

NEWS FROM THE FSF [IMMEDIATE RELEASE 29/05/09]: Taunton Town fan banned by chairman for being an "ass" and "a smart Alec"

Taunton Town Football Club fan Paul Chandler, has been banned from his own team's ground for being an "ass" and "a smart Alec" according to the club's chairman.

The story began last year when Taunton Town's board met with the Supporters' Club who 55-year-old Paul was then chairman of. Town's fans had fears over the way their club was being run and raised these legitimate queries with the board who responded by declaring the Supporters' Club a "disgrace" who had no right to ask any questions!

Following this the board announced the Supports' Club had been disbanded – something they had absolutely no right or authority to do. The Supporters' Club carried on as usual.

Paul has been refused entry ever since. The club have never replied to his letters or given any explanation whatsoever, even in the letter telling him he was banned – that is until the Football Supporters' Federation (FSF) stepped in.

Ken Malley, chair of the FSF's South West and South Wales Division attended the Football Club's AGM. Despite questions from Ken and other supporters the board refused to clarify why Paul had been banned. The board would not even allow Paul entry to discuss himself!

Following the AGM the FSF wrote to the club again on Paul's behalf asking for a reason for the ban and the right to appeal.

At last the club wrote back to the FSF branding Paul an "ass" and "a smart Alec" – as the club have still refused to give any other specific reasons for the banning we can only presume this is it!

Paul Chandler, former chair of Taunton Town FC's Supporters' Club, said:

"All I wanted from the club was the chance to defend myself. If I'm banned they should at least tell me why and give me the right to appeal. If that makes me an "ass" and "a smart Alec" then who knows what it makes the legal system in the UK where this is a fundamental point of principle!"

Ken Malley, chair of the FSF's South West and South Wales Division, said:

"Fans should only be banned for reasons of disorder or violence – not for asking awkward questions to their team's board. Paul's crime was so heinous the club won't even tell him what he's done. What a joke."

- ENDS -

Notes to editors:

The Football Supporters' Federation (FSF) is the national supporters' organisation for all football fans from England and Wales comprising more than 142,000 individual fans and members of local supporters' organisations from every club in the professional structure and many from the pyramid. For more info <http://www.fsf.org.uk/about-the-fsf.php>

Taunton Town FC play in Division One South & West 2008-2009 of the British Gas Business Football League which is the eighth step of the pyramid.

Contact:

Ken Malley - ken.malley@fsf.org.uk / 01288 381259 / 07976034242

Paul Chandler - paul@singer-g.fsnet.co.uk / 01823 481900

Michael Brunskill - Michael.brunskill@fsf.org.uk / 0779 5245859