



17 April 2020

Dear supporter,

The COVID-19 pandemic has, quite clearly, brought about challenges which extend beyond the game we all love, and led to an unprecedented and testing situation for everyone.

In these circumstances, open and honest communication is more important than ever, and it is with this in mind that I am writing directly to supporters of every EFL Club today on the 132nd anniversary of the foundation of the Football League.

I want to start by offering my condolences to those who have lost loved ones to this terrible disease. I would also like to acknowledge once again the incredible work being carried out by key workers, including front-line NHS staff and carers, at this difficult time. Their collective sacrifice for the health and wellbeing of others is something to be truly proud of, and one which – on behalf of the EFL – I would like to sincerely thank them for.

It is often said that football is like a family, and we have seen that many of those undertaking vital work are fans of EFL Clubs. From Bristol to Bolton and Colchester to Carlisle, supporters across the country are among the heroes making a positive impact, and it has been heartening to see and hear the stories of people coming together at such a crucial time.

Our Clubs are also rising to the challenge and are carrying out important work in their local communities. We know that eight in 10 people in England and Wales live within a 15-mile radius of an EFL club, so whether it's offering practical, emotional or physical support, the help football clubs are providing should not be underestimated.

It is, of course, by continuing to adhere to Government guidelines that we can all play our part in the national effort against coronavirus and so I'd also like to take this opportunity to urge you all to stay at home. In doing so, you will save lives.

When it comes to footballing matters, I understand the desire among fans for definitive answers, particularly around the conclusion of 2019/20 campaign. As I am sure you will appreciate, the situation presents significant operational and financial challenges, including the logistics of Clubs returning to full operational status, the practicalities of playing football behind closed doors, and the possible knock-on effects for the 2020/21 campaign. Please be assured that we are working hard on these and will update you as soon as we can once decisions have been made.

To give you an honest assessment of the current situation; the point at which you will be able to attend games again remains unclear. Please be assured, however, that we are going to welcome you back to stadiums as soon as it is safe to do so. Your contribution to the matchday experience and atmospheres created in stadia up and down the country is something we should never take for granted. Unfortunately, I cannot tell you today when football will resume, though whenever we do return, matches are likely to be played without crowds.

And whilst we are unfortunately without the presence of the hundreds of thousands of supporters who pass through EFL turnstiles each week, we will endeavour to bring live football direct into your homes once it returns. Plans are continuing to be worked up for all games to be broadcast either via our broadcast partners, iFollow or equivalent Club streaming services. We will update you on this once we know when matches will recommence.

The contribution to football's finances made by match-going supporters should not be underestimated. It is critical to the business model of league football. Perhaps the biggest challenge right now is not knowing when we will be



able to reintroduce football in front of crowds. We can only hope that the situation develops in such a way that we will be able to do with the shortest possible break.

With or without spectators, delivering a successful conclusion to the 2019/20 season remains our goal to ensure the integrity of our competitions. This, of course, means that a number of factors – including when, where and within what timeframe fixtures will be played – must be given careful consideration in line with Government advice. Similar factors must also be taken into account when agreeing an approach towards player training and testing, not least the appropriate level of medical resource and creation of an effective and efficient medical matchday protocol.

As we've previously stated, the health and wellbeing of our Clubs, their players and staff, and you – the fans – remains our first priority, and so you can appreciate that we want to give thorough and rigorous thought to these matters.

From the outset, we have committed to regular dialogue with each of these groups, as well as the Government, in order to tackle the challenges we face as effectively as possible. As well as taking into account the current climate in terms of public opinion, including those views of fans, we are regularly taking ideas and suggestions from our Clubs.

Aside from two catastrophic World Wars, this pandemic is arguably the most challenging issue to have affected football since the League was founded 132 years ago. Our Clubs have been left with significant outgoings while facing a sudden loss of income. With this in mind, I'm sure you will be aware of talk about wages and deferrals. Good progress is being made in these areas, with a view to this assisting in delivering medium to long-term solutions that protect our game for years to come.

As I said when I arrived, the EFL and its Clubs matter to many people, but most of all to the supporters. It is natural, at this stage, that you will have many questions, and we will endeavour to continue to provide answers and solutions, but we must do so with your health – as well as that of the entire nation - in mind.

I thank you for your patience so far and ask for more of the same; this is a serious situation which is changing by the day, and one which requires informed and considered decisions. The next few weeks will bring more clarity when it comes to our operational plans and, as always, we'll look to maintain regular communication.

One thing we can be sure of is that football, and normality, will return, and will so do more quickly if we remain united.

For now, thank you for your ongoing support and, please, stay safe.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rick Parry', is positioned above the typed name.

Rick Parry
EFL Chairman