

Apprentice Success Stories: Joseph Cooper

If our professional successes are measured by the impact we have on others, then apprentice Joseph Cooper has made a highly commendable start to his career!

Joseph is undertaking his apprenticeship with Plymouth Argyle Football in the Community Trust, through the Level 3 Community Sport and Health Officer apprenticeship standard. The apprenticeship seeks to use the medium of sport as a catalyst to drive positive change across social and physical platforms. Joseph sought to follow this route because "it allows me to use sports and wellbeing to engage with a variety of people in the community. Sports can be used to motivate, get healthy and even engage the hardest to reach people in the greater community. No matter anyone's status, upbringing and ability, everyone deserves the access to sports for physical or mental wellbeing, as well as enjoyment, freedom and challenges."

Part of Joseph's role has afforded him the opportunity to become involved in the 'Loneliness Project', which seeks to reach out and support those who are at risk of isolation, particularly in light of the recent global pandemic.

For Joseph, this has been a unique chance in his development to build strong and lasting relationships with members of the local community. Joseph highlights how he has been able to support lifelong Plymouth Argyle fan, 95 year old Charlie: "During the time period in which I have visited and created a friendship with Charlie, my family have become pen pals, where we have written letters, exchanged Christmas Cards and also gave him a birthday card to celebrate his 95th birthday. As well as this, I contacted some other staff members/leaders on the projects about seeing if we could possibly celebrate such a big birthday for an Argyle fan, with his

name and age on the back of a Plymouth Argyle shirt. I was delighted that through the funding and donations we have received as a trust, we were able to make this happen on his birthday."



Tweet



Argyle Community Trust
@PAFCCCommunityTr

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Charlie's first @Only1Argyle game was in 1932 & on his 95th birthday we were able to surprise him with his very own shirt ❤️ Apprentice Joe has built a great friendship with Charlie & his family write pen pal letters to help support him ✍️
[@EFLTrust](#)
[#TacklingLonelinessTogether](#)



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Joseph was delighted to have the chance to present Charlie with his surprise birthday gift, and looks forward to using his apprenticeship as a vehicle to make a real difference and positive impact across those in his local community.

Charlie said: "I'm extremely grateful for all the work that Argyle have done for myself. They have always been part of my family since I was a young boy; but the kindness of visits, phone calls, drops and overall support of everyone is overwhelming and I never expected any of this! The club has done so much for myself, and for that I'm so grateful."

Charlie specifically wanted to express his sincere thanks to Argyle Community Trust staff; Emma Potter, Jamie Clewer, Todd Hanrahan, Ben Kerwell, Ben Hugill and Joseph Cooper for all the visits and phone calls, as well as for the organisation of the shirt and message for his birthday.

Joseph highlights how the surprise birthday gift has been a "highlight of my apprenticeship so far. It was a pleasure to be able to organise a shirt for Charlie for his 95th birthday, as he has been a loyal Argyle supporting fan from when he was 8 years old. Being able to organise this, was an absolute pleasure after building up such an amazing friendship with Charlie. As well as gifting a shirt to Charlie, we were able to discuss my Granddad, who was my role model, as well being an Argyle first team player. Being able to talk about my first hand experience of knowing my Granddad for the amazing person he was, I was also able to get an insight to his playing days from Charlie."

Joseph's apprenticeship opportunity has been made possible with thanks to the generosity of Samworth Brothers, who have acted as sponsors to Joseph's apprenticeship position, through the transferring of apprenticeship levy funds. Samwoth Brothers are family business, that was founded back in 1896 by George Samworth. Samwoth Brothers produce a range of products, inclusive of Ginsters, the UK's number 1 Cornish savoury pastry brand, as well as the West Cornwall Pasty Co.

Plymouth Argyle Football in the Community Trust are extremely proud of Joseph and very much look forward to supporting his professional development through this exciting apprenticeship pathway.