



## Secretaries Report June 2021

As I write we are coming out of a worldwide pandemic. Over 128,000 people in the UK alone have lost their lives to this horrible virus and life will quite simply never be quite the same. I offer my heartfelt condolences to those people that have lost family members and friends. However 43% of the UK are now fully vaccinated which brings new hope to the situation. My mind is also drawn to the loss in a workplace accident of our own colleague Richard Scott (or Scotty as he was affectionately known).

It is quite simply mindboggling what has been endured this year. It seems selfish and insignificant to talk about officiating and football based on that. However, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge how the association and its members have changed adapted and I believe come out stronger because of Covid 19.

Firstly, I want to thank the Committee. We have met virtually but not as regularly. The general operations of the association have been suspended; our 2019 20 AGM could not take place but where we could we were active.

There are some real heroes out there. I especially single out Lawrence Black for his enduring work supporting referee's mental health in organising the NEURA zoom chats. A light-hearted down to earth weekly gathering of officials to learn lift your mood and have a laugh.

The unknown and unseen people who have given a listening ear to those struggling with Lockdown I also thank. As Secretary I am privy to slightly more info than the normal member. To those who offered that simple support I thank you. We have truly learnt its ok not to be ok. The support for each other is outstanding.

Football has been suspended unless of course you are lucky enough to be involved in the Premiership. Executive Elite status gave some the opportunity to get out there and I am thankful to be one of the few to benefit. The majority are not so fortunate. Some have not blown a whistle or raised a flag. Hopefully, that's about to change. Its on that basis the NEURA have decided to pursue a situation where that those not involved in Premier League football this season would not pay to reregister for 2021-22. We hoped to get the backing of the NIRA CAFA and IFA on this. Unfortunately only the NIRA have been able to support this. However many registration fees have been significantly reduced by NEURA support by the NIRA.

I look forward to our AGM and getting the new season underway. Use your vote carefully!

Thanks to you all and stay safe out there.

#wewillbeback

Yours in sport  
Neill Gillespie