



## Fans' Weekend 2012 – Summary Report

**The first Fans' Weekend was held on 7th and 8th, jointly organised by the Football Supporters' Federation and Supporters Direct.**

Separate annual general meetings (AGMs) were held for each organisation. Workshops, which did not formulate policy, were set up covering topics of interest and concern to football supporters. During the workshops delegates were able to informally discuss their views and concerns. More info: [www.fsf.org.uk/fans-weekend/2012](http://www.fsf.org.uk/fans-weekend/2012)

The FSF AGM covered the usual constitutional requirements, the minutes from last year's AGM and the financial report were adopted and FSF officials were elected. Additionally, a general report on the FSF's activities and current situation was discussed, during which motions relevant to the various policy areas in which the FSF is active were debated.

FSF Chair Malcolm Clarke welcomed delegates to the AGM, including a guest from the Argentine football supporters' organisation, Monica Nizardo. Referring to the joint weekend, Malcolm said that it was entirely appropriate and constructive for the FSF to work with SD, at a time when the two increasingly work together on issues of common concern.

It was, of course appropriate also at that time to remember those valued colleagues no longer with us, including Frank Horrocks, former chair of Manchester City Supporters and also the former long term chair of the Northern Division of the National Federation of Football Supporters Clubs, the NatFed, one of the constituent parts of FSF. The Chair also referred to the death of Chris Sliski, a long time supporter of Slough Town and a respected supporter of the FSF in its Southern Division and nationally. Chris will be very much missed. It was also very sad to learn on the day after this AGM of the sudden death of Mark Agate, the former long term secretary of the NatFed and later national administrator of the FSF. Malcolm also referred to several well known former players lost during the year.

### **ADOPTION OF 2011 MINUTES**

In the FSF AGM, **minutes from the 2011 AGM were firstly adopted**, after which matters arising were discussed. The Chair referred to the promised independent review of the FSF's organisation, with special reference to areas of potential conflicts of interest for FSF officials and what should be done about them. Since last year Eric Samuelson, chief executive of AFC Wimbledon, had reported suggesting various changes to FSF which would remove conflicts and which would improve its organisational efficiency.

The FSF National Council (NC) had set up a working party to examine the report and produce proposals for the reorganisation of FSF. The Working Party had established initial ideas on ways in which it felt this would best be done, and proposals would shortly be put to the NC for consideration. In outline these involve the FSF NC remaining broadly as it is but concentrating on policy issues. It would elect the Board of a new FSF Company which would employ staff and run the operational and financial affairs of the FSF. We would also establish a new charitable arm, to access funding for certain types of project.

Staff and contractors would not be eligible to sit on the Board of the new Company. When proposals have been finalised an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) will be held,

probably towards the end to the year, for members to debate the proposals and adopt them as they thought fit. The proposals would be published to members some time before the EGM to allow consideration. Members were, of course, invited to submit comments, suggestions and ideas about this at any time via FSF Secretary Mike Williamson.

A request was made from the floor that a summary of the 2012 AGM should be placed on the FSF website as soon as possible to keep members, including those unable to attend, fully informed. The Chair agreed to the request.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Malcolm Clarke referred to FSF's difficult financial situation, because of the much reduced support from the various football authorities. Additionally, the current financial climate makes any search for sponsorship particularly difficult. Malcolm referred to the forthcoming FSF Fans' Card which would be made available soon for members to buy when details are finalised. Though the Card was not expected to generate income quickly for FSF, it was expected to be quite important in time. Detailed information would be published to members as soon as possible.

Malcolm stressed the need for continued growth in FSF membership numbers.

A comment from the floor suggested that members should be urged to lobby their clubs to support the financing of FSF by the football authorities. The Chair accepted the proposal.

**The Financial Report was accepted Nem Con.**

## **FSF ELECTIONS**

### **FSF President**

The Chair said that after her first term as **FSF President, Monica Hartland** was now standing for election for a further term of three years. Monica had stated that she was willing to stand again, and after summarising Monica's many years of good service to the NatFed and the FSF, the Chair said that he was happy to propose her re-election, with Secretary Mike Williamson seconding the nomination. Monica said she was honoured to be asked to continue in office.

**The election of Monica Hartland as FSF President for a term of three years was accepted by the assembly Unanimously.**

**(proposed by Chair Malcolm Clarke, and seconded by Secretary Mike Williamson).**

### **FSF Secretary**

The Chair advised that Mike Williamson was standing for re-election as Secretary for a further term of two years. Malcolm said that he relied on Mike for advice on issues of the FSF Constitution and related areas.

**The election of Mike Williamson as FSF Secretary for a term of two years was accepted by the assembly**

## **Nem Con**

**(proposed by Treasurer Carroll Clark, and seconded by Ash Connor).**

## **FSF Deputy Chair**

There were 3 nominees but before the election two of them, Jon Keen and Kevin Miles withdrew their nominations.

**Martin O'Hara was elected as FSF Deputy Chair unopposed – accepted by the assembly Nem Con.**

**(proposed by Rick Duniec, seconded by Viking Supporters Co-operative)**

## **FSF NC directly elected representatives**

12 Nominations for the election of directly elected representatives on the NC had been submitted. They were Ash Connor, Raj Chandarana, Michelle Shaw, Ian Todd, Kevin Miles, Rick Duniec, Ken Malley, Tim Hillyer, Vince Alm, Peter Daykin, Martin O'Hara and Jon Keen. Members had been advised previously of the list of nominees, and their sponsors. Nominees' election statements had been published. However, the Chair advised that there were 16 vacancies for the posts. Martin O'Hara's name was removed from the list following his election as Deputy Chair.

In addition Kevin Miles, nominee for this election said that since his nomination had been put forward, a widely held view had become clear, that anyone employed by the FSF, as he is, should not also hold office as an elected official of the FSF, even though he personally disagreed with this view. Accordingly, Kevin announced that he was withdrawing his nomination in this election.

The Chair advised that the remaining 10 nominees as below would therefore be elected unopposed as FSF NC directly elected representatives.

**Ash Connor, Raj Chandarana, Michelle Shaw, Ian Todd, Rick Duniec, Ken Malley, Tim Hillyer, Vince Alm, Peter Daykin, and Jon Keen were elected unopposed as FSF NC Directly Elected representatives – accepted by the assembly Nem Con.**

**(details of their sponsors previously circulated)**

## **FSF REPORT**

The Chair explained the new format of the FSF Report which would be considered by the assembly as a whole. This was a new process and delegates' feedback on it would be welcomed.

Comments were made from the floor that whilst the Report appeared to be an excellent document, it should have been published sooner to allow members to give it proper consideration. Additionally, reports from FSF divisions ought to be included. The Chair said that comments were appreciated and would be taken on board.

## **Club Regulation and Governance**

Referring in turn to the Report's sections on FSF policy, the Chair first turned to **Club Regulation and Governance**.

The Chair reminded delegates of key areas in this aspect of FSF work, in particular referring to the DCMS Select Committee Report and the responses to it from the FSF and Supporters Direct, and from the football authorities. It was regrettable that the Government had requested a joint report from the football authorities, rather than separate reports from each of them, as this confused the true responsibilities of each, particularly the FA as the Governing body of the whole game. The jury is still out on where this process will end. Government had stated it would initiate legislation in the absence of action by the football authorities.

Views were expressed from the floor that the use of e-mail lobbying does work, and should be taken up here. Fans must stand up and start fighting for themselves.

## **Safe Standing**

There has been considerable progress in this area, with several football clubs expressing explicit support, and others supporting the movement less publicly. Jon Darch was praised for his efforts with the Safe Standing Road show, often at much cost to himself.

Peter Daykin advised that there were on-going contacts with MPs, police authorities, safety groups and others to initiate a parliamentary debate. The Chair said that contacts with senior club officials had proved to be beneficial. Delegates were reminded of the FSF website petition on Safe Standing.

Safe Standing was discussed by delegates with only one delegate voicing opposition. Sensitivities felt by some, especially in the Liverpool area and particularly during the anniversary of the Hillsborough tragedy, were acknowledged. However, it was also felt that the introduction of properly set up Safe Standing areas should be possible.

Peter Daykin, FSF policy leader in the area, said that the need was for properly organised trials in 3 or 4 grounds. For that it would be necessary to ask Parliament to relax the relevant legislation.

**At this point, motions tabled were debated.**

## **Motion1 – opposition to the commercial development of football grounds**

Motion 1 as stated below, was debated. As the proposer was not present, because The FSF NC had supported the motion, the Chair Malcolm Clarke spoke to propose it. There were no speakers against the motion.

The motion as tabled was -

***The Football Supporters' Federation opposes the development of football grounds for commercial purposes. The FSF will support and encourage opposition to such developments (including peaceful direct action), and will involve Supporters Direct***

**and independent supporters groups and where appropriate, unless the following two conditions are fulfilled:**

- (i) The financial accrues to the football club itself,**
- (ii) The club's supporters approve the development after being properly consulted, and provided with all relevant information.**

**Where these conditions are not fulfilled, the FSF will support local supporters in opposing such developments.**

**(Proposed by Paul Caulfield and seconded by FSF NC)**

**The motion was carried with only 6 votes against.**

**Motion 2 – calling for the ending of Football League website advertisements by Wonga.com**

Motion 2 was then considered. The motion as tabled was as follows -

**Fans' Parliament 2012 notes that a large number football club websites carry banner advertisements for the controversial "payday loans" company Wonga.com.**

**There has been a great deal of concern expressed in the press, in social media and in Parliament about the activities and operations of Wonga.com and similar companies, in particular the extremely high interest rates they charge and the almost total lack of regulation of the short-term loans industry in the UK at present.**

**Adverts for Wonga.com (a part of their £16 million advertising budget) appear on the websites of approx 75 out of the 85 clubs who use a website "platform" supplied and managed by Football League Interactive (FLI). Wonga clearly see the demographic profile of football supporters as a profitable market to be exploited.**

**Fans' Parliament 2012 calls upon the Football League, through its FLI subsidiary, to refrain from renewing any website advertising contract with Wonga.com until such time as there is tighter regulation of the short-term loans industry in the UK and a cap on interest rates that can be charged.**

**We also encourage individual clubs to opt out of having Wonga.com ads on their websites until this regulation is in force.**

**Proposed by Bob Ward Seconded by John Flanagan**

**Proposing the motion, Bob Ward** acknowledged that the situation with regard to this issue was changing, and the motion may be seen as pushing against an open door, as advertisements for Wonga.com are no longer carried by the Football League website. However, the intention was to encourage the football authorities not to associate themselves with organisations like Wonga.com, until there are much better controls over the short term loans industry.

**Seconding the motion, John Flanagan** said that it would send a message to the football authorities of our keen dislike for companies like Wonga.com who use extortionate interest rates on their loans

**For the FSF NC (NC), Jon Keen** explained that the NC could not support the motion as tabled, because it singled out one particular company, rather than seeking better controls for the loans industry as a whole. However, as an individual member, **he tabled an amendment**, which would replace the original motion, as follows –

***FSF 2012 calls upon the football authorities across England and Wales to prohibit the promotion through football of “Pay-day” and other short term loans companies until such time as there is tighter regulation of this industry and a cap on interest rates has been applied.***

***(Amendment proposed by Jon Keen and seconded by Pam Wilkins)***

**Bob Ward** agreed when asked by the Chair if the amendment was acceptable to replace the original motion.

Stella Creasy MP said that the amended motion should be accepted so that pressure for proper regulation of the industry could be exerted. Views were expressed from the floor that that a single industry should not be singled out as many other industries could be seen as acting unethically or needing stronger regulation and it is not the role of the FSF to involve itself in such wider political matters. .

Summing up, Bob Ward urged delegates to support the motion.

**The amended motion was carried with only 1 vote against and 5 abstentions.**

**Motion 3 – Motion regarding the FA Opening Doors and Joining In campaign, the promotion of inclusion, and opposition to discrimination.**

Motion 3 was then debated. It was tabled as follows –

***FSF Fans’ Parliament***

- 1. notes the commitment shown by The Football Association in its Opening Doors and Joining In campaign.***
- 2. recognises that football fans share the responsibility for ensuring that the game is for everyone, irrelevant of race, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexuality or any other factor:***  
<http://www.thefa.com/TheFA/WhatWeDo/Equality/Homophobia>
- 3. endorses the Action Plan promoting inclusion, widening diversity in the game and addressing discrimination in all its forms. The objective is underpinned by six delivery Themes: Education, Visibility, Partnership, Recognition, Reporting, Monitoring.***
- 4. instructs FSF officers and NC to adopt the Themes of the Opening Doors and Joining In campaign to ensure that anyone who wants to share in football, whether they play, watch, coach, referee, officiate or volunteer, can do so free from any form of discrimination or hatred based on their individual characteristics or background.***

- 5. mandates FSF officers and NC to promote a positive, inclusive image and reputation of the game, its participants and supporters; and to engage proactively with partner organisations.**

***It's simple really. Football is for everyone, all the time.***

***(proposed by Tim Hillyer and seconded by Raj Chandarana)***

Proposing this motion and asking for the support of the assembly, Tim Hillyer advised that as Raj Chandarana was absent for personal reasons, Kevin Miles had agreed to second the motion. Note that under the FSF Constitution it was not necessary for the seconder of a motion to be present anyway, but the sponsorship of Kevin Miles was noted.

**The motion was carried by the assembly Nem Con.**

### **Emergency motion on Proposals by Michel Platini for re-organisation of the Euro 2020 Championships.**

At this point an emergency motion was debated which arose from events only one week before the AGM, when Michel Platini of UEFA suggested that the Euro Championships could be organised in up to 24 different venues rather than be arranged in one or two countries as before. The motion tabled was –

***The Football Supporters' Federation notes the suggestion by Michel Platini that the Euro 2020 championships could be based on a different hosting format, across a number of cities not necessarily located in one or two 'host countries'.***

***We call upon UEFA to ensure that there is the maximum possible consultation on this issue with supporters across Europe through FSE.***

***This Fans' Parliament calls on the FSF NC to initiate a process of consultation among our own members to ascertain opinions on the issue, and resolves to submit an emergency motion to the FSE's European Football Fans' Congress in Istanbul calling on FSE to do likewise.***

***(proposed by Kevin Miles and seconded by Ken Malley)***

Kevin Miles explained that the motion was necessary to establish the principle of supporter consultation. It was also necessary to ascertain the views of supporters in general with regard to the proposals. As tabled the motion was, in itself, uncontroversial.

**The emergency motion was carried unanimously.**

**Here the Chair returned to consideration of the FSF Annual report.**

### **Ticketing**

Jon Keen summarised the year's events in this policy area. Unfortunately, attempted contacts had been universally ignored by Premier League clubs. John Reid (Queens Park Rangers supporters) thanked the FSF for support given to efforts to reduce the clubs prices.

### **Football Law**

Chair Malcolm Clarke referred to the considerable work by Amanda Jacks on case work, involving supporters and football law. Amanda referred to changes in the law.

### **Club Charters**

Malcolm Clarke said that work on the area was on-going. He congratulated Doncaster Rovers and Crystal Palace who are introducing meaningful new charters.

### **FA Cup**

The Chair said that the amount of tickets allocated to the competing clubs remained a on-going issue.

### **TV Scheduling**

It was reported that the Premier League had agreed to give more notice regarding fixtures affected by TV re-scheduling.

### **Diversity**

Tim Hillyer reported that the FSF NC has agreed to arrange training in this area for its members.

### **New Technology**

The Chair commented that the Premier League had agreed to the implementation of goal-line technology as soon as possible.

### **Women's football, International Competition Structure, Coach travel**

No issues were reported on these policy areas.

### **Domestic Competition Structure**

Tim Hillyer referred to the next Non-league Day scheduled for 12 October next.

### **Academies and youth development**

Jon Keen referred to the considerable unhappiness felt by clubs towards the compensation payable for loss of players under the new EPPP scheme.

### **FSF Governance**

The Chair said that this area had already been covered today.

### **Any other business**

Gary Deards referred to the need for co-ordination between FSF and Level Playing Field on funding applications to the Fans Fund.

Michael Brunskill encouraged delegates to attend the FSF Awards evening to be held that evening.

The Chair Malcolm Clarke referred to a new book written by David Conn, the football journalist, long a friend of football supporters.

He thanked delegates for their attendance and closed the AGM.