

# ENGLAND and WALES FOOTBALL COUNCIL [EWFC] MEETING



**DATE:** Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> 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]
- Roger Ellis [RE]
- Tim Hartley [TH]

### In attendance:

- Ashley Brown (CEO) [AB]
- James Mathie (Head of England and Wales, and Club Development) [JM]
- Nicola Hudson (Network Manager) [NH] (by video conference for item 8.3)
- Vicki Goodfellow (Network Co-ordinator) (Minutes) [VG]

### 1. Apologies and welcome

Apologies were received from Daniel Crawford [DC], Michael Green [MG] and Peter Lloyd [PL]. Apologies were also received from the following board members: Ally Simcock [AS] and Tom Greatrex [TG].

### 2. Minutes and report from the previous meeting

Except for one minor change (adding MG to the apologies) the minutes and report from the meeting 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 were agreed.

It was confirmed that the minutes and report from this meeting will be approved via email as there are no further meetings.

### 3. Board report

AB provided a report from the last board meeting.

From a financial perspective we remain ahead of budget, so we anticipate a loss albeit a smaller one than expected.

The board discussed the lack of clarity around our work with other sports in the new organisation. It was confirmed they will not be represented in the organisation, but we may still be able to continue to link with other sports via a 'friends of scheme'. We should be able to continue to support other sports trusts if there is the relevant funding in place.

The first SD General Meeting (on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November) is an SD only meeting which is a vote to transfer the assets to the new organisation. 50% of members (circa. 42) need to vote to meet the quorum with a voting majority of 75% in favour to pass the resolution.

This meeting needs to be followed up by another SD General Meeting in December, but we only need a small number of members to attend. The second resolution is to confirm the winding up of SD

SD Europe are holding their AGM on 1<sup>st</sup> December in Spain. Luke Cox (board member) will be attending on behalf of SD.

### 4. Matters arising

Action points from the last meeting were discussed.

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Item 6 - NLM questioned whether the new organisation would give advice on whether there should be more than one fan organisation per club. AB said he feels it will be down to the situation at each club.

TH asked whether we think there will be a drop off in new Supporters Trusts as organisations can still get representation if they are an associate member. JM said the gravitas of being a trust still has a positive influence when setting up a new supporters' organisation.

Item 7.2 – AB said iFollow is still a relevant issue as we are meeting with the EFL next week. There are concerns about the service affecting crowd numbers and there are still questions about the distribution of revenue.

### 5. One organisation update

There was a discussion about the elections for the new National Council.

It was suggested that we ask all trusts to circulate the details of the individual election to their members.

AB reported that the new Unified Football Supporters' Organisation has been registered with Companies House. It will be recommended to the new board that this is only the registered name and a new name should be used.

The constitution of the new organisation was compiled by Kevin Jacquiss.

The interview date has been set for the CEO interview (Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November). There will be a panel of three people – one SD representative, one FSF representative and one Independent (Lord Keith Bradley). The candidate who doesn't get the job will still have a role in the new organisation.

AB confirmed the running order of the meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November: SD General Meeting, FSF General Meeting, new organisation Extraordinary General Meeting and a meeting of the new National Council.

AB confirmed that the Chair and Vice Chair will nominate themselves rather than seek nominations from other members. This may change in the future, but it was too complex to get nominations due to time restraints.

AB confirmed he has submitted a transfer funding request for additional costs of the merger to the Fans' Fund, but we are still waiting to hear back.

The Fans' Fund have engaged a market research company to ask stakeholders how the funding bid process should work. Both AB and KM gave interviews to the company, but we are unsure of when the report will be published. Decisions may not happen until the end of July as it is linked to the TV money deal. They have promised that if there is a 3-4-month funding gap then they would provide a temporary financial fix.

The interim board will submit a hand over document to the new organisation's board. TH said that there would include an emphasis on Supporters' Trusts.

### 6. Unified organisation's National Council

Discussed in item 5.

### 7. Fans' Fund KPI's

JM highlighted the following points from the report:

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- We have already surpassed the annual target for one to one support to our members.
- A range of clubs/supporter groups that we have been working with were then discussed

## 8. Divisional Reports

### 8.1 Premier League

KL reported that a structured dialogue meeting was held with the Premier League on 11<sup>th</sup> October. Due to the Premier League adopting the new terms of references for the meetings we already have the notes from the meeting. We tried to get a commitment from the Premier League to encourage their clubs to have a structured dialogue agreement in place.

Other points to note from the meeting:

- Issues with train fares were discussed with the Premier League (including non-refundable fares for last minute fixture changes). Fan Fare and the Premier League are keen for this to be progressed.
- There was a discussion on potential impact Brexit might have on fans travelling from overseas.
- Retention of the £30 away ticket price cap will be confirmed in February.
- There was a discussion about kick-off times. It was suggested that there should be a central pot of funds to compensate fans on costs for rearranged fixtures.
- VAR may possibly be adopted next season but a lot more testing is needed.

### 8.2 EFL

A network meeting was held last week, and a structured dialogue meeting with the EFL is planned for next Wednesday. It was confirmed that Malcolm Clarke [MC], TG, DD and AB are all attending and regulatory reform proposals will be discussed.

### 8.3 Non-League

NH reported on her recent meeting with the National League - Michael Tattershall (CEO) and Caroline Barker (non-executive director). She raised several issues from the network, the items discussed were:

- Rescheduling of kick-off times.
- Structured dialogue with the National League
- We provided feedback on the change of format to the play-off's
- Update on 3 teams promoted to L2 and 3 relegated from L2
- Scheduling of fixtures during the 2022 World Cup. There are no plans to change the fixtures at the moment, but they may leave it up to clubs to decide if they would like to reschedule if their fixtures clash with England games.
- Coverage of early round FA Cup draw.
- Non-League Day and how we can partner going forward.
- Impact of IFollow.

The meeting report will be published tomorrow along with the agreed terms of reference.

NH reported that North Ferriby are facing the possibility of being relocated 11 miles away and have applied to change their name. NH is working with their fans and they have started a petition. She is keeping Malcolm Clarke and TG up-to-date on the situation as our FA Council representatives. NH said that they have been considering how they would become a community owned club with JM if they needed to.

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### 8.4 Clubs

JM held a conference call for the community owned club network call a few weeks ago with a focus on income generation, with some great case studies at Bath City and Newport County. Another call will be held in the coming months. We are planning a visit to Exeter FC to look at their heritage project.

### 9. FA Supporter representative update

TH asked what the benefits are of having FA Council representatives.

KL said that it's not about attending the council meetings themselves – it's about the opportunity to meet people and take up your agenda with the right people outside of the meeting. KL said that TG has picked up on the meetings she had arranged with FA staff.

JM said it raises an interesting point about how the role is best used and is most effective with the various priorities the organisation has, and feels that it's important to have in writing what the role is for and how it should work with employees, the National Council, the board etc.

There was a discussion around the new regulations on taking a bag/s into Wembley Stadium.

### 10. Regulatory reform campaign

AB reported that we are still working towards the previously agreed timeline which is the forthcoming meeting with the FA.

MC is trying to organise a meeting with the regulatory people at the FA. TG, RE and MC will attend.

RE said that the regulation papers have been sent to 3 FA board members.

JM said that the Conservative Party Conference fringe event was very positive. The panel consisted of Nick Vaughn (The FA), Damian Collins MP, Jamie Fuller (Skins), Nicola Palios (Vice Chair Tranmere Rovers) and it was chaired by TG. It was great to hear Damian Collins comparing the broadcasting code with the need for regulation in football and stating support to look at how Government could empower the FA or regulate.

RE said that one of the major discussions for the working group was about whether focus on the establishment of an independent regulator. We want to ensure that the FA act as guardians of the game. We feel that we are going as far as we can without the need for legislation but if the reforms don't go far enough then we will push for legislation.

JM reported progress on the ground protection project that the Government have asked the FA to undertake

### 11. AOB

NLM raised concerns that the new organisation will be in breach of Sport England's regulations as the new National Council will have decision making powers. AB said that it doesn't apply as it is an elected body.

It was confirmed that this is the final meeting of the EWFC. JM thanked the volunteer board members particularly NLM for his effort over the years. NLM thanked all past and present EWFC members for their time and contribution to SD.