

# MARINERS TRUST

CONNECTING CLUB & COMMUNITY

Programme Notes. GTFC v Notts County – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Written by Dave Roberts

Welcome to supporters of both the Mariners and the Magpies to this afternoon's very important match in front of a big crowd and no doubt a fantastic atmosphere.

Today we see 16 of our junior having the chance to play on the pitch at half time. This is a fantastic scheme that is run by the GTFC Sports and Education Trust which is usually taken up by junior football clubs or private birthday parties. This is something we have done once a season for several years now and see it is a great chance to reward our junior members.

As we review the way forward for Mariners Trust we very much recognise that we need to re-look at our junior members section and make it much more relevant and integrated into the football club itself. Our young fans are vital to the future of the football club and as well as capturing them at an early age their interest needs to be sustained on an ongoing basis. As there is no official junior supporters club run by the club we very much see ourselves filling this void but we know we have to be much better at what we are doing. For this reason we are taking the opportunity to re-launch the junior section this summer ready for next season. In order to get to the best possible solution we have started consulting with some of our young fans to understand exactly what they want and we will continue to do more of this over the coming weeks. We will also be looking at best practice from other clubs. Some of the issues being highlighted so far are as follows:

**Age Groups**- It is clear that we need to separate the age groups as what we are doing at the moment is not really relevant for some of the older kids and they certainly do not like being called juniors!! Current thinking is to have juniors up to age level 11 and then something separate for 12-16 year olds

**Fees** – The current system of annual £5 fee causes a lot of administration and we are looking at having a slightly higher one off fee for each of the sections. This will very much simplify what we are doing and free up time to organise activities.

**Organisation** – We are thinking that although the juniors comes under the umbrella of the Mariners Trust the objectives are very bespoke and as such we believe it is best run on a stand alone basis through a sub committee. This will allow dedicated resource and fundraising. All proceeds from the fundraising along with membership fees would be used for the benefit of the junior members.

**Activities** – Although we have the play on the pitch today we know we need to do more things that will engage our young fans and keep them interested in the football club. By having a dedicated team focusing on the juniors we plan to have a full year's schedule at the start of each season which would be firmed up on a rolling 3 month basis. By splitting the age groups we can also make this much more relevant especially for the older kids.

**Integration** – We want to be much more integrated with the club with regard to the junior section. This includes the great work that goes on in the community through the GTFC sports and education trust. The club really do value their young fans but we feel there is much more that can be done and one of the keys to this will be getting better access to players and manager which is something Michael Jolly is keen to do as well.



