

The Talk of the Town

Volume #8, Tuesday 15th October



Tickets: £6 Adults, £3 Concessions, £1 Under 16s
vs Leverstock Green
Bell Close, LU7 1RX
SSML Premier Division



People at the Club

First Team Managers: Joe Sweeney and Paul Copson.

Physio Team: John Rutherford and Lorraine Smith.

Chairman: Alan Penman

Vice Chairman: Steve Harris

Director of Football: Sean Downey

Secretary: Roy Parker

Treasurer: Steve Harris

Match Photos: Andrew Parker

Reports, Programmes, Kitman, Media:

Kieran Carvell

Hall Hire: Pauline Parker

Groundsman: Bruce Warner



Welcome to Bell Close

Welcome to Bell Close, or welcome to our online programme, for tonight's league fixture against Leverstock Green. A very warm welcome to our visitors this evening.

A win on Saturday in the FA Vase against Hadleigh was certainly welcome, as we put in a very good display against decent opposition from Suffolk.

180 watched that tie, a very good crowd on Non-League Day. This evening, we continue the search for those elusive first 3 points, but Levy Green will prove stern opposition.

We hope you enjoy the game this evening with us.

Coming up this week, our Under 18s travel to Berkhamsted tomorrow evening in a cup match.

On Saturday at 12pm, our Under 15s side welcome MK Dons Under 15s to Bell Close. This promises to be a very entertaining game of youth football, so head down on Saturday.

However, if you're following the first team on our travels, then join us in North Greenford for a 3PM Kick Off!

Busy week, lets make it all worthwhile! Up the Town.



History

Leighton Town, who were known as Leighton United between 1922 and 1963, were formed in 1885. They were mainly involved in local leagues until the outbreak of the Great War, and were winners of the Leighton and District League on several occasions.

Leighton were one of the original members of the South Midland League in 1922 – which at the time was known as the Bedfordshire County League. They were also members of the Spartan League between 1922/23 and 1951/52, but their only successes being the Spartan League Division 2 title in 1923/24 and 1927/28. They were Bedfordshire Senior Cup winners in 1926/27.

In 1952, they became a founder member of the Hellenic League, but after two disappointing seasons, moved to the South Midlands League. In 1965/66 season however, the Premier Championship sat in the Leighton Town Boardroom. The club then rejoined the Spartan League in 1967/68.

Leighton proceeded to consolidate their League success by winning the Bedfordshire Senior Cup for three successive seasons in 1968, 1969 and 1970. Unfortunately, some of the successful players moved onto other clubs, and Leighton's fortunes again declined. A move to the United Counties League proved disastrous and, after just two seasons, the club rejoined the South Midlands League. During the '70's and '80's, Leighton were unable to capture the success of the '60's.

In 1990/1991 the First Team won the South Midlands League Challenge Trophy and the O'Brien's Premier Division Cup, both for the first time. The 1991/2 season was one of the club's best ever. The South Midlands Premier Division title, which had eluded the club for so long, was won, and with it a place in the Isthmian League.

1992/3 saw the Club's success continue when they won the Bedfordshire Senior Cup for the first time since 1970. The Club missed out on promotion in their first Isthmian League season by just a single point but the Youth Team retained the County Cup.

1995/6 saw the First Team win promotion to Division 2 of the Isthmian League, whilst at the same time retaining the Buckingham Charity Cup.

In the 1996/7 season, Leighton won the Isthmian League Associated Members Trophy for the first time. 1998/99 saw the return of the Associated Members Trophy and the Buckingham Charity Cup.

Season 2003/04 was arguably one of the Club's best ever, as the First Team won the Ryman Isthmian Second Division title. The team was also named Ryman Division Two Team of the Year, and Paul Burgess was awarded Manager of the Year. They also reached the Fifth round of the FA Vase, and the final of the Beds Senior Cup, before losing to Andover and Arlesey respectively.

The 2004-05 season saw the club placed in The Southern League East Division and finished in a creditable tenth place. They also won the Buckinghamshire Charity Cup. The Reserves won the Bedfordshire Intermediate Cup and the U18's won the SCYFL League Shield, a first in the club's history.

The 05-06 Season saw the Club progress again, improving on the year before, as they finished 8th in The Southern League West Division. After a poor start, League results improved and the side only suffered four defeats from the start of November until the end of March, a play-off place just eluding them.

After three excellent victories interest in the FA Trophy competition ended with a single goal defeat to eventual semi-finalists, Borehamwood.

The Club also reached the Beds Senior Cup Final, but sadly they again finished as Runners Up.

The Club were relocated to the Southern League, Midland Division for 06-07 season but only one League win in the first six games and early exits in the two FA Competitions cost Paul Burgess his job in September. He was replaced by former Wycombe, professional Keith Scott, results did improve but it was a disappointing season, although Town did win the Bucks Senior Charity Cup.

The 07-08 started brightly with the first League defeat not coming until mid-October. Three wins in the FA Cup saw the Club reach the 4th Qualifying Round for the first time in its history. A 3-0 defeat to Conference South, Havant and Waterlooville finally ended the run. Keith Scott left in December to join Windsor and Eton. In January 2008, Assistant Manager Sean Downey was appointed as First Team Manager and did a splendid job as the Club ended their League season in 9th place, winning the Bucks Charity Cup and reaching the final of the Beds Senior Cup once more.

The 08/09 Season the First Team finished 8th in the Southern League, Midland Division, achieving their highest points total to date at that level.

The 09/10 season saw Leighton once again finish in the top half of the table, when they finished in 9th place and they also lost the Bedfordshire Senior Cup Final to Southern League rivals, Arlesey Town after penalties.

History

Season 2010/2011, saw Town finish in 7th place in the League, gaining 69 points, their best performance since joining the Southern Football League.

The 2011/2012 a poor season saw Leighton finish in their lowest position for several years.

2012/13 was also very disappointing for the First Team as they finished in 20th place.

2015/2016. After 3 disappointing seasons Leighton finished the season in the bottom two of the Southern League Central Division and were relegated to the Spartan South Midlands League where they had last played in the 1991/92 season.

2016/2017 This was a disappointing season with the club struggling for much of the time after yet another Managerial Change. Things did pick up towards the end of the season and we eventually finished in 16th place.

2017/18 The club retained Scott Reynolds as Manager and finished 4th in the League and reached the Quarter Finals of the FA VASE. Gates improved and it was our best season for about 8 years, however Manager, Scott Reynolds resigned at the end of the season.

2018/2019 The Club appointed experienced coach Danny Nicholls as the new Manager, but he resigned at the start of October. The Club then appointed Joe Sweeney and Paul Copson as their Management Team and results improved but we were unable to reach the top third of the table..

2019 We are hoping to be competitive this season with several new signings but this is a very difficult Division and we are well aware of the quality of many of the teams.



The Visitors History

Leverstock Green Football Club was formed around 1895. The first match reports appeared on January 4th 1896 in the Advertiser and gave an account of a match against Hemel Hempstead Rovers. The first competitive fixtures were reported during season 1908/1909 when the Club competed in Division Three of the West Herts League. Other clubs competing in the league at that time were: Abbots Langley, Bovingdon, Boxmoor, Bushey Heath, Hagden Lane, Kings Langley and Potten End. The Club ground in Pancake Lane originally formed part of the Gorhambury Estate, Lord Verulam making the ground available for the youth of the area and his estate workers to enjoy a game of ball. Clearly Lord Verulam was an early enthusiast, providing timber-built changing rooms, which have been progressively replaced since the 1960's by the existing brick built clubhouse and changing rooms. On the death of the Lord, certain parcels of land, including that on which the Football Club stood, fell to the Crown in lieu of death duties and is administered on its behalf by the Commission for New Towns, who have remained the Club's landlords since that time, despite two unsuccessful attempts by the Club to buy the freehold. The club remained members of the West Herts League until 1954 when it broadened its horizons and successfully applied to join the Herts County League. By the mid 1970's the Club started to move forward with a new clubhouse, post & rail and the installation of training lights. The playing side of the club also improved and in 1979 the club won Division One of the Herts County League and were promoted to the Premier Division the highest standard the Club had achieved in 80 years. In 1991 the Club were accepted into the South Midlands League and had two highly successful seasons in the Premier Division before being forced to drop into the Senior Division, as floodlights were then not available. In 1996 the club finished in runners-up position and the following season were the divisional champions but could not be promoted because floodlights had still not received approval from the Council. The 2005-06 season has been the most successful for the club since the installation of the floodlights in 1999, which had fierce, and continuing, opposition. It looks like it will be the highest finish achieved in the Premier Division. The Premier Division Cup Final and The West Herts FA St Mary's Cup Final against Berkhamsted Town have been reached plus a good performance against Boreham Wood in the Herts Senior Cup, going out on penalties after a 1-1 scoreline. In the FA Vase, Downham Town were beaten after a replay, North Greenford United were disposed of but we went out to Chalfont St Peter. In the FA Cup Eton Manor were beaten then we went out in a replay to Barkingside. James Armstrong scored hat tricks in both the FA Cup and the FA Vase, how many other players, if any, have achieved this feat in the same season. Season 2006-07 saw us win the Herts Charity Shield for the first time in our history, and a highest ever league finish in fifth position. In 2007 the new Peter Metcalfe changing rooms were built due to continuing improvements to the club at a cost of ninety thousand pounds but were long overdue as the existing rooms had become too small with the ever increasing number of players, substitutes and management teams that clubs have these days.

2008 saw the refurbishment of the clubhouse to include new toilets, new hospitality suite. The Ladies team was formed in 2005 and competed in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Women's Football League and play their home games at Pancake Lane on Sunday afternoon's. The Under 18 floodlit team competes in the Southern Counties Floodlit Youth League and also there are numerous youth teams from the age of eight upwards that play Sunday football. Season 2009-10 saw the Ladies take their League Championship and have accepted the offer of promotion to the Eastern Region Womens League and will play in Division One South for season 2010-11 and they finished a respectable 4th position. Season 2012-13 saw the Ladies finish as runners-up and are promoted to the Premier Division ERWFL for season 2013-2014. The Under 18 Ladies team competed in the Hertfordshire Girls Football Partnership League in season 2012-2013 this being their first season with the club and completed the season without defeat. They will now take their place in Division Two of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Womens League for Season 2013-2014. Due to the standards being set by the Football Association for Season 2009-10 the Club has had to undertake various ground improvements which includes a concrete walkway round the ground and seated accommodation for 113 spectators. It was also a season which saw some major changes with Kate Binns taking over as Chairman when Bill Dawes felt it time to relinquish this post. The Management teams also went under some changes with the First Team, Reserve Team and Under 18 floodlit team having new Managers either at the start or during the season. Season 2010-2011 saw a fourth place finish in the South Midlands League Premier Division scoring 100 league goals. After an early exit from the FA Cup at the hands of Harefield United, the team stormed into the FA Vase commencing with a 6-0 win against Welwyn Garden City, then a 5-4 home win against Enfield 1893 it was then a visit to Hullbridge Sports and a 5-1 win, Tunbridge Wells were the next to fall with a 3-1 home win, in the fourth round Bemerton Heath Harlequins were defeated 4-1 at home, then the fifth round we were drawn against Rye United at home and the Wembley dream then faded with a 2-1 defeat. The final of the league Premier Division Cup was reached but we went down 2-0 to Colney Heath who we had beaten 4-1 in the league ten days earlier. Tring Athletic were next up in the St Mary's Cup Final but we went down by two goals to one. Finally silverware came our way at the Herts County Ground when we beat London Colney in the Herts Charity Shield. The Reserves finished in 12th position in the Suburban League North Division and the Under 18 floodlit team came runners up in their Southern Counties League Delphian Division. Towards the end of the 2011 -2012 Season Manager Steve Heath and his assistant Neal Bartlett gave the club notice that they would be standing down. A new Manager for Season 2012 -2013 was recruited in Steve Benitez who had been Chesham United Reserve Manager in the Spartan South Midlands League Division One the previous season. Steve brought in Dan Manzi as his assistant. With most of the previous season's players moving on it was a case of start again as the season approached. Having picked up a good number of points before Christmas we eventually finished in fifteenth position. Prior to Season 2013-2014 Steve Benitez had to relinquish the post of manager due to work commitments in Spain and his number two Dan Manzi has stepped into the role of Manager. Also to relinquish her post just prior to the AGM was Chairman Kate Binns this position has been filled with Secretary Brian Barter taking on a dual role. Brian was awarded the F.C Crain trophy for club secretaries by the Spartan South Midlands League in season 2011-2012 and also recognised for forty years service to football by the Hertfordshire Football Association. Brian has had recognition for fifty years service from the Football Association and at the 2019 SSML AGM was awarded with the Alf Joyce Memorial Trophy by the committee for service to the club. Season 2013-2014 proved difficult having won the first league game the next thirteen were defeats a rare win in the Premier Division Cup then defeats in seven out of the next eight league games prompted a change of manager. In came the ex-Rayners Lane Manager Dene Gardner who saved the club from relegation and reached the final of the St Marys Cup where we were runners up losing by three goals to two. The Senior Ladies team won the Hertfordshire Women's Cup at the County Ground Letchworth defeating Royston Town Ladies by three goals to two. The Ladies Whites in their first season in senior football were Champions of The Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire League Division Two and won the final of the Openage League Cup by two goals to one after extra time against Division One side Flitwick Ladies.

The Visitors History

Another milestone was reached as Bill Dawes was recognised by the Football Association and The Hertfordshire Football Association with awards for "50 years service to football". Season 2014-2015 was remembered as the club increased its bank balance with prize money from the FA Cup with wins at home against Newport Pagnell Town and wins away at Harefield United and Biggleswade United before losing 5-0 at Staines Town. The Gaffa decided to relinquish the post due to work and health reasons and first team coach Paul Faulkner has taken over the reins for season 2015-16. Paul Faulkner has moved on and the team is now under new manager Paul Hunt. The Under 18 team finished runners-up in their division. They had wins in the FA Youth Cup at North Greenford, Northwood a home win against AFC Hornchurch before going out at Roots Hall to Southend United. Season 2015-2016 saw the first team secure their place in the Premier Division. The Under 18 team reached the Brian Hitchings and Colwyn Youth Cup Finals losing both games to Luton Town Cedars. The Brian Hitchings Cup Final was played at Luton Town's Ground Kenilworth Road. Season 2016-2017 saw the Chairman Brian Barter relinquish the post and Nicholas Christou was voted in as his successor. The first team finished mid-table with Scott Dash at the helm. An early exit in the Herts Charity Shield and FA Cup both at the hands of London Colney. In the FA Vase we had a 4-0 win at Harefield United and a 7-3 win at Thrapston before going out 2-1 to Welwyn Garden City. The Semi-Final of the League Challenge Trophy was reached before going out to London Colney. Season 2017-2018 The team finished in 7th position in the Premier Division and won the St Marys Cup beating Berkhamsted. Manager Scott Dash resigned prior to the Final. Our last word goes to a club stalwart Jim Matthews "Macca" as he was affectionately known, who sadly passed away, July 2006 at 90 years of age. His dedication to the club was recognised by the Football Association and The Hertfordshire Football Association by awards for "50 Years Service to Football".



Away Fan Guide

Transport

Bell Close (LU7 1RX) is situated in the centre of Leighton Buzzard, opposite Morrisons.

There is a bus stop next to the entrance and the Train Station is a 15 minute walk away, where trains run frequently to London, Milton Keynes, Birmingham etc.

If you are coming to Bell Close by car, you can come through Town or down off the bypass (A4146) and down Grovebury Road. This will avoid a potential busy Town Centre, especially on a Saturday Afternoon.

Parking can be found at the ground, or further afield in a number of side streets.

Parking at the ground on a busy matchday will be limited.

Food and Drink

At the club, we have a Tea Bar open that serves a range of Hot and Cold food and Hot drinks.

In the bar, we have light snacks, as well as a range of draught lagers and ciders.

We also have soft drinks as well as bottles of ale and beer.

In Town, there are a range of pubs, with The Sun being the pub the closest in proximity to Bell Close.

In Town there is a Wetherspoons, as well as fish and chip shops and restaurants.

Across the road, there is Morrisons who have a fantastic Deli Counter serving hot food.

Enjoy the Game.



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Saturday 19th October

KO 12pm

Leighton Town U15

V

MK Dons U15

Bell Close Lake St Leighton Buzzard LU7 1RX



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The Sports Roundup



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Squads



1. Brad Kirkwood
2. Tom Bryant
3. Tom Silford
4. Dave Murphy
5. Alfie Osborne
6. Brian Foulger
7. Danny Webb
8. Jordan Fredericks
9. Archie McClelland
10. James Towell
11. Ashton Campbell
12. Aaron Murrell
13. Alex Condon
14. Kuda Butawo
15. Antony Leslie
16. Luke Pyman
17. Michael Donkor
18. Les Barker

1. Wayne Fallon
2. Kane O'Neill
3. Alex Ward
4. Jack Stevens
5. Dan Weeks
6. Steve Hawes
7. John Smith
8. Luke Peerless
9. Ollie Cox
10. Adiel Mannion
11. Frank Jowle
12. Luis Brooker
13. Ollie Lawford
14. Louie Griffiths
15. Robert Paun
16. Bryn Rigarlsford
17. Jamie Fulton
18. Jamie Ovington

OFFICIALS

Referee: Chris Parperi.

Assistants: Alex Francioni and
Chaolun Tan.

