



SCOTTISH FOOTBALL CHAPLAINCY  
— MORE THAN TWO LEGS ON A SATURDAY —

## Our Focus

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Sports Chaplaincy UK works in partnership with the SFA and the rest of the Scottish footballing community to offer pastoral support, help and encouragement to all who may need it.

## Our Objectives

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Sports Chaplaincy UK is the charity that facilitates, trains, supports and encourages chaplains for the benefit of the footballing community, people of all faiths and of no faith. It is recognised that there is a need for high quality pastoral and spiritual care, this generally involves visiting offices and training facilities on a weekly basis and being available to listen and bring support to all. Each chaplain will bring with them a vast range of skills, knowledge and expertise. A chaplain should be extremely supportive, bring a non-judgemental listening ear and an empathetic and compassionate presence.

## Sports Chaplaincy UK Values

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**P**resence - through regular interaction a chaplain becomes a connection point from which a journey of building trust begins.

**E**xcellence - a chaplain should be continually looking to improve their pastoral skill sets which are extremely valuable.

**R**elationship - when engaging with people chaplains need to be sensitive and compassionate.

**C**onfidential - a chaplain must be a trusted and safe port of call.

**H**umility - chaplains should be focusing on serving and not seeking anything for themselves.

Sports Chaplaincy UK has had the privilege of providing chaplaincy to Scottish football since 1998 when Mark Fleming was appointed at Partick Thistle FC in the midst of a difficult crisis at the club. Nine years later he began to develop chaplaincy at other clubs and now chaplains have been sourced, trained, appointed and overseen at the vast majority of football clubs within the SPFL, HFL, SLFL and SWPL.

## The need for a chaplain and what they can do:

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Pastoral care encompasses a wide variety of issues and offers support at times of personal crises as well as during everyday life. Problems faced by the footballing community are no different to those faced by society as a whole, however, there are some features unique to the professional footballing community that create an additional need for chaplaincy support:

- \* The highs and lows of the football career
- \* Off the field issues, which can impact performance
- \* Players with long term injuries
- \* Loneliness and homesickness
- \* Bereavement
- \* Building bridges for the club into the community



**Danny Lennon**  
Manager of Alloa Athletic FC

**“There is no doubt in my mind that the sports chaplains do a power of work for the good of the game, as well as making a large positive impact on the role models within it.**

I have benefited from the invaluable input of sports chaplaincy from my time as captain at Partick Thistle in 1999, right through to present day. I know of a great number of players and coaches who have been helped with gambling problems, depression, anxiety, alcohol misuse, bereavement, relationship issues, sectarian abuse and how to cope with success and failure in the public eye. I dread to think what would have happened to these players and coaches had they not been helped and supported by the chaplains.”

## Education



Mark has been involved in the SFA Performance Schools throughout Scotland over the past year, delivering a workshop on “How to deal with peer pressure.” This has been received by coaches, pupils and head teachers with great enthusiasm and appreciation. The intention would be to deliver other “life skills” workshops over the next year in all schools.

## Training



Sports chaplaincy place a great deal of importance on the training of new chaplains. 57 potential chaplains have been trained over this last year. Out of these 40 have been appointed, 9 of these were replacement chaplains. 43 club chaplains have been trained in understanding and addressing gambling addiction and Mark has personally supported 3 players with gambling problems.

## And beyond



Mark has been working with the men’s and women’s national teams. He delivered a seminar at the UEFA A Licence coaching course on the basis and benefits of chaplaincy. He visited and offered pastoral support to all 6 SFA regional departments. Mark has recently been accredited by NHS Scotland as a qualified Scottish Mental Health First Aid Trainer. This will enable him to train people within football clubs as mental health first aid officers.

Working in  
partnership with:



SCOTTISH WOMEN'S  
PREMIER LEAGUE



SPFL 39 clubs  
HFL 16 clubs  
SLFL 9 clubs  
SWPL 13 clubs  
SJFA 2 clubs

- 471+ hours of chaplaincy training delivered
- 2100+ hours of in kind support given locally and Nationally
- 79 clubs have chaplains
- In the region of a £490K of in kind support and training given in the last 12 months
- 57 potential chaplains trained

## Helping others - it's what we are about

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### SOME STATISTICS ABOUT SPORTS CHAPLAINCY UK AND SCOTTISH FOOTBALL CHAPLAINCY

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#### EVERYDAY SCOTTISH FOOTBALL CHAPLAINCY:

- 40+ hours per week from Mark to support chaplains and staff both at Hampden and other locations when necessary
- 21,000+ hours of in-kind chaplaincy support provided over the last 12 months
- 44 chaplains trained through Sports Chaplaincy UK, regionals and induction days
- 471 hours of training and support provided by Sports Chaplaincy UK
- 79 club chaplains in post
- 3000 people engaged and supported
- 8 organisations engaged

#### INCIDENT INTERVENTIONS AND DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUPPORT:

- Suicide intervention
- Bereavement
- Funerals
- Mental health and well-being issues
- Eating disorders
- Relationship breakdown and counselling
- Addictions
- Job issues
- Hospital visits

#### MATCH DAY CHAPLAINCY:

- A chaplain's work is not just with players but can be with all those at a club. On match day this can be supporting a wide variety of individuals including offering support in times of crisis at a stadia. A chaplain may offer support to the team's manager and coaching staff, player's families, hospitality staff, stewards as well as supporters.
- 4000+ hours of support per year to match day chaplaincy support
- 200+ club staff given bereavement support

#### SUMMARY:

In-kind hours: **21,000**

Training and support hours: **471**

Chaplains: **79**

Incident intervention: **265**

Incident intervention ROI: **£489.6k** (not including interventions)

Suicide interventions: **6**

Suicide interventions ROI: **£4.5 million**

\*A suicide intervention has a value of **£750K** to the wider society

It is our desire to offer a chaplain who is available to all areas of the football community.

“A very, very special thank you to our Club Chaplain, Duncan Strathdee. A number of people associated with the Club have faced personal tragedies or difficulties over the course of this season and, unseen and unheralded, Duncan has provided them with a listening ear, comfort and guidance that I know has been very much appreciated.”



**Stuart Brown**  
*chairman of Stirling Albion FC*