



FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS' ASSOCIATION

PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED BY THE NEXT NC MEETING

National Council Meeting

Thursday 6th February 2020

Unite the Union, 128 Theobalds Road, London, WC1X 8TN

Attendees:

Ally Simcock (Associate rep - Pint of Vale) AS
Antony Wilkinson (L1 & L2 rep - Blackpool Supporters' Trust) AW
Chris Paouros (Fans for Diversity rep - Proud Lilywhites) CP
Christine Seddon (Individual representative – Blackpool FC fan) CS
Fiona McGee (Individual representative – Leeds United FC fan) FM
Geoff Bielby (Championship rep - Hull City Supporters' Trust) GB
Kat Law (PL Network rep & Tottenham Hotspur Supporters' Trust) KL
Kevin Miles (FSA staff) KM
Kristine Green (Individual representative – Grimsby Town fan) KG
Malcolm Clarke (Chair) MC
Manny Dominguez (L1 & L2 rep - Bradford City Supporters Trust) MD
Michael Brunskill (FSA staff) MB
Neil Le Milliere (Supporter-owned clubs rep - Exeter City ST) NLM
Nick Duckett (Supporter-owned clubs rep - FC United) ND
Peter Daykin (Individual representative – Sunderland AFC fan) PD
Richard Tomkins (National Game rep - Hereford United) RT
Rick Duniec (Championship rep - Leeds United Supporters' Trust) RD
Roger Ellis (L1 & L2 rep - Sky Blue Trust) RE
Simon Cope (National Game rep - Scarborough Athletic) SC
Tim Hillyer (Supporter-owned clubs rep - Dons Trust) TH
Tom Greatrex (Vice chair) TG

More info on FSA NC structure and members [here](#).

<u>Item</u>	<u>Action</u>
<p>MC chaired the meeting.</p> <p>1. Apologies</p> <p>Apologies received from: Dave Kelly, Steve Powell, Rob Street, Martin O’Hara, Teddy Bellamy, Malcolm Hirst, David Michael, Dave Pennington.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of the 31st October 2019 Meeting</p> <p>SC says he had submitted apologies to last meeting and requested minutes to be amended.</p>	RI
<p>3. Matters Arising</p> <p>RE asks if groups has been appointed to look at constitutional review. MC says he will look at this at Board next week. NLM reminds that membership policy is part of this too and that needs resolving ahead of the next AGM.</p> <p>NLM asks if contact details are up-to-date. KM says it’s always an ongoing process but all member groups have been contacted this year. MC moves discussion to AOB.</p>	
<p>4. Minutes from the 14th November 2019 Board Meeting / Board Report</p> <p>Amendment: Resolution at FA Council re: FSA governance proposals was passed nem con (no objections) not unanimously.</p> <p>SC asks Q4 re: finance and FA funding. Monthly? Annual? And what is it contingent upon.</p> <p>KM: The FSF received £75,000 unrestricted funding and that continued for FSA. We have KPIs from Fans Fund which already take into account our workload and FA funding. If FA proposed new KPIs it could leave us overstretched. In dialogue with FA to find a solution which satisfies both parties.</p> <p>MD asks if members would fund the organisation. MC says to be realistic the level of funding required isn’t going to be raised by members and core funders have no influence over policy.</p> <p>General discussion on partnership deals and membership income generation. MC says current model is working well but good to discuss and review this with the NC perennially.</p>	RI
<p>5. Report from the CEO</p> <p><u>Standing</u></p> <p>KM hands to PD re: standing: Minister will make announcement tomorrow on “emerging findings”. It doesn’t solve all problems as there are on-going issues re:</p>	

different types of standing accommodation being approved. Good news but not the end of the road and we have to defend choice / menu of options.

KL asks for general FSA support in communicating the news to fans as some might presume they can all stand anywhere in stadium which isn't the case as it is specific to rail seat areas. It's a confusing message and needs carefully articulating. Also asks about details over percentages of rail seats per ground, any restrictions in upper tiers. No details on this yet.

KG concerned that clubs in L1 & L2's needs aren't forgotten. PD says we support EFL in their position on defending safe terraces. PD says we've always told SGSA and EFL we wouldn't support one technology alone as a range of options need to be available for clubs (e.g. safe terraces, the "Cardiff City model", rail seats).

MD asks about standing / seating ratio and clubs who have been promoted to PL then relegated. PD says all clubs should be able to do what they want within the constraints of the Green Guide. The standing / seating ratio will remain 1:1 in short term.

NLM outlines concerns about rail seat legislation cascading down and then club loses terrace. PD says we would never tolerate that and no indication from authorities that they will do that.

Discussion around density and KM says most regs relating to this are set by concourse size, number of toilets etc. PD says the organisation has huge level of knowledge re: standing ground requirements. SC encourages FSA to be alert to the dangers of unintended consequences e.g. authorities dictating rail seats at lower league clubs. PD says that will continue to be the case.

Community fund

RE says until fund is announced in budget difficult to know what to do with it. Given it refers to "local clubs" the presumption is its smaller clubs. RE suggests contacting the Department and making a definite proposal. KM says will see where the budget sits once the reshuffle occurs.

ND asks if this was an FSA proposal? KM says it seems to be something which was added to conservative manifesto but we will follow up with the Department. TH says new AFCW Stadium will be a 7-day community stadium.

APPG

KM – meeting last night and reconstituted for new Parliament. APPG has many influential MPs including ex-sports minister and CMS Select Committee chair etc. MB outlines ideas for upcoming APPG ideas on policing/football costs, facial recognition technology, Qatar 2022, VAR and agent fees.

European Super League

KM says Football Supporters Europe have contacted UEFA and were told they are no proposals but KM believes there is work going on behind-the-scenes and the

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concept has changed. Would still have 6 groups of 6 Champions League format and an impact on the domestic fixtures. KM says we should oppose expansion of Champions League but difficult to mobilise protest around that as changes are more incremental. Look at two ways – either good news as we fended off worst excesses of the ESL or bad news as they will make smaller changes which we opposed.

KM: FIFA World Club competition in 2021 will be in China which is against FIFA's own rules on consultation, bidding process and assessed against human rights standards. FIFA deny this as they say it isn't a tournament but a "pilot competition".

They are expanding it to a 24-club competition, including 12 European clubs, held every 2 years, in November / December, which will impact domestic fixtures as this would be expected to take 3 weeks. 4 English teams likely. FIFA can dictate under rules and problem as no direct supporter engagement with FIFA.

KL asks if there's a public update on this? KM says he would like FSE to write. Jim Chisem FSE to look at this.

AS sits on Fixtures Working Party and says impact would be huge and will harm teams throughout the leagues because of the knock-on effect on Cup competitions etc. RE agrees this could threaten League Cup and FA Cup. Trickle down money lost.

CP outlines concerns about China's human rights record. KM says there has been progress with joint Transparency International work and it should be impossible for China to get a tournament but they have designated this a competition. MC asks to highlight this with human rights campaign partner via FSA website / networks. NC backs opposes FIFA's decision to ignore their own "tournament" rules and award "competition" to China.

Discrimination

MC says need clarity from FA on whether they hold a club responsible for individual fan behaviour away from their home ground e.g. a ST holder thrown out at an away game.

AS says PVFC were charged last season with "sexist chanting" at Crewe last season, reported by assistant referee. Club received no definitive evidence but pleaded guilty and was fined. This season AS was asked by the club to work with fans in the away end to challenge such behaviour.

CP says fans and officials feel more empowered to challenge abusive language. Mass discriminatory chanting occurs in Europe whereas in UK it tends to be more individualistic behaviour which needs to be challenged. Continue to call it out and educate.

NLM talks about abuse in stands aimed at players who have committed criminal acts. CP says that it different from abuse relating to legally protected characteristics.

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KM says tone of abuse online towards club officials is often unacceptable and believes FSA could look at a respect campaign as there is a danger clubs walk away from fan engagement if nothing changes. Concerns around match protocol as it gives a lot of power to one abusive individual to stop / cancel a match.

KM says FSA National Survey to gauge attitudes across a huge range of issues including this and guides a broad summary of policy which is taken to the AGM for discussion. Beneath that break down and build policy papers in each area led by staff but supported by working group of volunteers. That paper is brought back to NC to approve as a policy development. NC approves.

RE asks to send broad headers around NC to prompt questions.

CP: Can we incentivise? KM maybe something focused at affiliates in proportion to affiliates. Table at FSA Awards?

Awards

MC asks NC to formally congratulate those involved in the Awards. NLM says fantastic event but disappointed in the drinks selection as he prefers real ale to lager and concerned about the wastage rates. MB says he believes cost is per head not per bottle.

Gamble Aware

TG asks how many clubs have responded yet? TG says will be helpful to have a number to encourage his own club.

Policing and stewarding

MC says Trading Standards link is a good one to build. Football industry doesn't always seem to think it has to comply with consumer law in ST T&Cs. KL commends Amanda Jacks work on this and encourages others to contact Amanda.

National Game and community-owned clubs

TH asks about Nicola Cave's work reviewing SD documents in relation to trust rules / model constitutions. KM confirms Nicola is working on that but isn't sure about the end date as she's going through entire archive. RE encourages Nicola to speak to Trust secretaries. KM says tidying what we have at the minute and then ensure they are all fit for purpose.

TH asks for further detail on Coop Commission. KM says Andy Walsh is leading this work and will supply more detail.

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NC reps to promote FSA Survey

D.Rose to update NC

KM to ask Nicola to update

KM

<p>6. Club governance reform / Issues re Bolton Wanderers</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>KM: FSA governance paper proposes independent regulatory unit within the FA which is preventative not just reactive. Paper was fed into the political parties. Pre-election Conservative Party included “fan led review” on governance in manifesto. If FA doesn’t adopt how do you influence without legislation? Government only supports 2030 FA World Cup bid if FA adopt proposals out of fan led review? We have very good contact with those leading the review. KM pays tribute to RE’s input into the FSA governance paper as it has been very well received.</p> <p>RE: EFL have Jonathan Taylor QC reviewing financial sustainability. Debbie Jevons outlined to CMS Select Committee what his work would cover. We have noted those comments.</p> <p>CS says there could be challenges at the end of season to EFL because of how BWFC was handled which could affect where teams finish. For FSA to think about and consider position.</p> <p>In relation to Bury FC RE says there are two different groups (Forever Bury and Phoenix Bury) who have different aims. One to revive Bury FC (and buy Gigg Lane), another to form a phoenix club. This makes for a challenging local environment but FSA are active. TG says FA Alliance Committee discussed and the FA technically through that committee place clubs in a league.</p> <p>SC explains similar situation developed at Scarborough Athletic as Scarborough Town formed one year later, although they have ceased to exist. RE says Ashley is doing what he can to assist.</p>	
<p>7. FA Cup issues</p> <p>TG and KL run through work on pricing, 15% away allocation, broadcasting etc. More pressure on FA to get rid of 3rd/4th Round ET/replays from bigger clubs. Questions to ask in survey. KL outlines unfairness of disparity in costs between first game and replay. Shouldn’t charge more for replay than original tie.</p> <p>KM: Unintended consequences of FA’s solution to Bet365 problem was to stream games on the FA website which we oppose as there is too much football on TV.</p> <p>SC / KL discuss whether clubs have to agree price. MC says it’s worth clarifying. KL suggests getting latest rules and checking via Andy Ambler.</p> <p>TG says FA Cup qualifying round games will be changed so clubs can share clips on social media and expand marketing activity to incorporate earlier round and may televise qualifying round.</p>	<p>MC/TG</p>

<p>MC says there was an application from Arsenal FC for exemption from 15% away ticket rule. This was rejected by the FA.</p> <p>CP asks if any dialogue about women's FA Cup? KL / TG say no as issues have been pricing but acknowledge the point and agree a watching brief is needed.</p>	
<p>8. FA Council report</p> <p>MC says this has been covered in other items.</p>	
<p>9. Network updates</p> <p>MB says he will share PL Network mins, EFL Supporter Engagement mins and Safer Gambling Hub which he encourages all reps to put on their supporter engagement meetings.</p> <p>Community-owned clubs - NLM is setting up a meeting of Trusts in SW. TH says mins of this Network are available to circulate.</p> <p>Fans For Diversity – CP says 10 new members and areas of work to explore: discrimination inside stadia, evaluation of FFD campaign and brand, develop fan and best practice guide to inclusion and FFD inclusions policy (volunteer who'll lead on that). Events looking towards FFD 2020 conference and things around England C International at Aldershot. Also women's football fan event. Next meeting at upcoming at WBA.</p> <p>MD asks for update on Anwar's community work. KM says working jointly with KIO/FSA to work with young people and, if appropriate, educate and change attitudes rather than pushing fans into the criminal justice system. No KPIs or funding to it but we have done work in that area. It is now a funded KIO/FSA role – finance/staff sits with KIO and have new fan education officer funded by Chelsea FC but working across all clubs. Years two and three will hopefully be funded by Fans Fund as joint project.</p> <p>EFL Networks – No meeting since the last National Council meeting. The next Championship / L1 & L2 Network meeting is on Thursday 12th March 2020. Work ongoing to collect information on ticket pricing by clubs in the Championship / L1 & L2.</p> <p>National Game Network has not met since last NC. Next NGN meeting expected in March. RS arranging to meet with chief exec of National League in due course.</p>	<p>MB</p>
<p>10. AGM preparation</p> <p>KM – it's on 18th July. TG asks if we can make something more appealing beyond constitutional items? RE says at last year's AGM a resolution was passed about climate change. Has anything been done about that?</p> <p>MC suggests staff to check AGM mins.</p>	<p>RI</p>

<p>11. Internal constitution review</p> <p>TG suggests this is discussed at board next week as running short on time. MC agrees.</p>	<p>Board</p>
<p>12. Community-ownership problems</p> <p>NLM says he knows things are going on behind-the-scenes but nothing talked about at Council / Board. MB encourages NC members to highlight any useful issues to Comms team.</p>	
<p>13. Elite player performance plan</p> <p>This proposer for this agenda item was not in the room so no further discussion. NC agreed that should members wish to submit an agenda item they should also submit a suitable level of information alongside that item so that the secretary / chair is aware of this proposer's intent, should they be absent.</p>	<p>NC reps to include note with agenda items</p>
<p>14. Facial recognition technology</p> <p>KM says we'll check this with Paul Corkrey who added this item but isn't at the meeting. KM says this subject will be in survey.</p> <p>CP points out gender / BME dynamic to this as well. TH says London IAG say they have not been using this technology but there are areas in London where it is used. MC says significant issue but something to come back to in more detail.</p>	
<p>15. AOB</p> <p>NLM asks if "Election Runner" (electronic voting) can be looked at for consideration of approval by this body for supporters' groups to be implemented at a local level for FSA endorsement.</p> <p>NLM asks who is main contact at ECST? Office to clarify.</p> <p>KL talks about anti-discrimination work at THFC and improvement around protocol used at games by referees and staff. Need for players to feel comfortable to report but also for media to report responsibly in relation to the evidence.</p> <p>MC closes meeting.</p>	<p>KM</p> <p>MB</p>

Addendum

Women's game report

The FSA had a very successful meeting with Lauren O'Sullivan, the head of league operations for the FA. We made a presentation on the work that we do elsewhere in the game and outlined our

ambitions for a network of supporters' groups in the women's game. Lauren is keen to attend a network meeting and find out more about our structured dialogue work.

Elsewhere we are continuing to build our profile within the women's game and our Free Lionesses Twitter feed now has more than 1000 followers. Bristol City Supporters Group has now joined the FSA.

After England's success in winning the She Believes Cup in 2019 the national team's focus will be shifted to this invitational event in March. The FSA will be taking the opportunity that the event provides to raise awareness of supporter issues and our wider work.

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