**Appeals Board**

Decision of the Appeals Board held on Thursday 15 July 2021

The Appeals Board – Carley Shields (Chair)

 Ian Beggs

 Ciara McReynolds

**Portadown BBOB v Mid Ulster Football League**

The Appeals Board decided that it was still sensible to hold the Appeal remotely, and on the papers, given the ongoing pandemic.

This was an appeal by Portadown BBOB (Portadown) against the decision of the Mid Ulster Football League (MUFL) made on 21 June 2021, and communicated via email on 23 June 2021, not to allow Portadown's application to be admitted to the Mid Ulster Intermediate B Division for the 2021/2022 season.

The Appeals Board have considered the arguments advanced by both parties in correspondence and set out the rationale for its decision below.

Rule 4, in particular Rule 4b of the Mid Ulster Football League Rules states that *‘All issues regarding promotion and Relegation will be determined annually by the Management Committee. NB. As a guideline, the Management will look to promote 2 teams from each Division per season.’*

In March 2020 the MUFL released a statement, which has been quoted in both parties' submissions, which stated*: ‘The Committee have for some time expressed their concerns about potential sterility at the bottom of Intermediate B. In order to offset this, the Committee are with immediate effect opening up the possibility of promotion and relegation between those teams finishing in the top 1 or 2 places of Junior Division 1, providing of course that they meet the Intermediate ground criteria, and those teams finishing in the bottom 1 or 2 places of Intermediate B. The Committee have further determined that with immediate effect Junior teams, whether internal or external to the MUFL, can NOT be parachuted into Intermediate football and that, in accordance with the wishes of our National Association, Intermediate football may only be obtained via the natural processes of the pyramid system.'*

It is acknowledged by the MUFL and the Appeals Board that Portadown had achieved one of the qualifying limbs, that being Intermediate ground approval from the IFA. However, given the disruption due to the ongoing pandemic, it is noted that in the last recorded season of 2019-2020, Portadown finished 7th out of 12 teams in Division 1, 23 points behind the position required for automatic promotion (assuming ground approval is achieved) and 10 points from the bottom. This therefore meant that Portadown had not satisfied the second qualifying limb of finishing in the top 1 or 2 places in Division 1.

Based on Rule 4b cited above the Appeals Board is satisfied that the MUFL were entitled to make the decision it did.

The Appeals Board is also satisfied that the MUFL gave due and proper consideration to Portadown’s request by allowing representations to be made at the Management Committee on 21 June 2021.

The Appeals Board therefore dismisses the appeal.

End.