



CLUB STATEMENT

22 April 2019

Ton Pentre AFC – A Message from the Board

Ton Pentre AFC is a football club with a very proud history and one that is synonymous with the Welsh domestic game.

However, a club cannot live in the past and although efforts have been made to modernise Ton Pentre AFC, the environment which the Club now finds itself in is a difficult one. The future of the Club is in serious jeopardy.

Without immediate action there is a real possibility that Ton Pentre AFC will not be in a position to commence, or complete, the 2019/20 season. This is, therefore, a very distressing time for all involved in the Club.

Issues

Ton Pentre AFC need a regular income stream to operate at Welsh League level, however, there is a shortfall of sponsorship, community support and volunteers at this current time.

Following the Club's well documented work with Supporters Direct, a community shares initiative was introduced but failed to attract the support of people in the locality. The majority of those helping the Club by essentially becoming part-owners of Ton Pentre AFC, came from outside of the immediate vicinity.

The amount of volunteers at the Club reduce year-on-year. Unfortunately, many of the Club's volunteers have passed away and with fewer people coming forward to assist, the small Board and tiny volunteer pool are stretched and strained to the point that personal lives are affected. However, this small team has proven what the Club can achieve with additional support and sponsorship.

With the Club not owning Ton Pentre AFC Social Club (the Clubhouse) regular income is limited to matchday gate receipts, refreshments and fundraising activities.

The face of Welsh football is changing due the restructuring of the league system by the Football Association of Wales for the 2019/20 season onwards.

The Club obtained its Tier 2 Licence last season, with an extension to the existing stand now providing 250 seats in Ynys Park. Emergency lighting and pitch upgrades have also taken place. The floodlighting was upgraded in 2016 to meet the standards for a live televised match on S4C and following a major electrical fault last summer they have now also been repaired and are fully operational.

The now annual Tier 2 Licensing process has seen more stringent regulations placed upon the Club to meet the requirements to participate at one of the highest levels of football in Wales.

As a result, much of the cash reserves that the Club has been able to save over the years have now been used in order to be compliant with the FAW regulations.



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Facts

It is important to highlight that Ton Pentre AFC is not in debt and the Board have worked hard to ensure that work on the new stand was completed with grant funding. The playing-surface also underwent a lot of improvement work and more is planned for the summer of 2019 using ring-fenced funding that it has been able to secure (more below).

Ton Pentre AFC Social Club

Contrary to the belief of many, Ton Pentre AFC Social Club (the Clubhouse) is not owned by Ton Pentre AFC (the football club).

It is a different business to Ton Pentre AFC. The clubhouse provides some sponsorship, as it does for other local sports clubs, but this has also reduced over time and is not material to the running of Ton Pentre AFC.

Ton & Gelli Boys and Girls Club

There is also a belief amongst the community that Ton & Gelli Boys and Girls Club are in some way affiliated to Ton Pentre AFC and/or are seen as the same club.

This is not the case, however, the Board of Ton Pentre AFC suggest that a merger of the two clubs should be considered to protect the future of football in Ton Pentre.

Both clubs have a rich and proud history and we believe the relationships between the both entities could be strengthened to provide a full and complete player pathway for aspiring footballers of all ages and genders in the Rhondda.

Ton Pentre and Gelli Community Interest Organisation (CIO)

Known locally as the 'Welfare'. Ton Pentre AFC gifted the ownership of Ynys Park to the Miner's Welfare Association in the 1930's to ensure its continuing legacy as a recreation ground for the benefit of the inhabitants of the locality.

This charity is responsible for maintaining the premises, its contents and grounds for the use of those in the surrounding area, however, the majority of the maintenance and upkeep of Ynys Park is completed by Ton Pentre AFC.

There is a good working relationship with the CIO and both organisations have been working closely together with regards to the surface at Ynys Park using the ring-fenced funding mentioned above.

This ownership arrangement has benefits but it also presents challenges in the modern world as it restricts opportunities for lottery funding and other grants.

Decision of the Board

At a recent Board meeting all of the above was reviewed and an assessment carried out as to whether Ton Pentre AFC has the means to operate in the 2019/2020 season.

Taking into account the reducing pool of sponsorship, shortage of community support and the difficult trading conditions facing the Clubhouse, the Board decided that it may not be possible to operate the Club next season unless there is a dramatic change of fortunes. Therefore, the Club faces a defining moment.

Could it be end of its 123-year existence?

The only possible way for Ton Pentre AFC to survive is if the community step forward to support it and show that it's still relevant.

Next Steps

If there is a desire from the community to save the Club then the Board will arrange for a Special General Meeting (SGM) to be called at the earliest opportunity.

All members of the existing Board are willing to step down immediately if there is a desire for a completely fresh approach to the operation of the Club. There is already a variety of key roles vacant.

If there is no support from the community, then Ton Pentre AFC will be faced with withdrawing from all competitions and could cease to exist prior to the start of the 2019/2020 season.

For anyone wishing to discuss this further at an upcoming match, Ton Pentre AFC play at home on:

Tuesday, 23 April vs Ammanford (7:15pm)

Contact Us

Should there be a desire for a Special General Meeting to save the Club, please leave a message on our Facebook page, tweet us or send us an email – sec.tonpentre@gmail.com.

Thank you for taking the time to read this important information.

The Board of Ton Pentre AFC