

# COME ON YOU FANS

## DERBY COUNTY fans' panel

For today's fans' panel, **Emily Liles** talks about Derby County's nomination for the Johnstone's Paint Community Club of the Year award

IN 17 days' time, the Football League awards take place in London, with Derby County the only club to be nominated for three awards.

Young striker Mason Bennett will learn if he has picked up the prestigious Apprentice of the Year award, while the club's digital team hope to claim the Best Digital Content gong.

Arguably the least publicised accolade is the Johnstone's Paint Community Club of the Year, the final nomination for the Rams.

The club's Community Trust have already been named as Midlands winners and will battle it out with four other regional victors for the national title.

It's the third nomination in four years for the Trust and Simon Carnall, head of community, believes one flagship programme in particular has seen them ranked as one of the best in 2013.

"We have a free school which is a topic that's receiving a lot of bad press at the moment with questions raised over their effectiveness," said Carnall.

"We have a £1.8m school, 200 yards from Pride Park, which houses 50 young people who have been permanently excluded from schools and we felt that best demonstrated what we are about.

"We're not educationalists so we work with Derby Moor Community Sports College and it's a partnership where we use our staff for the physical activity but we leave the teaching to those who are qualified."

One common misconception is that community schemes are funded and directly related to their respective football clubs.

But each of the 72 Football League clubs have their own charitable arm, a separate financial entity which relies

on external sources of funding.

And Carnall insists the club and trust have a symbiotic relationship.

He added: "We use the brand of the football club to improve the lives of people in Derbyshire as Derby County is a unique selling point.

"We are at the heart of the football club but our governance sits outside, so we can be independent.

"Clubs grow when they are promoted and have to make cuts when they get relegated and it would be easy for community departments to follow suit.

"We're protected from that but we've still got to be integral to what the football club is trying to do and I think that's why we are successful."



Simon Carnall, head of community at Derby County Community Trust.

Before their promotion to League Two in 2009, Burton Albion did not have a community department but now have 22 full-time staff reaching out to 6000 local people and the Brewers' community manager, Andy Taylor, is grateful for their neighbour's work.

"Derby have good facilities and the support of the football club and I like to feel we've created a smaller version of that," said Taylor.

"They've been there or thereabouts for the community award for a number of years and I hope they go on and win it"