Club Furry Mascot Policy

Approved by	Version	Issue date	Review date	Contact person
Board	2	June 2019	June 2020	Paul Antrobus

Gresty The Lion

1. Introduction to the Mascot's Role at Crewe Alexandra

This position is a voluntary role within the club. The Gresty the Lion mascot should represent fun, fair play and sportsmanship. The aim is to enhance the spectator's enjoyment of the live football experience.

The Club mascot will be responsible to the Match Day Safeguarding Officer (Bev Dyer) and Designated Safeguarding Officer (Paul Antrobus) but will only be responsible for themselves (e.g. ensuring that they attend any training required, turn up at the appointed time; have the right equipment; and act as a responsible member of the club team).

The mascot will be a valued member of the club team and gain a volunteering experience which will provide you with an insight into professional football.

The mascot will have the opportunity to watch the match once your duties have been completed (at the discretion of the club).

2. The duties of Gresty the Lion

- Enhance the spectator experience and represent the club Brand as a positive role model
- To attend additional training as required e.g. safeguarding training
- Arrival at the club or appropriate ground at the appointed time and at least 1 hour before the match begins
- Use appropriate designated changing area to change into and out of the mascot uniform
- When in the mascot uniform follow the instructions of the nominated companion, steward or staff member who is accompanying them in order to remain safe at all times as the mascot uniform is quite cumbersome
- Leave the stadium when asked to do so by any club official
- Ensure the mascot uniform is returned to the club in good condition
- Each mascot is accountable for his / her own behaviour at all times
- To only use the mascot uniform when representing club activities
- If invited to away matches stay in the stadium end appropriate to your team (or follow the guidance provided by club officials)
- To follow instructions given to you by the Club's safeguarding team
- Generally you will need to attend each home game including weekend and evening matches (up to 5 hours a week)
- Additional attendance at training may be required at the start of or during the season
- Turn up at the appointed time and demonstrate a commitment to regular attendance
- Attend pre and post-match briefings as required
- Provide crowd entertainment on match days before the match and on occasions at half time

3. Person Specification

The individual must:

- Be 18 years old or older
- Have an outgoing personality;
- Demonstrate excellent communication skills;
- Be committed to team working within CAFC
- Enjoy working with crowds in a busy environment;
- Be committed to safe working practice;
- Be willing to undertake training appropriate to the role
- Be willing and available to work outside normal office hours

4. Recruitment and Safe Deployment

Recruitment should be an open process with clear information provided about the role and person specification. References should be taken up and a full employment history, including clear explanations for any gaps in employment.

The role of the character mascot does not fit into the category of a 'Regulated Activity' as the individual will always be supervised by another Club volunteer or staff member therefore, the post is not subject to an enhanced DBS criminal records check. However, the persons appointed may also

hold another role in football which does require a DBS check and the HR department should be made aware of this situation if that is the case. The fact that a DBS checks are not required reinforces the importance of implementing rigorous recruitment and supervision processes.

All staff and volunteers recruited to the club must provide evidence of their identity, (that they are who they say they are) and any documentary evidence required for the role will be viewed and copied from the original document (photocopies are not acceptable). Appointment to this volunteering opportunity will be subject to the provision of two written references indicating their suitability for the role and a probationary period. The Club will also confirm that applicants are legally eligible to work in the UK and check with Cheshire FA's County Welfare Officer to ensure any person recruited to this role is not the subject of an FA suspension order.

5. Induction

Once the club has appointed suitable person(s) to the role(s) the successful applicants should receive appropriate induction which will include:

- A briefing of key areas such as health and safety, safeguarding and other key club issues
- Details of the Designated Safeguarding Officer and Match Day Safeguarding Officer
- Agreeing a time and date for the person to meet with and receive safeguarding induction from the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- An orientation to the club
- Copies of appropriate policies and guidance e.g. child and adult safeguarding policies and procedures; staff handbook, Gresty mascot guidance (see 6.2. below).
- Talking through the role and responsibilities and provision of a copy of the specification
- Issuing them with this policy and code of conduct
- Identifying any training or support needs and plan appropriate training
- Answering any questions, they have and set dates for supervision or review which should occur regularly during the probationary period.

During supervision sessions there will be a constant reinforcement of the expectations and requirements of the club and feedback on performance to date.

6. Code of Conduct

The Furry Mascot is a responsible ambassador of Crewe Alexandra Football Club (CAFC).

This code of conduct provides clear guidance on acceptable standards of behaviour required by the club. Failure to meet these standards may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

The club mascot should represent fun, fair play and sportsmanship. Their aim is to enhance the spectator's enjoyment of the live football experience.

CAFC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and all participants including adults who might be more vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. A rigorous recruitment process will be undertaken including the requirement for two written references.

6.1. The Volunteer Furry Mascot Must:

- Ensure that any direct contact with children or vulnerable adults is in an open environment and appropriate (the club's Match day Safeguarding Officer and Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will provide guidance on acceptable behaviour)
- Always be accompanied by a Club nominated companion, steward or member of staff to ensure that the mascot is never be alone with children- the companion will act as the 'eyes and ears' of the mascot and answer any questions
- Avoid direct contact with children and young people. Handshakes and waves are very appropriate, hugs should not be initiated
- Ensure that their/Gresty's hands are always visible, hand contact should be on shoulders only - the mascot assistant can assist in this by prompting 'Gresty give us a wave!' for any photographs
- Report any concern / allegation or disclosure concerning risk or harm to children to the club DSO or on match day to the Match Day Safeguarding Officer (Bev Dyer)
- Follow the Club's policies and procedures for Safeguarding and protecting Children and Adults at Risk
- Abide by the relevant Rules and Regulations of the EFL and the Football Association ("the Rules and Regulations")
- Maintain a responsible and co-operative attitude and uphold the ideals of fair play and sportsmanship
- Be punctual at all events; demonstrate a commitment to regular attendance and inform the Furry Mascot Coordinator as early as possible if you are unable to attend for any reason
- Show a positive and responsible attitude towards everyone involved in football
- Be a responsible ambassador of the club
- Recognise the referee and their assistants are the symbol of authority and always treat them with respect
- Promptly obey any instructions given by the referee, assistant referee or any fourth official
- Promptly comply with any instructions given by a steward, security guard or the police
- Provide consent for images or video footage taken at the match which may be used for media, publication or promotional purposes (Images consent form available from the club)
- Attend training and learning opportunities as required by the club
- Wear the appropriate Gresty uniform as directed by the club and follow the instructions of the nominated companion, steward or staff member who is accompanying them at all times in order to remain safe
- Be responsible and accountable for their own behaviour at all times
- Leave the pitch side 15 minutes before the start of the match or when asked to do so by any club or match official
- Inform the DSO of any change in health status which may affect their ability to perform your duties
- Inform the Club's DSO immediately if they become the subject of any external safeguarding concerns or investigation

6.2. Practical considerations:

Get used to the costume and the limited vision (look forward through the eyes and nose and down through the mouth). Practice walking in the costume. Move slowly and carefully.

Separate guidance about the full character outfit components; the order of dressing; costume care instructions and how to 'portray the character' through body language rather than speaking is available from the DSO and is provided at induction. Experienced mascots will recognise the need to speak to a child to reassure them if they appear to find the costume frightening or unsettling and will then move away to avoid distress.

6.3. The Volunteer Furry Mascot Must Not:

- Act in an inappropriate manner with any child(ren) or vulnerable adult
- Hold children for health and safety reasons – the parent/guardian hold the child and then approach Gresty the Lion
- Sit down when children and young people are present – this avoids the possibility of children sitting on or being taken onto your lap at any time
- Approach children – always let them come to you
- Influence, incite or condone unacceptable behaviour
- Criticise or disrespect officials, opponents, coaches, other Mascots or fans
- Enter the field of play, nor must they interfere with any officials, make a nuisance of themselves or prevent the smooth and orderly progress of the match
- Attempt to question or influence any decision made by a referee or assistant referee
- Approach or attempt to communicate with any player, coach or club official either of their own team or opposing team
- Interfere with any pitch equipment including, but not limited to, the goals, the ball, corner flags etc.
- Wear, use or lend the mascot uniform at any time without the express consent of the club
- Engage in any behaviour that is likely to cause offence or distress to any individual or sections of the crowd
- Operate around the area where the opposing fans are situated
- Throw anything of substance into the crowd including but not limited to water or other liquids

This Code of Conduct is extensive but not exhaustive and mascots should be aware that if their behaviour is found to be unacceptable they may be released from their role.

Note: It is important to recognise that The Football Authorities; Official Leagues; The Football Association and Crewe Alexandra Football Club will not tolerate conduct that is detrimental to the sport, the participants, the spectators, the officials or the community.

Such conduct includes (but is not limited to) vulgarity, lewd acts, harassment, racism, sexism, physical violence or threat of physical violence, verbal abuse, taunting, or any other anti-social behaviour.

7. Safeguarding Contacts

Any immediate concern or potential risk should be reported to a Steward without delay.

All concerns should be reported without delay. The following contact numbers are provided for the reporting of any welfare or safeguarding concerns:

CAFC Designated Safeguarding Officer
Paul Antrobus
T: 07788 432463
Email: pantrobus@crewealex.net

Match Day Safeguarding Officer
Beverley Dyer
Tel: 07733 077611

Cheshire East Children's Social Care:
Tel: 0300 123 5010
Tel: 0300 123 5022 (Emergency Duty Team for out of hours)

Police:
Emergency: 999
Local: Call 101 and ask for Cheshire Constabulary's Child Protection Team

EFL Safeguarding Manager:
Alexandra Richards
Tel: 07792 284740
Email: arichards@efl.com