

ENGLAND and WALES FOOTBALL COUNCIL [EWFC] MEETING

DATE: Thursday 20th September 2018

TIME: 13:00 to 16:00

LOCATION: The Camden Room, CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London, N1 6AH



REPORT

Present:

- Antony Wilkinson [AW]
- Geoff Bielby [GB]
- Kat Law [KL]
- Neil Le Milliere [NLM]
- Peter Lloyd [PL]
- Tim Hartley [TH]

In attendance:

- Ashley Brown (CEO) [AB]
- Deborah Dilworth (Network Manager) [DD]
- James Mathie (Head of England and Wales, and Club Development) [JM]
- Nicola Hudson (Network Manager) [NH] (by video conference)
- Vicki Goodfellow (Network Co-ordinator) (Minutes) [VG]

1. Apologies and welcome

Apologies were received from Dan Crawford [DC], Michael Green [MG] and Roger Ellis [RE].

2. Minutes and report from the previous meeting

With the exception of a couple of minor changes the minutes and report from the meeting 8th May 2018 were agreed.

3. Board report

NLM reported that a SD and Football Supporters' Federation [FSF] interim board has been set up. A further report will be provided later in the meeting.

4. Matters arising

Action points were discussed.

5. One organisation update & future of EWF Council (Recruitment to the new networks & council)

AB gave an overview of the operational work that has taken place since the vote to merge with the FSF.

We've begun working closely with our colleagues from the FSF and have created a task list of everything that needs to be undertaken before the new organisation becomes operational. The aim is for the new entity to be operational from 1st January 2019.

One issue which needs to be resolved is what form the new entity will take. This was discussed at length at the interim board meeting which took place yesterday. The long-term aim is to become a CBS (Community Benefit Society) but as a short-term measure it may be necessary to become a CLG (Company Limited by Guarantee) and work to become a CBS within the next year or two.

A lot of work on finance of the new organisation has been undertaken and we have been looking into what the finance will look like at the end of the current Fans' Fund cycle.

The Fans' Fund have asked us to bid for packages of work for the next round of funding which starts in August 2019. At the end of October, once a new CEO has been appointed, we can talk about what work needs to be undertaken by the new organisation in the next three-year cycle.

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The new organisation is in a strong position to secure Fans' Fund funding, but we don't know what the work will be or how much we will get for it. It's likely that we won't find out until March or April next year.

There will be a new name for the new organisation although this hasn't been decided yet. It's likely that both FSF and SD's current brand will still exist under an umbrella brand for a period.

The interim board are working on how to manage our online and social media profile.

The first AGM of the new organisation is scheduled to take place on Thursday 22nd November.

We've looked at our membership of other organisations and whether these should continue, for example, Supporters Direct Scotland, Supporters Direct Europe and the Sport and Recreation Alliance.

There are ongoing discussions about how to incorporate the work of other sports in the new organisation.

There will be 6 networks in the new organisation, they are; Premier League, Championship, Leagues One and Two (combined), Non-league, community owned clubs and Fans for Diversity. Each network will have 3 places on the National Council along with 6 individual representatives and 3 associate member representatives. The election process for the National Council will start at the network meetings with the results ratified at the first AGM on 22nd November.

It was confirmed that the SD EWFC will cease to exist at the end of the year. AB encouraged all members to consider standing for the new National Council via their network.

The new organisations board will be fully elected from the National Council members.

NLM questioned why the new board members are elected from the council when this method hasn't worked for SD. AB said that the number of overall meetings has been reduced but this was the proposal presented to members at the AGM.

KL said that the Premier League network meeting is next week which isn't very long to give members a chance to think about the elections. TG said the aim of the meeting is to make the process clear and that voting will take place electronically after the meeting.

TH said that the draft constitution will be ready by the end of October. Our work with other sports remains an issue as it's clear that the Fans' Fund will only fund work within football.

TG said that there might way of involving other sports in the new organisation, for example, a 'friends of' scheme. It has been confirmed that other sports won't have voting rights.

JM pointed out that we are not 100% funded by Fans' Fund as we get £8k per year from the Rugby Football League and the income from membership fees, alongside other non-restricted revenue so this money could be put directly back into other sports. JM said a paper could be put together on how the work can be carried out financially.

PL asked who is putting together the funding packages. AB responded there's no documented process for the new funding application, but we've been told that we will have a series of collaborative meetings with Fan's Fund. The Fans' Fund will then present the packages.

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KL asked whether an elected representative would lose their place on the board and/or National Council if their team gets relegated or promoted. TG and TH confirmed that they would lose their council place however they would remain on the board (if applicable).

There was further discussion around the process of the elections to the National Council.

AB confirmed that only affiliate members can stand for elections to National Council via the networks. Anybody standing for election will be reminded of the affiliate member criteria and that if they don't fulfil the criteria then the result won't be ratified at the first AGM.

6. Fans' Fund KPI's

JM reiterated that it is still important that we meet our KPI's for this funding year (August 2018-July 2019).

NLM asked whether the current KPI's will have an impact on the new organisation. JM said that we have just started year three of a three-year cycle, so they are still relevant, and it is critically important that we agree the new KPI's with the FSF as soon as possible.

PL asked why the number of new Supporters' Trusts have plateaued over the past few years and whether we are effectively communicating the benefits of becoming a Supporters' Trust. JM explained that this KPI is slightly out of our control as it depends on the situation at each club. We've not quite reached saturation point yet but we do need to ensure that setting up a trust is the right thing to do. There are some clubs that could have a trust and we are involved in conversations, for example, Sunderland and West Ham. We've been attempting to influence West Ham FC about the benefits of democratic supporter engagement with regard to their supporters' board.

AB said that the new organisation must be able to explain why supporter groups should become a Supporters' Trust rather than a supporters' club.

7. Divisional Reports

JM reported that we are currently offering support to Wycombe Wanderers and Newport County who are discussing whether to remain supporter owned. JM & DD are attending a public meeting at Newport County this evening.

Swindon Town Supporters' Trust are in serious discussions about taking on the ground alongside the club.

PL asked if MOU's are working or if there's anything else we can do to promote them. DD responded that we want them to be as organic as possible with an agreement on both sides. Often the process is quite slow. We have a lot of potential MOU's in the pipeline although none in the Premier League. KL said THST decided not to go ahead an MOU for various reasons. DD said that it's worth having an MOU even where a verbal agreement is in place.

7.1 Premier League

DD reported that the next meeting is taking place on Thursday 27th September. It was decided not to have a trust meeting before the FSF meeting due to the merger making two meetings irrelevant. We are next meeting with the Premier League on Thursday 11th October, but we still have not received the minutes from the previous meeting. We are working on terms of reference for the meetings with the FSF to present to the Premier League.

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DD highlighted that she has been publishing 'Fanspiration' articles regularly to highlight the great work undertaken by some trusts.

7.2 EFL

DD said we are presenting terms of reference the EFL meetings to John Nagle at the EFL.

DD has been working on the role of the Fan Elected Director with Mariners Trust, Crawley Town Supporters' Trust and Robins Trust. The Mariners Trust produced a pamphlet on how supporters can get involved and they are working on a MOU with the club.

We recently circulated information to our EFL members about live streaming of matches during the 3pm blackout and we've received some interesting feedback. It appears that some clubs were not aware that it was going to happen.

DD attended and made a presentation at the recent Leeds United Supporters' Trust AGM.

Trust Oldham were meant to be looking into becoming a SD member but then had a change of personnel on the board. We're back in touch with them and we are hoping that they will still become members.

Luton Town Supporters' Trust have had a complaint about one of their board members Tweeting racist and anti-Semitic messages, so we have been advising the trust on how to handle the complaints.

7.3 Non-League

NH thanked those who contributed toward the online training feedback. The training has been added to the new Best Practice area on the Hub. JM & NH gave a brief demonstration of the Best Practice area.

The National League have agreed in principle to the terms of reference NH recommended for their meetings, however, there are a couple of points that still need to be agreed.

NH is hosting a virtual meeting with the network on Monday. NH is meeting with Andy Walsh before the network meeting to discuss how it will work.

NH is working with Torquay United Supporters' Trust, Billericay Town Supporters' Trust and Stockport County Supporters Co-operative on MOU's and structured dialogue.

7.4 Clubs

JM reported that we provided a lot of support to Clapton CFC to set up.

We are currently helping AFC Rushden & Diamonds obtain a new home ground.

JM highlighted that there are a lot of tools for community owned clubs in the new Best Practice area.

We are still working on a diagnostic tool.

The next network meeting will be held in a few weeks by a video conference.

8. FA Supporter representative update

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KL reported that she attended her last FA Council meeting at the end of May. TG attended his first FA Council meeting in July and has subsequently met with FA representatives. The next FA Council meeting is scheduled for mid October.

KL is speaking with the FSF about potentially funding a cross pyramid campaign on FA Cup prices. AB said that the distribution on the prize money should also be included in the campaign.

9. Regulatory reform campaign

JM reported that we are holding a free fringe event at the Tory Party Conference in Birmingham. It is a panel discussion and the panel are Jamie Fuller (Skins), TG and Caroline Barker and Damian Collins MP. We had hoped that Nick Vaughn from the Football Association would also take part on the panel, but he has withdrawn his attendance. The event will be attended by some of our members Supporters' Trusts and MP's.

PL asked about our organisational view on the sale of Wembley Stadium. JM said that we wrote the paper which contains our position which includes a focus on what would happen with the money if a sale went ahead.

A question was then raised about how policies and decisions will get made in the new organisation. It was **agreed** that the question will be posed to the board.

10. Club/supporter group relationship of the year award update

DD updated on a new award developed for the Football Business Awards highlighting good partnership work between a club and the supporters, with a shortlist published on the Hub. The judging panel (which is AW, FSF and Andy Ambler of the Football Association) had a video conference to decide the winner but the results are confidential. The winner will be announced at the awards ceremony which is taking place on Thursday 22nd November. DD also reported that we have partnered with the North West Football Awards for the second year running.

11. SD Hub - Best Practice Area

Discussed in item 7.3.

12. AOB

GB reported that Hull City Supporters' Trust have recently revised their partnership model, so they now have community partners, including Hull City Ladies.

13. Date & time of next meeting

Thursday 8th November 2018 in the Bank Room, CAN Mezzanine. Lunch served from 12:30 with the meeting from 13:00 to 16:00.