much more.

The staff at the hospital thanked the club for their generous gesture, and for keeping the children in their thoughts even though we could not visit in person.



SUPPORT KEY WORKERS

Argyle Community Trust staff across Plymouth, Devon & Cornwall continued to operate within Primary Schools and offered provision to vulnerable children and the children of key workers during the pandemic. ACT Schools Community Coach, Rhys Hannon, attended Laura Green Primary in Plymouth, working with year groups from foundation to year 6.

CASE STUDY

Rhys delivered physical activity breaks which provided children with some stability, normality and essential physical fitness with the aim of giving some positivity to the children in a time when their health was being affected both physically and mentally. Additionally, Rhys supported children from home with phone calls, setting physical education challenges that the children could complete from home and engage with online videos, which included our club mascot Pilgrim Pete. This helped to improve the children's engagement with their education. Rhys' role was to support school and home-based children at Laura Green with their social, mental, emotional and physical well-being.

The lockdown inevitably created some negative effects on children's mental health. Working closely with them allowed us to identify and support those children. This created a relationship at a deeper level

to engage them in plans to move them forward socially, emotionally, mentally and physically. Rhys' role in the school gave children access to physical games throughout the day to help with socialising, just in a slightly different way. Additionally, this had an impact on children at home with physical games played on their own or against family.

We are proud to have had a positive impact on every child's well-being at Laura Green. Across a thirty-four-week period Rhys offered 1,020 hours of support to the pupils across a range of activities. This included offering half-term provisions, with certain children still being able to attend school activities.

Rhys was proud to be involved, "I absolutely loved being able to help and support Laura Green during this challenging period and helping the children access physical activity, and helping with social, mental, emotional and physical well-being. It has been a different challenge, but one the trust and school adapted fantastically to, supporting the children's needs across the whole school. The work was incredibly varied, including walking children to school to support families, to delivering COVID-19 safe physical education to children in and out of school, supporting their well-being across such a long and uncertain time. It has been rewarding to be able to engage children and have a positive impact in such difficult times."



I ABSOLUTELY LOVED BEING ABLE TO HELP AND SUPPORT LAIRA GREEN DURING THIS CHALLENGING PERIOD AND HELPING THE CHILDREN ACCESS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND HELPING WITH SOCIAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING."



The Headteacher of Laira Green added, "During each of the lockdown periods, our Plymouth Argyle coach, Rhys Hannon, continued to work with us in support of our children. He did a daily 'wake up, shake up' session which we streamed live to all our home learners, and he continued to provide physical education sessions and short activity breaks for our in-school learners. Rhys has become a pivotal member of our pastoral support team, providing a listening ear, encouragement and time outs if needed for our children, some of whom have struggled with their experiences during COVID-19. His bright and cheerful attitude throughout this difficult time has not only been invaluable to our children but greatly appreciated by staff too."

Stew Walbridge, Plymouth & South Hams Regional Manager, added, "The ability to be flexible and adaptable during the pandemic was vitally important to be able to offer impactful provisions within primary schools during COVID-19. Being able to meet the children and schools' needs is vital, and Rhys is a great example of what staff at the Trust have been doing across the pandemic. We are extremely proud to support the children and teachers of primary and secondary schools in Plymouth, Devon & Cornwall."

THE IMPACT



Mayflower Sporting Voyage - 3 schools. 7 classes. 197 pupils. 42 hours. E-learning Sporting Voyage - 5 schools. 12 classes. 380 pupils.



ACT worked across 34 different schools in Plymouth with coaches supporting school staff who were delivering to key workers and vulnerable children. ACT coaches delivered to 3060 children during the pandemic and provided PE sessions, in-school football and PSHE lessons for those still attending in person. Argyle Schools Coaches contributed over 2700 hours of face-to-face delivery throughout the pandemic.

“
THE ABILITY TO BE FLEXIBLE AND
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OFFER IMPACTFUL PROVISIONS WITHIN
PRIMARY SCHOOLS DURING COVID-19.”



CASE STUDY



EFL Day of Action

Plymouth Argyle and the Community Trust joined forces for an unforgettable experience for children of NHS workers for the EFL Day of Action, an initiative which saw all 72 member clubs host events to give back to their communities. Argyle opted to recognise the crucial role the NHS played throughout the pandemic.

Thirty children and their parents had an exclusive tour of Home Park and training session on the Pilgrims' training ground, followed by a picnic and Q&A session with Argyle first-team players.

Stewart Walbridge, event lead, said, "We were delighted to give something back to the families. Football has the ability to inspire, and we hope this experience instils a life-long passion for sport and Argyle. Importantly, it was another opportunity to express our gratitude to the NHS."

Argyle became one of the first clubs to offer facilities to ease the burden on the NHS. Having initially served as a phlebotomy and antenatal centre, Home Park was converted into a vaccination centre. Our Community Trust was extremely active in the region, delivering food parcels to residents, and tackling loneliness.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY FIGHTBACK

Testing times have seen people in communities really pull together. As a club, we were able to assist by using our expertise to provide educational support to those made redundant by the financial impact of the pandemic. We were also able to empower young people to contribute to social action efforts, on a voluntary basis, through the National Citizen Service programme. The Government's Kickstart programme has provided the opportunity to diversify our recruitment.

THE IMPACT



Employability Support - 24 adults enrolled on employability courses, supporting local people get back into work post-pandemic. 150 hours of career support and personal mentoring delivered by Argyle staff. 45 new qualifications achieved by learners to support their CV and job searching. 470 hours of social action completed by the learners, helping local residents struggling with isolation.



Social Action - 111 year 11 school leavers delivered 1,665 hours of social action across local communities during August 2020 through Keep Doing Good. 345 NCS Autumn completers 127 of whom completed 15+ hours social action during December collected food for local families. 1,905 hours of social action completed in Autumn 2020.



NCS Staff worked across 4 local schools, delivering Careers and Progression Guidance support sessions for Year 10, 11 & 12. Staff had seen a total of 1,061 young people equalling 2,916 hours of individual engagement during 4 months in Autumn 2020.

CASE STUDY



The Kickstart programme launched during the pandemic. Operating closely with the English Football League Trust and Department of Working Pensions, there are currently ten Kickstart employees enrolled within the club.

The programme provides 16-24 year olds with:

- 6-months paid employment
- Experience in the professional sport sector
- Training and workplace learning
- CV workshop training

Falmouth University graduate Talia Heggs was struggling to find employment following her studies, "Before I started university I knew competition would be fierce, then the pandemic hit. It was hard to remain positive with little job opportunity. I worked in the hospitality sector but was travelling significant distances. I had quite a few financial responsibilities so this was quite a stressful period for me."

Talia has been working as a Media Assistant with Plymouth Argyle since February. Thus far, she's been enjoying a plethora of roles, "I feel so lucky to be in this role. Not only has it given me an employment opportunity after a period of job instability, it's provided me with skills and experience for future sporting roles. Whatever the future of my employment at Plymouth Argyle holds; I can safely say I now have my foot in the door in a lucrative industry, which I am incredibly grateful for."



ENGAGE OUR FANS

It is the responsibility of any football club with its communities at the heart of its operations, to ensure the wellbeing of its supporters. This period therefore required our drive to support fans through a mixture of face-to-face, virtual and streaming mediums.

CASE STUDY



Phone calls made by Ryan Lowe to supporters during lockdown



Online mental health team talk



Visits made by players and management during lockdown



Argyle's Head of Fitness and Conditioning John Lucas used his expertise to help the Green Army remain active during lockdown



Academy Players Carols for Care Home



Provided support on streaming services

THE IMPACT



"Learn & Play packs - Supported 50 Plymouth schools by providing food hampers and lunch packs to those local families in need of support. A team of 6 Argyle drivers delivered 100 packs each week. In total, Argyle staff drove a combined total of 423.8 miles to ensure children had access to nutritious food during school closures. 6,000 packs, including food ingredients, sports equipment, reading books and learning sheets were delivered to local homes for children to enjoy during lockdown."



ENGAGE AND IMPROVE OUR FOOTBALL STRUCTURES

During the pandemic, the football club took the opportunity to review its strategy and plans with a focus on providing the best platform for players in Devon and Cornwall. Several changes were made to the academy with investment in player recruitment, coaching staff, player pathways and continuous professional development to improve the environment and opportunities for young players.

Academy staff continued their support by engaging with Under 8's through to Under 18's by providing online webinars, individualised sessions, virtual teammates, and support sessions.

CASE STUDY

Virtual Question and Answer Case Study 2021

During Lockdown the Argyle Community Trust offered online support to those children who would regularly attend their weekly sessions including:

- Weekly Physical Challenge
- Weekly PSHE workshop
- Live Q&A with a current or ex-professional footballer

The Live Q&A's were well attended with over 550 children engaging with eight events. Plymouth Argyle Club Captain Gary Sawyer, Argyle Striker - Ryan Hardie and current Preston North End Defender

Jordan Storey joined us on the series.

The sessions demonstrated the different routes the players had taken into the professional game, some playing through academy ranks and others playing through the non-league ladder. There was a total of 576 minutes of engagement from 550 children across the eight sessions.

Argyle Community Trust Regional Manager Stew Walbridge explained, "The events aimed to inspire and motivate the futures of the children. It was vitally important for us to highlight the different routes into the professional game but also the education the players have had to help them follow their own football careers."

Jon Dawe, who is a parent and local grassroots coach, added, "The webinar Series provided a brilliant insight for the children into the sheer hard work, commitment, determination and resilience that is needed to succeed in the elite-level game."

Jordan, a child from our Long-Term Player Development Centre who attended multiple events, stated, "Asking questions to a professional player is something I have always wanted to do. I looked forward to seeing them every week, it was amazing. My favourite was Ryan Hardie because I'm a striker too!"

THE IMPACT



Q&A Professional Staff/Players
- 10 Q&A sessions hosted with professional players, including fan favourites Danny Mayor, Ryan Hardie, and Club Captain Gary Sawyer



Over 600 local children joined in a session to quiz their favourite players about a range of topics. Over 300 questions were sent in by budding young players and answered by our first-team squad, including how to stay fit and healthy from home.



Online ADC/LTPD Sessions - PAFC and ACT coaches provided 3 online sessions each week, giving local children the chance to sharpen their skills from the safety of their back gardens. Nearly 30 hours of skills, drill and training advice was shared by our professional coaches. 580 participants engaged in sessions, which also provided health, well-being and resilience learning alongside practical sport.





SUPPORTING THE VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

The will to support, the drive to combat harm and the commitment to sustaining positive contact has led to Plymouth Argyle and Argyle Community Trust being able to care for the city's most vulnerable. Virtual engagement with disabled players has reduced levels of anxiety amongst participants and continuing with the 'It's a Goal' programme which combats poor mental health has been a great source of support for adults in Plymouth.

CASE STUDY

Argyle Community Trust has been proud to deliver the 'Tackling Loneliness Together' project which has connected older people who were at risk of loneliness during the pandemic. During this time, the EFL Trust were awarded £1.3 million from the Department of Digital Culture Media and Sport to deliver the project. Plymouth Argyle was one of the 32 organisations chosen to expand activities under the campaign which included befriending phone calls, online social groups, pen pal schemes, walking groups and 'garden gate' conversations to reach people when they needed it most. Some key work on the programme included:

- **3,000** phone calls made by the Trust to check on peoples' wellbeing. Club Chairman Simon Hallett made many phone calls from America to supporters.
- 4 online sessions delivered via Zoom every week aimed at different target audiences including:
- Coffee morning open to anyone over 60
- Coffee morning for Armed Forces Veterans



- Argyle Memories – Opportunity for Argyle/football fans to share stories
- Seated exercise class for a group of males with dementia

Work was undertaken to provide the community with electronic devices and digital skills to enable them to keep in contact with friends and family, attend online sessions and order shopping online.

- Over **1,000** letters sent to older people to offer support. Monthly support packs sent out which included ways to keep physically and mentally active, puzzle books and Argyle masks and snoods. A pen pal scheme between care home residents and primary school children was also developed.
- **15** weekly garden gate visits to the lonely and vulnerable to check on their wellbeing. For many this was the only conversation they may have had.
- Several face-to-face sessions, including a walk & talk group in Central Park, coffee mornings and walking football to help people integrate back into the community.
- Support for local initiatives including Plymouth City Council's Caring for Plymouth scheme and Four Greens Community Trust's food bank which saw us deliver almost 800 food parcels and over **200** medication prescriptions.

The story of Roger, an Argyle fan of 75 years, is just one example of the positive work. Just before the first lockdown, Roger's wife of 60 years suddenly passed. Roger said, "I didn't know where I was at

that particular time, it was hard to keep going. I felt like I didn't want to go on and it was hard to get to grips with. The support has pulled me off the floor and I don't know where I would be without it."

Roger received weekly phone calls and garden gate visits from staff, and a call from Club Chairman Simon Hallett and First Team Coach Kevin Nancekivell. Roger also attended our online Argyle Memories group. Roger is looking forward to returning to Argyle next season and taking part in the Trust's provisions.

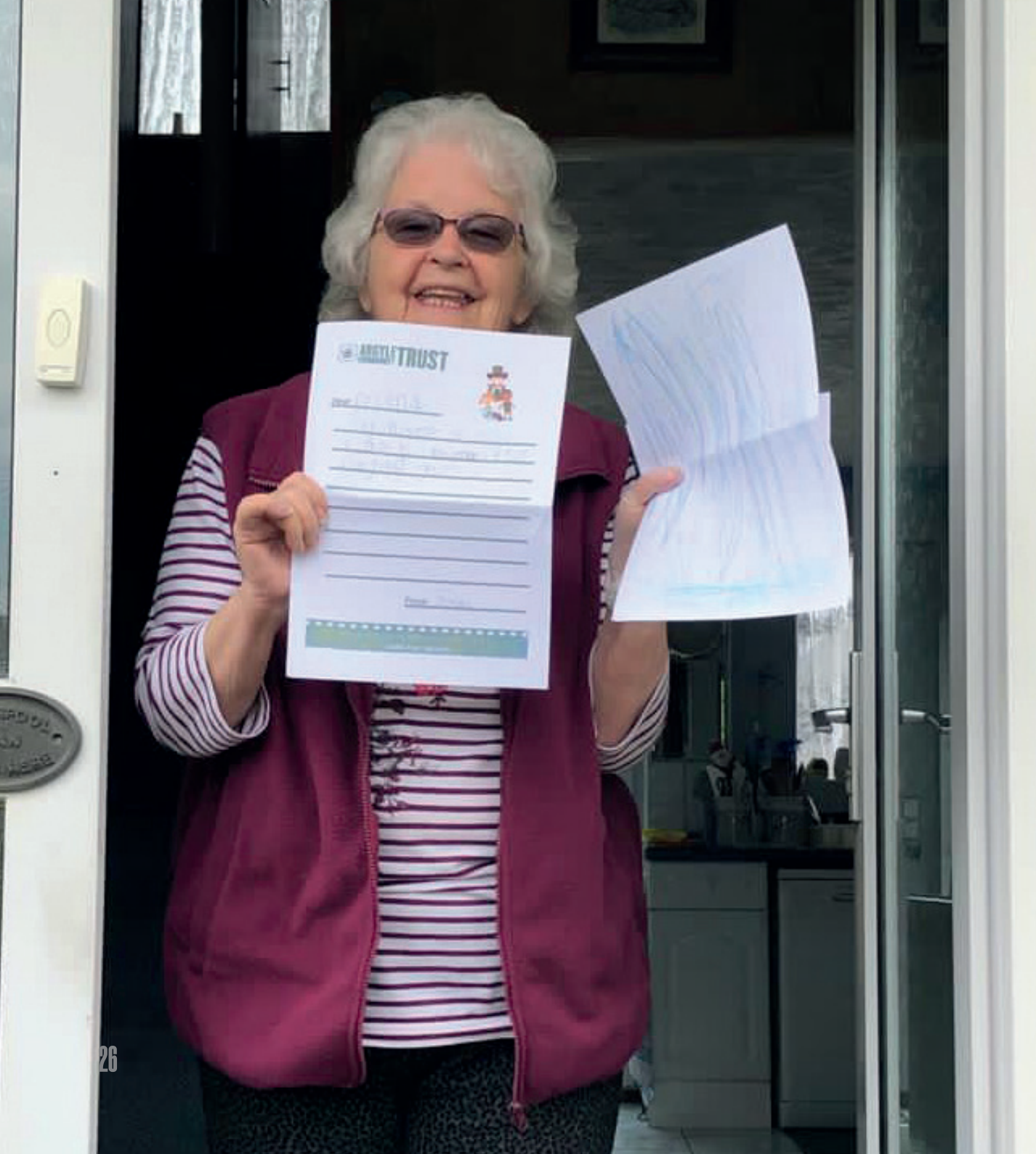
Hand delivery of season tickets to vulnerable fans

Following the Government announcement that reduced numbers would be allowed to return to stadiums, the Green Army following couldn't wait to get their season tickets.

With many supporters finding it overwhelming and challenging to come to Home Park and collect their tickets, to offer support to fans, a group of volunteers made up of club and community trust staff, relatives of staff and members of the Argyle Fans' Trust, hand-delivered season tickets to the most vulnerable.

Ten drivers totalling **64** hours of driving worked across Plymouth to ensure season ticket holders received their cards in time to return to Home Park.

Fans were overjoyed with this gesture and were eagerly looking out their windows to spot an Argyle volunteer arriving. One volunteer reported the moment a 50-year-old supporter stood on his front step hopping with excitement as they approached the house.



Special visits to Home Park

With fans able to return, Plymouth Argyle took the opportunity to reach out to vulnerable supporters to offer them the experience of watching a live game.

A carer of one fan, who was receiving end of life care, reached out to the club asking to help with their request to be able to see one more game. Working with his care team, the club was able to invite the supporter to watch a game before Christmas.

The fan said, "I really enjoyed being back at a live game for the first time since March, it gave me a much-needed lift. Thank you for arranging this for me."

On the same evening, Argyle welcomed the family of a supporter who had suddenly passed away. The young children and their mother were invited to the game to remember their father in one of the places he enjoyed visiting. Mum Leanne said, "Wow! And thank you so much, it was amazing. It means so much to us all."



THE IMPACT



Partner – Four Greens Trust -
Supported local 'Well-Being' Hubs for 15 weeks and counting in distributing food hampers across the North of the city. To date, over 450 weekly food parcels have been dropped off to families experiencing food poverty.



Disability Provision- 45 Sessions.
67.5 Hours of provision.
221 Participants.



It's a Goal - 22 sessions. 24 average attendances. 10 Therapy sessions delivered & in partnership with Livewell Southwest STEPS.



Tackling Loneliness Together -
Activities – 80 Attendees – 908 individual hours of engagement.
Online – 62 Attendees – 651 individual hours of engagement.
Phone Calls – 1114 Attendees – 5157 individual hours of engagement based on 1 hour per phone call.
Postal – 1243 Attendees.



CARE FOR
OUR STAFF



IT MADE ME FEEL VALUED AND APPRECIATED AS AN EMPLOYEE.”

The pandemic has been devastating, not only in terms of employment but also in terms of social interaction, health and well-being across all businesses in the region.

Our primary focus was to secure future employment for our staff, but to also ensure we engaged with the workforce throughout, supporting them in multiple ways. It was important to ensure we were open, honest and transparent with staff but to also try to keep our workforce focussed and healthy.

Through developing multiple scenarios and financial planning we developed specific plans for various situations. This involved utilising the support mechanisms available such as furlough, business grants and support from funders whilst ensuring we protected our assets.

As restrictions changed, we used this time to work on the future business. The study below demonstrates how we have continued to engage with our staff through this period including some feedback from our staff surveys.



THE IMPACT



Redeployed staff to support in other areas of work including visiting and engaging with those that have been identified as vulnerable. Provided work from home equipment ie laptops, office chairs.



Protected jobs through the Furlough Scheme.

98 full-time staff were furloughed at some point during the year.



Total value of full-time salaries paid by the furlough scheme: £613,737

169 casual staff were furloughed between April – June 2020

Total value of casual wages paid by the furlough scheme: £53,577

CASE STUDY



- The club ensured staff received full pay, even when furloughed, so committed to topping up salaries with the final 20% not covered by the Government scheme totalling £133,462.
- Owner and Chairman Simon Hallett gifted over 360 staff with a £20 amazon voucher each, totalling £6,000. The generous gesture from Simon and his wife Jane was to thank staff and lift morale. The Chairman specified that the voucher was to buy something they wanted, not necessarily needed, but to treat themselves during the first lockdown.



Staff survey feedback

- 100% of staff felt that their welfare was being looked after with 84% saying the Trust was fully or very supportive. Some of the reasons were:
- Management communicating well
- Managers listening to staff concerns and understanding
- Providing PPE and keeping up to date with guidance

Argyle staff and their families received several support packs throughout the pandemic, from pizza-making kits to Christmas hampers. Similarly, 'One Argyle' delivered a range of online get-togethers that turned Social Distancing to Distanced Socialising. Events included quiz nights, bingo and fitness classes.



OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT

There is no doubt the effects of COVID-19 on our local communities will be long-term. As a club, it is essential we are at the forefront of the resurgence of the people in the city of Plymouth and beyond, building new and vibrant partnerships which are sustained over time. We will continue to make commitments, provide services and work with local, regional and national partners to increase levels of social harmony, reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and above all raise aspiration within those communities we operate within.

We will continue to support the NHS whilst the pandemic continues.

We will also continue to communicate honestly with our fans to ensure we keep you updated on developments.

The charity will continue to support those most in need, working with partner organisations, whether this be supporting those suffering from food hunger or those struggling to transition back into society. We will do this through our projects and staff ensuring we provide the support individuals and groups need. We will not replicate work for others but work with partners to enhance and improve opportunities for those within Devon and Cornwall. All of which are aligned to our strategic aims.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We are by no means finished with our work in relation to COVID-19. There is a need for ongoing support for people within Plymouth, Devon and Cornwall. We aim to ensure we can support those most in need through our outreach work, and also by opening up as a football club.

We will continue to offer our services and provisions for the NHS and aim to make further links with them to support their provisions.

We aim to work with young people to give them opportunities through the football club to reach their potential through projects and provisions such as KickStart.

We aim to use the past twelve months to learn how we can shape our club moving forward to benefit the community it proudly serves.

With the role we have undertaken within the community over the past twelve months we are assessing our work, developing further partners and using this to shape our future. We aim to implement a five-year strategy that will be key to our evolution and ensure we continue to keep the community at the heart of our operations.



Through national and local partners, utilisation of local insight and community consultation we aim to provide opportunities to those within our communities. Through the club and its charity, we aim to ensure we support not only those that supported us but those who are most in need.

We have continued our commitment to improving our football structures by engaging with County FA's and grassroots clubs and will be announcing a new pathway to support talent development, alongside this we will be launching partner club programme which is aiming to support grassroots clubs across Devon and Cornwall this will enhance relationships and support those who are involved in grassroots football. This will help put the club at the heart of community football for clubs and young people across the two counties.

We truly believe in this area and we have seen this in recent months with 15 ex academy graduates involved in the first-team squad during season 2020/21.

We are also planning to outline our strategic plans and ensure we have a well-balanced business model to achieve our goals. This will align to our vision and values and ensure we continue to support our communities we serve.





THANK YOU

Thank you to our partners:

Throughout the pandemic it must be noted that the response to COVID-19 has not been undertaken alone and we thank partners, supporters, funders both new and existing for their help during this period.

Our key COVID-19 partners:



Local Schools
across Devon
and Cornwall