



## WOMENS PATHWAY CHAMPION AFC FRADLEY

I'm Jen, and I've been involved in recreational women's football for most of my life, from school and local girl's football, playing for and managing Durham University Ladies, playing in regional leagues in South Yorkshire and Worcestershire, and, more recently, winning the Staffordshire Girls and Ladies League Floodlight League Division One title last season with Burton Albion 'Yellows'. I now manage and play for the AFC Fradley women's team, the Beaufighters.

I've been hooked on the enthusiasm and passion within AFC Fradley since I first got involved with the club ahead of its first-ever training session, and since then, I have worked to develop my coaching skills through a combination of formal training, mentoring and practical application.



When we set up women's training, its immediate popularity and the levels of enthusiasm surpassed mine and the club's expectations, convincing us to enter a league in our first season, where we are experiencing great success. We have received fantastic feedback from our players about the physical and mental health benefits that playing with us provides and we have an ever-expanding calendar of social events. We have benefitted from great support from our local community. I think it is hugely positive, especially for children, to see women role models playing and being involved in football at this level, as well as being able to aspire to the level set by Katie Wilkinson, our Director of Football and female professional player. We continue to benefit from the strong backing of the club, including the unwavering support of our Chairman, Darren Peck, who has pulled out all the stops to get us up and running in our first season.

Looking ahead, I would like to see an expanding women's section, with multiple teams offering a range of opportunities at different levels and across formats whilst maintaining the positive and inclusive spirit of the 'Beaus'. I am also keen to see women well represented as coaches and managers within our club, utilising our internal expertise, taking advantage of externally targeted offerings, and learning from and supporting each other.

### Chairman Darren Peck says,

Jen's enthusiasm and commitment to championing the women's pathway at AFC Fradley is truly commendable. She has also taken it upon herself to support women and girls coaches in the club. AFC Fradley is particularly passionate about encouraging women to play football and inspiring girls to look up to them.

The club's efforts in setting up women's training sessions which quickly progressed to playing competently in the floodlit league, have had a significant impact on the community. The camaraderie, teamwork, and support the AFC Fradley Women offer each other is evident and palpable.