

Mr M Ives
General Manager
National League
4th Floor Waterloo House
Birmingham B2 5TB

19th February 2021

Dear Mr Ives,

Following the results of the voting on the National League resolutions dated 1 February 2021, we write to you on behalf of the clubs that voted to fulfil the 2020-21 National League North and South season.

We feel the options presented in the resolutions did not provide an alternative solution to a Null and Void scenario and the result of Resolution 3 was very closely divided with a very small majority determining that the season will be ended with immediate effect. However, as a league of members (66 clubs) the vote delivered a majority result in favour of continuing the season albeit you chose to adopt the four votes each rule for NLN and NLS as opposed to one each for the NL.

We believe that the 19 clubs at Step 2 that wish to continue, should be afforded an opportunity to do so, with playoffs and promotion, as per normal.

We believe the following reasons support the resumption of the 2020-21 National League North & South seasons:

- Our feedback and experiences week to week leave us in little doubt that the majority of our communities and supporter base are under extreme strain within the current lockdown conditions. Looking forward to better times and more normality is a large part of keeping people positive. We believe that a Null and Void scenario would negatively impact the mental health of our supporters and communities.
- Our supporters, season ticket holders and commercial partners have demonstrated a huge amount of goodwill and faith by retaining their season tickets and accepting that their interaction with their club will be remotely and digitally rather than what they signed up for and attending matches. A Null and Void season would require either substantial refunds or carrying over the

commercial and ticketing revenue into next season. This would have a huge impact on future commercial revenues.

- With the outcome of the vote being Null and Void in Step 2, the ability to have promotion and relegation between Steps 1 and 2 is lost. Promotion and Relegation within the National League system is a fundamental value which the league has worked hard for over the years and which was the motivating driver in reaching a sporting conclusion to last season. We feel it important for our relationship with the EFL that both promotion and relegation be retained at Step 1 and Step 2.
- Last year, although the clubs voted to curtail the season, the playoffs and automatic promotion places were sanctioned, and we believe a similar approach should be adopted this season to maintain the integrity of the overall competition.
- All clubs have accepted financial support from the National Lottery for the months of October, November and December and also FA grant funding in order to prepare and proceed with league matches behind closed doors. Those conditions remain and we feel we have an obligation to proceed and complete the season having already accepted that funding.
- We have all invested considerable sums, by entering into contracts and taking on liabilities on the basis the season would progress to a full conclusion whether behind closed doors or not. How are we expected to now reconcile this investment and commitment? Numerous clubs are entering dialogue with Sport England regarding grant and loan funding to continue operating and are exploring every option to fulfil this season.

In summary, we respectfully request that the league strongly consider that the two divisions at Step 2 continue playing their seasons, either separately or as one.

We believe that this is in the best interests of all National League members allowing the league to cater to the needs and drivers of all clubs in a sympathetic manner, allowing those who wish to continue to do so, and those who cannot or do not wish to continue to end their season.

Promotion and relegation can be maintained between the National League and National League North and South in order to recover a full National League of 24 clubs next season, as well as maintaining the integrity of our relationship with the EFL.

Yours in Football,

AFC Fylde - David Haythornthwaite

Gloucester City - Alex Petheram

Boston United - David Newton

Chelmsford City - Steve Shore

Chorley - Graham Watkinson

Concord Rangers - Antony Smith

Dartford - Dave Skinner & Steve Irving

Dorking Wanderers - Marc White

Eastbourne Borough - John Bonar &
David Blackmore

Ebbsfleet United - Damian Irvine

Havant & Waterlooville - Trevor Brock

Hemel Hempstead Town - Dave Boggins

Hungerford Town - Patrick Chambers

Kidderminster Harriers - Neil Male

Oxford City - Paul Lyon

St Albans City - Lawrence Levy

Welling United - Mark Goldberg

York City - Jason McGill