

fsf

fans' parliament 2006 **review**



FSF National Administrator, Mark Agate, brings us up to date with the goings on at this year's conference weekend & AGM



With the Prime Minister sending his apologies and good wishes for an enjoyable and successful occasion, almost 100 delegates from all over England and Wales attended the fourth FSF Fans' Parliament at The Wild Pheasant Hotel in Llangollen, North Wales.

Motions approved at the main session on Sunday 4 June 2006 called for:

- No more unjustified football banning orders
- Restrictions on long-distance midweek fixtures, in that a team should play at least its five furthest away games on a Saturday
- Beefing up of the "fit and proper person" test

for club owners and directors

- The scrapping of the 10 point deduction rule for clubs in administration
- Strengthening of controls against misappropriation and misapplication of Football Foundation grants
- An end to restrictions on away travel
- Action on homophobic chanting at grounds
- Opposition to placing home fans in an upper tier with visiting fans underneath.
- Nationally accessible locations for future Fans' Parliaments taking into account travel and accommodation needs.
- Moves towards accepting Milton Keynes Dons Supporters Club as an affiliate member.
- Acceptance of a template for addition to the

rules of football authorities and competitions which specifically includes approval by supporters where a club seeks to relocate against supporters' wishes.

- Teams should only play in their change strip where there is a genuine colour clash with that of the home club
- A call for an end to representation by Agents of more than one involved party
- A call to all relevant government and football authorities to accept the recommendations of the Independent European Sport Review
- The approval process for an application from a prospective affiliate member was streamlined subject to submission of a suitably-completed and signed statement that the organisation is democratically run.
- A call for fair-pricing in the Football Conference national and regional leagues was carried.
- A congratulatory Motion on England's World Cup campaign was remitted to National Council
- A proposal concerning time period before members' voting rights was remitted to National Council

As if proof were needed that delegates do not rubber-stamp acceptance of proposed Motions, a proposal that the F A Cup winners be given a place in the Champions League was defeated. Indeed all Motions were debated and half of those carried yielded votes against and abstentions.

Full details of all Motions and events were published in our 2006 brochure with a 12 page supplement, which included additional Motions, issued at Llangollen.

Opening Conference, Chair Malcolm Clarke paid tribute to the late Archie Gooch, a Vice President of FSF, who had been associated with our supporters movement since 1950, holding many executive positions. He had been chairman of Exeter City FC and at the time of his death a Director of Bristol City FC.

He is especially remembered for an unaccompanied epic journey from the West Country to Scarborough in 2002 to give his blessing to the amalgamation of FSA and NFFSC.

Reports were accepted with Treasurer Carroll Clark explaining that costs of our flag-ship magazine "The Football Supporter" had increased as it had doubled in size; he also explained items concerning legal fees and also that costs of our domestic website were due to inclusion of an on-line shop and ongoing work on a Ground Guide. It was clarified that the Football Supporters' International website has a separate ring-fenced cost centre.

Malcolm Clarke stressed the need for the situation regarding our future funding to be resolved be it from continuation of support from the PFA, TV money or from recruitment of members.

John Davies of Wrexham was re-appointed as Auditor.

The Rt Lord Pendry PC had accepted an invitation to be re-appointed as Patron and Ian Todd re-elected as President for three years.

Recommendations as to appointment of Vice Presidents will be made to FP2007.

There were two candidates for the post of Deputy Chair. Mark Longden was standing against Alan Bloore, who was seeking re-election. Both took part in hustings by adding to their published manifestos and taking it in turns to both answer all questions from the floor.

Voting was by ballot following which we broke for lunch and the result (taking into account three votes for an affiliate organisation and one for an individual member) was announced on resumption with Alan Bloore elected by 110 votes to 59 for a further two years.

Secretary Mike Williamson was unanimously re-elected for a further two years.

Ten National Council members had been appointed by the Divisions and seven nominated for the maximum eight places were elected.

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Commenting on the Fans' Parliament, FSF chair Malcolm Clarke said:

"Fans have proved yet again by travelling here at their own expense from all over England and Wales that they care passionately about the game and its future, not just their club. Let's not forget that the game has many problems and often treats its supporters not nearly as well as it should. We look forward to pressing the fans wishes, contained in the motions passed this weekend, with the football authorities."





Stuart Brennan of the Manchester Evening News receives his FSF Football Writers Award on the pitch at Gigg Lane, Bury.

Since the Conference and the 2006 World Cup in Germany we were heartened to receive a letter from Minister for Sport Richard Caborn, which we are pleased to reproduce here:

Dear Malcolm,

I would like to pay tribute to the part which the Football Supporters' Federation played in working closely with The FA and the UK and German authorities to help make the 2006 World Cup a positive and memorable experience for visiting fans and to help combat football disorder.

In particular I would like to thank Kevin Miles and his team in the FSF's International Coordination Team who, under the auspices

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of the FSF's Fans' Embassy, played a key role in welcoming England supporters during the World Cup by offering advice, information and support before and during the tournament.

I know that much work had been done prior to the tournament through the Home Office-led World Cup Co-ordination Group, and then during the tournament, to ensure that disorder was kept to a minimum.

Despite a small minority of fans being detained for minor offences such as drunken or anti-social behaviour, I believe the operation

was a great success, and I hope this will help to continue to influence(.) for the better, others' perception of English football fans.

Of course we must not be complacent, however, this operation and that in Portugal during 2004 gives us a good platform from which to build in the future. Please send my thanks to all concerned.

Yours ever,
Richard
RT HON RICHARD CABORN MP
Minister for Sport

This season's Fans' Parliament will take place at Crewe Alexandra FC's Gresty Road on the weekend of Saturday & Sunday 9/10 June, 2007

Stuart Brennan of the Manchester Evening News had been nominated for the FSF Football Writers Award but was unable to be present. Brennan, 42, who has been at the M.E.N. for eight years, received his award on the pitch at Gigg Lane, Bury, ahead of FC United's Supporters Direct Cup match against AFC Wimbledon, which United won 2-1.

Malcolm Clarke, the Federation chairman, said: "Stuart received nominations from both United and FC United's fans who are among the 130,000 members of our organisation and our council had to decide from a shortlist. Stuart proved he has courage in his reporting of the Glazer issue at United and in the way he has covered FC United during their inaugural season, to be a worthy winner of this award. Stuart's excellent journalism shone through as did the paper's perceptive coverage of the Glazer takeover and the setting-up of FC United."

Malcolm also presented the FSF Services to Supporters Award to Colin Hendrie who was representing Independent Manchester United Supporters Association, Manchester United Supporters Trust and Fans United FC. Colin spoke of the ability of United fans to work together, highlighting that their loyalty cannot be traded on.

In closing the weekend's activities Malcolm thanked the organisers for ensuring a successful weekend, bid farewell to Ian

Blackledge and Norman Beverley who stood down from National Council and welcomed Dave Tomlinson to our governing body. Dave is the new Chairman of Northern Division.

Welsh Division had continued the policy of providing a weekend package of accommodation, hospitality and events, for groups and families to enjoy as well as those travelling for the Sunday Conference. Many delegates not only arrived on the Friday but holidayed in the area, not only at the Hotel but on the local waterways.

Events kicked-off with a welcoming Dinner MC'd by former International and FA Premier League referee, now an assessor, who as well as being an entertaining speaker complemented the anecdotes of John McGovern. The former Scottish International is better known as captain of Brian Clough's all-conquering Nottingham Forest and Derby County sides and brought his European Cup-winners and Championship medals with him. There were several impersonations of his manager and playing colleagues.

Host Carroll Clark introduced several International and Wrexham players, including Dai Davies, George Showell (Wolves) and Sammy McMillan (Manchester United).

On Saturday delegates attended workshops on Policing & Stewarding, also Racism &

Community Diversity. The former included a speaker from the UK Football Policing Unit of the Association of Chief Police Officers (who was literally on his way to Germany) and the Football Safety Officers' Association; both spoke highly of their strong links with supporters, which are envied across Europe and it was agreed that a questionnaire be prepared to enable feedback of bad and good experiences from away supporters in particular. Banning orders and safe standing were raised.

Show Racism The Red Card DVD created a lot of discussion culminating in the perception that a formal fans' view was needed, club should take more positive stance against any racist or homophobic chanting, with particular attention to training further down the pyramid. Education was also a key theme. Local scenic canal and steam railway attractions saw a small group of England supporters watch their team's game against Jamaica on TV, with many travelling over the border to Manchester to watch the match live.

An evening to enjoy followed with the rarity of a rock band - Wrexham-based "Out Of The Blue" - playing a full version of "Route 66" as their warm-up before dinner with two memorable sets following later, sandwiching a quick-fire impressionist with Rod Stewart, Anne Robinson, Rolf Harris and dozens of other stars materialising before us.

the fsf fans' blueprint for football

The FSF Fans' Blueprint for Football guides all of our campaigning work, and calls for:

- The creation of one unified governing body governing all levels of football in England to replace the current multiplicity of leagues and associations.
- The introduction of revenue sharing between all professional clubs where one quarter of all league TV and gate revenue (including executive boxes) is pooled and divided equally.
- Minimum standards of governance, administration and financial control for all clubs to be enforced by the governing body as a condition of membership and league entry, including a "fit and proper" person test for all persons owning or directing a football club
- An annual club licensing system to be introduced over a five year period. A condition of licensing to include a ban on unfunded revenue deficits.
- The creation by statute of a special legal status giving appropriate forms of "not-for-profit" status for sporting clubs
- The Government to permit safe standing areas at stadia where clubs and their supporters so wish

- An end to constant fixture changes to suit television or policing
- Prior consultation with supporters on broadcasting contracts to ensure a fair deal for the matchgoing fan and an end to TV "overkill"
- An end to bans on away fans and an increase in away ticket allocations
- A comprehensive review of the structure of all domestic league and cup competitions and the structure of the season involving supporters
- Consultation with supporters on the structure of all European and international club and national team competitions and how they relate to domestic competitions
- The development of clear rules in consultation with supporters to prevent any recurrence of the FA appeals tribunal decision to permit the former Wimbledon FC move to Milton Keynes
- The development of clear, legally enforceable rules to prevent clubs selling their grounds without the explicit prior agreement of their supporters and other another ground being provided in the same town
- Involvement of supporters in initiatives to combat racism on the field and in the stands

- An end to discriminatory treatment of away supporters in terms of ticket prices and allocations in both domestic and international competitions and club levels
- The development of a regular TV free midweek evening with no live broadcast Premiership, Football League or Champions' League games for midweek fixtures to encourage live attendance
- An end to the constant above-inflation increase in ticket prices, particularly for lower priced tickets
- Discount ticket prices for younger and retired supporters with national standards on age criteria
- The development of disabled supporters' facilities at all levels of the game including minimum standards
- Involvement of supporters in all policing and stewarding policies affecting them
- Encouragement and adequate funding of supporter organisation and involvement in the game at all levels
- The introduction of statutory independent regulation of the game