

ENGLAND and WALES FOOTBALL COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: Thursday 15th February 2018

TIME: 12:30 to 15:30

LOCATION: The Abbey Centre, Westminster, London



REPORT

Present:

- Daniel Crawford [DC] – for part
- Neil Le Milliere (Chair) [NLM]
- Peter Lloyd [PL]
- Roger Ellis [RE]

In attendance:

- Ashley Brown (CEO) [AB]
- Deborah Dilworth (Network Manager) [DD]
- James Mathie (Head of England and Wales, and Club Development) [JM]
- Malcolm Clarke (Chair, Football Supporters Federation) (by conference call for item 4) [MC]
- Michael Green (Board Member) [MG]
- Nicola Hudson (Network Manager) [NH] (by video conference)
- Tim Hillyer (board member) [THi]
- Tom Greatrex (SD Chair) [TG]
- Vicki Goodfellow (Network Co-ordinator) (Minutes) [VG]

1. Apologies and welcome

Apologies were received from Hannah Dawson [HD], Katrina Law [KL], Peter Martin [PM] and Tim Hartley [THa].

NLM thanked the retiring England and Wales Football Council [EWFC] members (PM and THa) for their time and work during their term.

2. Minutes and report from the previous meeting

There are two changes to be made to the minutes from the previous meeting:

- Add MG to the list of apologies (minutes and report)
- Remove the action point under item 10 (report only)

Once the above amendments have been made the minutes and report are accepted.

3. Matters arising

EFL Fans' Forum

RE reported that the Fans' Forum meetings have slightly improved but he still feels there is quite a way to go for them to be completely effective.

EFL structured dialogue meetings

DC thinks it's useful for supporter representatives to be in the room with The EFL even if the meeting structure isn't perfect. MG said that the attendees need to feel they can talk directly to The EFL about their issues (for example, the Blackpool situation) without any repercussions. DD will continue to work with the EFL to improve meetings

Lincoln City Supporters Trust

NH gave a brief history into the situation at Lincoln City Supporters' Trust. It was confirmed that they are currently unable to become members of SD and we understand that the FCA are currently investigating their membership structure.

ENGLAND and WALES FOOTBALL COUNCIL MEETING

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REPORT

4. FA Supporters Representative Update

MC report that the main agenda item at last FA Council meeting was the FA reform. He spoke at the meeting to say that we generally agree with the proposed reforms but said that it should not be just about meeting targets and Sport England's new governance code.

MC feels that the new FA Council members have already made a positive impact.

MC also attended the membership committee meeting where they formally approved Northwich Victoria.

MC responded to questions from EWFC members:

- TG felt disappointed that there's nothing specific about inclusion of supporters in the reformation and asked if the reform is as full as The FA have portrayed in the media.

MC responded that he feels we are on a path of change albeit not moving as fast as we'd like. He said that the reform is two-fold – constitutional change, of which there are no planned changes in the immediate future, and cultural change. He said that cultural change can have a positive effect on the way the organisation is run which is what is currently happening.

MC has found that the National Game meetings are now really useful and he finds them more helpful than the FA council meetings. He is hopeful that it means we can input into issues before it reaches the full council.

MC is also hopeful that Professional Game meetings will start soon so KL will get an input.

- NLM questioned whether the changing format will take power away from the FA Council and whether constitutionally the FA Council can instruct the board.

MC said that the changes are because the format of the council meetings was stale. The changes were agreed last May and will be implemented soon.

Any financial decisions will be down to the board. There will be other matters where the FA Council have absolute power. NLM pointed out that this was not what was in Sport England's governance code but MC confirmed that Sport England were happy with The FA having a different decision making structure.

- TG said that we should add our issues to The FA's agenda that can also help the issues on their agenda. RE asked if we're working to input into Greg Clarke's 5 key issues that he highlighted in a recent meeting with MC and KL.

MC agreed that we do need to do some work on our position on some of the issues but there are others where we have a clear position

It was **AGREED** that we would discuss a joint position on the 5 key issues at the next FSF/SD meeting.

- AB stated the he felt disappointed about The FA's announcement on the reciprocal agreement with Qatar FA as he feels that The FA did not press for increased human and workers' rights. AB suggested that the FA supporter representatives should write to the FA Chair on this subject.

ENGLAND and WALES FOOTBALL COUNCIL MEETING

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REPORT

MC said that he needs to see the details on the agreement first and that we should also liaise with the TUC as they have been talking to The FA on the agreement.

- JM said that the community clubs hub is positive as they are giving more support to grassroots clubs and that we can work together with them. MC agreed to keep JM up-to-date with any opportunities that he can see for our club development work.

5. Board Report

As per the instruction at the last EWFC meeting, NLM asked the board if we could accept Trust Oldham into SD membership based on their current constitution (on the proviso that they convert to a Community and Benefit Society in due course). This was approved by the board.

AB confirmed that the annual report is currently with the designers. We will distribute the final version to the membership in PDF format to save on printing costs; however, we will circulate hard copies to some stakeholders.

AB confirmed we have had a review of staff policies and believe they are generally quite strong but there are some that will need reviewing. Richard Irving is putting together a timeline of when we'll present the new policies to the board.

6. KPI Updates

6.1 Fans Fund

Points to note from the discussion on the paper:

JM clarified that the communications target is for the year to date. SD board members, Stuart Fuller and Oliver Holtaway, did a piece of work with the SD team on our communications and looking at our audiences. We need to do some further work in expanding beyond our core support.

JM highlighted some of our current major cases.

We did a survey and some work around issuing a standard mark for organisations that carry out good practice that is over and above the legal requirements. It was decided that at the moment we would push full members to display the dated membership logo on their website rather than create an extra level of work for our organisations.

PL feels that there has been a positive increase in our communications output. We need to emphasise this to the Fans Fund. It is important not to stop referencing the SD Hub but ensuring that we are enticing people not just mentioning it.

6.2 Power to Change

JM reported that we are developing a club health check tool (which The FA are also interested in). It breaks down what 'good' looks like in a range of fundamental areas. We will turn it into a tool that our clubs can use.

It was confirmed that we'll run a session at the SD Members' Day on this for our clubs.

7. Divisional Reports

7.1 Premier League

DD provided an update.

ENGLAND and WALES FOOTBALL COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: Thursday 15th February 2018

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REPORT

DD took over managing the network in September 2017. She recently met with the trusts for a second time and feels she is making good progress in building up a rapport with the group.

She had separate meetings with Manchester United Supporters' Trust and Everton Supporters' Trust. She is due to meet Spirit of Shankly soon.

DD attended a meeting with The Premier League where we discussed the benefits of using structured dialogue case studies from clubs

In the Premier League Trusts meeting we agreed who we can send the Engage! Document to at each club so the content of the covering letter can be tailored.

AB said that the work on the MOU at Fulham and Norwich is something we want to push as much as possible. Where council members have the opportunity they need to push it forward. We can share a MOU template which can be adapted for your club.

TG stated that Fulham and Norwich could always help with one to one support for other trusts.

7.2 EFL

DD said that there is lots of good work with the EFL trusts.

We are currently chasing Trust Oldham to get them into full membership following the approval by the SD board.

We are chasing the FSF to contact the EFL for a meeting date so that the trusts can meet up.

7.3 Non-League

NH reported that the structured dialogue trials are set-up. We are just waiting for the National League to get a buy in from the clubs. We may remove York from the trial due to the current situation.

NH will set-up the Non-league Private Network Area in the Hub next week.

We are due to meet with the National League soon.

NLM is concerned that supporters in the neutral zone at the Non League aren't allowed to wear different football shirts. MC has raised this issue with The FA.

7.4 Clubs

Some of the crisis clubs were discussed in item 6.1.

JM reported that some clubs are doing well both on and off the pitch, for example, Newport County.

8. One Organisation & Independent SD

AB gave brief summary about developments since the last EWFC meeting.

He has been working with Kevin Miles (FSF) to produce a document around what the organisation structure could look like at a new one organisation. MC and TG have commented on the document and it has been circulated to the SD board. The SD board will discuss the content in a conference a call

ENGLAND and WALES FOOTBALL COUNCIL MEETING

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tomorrow. It's proposed that there will be a joint FSF/SD survey that will be sent to all members along with an outline proposal for the members to comment on.

AB, JM, PL, THa and OH are working on a proposal for a continued independent SD. The paper will also be reviewed by the board on the conference call tomorrow. It is anticipated that the funding from the Fans' Fund would be reduced but it is not known by how much. We need to look at classic SD work and what work we'd have to bid for against the FSF. We would have to find additional funding from elsewhere with other sports (e.g. Sport England, Rugby Football Union and the England & Wales Cricket Board) being potential targets. Our work with Sport England might have the scope to grow.

We have put a tender to Sport England to deliver some consultancy work which could be worth £50K per year, although it is likely a lot of the work would be undertaken by our consultants which greatly lessens the financial benefit to SD

AB outlined the possible timeline leading up to the AGM. At the beginning of June we will circulate the AGM papers to our members. Both the SD and FSF AGM's will be held on Saturday 28th July with one running after the other.

TG the board will discuss tomorrow whether we should have other consultation events or webinars in the run up to the AGM.

The EWFC noted the responses to the survey.

9. Regulatory Reform Campaign

We are unsure of when the EFL's Conduct of Owners consultation ends but we believe that they are presenting something at their AGM in July, we are aware that there has been a great deal of interest from MPs at clubs where there have been recent problems.

THi said that clubs who are owned by their supporter trusts are penalised by the EFL as they have to pay when directors are newly elected.

DC feels there is potential for us to use clubs where we have a good relationship to help us lobby ahead of the EFL AGM.

JM said that we are looking at research to Protect Football Stadia

RE is wary of the work around who owns the ground as it's not easy to find out.

PL said that Peterborough is a possible case study.

10. Other sports

AB asked whether the EWFC thought that this council should also cover other (non Rugby League) sports as we want ensure Rugby Union and other sports have representation at board level.

It was **AGREED** that it should be put to the SD board that other sports should have their own advisory group rather than be included within the EWFC remit.

ENGLAND and WALES FOOTBALL COUNCIL MEETING

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REPORT

11. Standard mark

Discussed in item 6.1.

12. Structured dialogue

This was discussed elsewhere in the meeting.

DD asked the EWFC to participate in our forthcoming MOU webinar (taking place on 22nd February) if possible.

13. Members Day

The EWFC were in agreement with the SD members' Day proposal.

14. AOB

There was no other business

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 8th May (1pm to 4pm), CAN Mezzanine, London.