**Introducing the chaplain**

The introduction of Chaplain’s Chat to the programme this year may have raised questions about the role of a chaplain in a football club. Football chaplaincy began in 1976 at Aldershot FC opening the door for sports chaplaincy in the UK. Currently over 300 sports chaplains are involved in 6 different sports in the UK (see [www.sportchaplaincyuk](http://www.sportchaplaincyuk)). Two-thirds of clubs in the men’s Premiership and Championship leagues have chaplains.

The sports chaplain’s responsibility is to offer pastoral and spiritual care to all connected to the club – players and their families, coaches, other staff and fans. Although sports chaplains follow the Christian faith they are there for those of all faiths or none, helping people to live with the tough questions rather than offering glib answers.

Pastoral care involves walking alongside others, sharing in the ups and downs of life, both the significant and the ordinary. Chaplains are concerned for people’s welfare being available to listen in a world that seems to be increasingly more rushed and where people have no time for each other. They provide the opportunity for non-judgemental listening and a confidential chat when required.

You will find me usually on the turnstiles or wandering around the ground, attempting to get to know people. I look forward to meeting you as we support the Royals together.