



Report of the National Game Network Meeting – London 8th March 2020

Introduction & Welcome

Ten members were in attendance either in London or online – Simon Cope, Garreth Cummins, Nick Duckett, Paul Griffin, Tony Roome, Maria Ryder, Sarah Stelling, Michel Thomas and Richard Tomkins. Apologies were received from Rob Street and Andy Walsh among others.

Amendment to previous minutes

TR noted that the minutes of the previous meeting in September 2019 should note that it was Clapton's *dissatisfaction* rather than *deep satisfaction* with the previous owners' behaviour that led to the club being formed. Otherwise, the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Update from National Council

The representatives from the FSA National Council – RT and SC – gave an update on the recent meeting. Most of the discussion surrounded the issue of the FSA's contribution to AFC Wimbledon's Plough Lane bond scheme, and the manner in which the decision was taken by a board meeting convened after the NC meeting, and not in consultation with the NC itself. FSA Chair Malcolm Clarke has explained the decision on the NC email loop, and the NGN representatives on the NC will take the meeting's concerns to the next NC meeting.

TR also asked for a resolution on the question of regional organisations, such as the southern division and their application for associate member status. This will be raised with the NC.

Structured Dialogue

The meeting was informed that there had not been a further structured dialogue meeting with the National League since the last NGN meeting, but that constructive work had been done with Michael Tattersall at the NL on tickets for non-league finals day, and on the disability access project which AW and MH had been working on among other issues. We would look to convene a meeting around the end of the season.

The question was raised as to whether there would be benefit to expanding the requirements of structured dialogue into steps 3 and 4 – there are logistical difficulties in dealing with multiple league organisations, but the FSA would look to improve relationships with the leagues.

Membership

The meeting was presented with an update on the membership situation at the various levels of the national game, with discussion on its implications. The ultimate target is to have 100% representation of clubs with at least one supporter organisation. ND mentioned that the Community-owned Clubs Network were looking to produce a brochure/document on the benefits of the community ownership model, and the meeting agreed that specific literature that would appeal to fan groups in the non-league game would greater encourage membership and be a useful tool.



The meeting asked for a proposal from staff as to how expansion of membership would be achieved, and it was noted that the members of the network themselves would also be engaged in raising the profile of the FSA and benefits of membership.

Initially, it was agreed that notable gaps in membership would be advised to the NGN email loop on a regular basis in order that people would be aware if they were visiting a non-member club and could aim to engage with the local supporter group on an upcoming visit.

Disability access

MR updated the meeting on the work that had been done throughout the national game – the National League had required all of their clubs to complete a disability access survey, and so we have a greater understanding of the situation throughout steps 1 and 2, and which areas require improvement.

The first clubs have now signed up to the charter, including Belper Town, Leek Town and Newcastle Town. Anyone with any questions, or who wants to hear more about Fans for Diversity and how to access funds should get in touch with Maria – maria.ryder@thefsa.org.uk

Women's Football

ND advised that there would be an equivalent of the Brian Lomax Cup launched in the women's game as a result of the Community-owned Clubs Network.

The question was also raised as to the position of women's supporters within the FSA structure – GC advised that while they don't form their own network within FSA structures, Deborah Dilworth (deborah.dilworth@thefsa.org.uk) is the FSA staff member with individual responsibility for growing this area of work, and individual fans and supporter groups of women's clubs could still become members and have their voices heard. The FSA has been looking to strengthen representation in this area for a number of years and will continue to do so. Deborah is in the process of affiliating a number of new women's football fan groups. GC also advised of the potential upcoming event in October around Women at the Match, and an associated survey, aimed at better understanding the position of female fans in both the men's and women's games.

Updates from attendees

PG advised that Dulwich were still seeking support for the planning permission application at Champion Hill, details of which [can be found here](#).

TR updated on Clapton Community FC and their proposed return to the Old Spotted Dog ground. The club has cash on hand to complete the purchase of the land, but the clubhouse and changing rooms require significant work, which may be funded through a loan of up to £100k. CCFC have had trouble in locating a surveyor due to the nature of the ground. The hope is that the club's women's team could move into the ground for the start of the 2020/21 season, but it's unlikely the men's team will be able to relocate by that point as the ground grading requirements are stricter.

RT advised that Hereford United Supporters Trust are moving towards 50% ownership of the club, and have been granted an extension until May 2021 to achieve this fundraising.



Any Other Business

TR asked if anyone had any knowledge of what happened if a community tried to buy an asset on which it had taken out ACV status – was referred to Deborah Dilworth who leads FSA work on ACVs.

SC asked if various groundhopper groups (and similar) would be permitted membership of the FSA, as non-club specific groups.

GC was tasked with reporting back on the terms of elections on the NC members from the NGN, with the upcoming FSA AGM in the summer.

GC was also tasked with finding out whether it would be possible for the FSA to have 'a presence' at the upcoming non-league finals day at Wembley.