



## FANS' PARLIAMENT 2009

Newcastle, Saturday June 20<sup>th</sup> 2009

### Notes from Breakout Sessions

An organisation of the FSF's size needs to get its arguments straight - you can't have 1000s of members all believing that you stand for different things! Fans' Parliament is where we set policy.

In past years we did this by sitting in one big room and debating but the sheer volume of fans in the room meant not everyone got their say and subjects were often skimmed over.

So this year we introduced extended, individual workshops looking at specific issues in depth before recommending motions to Fans' Parliament. This meant that when motions (and action points) came back the arguments and reasoning behind them had already been thoroughly tested through hours of debate.

There were five different sessions at this year's Fans' Parliament covering policing and stewarding, safe standing, diversity, ticket prices and club governance and ownership. The groups were also asked to review the FSF's guiding policy document, the Fans' Blueprint for Football for the first time since it was approved in 2003. Each clause of the Blueprint was studied with a report being made to the closing plenary.

All five reports were accepted by Fans' Parliament and referred to the FSF's National Council for action.

### CLUB GOVERNANCE AND OWNERSHIP

The workshop on club ownership and governance saw an enlightening and interesting discussion leading it to recommend a number of important changes to the Blueprint. Principle actions recommended were:

- To form, with Supporters Direct, an expert panel to develop detailed policy in this area.
- The enforcement of an enhanced and prospective rather than retrospective "fit and proper person" test for club owners and directors.
- The passing by Parliament of a Sports Law covering the rights and responsibilities of governing bodies to ensure they are able to adequately govern their sports without conflict with employment and competition law.

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## DIVERSITY

The diversity workshop was facilitated by the Justin Campaign who fight against homophobia in football. They were founded in memory of Justin Fashanu, the world's only openly gay professional footballer who tragically committed suicide in 1998.

The session focused on homophobia and the misconception that homophobia only effects gay people or is 'banter' – something which is not true. This means applying the same punishments and sanctions used in racial incidents.

To make this clear the group recommended that the wording of official documents should reflect this, clubs should proactively advertise this in stadiums and police stats should break down separately homophobic incidents, rather than publish under the umbrella of 'other arrests'.

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## TICKET PRICING & DISTRIBUTION

The workshop recommended the Fans' Blueprint included the key point that leagues and clubs should also offer special deals to away fans – the FSF heard many complaints last season where away fans were paying considerably more than home fans, this is not acceptable. The Blueprint was also changed to recommend that clubs use facility fees from televised matches to subsidise away tickets.

A number of actions were drawn up to take the work of the ticket pricing and distribution workshop forward, including:

- Campaign for maximum away ticket price at each tier
- Build Ticket Pricing database via reps from each club and overall divisional co-ordinators
- Continue existing work to reduce misuse of FA Cup Final tickets

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## SAFE STANDING

It was agreed that the FSF would work as closely as possible with Stand Up Sit Down (SUSD) who are also keen to become more involved in the FSF's work. This is a very positive development. The Safe Standing policy group intend to go to Germany and Austria to look at safe standing in practise at more grounds and gather images. The latter is key to everyone knowing what we mean by safest standing. The group will also work towards an extensive advertising campaign later in the season.

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## POLICING AND STEWARDING

The workshops proposed clubs use local assessors when imposing bans - too often they are judge, jury and executioner. Fans deserve the chance to put their side of the story.

It was also agreed the FSF should oppose any attempts by the police to recover policing costs from clubs.

Drinking laws related to stadiums and on football transport should be reviewed - these laws are discriminatory, impractical and difficult to enforce. We will work with Liberty to repeal them.

With 'transparency' high on the political agenda supporters must be represented on Safety Advisory Groups and committees.

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For further detail on motions and breakout discussions visit [www.fsf.org.uk](http://www.fsf.org.uk) and log in to the members area. Alternatively email [info@fsf.org.uk](mailto:info@fsf.org.uk) or call 08702 777 777.