

Ladies clocking up the miles

SHREWSBURY TOWN Women and Girls have not let the coronavirus stop them clocking up the miles for a good cause – as their efforts near £500.

With football kicked to the sidelines for the past few months, Town's girls' team were keen to do their bit for Severn Hospice and reached for their running shoes while individually hitting the road.

From the start of this month, they pledged to support the Shropshire and Powys charity by partaking in the 'Miles to Pounds' fundraiser.

The players agreed that, for every pound donated to their fundraiser, they would run a mile. The idea started out as an exercise challenge among the playing

ranks but they agreed to put their hard miles to good use.

And the ladies, who play under the umbrella of Shrewsbury Town's In The Community charity partner, are on the verge of smashing their initial £500 target.

They have raised £452, collected from the generous donations of 40 supporters.

There remains work to do for the players, whose team play in the West Midlands Women's League Division One North. The squad have so far completed 324.22 miles between them in three weeks, meaning they will continue to clock up the distance.

The ladies are tracking their miles on mobile running app Strava – insisting

there will be no hiding from the challenge.

The squad said in a statement: "Given the amount of miles the team were covering, we thought why not raise money for a great cause at the same time?"

"Given the current circumstances, we wanted to pick somewhere in our local community where we could help make a difference. That place for us is Severn Hospice."

The charity provides specialist care and support free of charge to families across Shropshire and North Powys who are living with incurable illness.

To support the team on their journey, visit justgiving.com/fundraising/lockdownfundraisersevernospice

Allscott looking for youngsters

ALLSCOTT are appealing for young footballers to be part of a new under-21 side as they look to build for the future.

The village club hope to add to the recent success of its senior team in the West Midlands League by adding a youthful outfit to its ranks.

Any interested players, aged under 21 and looking for a new challenge, should email Paul Lewis at paul@timberkit solutions.co.uk

Subject to Covid-19 government regulations, Allscott will look to hold a trial day for the under-21s side.

Home fixtures are played at Allscott Sports and Social Club.

Deacon looks heaven sent for punters

DEACON hit the mark on his most recent outing in February and can follow up in the Prix d'Aquitaine at Lyon-Parilly tomorrow.

The Dansili colt was having his third start for Christopher Head on that occasion having shown some promise when previously trained by his father, Freddy.

Placed on his first couple of attempts for his new handler, Deacon seemed to relish being allowed to make all over 12 furlongs as he switched back from an extended mile and five furlongs.

He built up a decent advantage and while his rivals caught up a bit in the closing stages, Deacon still won in a comfortable manner. Head sticks to 12 furlongs here and Deacon can shine again.

Head snr can also be among the winners with **Suffrage** in the Prix Bruleur.

He suffered a bit of a troubled passage on his racecourse bow at Fontainebleau

Racing tips

12.10 Suffrage
12.50 Deacon (NAP)
1.25 Bonne Idee
3.05 Shaken Not Stirred

All Lyon-Parilly

Groome aims high after Ward finally says 'yes'

AFC BRIDGNORTH are targeting promotion next season – after finally netting the manager they have chased for a number of years.

Former Wolves youngster and Crown Meadow No.2 Graham Ward was last week unveiled as the club's new boss, bringing with him a fresh new management team.

And the man he replaced at the helm, Steve Groome – who will now continue in the club secretary role he balanced with being in the dugout – is expecting big things after finally convincing his man to take the reins.

"I've known Wardy for seven or eight years and to be honest have chased him every time the vacancy has come up," said Groome, who had been in the dugout since February 2019 following Adrian Stanton's departure.

"The time has never been right for him but we spoke three weeks ago, he said he had to juggle a few things and then last week said yes.

Exciting

"We had a Zoom meeting with the committee members and it was all agreed over the weekend."

It is Ward's first job in management after a distinguished semi-professional playing career. Since hanging up his boots in 2012, the 37-year-old has held assistant roles at Bridgnorth's West Midlands Premier rivals Wolverhampton Sporting and Black Country Rangers.

He brings with him assistants Pete Whitehouse and Mark Donaldson, and Groome feels the new management team are an exciting prospect.

The expectations are lofty at Crown Meadow, where the club harbour hopes of a return to step five – a position the club in their former guise of Bridgnorth Town held a decade ago.

The proposed restructuring of non-league, due this summer, has been postponed 12

Grassroots

By Lewis Cox

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months, meaning that four clubs will again achieve promotion from the West Midlands Premier next season – and Ward, who is an IT specialist, is expected to lead the charge.

"To be honest we've said we expect a top-four finish," Groome, who guided Bridgnorth to a steady mid-table position before the season was null and voided two months ago.

"We're not expecting him to come in to maintain mid-table, it's to move us up to step five.

"There are four teams to be promoted and we're strongly looking at that. It's a real opportunity, one of the only good things to come out of this is that it's given us another bite at finishing in the top four promotion places next season.

"He's hopeful of bringing in new players. We hope some of the old guys will stay and hope to strengthen as well as improve the development side."

Groome, meanwhile, could not hide his delight at acquiring the services of Ward, who was previously assistant to former Wolves team-mate and pal Mark Clyde at Crown Meadow before the duo left in 2016.

He added: "It's absolutely brilliant. The three guys coming in have got a great footballing pedigree and can really take us to the next level.

"We've got a lot of ambition and desperately want to get back to where the old Bridgnorth Town were 10 years ago.

"We feel everything is right with the club now, we've got the facility, a good reputation again in the town and the last piece of the jigsaw was getting the football bang on and hopefully we've done that."

AFC Bridgnorth Development are looking to become one of the clubs entering the new Salop Leisure Feeder League, which is scheduled to launch for 2020/21.

League digs deep for charities



The Shropshire Junior Football League has donated £500 to Prism Telford and three other charities. Picture: Kidz in Focus

THE Shropshire Junior Football League has dug deep in the time of crisis to continue its unwavering support to important local charities.

The coronavirus pandemic has wreaked havoc with grassroots football, with the SJFL cancelling all of its leagues, festivals and cup finals from under-7s to under-16s for the first time in its 46-year history.

One of the league's flagship events, the SJFL FA Heads Up Charity Cup finals, which would have been staged at Market Drayton Town's Greenfields home at the end of April, was to be held in partnership and support of charities, with an emphasis of those in support of mental health of young people.

The league were due to match the funding of the gate receipts for the events, which was sponsored by the Georgia Williams Trust and Kidz In Focus. They were the only league in Shropshire given authorisation to use the FA's Heads Up campaign logos.

The finals have been scrapped due to government guidelines, but have been rearranged for 2021 – and the league has been united in the decision to pledge crucial financial support to charities in need.

The SJFL donated £2,000 from their charity fund and reserves to four charities, receiving £500 each.

PRISM Telford, who will again support next year's rescheduled finals, has been backed by the league. The community support service provide peer-led emotional support and listening service for bereaved children and young people.

Also receiving a donation of £500 was Shrewsbury

Foodbank Plus, the umbrella project for individual schemes, including Shrewsbury Foodbank – who, during the crisis, have been delivering vital rations to those in need – Barnabas Money Advice and 360 Platform For Life.

The league also supported Shropshire SANDS, a still and neonatal charity, and Bradbury House Shrewsbury, who offer care and support for those with learning disabilities and mental health needs.

The generous actions are just the latest example of the SJFL's commitment to support local charities. The league has raised more than £32,000 since 2000 in support of 69 good causes.

One event the Shropshire Junior Football League were able to wrap up before the health crisis lockdown was the Futsal Respect Festival. They staged the competition for a 12th year between January and March at Shrewsbury Sports Village.

The Futsal festival ran on Sundays, for under-7s to under-10s youngsters, with 61 teams taking part in a full programme of 16 fixtures each weekend. Over the nine weeks, a total of 288 teams took part – which also included the successful 'We only do Positive – Kick It Out' anti-racism themed day in February, with support from the Shropshire FA Youth Council and Georgia Williams Trust.

The midweek programme catered for ages between under-11 to 13 for a third year, with the assistance of an FA Futsal grant. In total more than 70 teams and 500 youngsters enjoyed access to the event.

towards the end of last year, but he did seem to be travelling well enough at one point before folding a bit tamely in the finish. The 11-length margin of defeat is possibly not a fair reflection of his run and 10 furlongs should be within his compass.

Bonne Idee boasts a beautiful pedigree as a daughter of Frankel out of dual Listed winner Mirror Lake, but she did not make the expected impact on her only start last term.

With another winter on her back, Bonne Idee should have strengthened up a bit and Group One entries later in the campaign could indicate she has shown some promise at home.

Shaken Not Stirred can end a disappointing run of results in the Prix de Juvisy. He looked a fair competitor when winning at Clairefontaine last August, but he has lost his way a bit since then.

His third last time out at Deauville in March indicated his best days may not yet be all behind him.

Chief: Racing ready to restart

BRANT DUNSHEA, chief regulatory officer at the British Horseracing Authority, has expressed his confidence that racing will be able to resume in Britain on June 1.

Racing was last staged on March 17 and the government announced earlier this month that no professional sport, even behind closed doors, would take place before June 1 at the earliest.

The BHA on Saturday published its protocols for resuming behind closed doors at Newcastle on that date, and Dunshea said it had been recognised that racing differed in its make-up from sports such as football and rugby.

Dunshea said: "We are largely a rural-based sport, we are an outdoor environment – both our training and racing environments are outdoor and pose lower level of risk and position us as a very different sport to football and rugby, for example. I'm very, very comfortable that our sport is being seen as a different sport to other contact sports by government, and I'm sure in the broader context of that comment it was focusing more on the contact sports rather than sports such as racing."