

# Supporters Direct

*the supporters' trusts initiative*

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## Scottish impact: Supporters' energy and creativity the key

**Mike Watson MSP**  
Minister for Tourism, Culture  
and Sport

**A**s Scottish Sports Minister, I am delighted that I have been able to bring to fruition Executive support for extending the Supporters Direct service to Scotland. It has been a long and, at times, difficult journey but thanks to the persistence of many including the Co-operative Party it is finally up and running. Now the real work begins.

At what is a difficult time for Scottish professional football, the message should be that this is about involving its most vital ingredient – the fans. Players, owners and club managers increasingly come and go, but the supporters are the one constant – theirs is a lifetime commitment.

As a lifelong fan, I am convinced that the ordinary supporter should have a greater say in how football is run. Far too often they are taken for granted until their loyalty, and all too often their wallet, is called upon to help out their club. Seeking to add a financial investment to an emotional investment in their club is not an unreasonable demand. Supporters are usually allowed to become more involved when their football club is in difficulty but

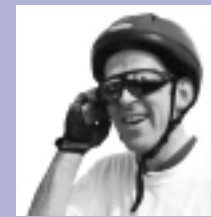
that need not, and should not, be the case.

Responsible supporters want the best for their club. There is a massive amount of energy and creativity to be released. Supporters therefore need to be given the opportunity for their concerns and views to be expressed through an appropriate outlet. Supporters' Trusts are an obvious means of doing this. Supporters Direct has been an unqualified success in England and I want to see that success replicated in Scotland. I am aware that several Trusts are already operating in Scotland, with some having representation on the Board, and that supporters at other clubs have already made approaches to Supporters Direct for assistance.

I have been able to make available to Supporters Direct £75,000 each year over the two years from April 2002. In return, I am looking to the organisation, through James Proctor, the caseworker based in Scotland, to establish ten Supporters' Trusts in each of the two years. I know that James will bring both energy and commitment to this work and I wish him and Supporters Direct every success.

# Tour of Trust

## Cambridge fans cycle for fun and funds



**Brian Attmore**  
Cambridge Fans United

Saturday 20th April 2002 saw the final fixtures for this season's Nationwide lower division teams. With relegation already confirmed a few weeks before, Cambridge United fans were, surprisingly, still eagerly looking forward to our match at neighbours Northampton Town. We hoped that the Cobblers, having put together a commendable run to escape the clutches of the drop into the basement division, would give us our last chance of our only away League win of the term.

For five Cambridge United fans, the day was looked forward to with more keenness and anticipation than many before. This was the day we had chosen to undertake a sponsored cycle ride from our home ground, the Abbey Stadium, to the Sixfields Stadium, the home of the Cobblers.

Cambridge Fans United committee members, Karen Hinkins, Steve Greenall and Brian Attmore, were joined by the Football Club's Redevelopment Manager Colin Davies and cycling enthusiast Peter Woor. Peter cycles to most away games and was the inspiration behind the idea. We set out at eight o'clock in the morning with the aim of covering the fifty-six miles to get to the match, having some fun whilst doing it, and raising vital funds for two excellent causes.

We had chosen to split our proceeds between the CFU and The Garland Appeal, a charity formed by Sir Paul McCartney in 1999 to commemorate the life of his wife Linda. The charity works with the PFA and English Schools FA to raise awareness of testicular cancer amongst young men and helps develop new screening techniques. Fortunately, the cases of Lance Armstrong from the world of cycling, and Millwall and ex-Cambridge City striker Neil Harris, have shown that a full recovery is possible if the problem is spotted early enough.

In near perfect conditions we made our way on roads that were more lumpy than hilly, passing Bedford Town's ground, and cycling through some picturesque villages on the long journey to our destination. Pre-publicity and liaison with the Northampton Town Supporters Trust had created much interest in our trip.

On our arrival in Northampton, we chanced upon the East Midlands Pub of the Year 2001 (the Malt Shovel in case you're interested) with its superb range of real ales.

Following a swift pint or two, and grabbing some not-so-swift food, we completed the last two miles to Sixfields.

A welcoming group of fans wearing the claret and white of our hosts and our more familiar black and amber greeted us at our finishing point – the impressive Walter Tull Memorial. Members of Cambridge Fans United met with Tony Clarke MP and other members of the Northampton Town Supporters' Trust, whose efforts in establishing themselves as an organised fans group ten years ago have been such an inspiration to Supporters Direct and CFU.

In a splendid example of co-operation and friendship between Trusts, we raised over £1,000 to be split between the two causes. To cap an enjoyable day the half-time tannoy announcement of our achievement resulted in a standing ovation and more money generously donated by fans.

A fantastic day was thoroughly enjoyed by those who took part. It was fitting, as we left the ground to travel home by more conventional means (except Peter who cycled back), to reflect on the words in memory of one of the first black professional footballers on the statue:

"Through his actions W.D.J. Tull ridiculed the barriers of ignorance that tried to deny people of colour equality with their contemporaries. His life stands as testament to a determination to confront those

people and those obstacles that sought to diminish him and the World in which he lived. It reveals a man though rendered breathless in his prime, whose strong heart still beats loudly." (With thanks to Phil Vasili – author of *Colouring Over The White Line.*)

By the way, an individualist equaliser in the second minute of stoppage time robbed Cambridge United of that elusive win. Yet this was of less significance to the many supporters who left the ground, pondering the crises currently facing English football, than the future security of their beloved clubs.



For more information on The Garland Appeal please see [www.garlandappeal.com](http://www.garlandappeal.com)  
[www.cambridgefansunited.org](http://www.cambridgefansunited.org)

# Canaries sing for stakeholder power

Mike Reynolds and Phil Harris

**W**hen the emergence of Supporters Direct hit the headlines in September 2000, we began to take an interest in what could be done by the ordinary supporter. At the time, there was much talk about increasing stakeholder power – stakeholder pensions, stakeholder employees – in fact we were all stakeholders. Why not be stakeholders in our club?

After numerous dire seasons, there still remained a core of about 15,000 regulars, every one of us feeling we had a stake in the club yet many of us unable to afford the price of the minimum block of shares available. Although the club was very fan-friendly it was reliant on the benevolence of the majority shareholders and, whilst the views of the shareholders were always listened to, there was a mass of fans for who this process was unavailable.

It was also perceived that many local businesses, both large and small, were uninterested in a direct involvement with the club because of previous difficulties with a former Chairman. We thought that local business could be a potential source of support if we could create a trust that held shares in perpetuity for the people of Norfolk and the wider community that the club serves.

In January 2001, we started posting messages on the official web site and on local newspaper websites regarding a Supporters' Trust for Norwich City, but the response was minimal. By the end of the season, Giovanni di Stefano, with previous involvement in a takeover at Dundee and dubious connections, was offering to buy up all available shares in the club,

including a large number held by a former Vice-Chairman. At last there was a serious interest, including the offer of shareholdings from a number of overseas fans. However, the support existed only via email, and it proved difficult bringing together enough of the interested parties to set the ball rolling. Nevertheless, when we met with the representatives of the Owls Trust at the start of the season they gave us every encouragement to work through the existing supporters bodies.



Following the first Supporters Direct annual conference, it became clear that there were two parallel groupings interested in the concept of a trust – the Shareholders' Association and the cyber grouping. Since the former was a recognised independent body, although perhaps not representative of the average fan, it seemed sensible to bring together these groups with a view to forming a Supporters' Trust. This duly took place and since

then real progress has been made.

Last month, Norwich City was within twenty minutes of the Premiership, only to lose out to Birmingham City in a penalty shoot out. The financial difference between winning and losing is enormous. Norwich City now needs to build on the successes of this season without the expected finances from ITV Digital.

The challenge for the trust will be to encourage as many of the 32,000 supporters who traveled to Cardiff for the final, as well as the thousands of Norwich City supporters who watched the match on ITV.

The trust will need to make clear to supporters that it offers a new avenue of investing much needed money into the club, which will help to keep the current squad together and strengthen it. On the pitch, Norwich City's aim for next season must be to go one better next year and reach the Premiership by automatic promotion.

It will also be important to explain that, whilst the short term objective of the trust is to help Norwich City obtain Premiership status, the main objectives are to put the club on a firm financial footing, with the supporters having a democratic say in the future of the club. The trust now needs to build on the expectation on the supporters so that both the club and the trust move forward together.

Dr Ian Gibson, MP for Norwich North: "Our fantastic supporters need to be drawn in closer to the decision making process at Carrow Road. Anything that gives fans a greater influence should be welcomed. The Canaries have supporters all over the country that would gladly support a Trust giving them a closer identification with the club. I have been active in helping to establish the Supporters' Trust and look forward to seeing it gain the support of and work with other groups of fans".

# A message from the Professional Footballers Association



Gordon Taylor  
Chief Executive of the PFA

**O**n behalf of the Professional Footballers Association, I wish to express our full support for the work of Supporters Direct and the Supporters' Trust initiative throughout the football world. Since its inception Supporters Direct has had a positive input at all levels of the game, from top to bottom, making your feelings known, and making sure the voice of the fans is not ignored in a world which is becoming increasingly dominated by profit returns and television, commercial and technology interests.

The last two decades have seen people coming into the game, not just for football reasons, but for profit opportunities and the stripping of assets at clubs. It is essential that the voice of supporters come together to prevent the loss of clubs who have played a vital part in the fabric of football's history. The very success of Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club illustrates the effect that supporters' involvement can have and it is hoped that the same effect can work a similar miracle at Carlisle United, to name but one of a number of clubs who are having

problems that need to be addressed.

Talk of a football crisis because of ITV Digital papers over the cracks of a fundamental problem in modern day football. It is not a problem of the total amount of money coming into the game from spectators, television and sponsorship, but a problem of its distribution, almost akin to world problems and the global economy where the vast majority of wealth lies with the top two per cent of the population. Similarly, in football, for the top twenty clubs in the Premiership to share £500 million a year from television alone, without the prospect of a penny for the remaining seventy-two clubs in the Football League illustrates a clear lack of solidarity, which needs to be addressed by bodies such as the PFA in combination with the supporters' organisations.

It is pleasing to see the forthcoming combination of the National Federation and the FSA through the Federation of Football Supporters. At the moment we have well over £1 million out on loan to over ten clubs in the lower divisions. For clubs to imitate the activities of ITV Digital by going into administration as a

panacea for these problems cannot be the only solution. Unfortunately, for many clubs, administration has been a last resort for survival whilst for ITV Digital, with the backing of Granada and Carlton, it was merely a convenient commercial exercise.

We need to continue to work together to look for new ways to protect the viability and enhancement of our clubs. We should be proud that of over 200 football countries in the world we are the one country with the most full-time clubs, the highest aggregate attendances, the highest number of full-time professional players and, of course, the longest history. It is as well to remind the football authorities that there were times when such Premiership clubs as Middlesbrough, Charlton, Fulham and Derby County were facing the receiver and ultimate closure and, but for the help of the PFA and supporters, would have been allowed to wither on the vine in today's cruel corporate world. Football is about more than profits and dividends to shareholders and until that fact is re-inforced we will need to continue to fight for the soul and spirit of the game.

# ITV Digital, football and fraternité

Matt Holt

It seems that English football has spent the last couple of months getting caught with its trousers down. Nothing new perhaps, but the ITV Digital farrago rumbles on and clubs across the land live with the thought that they could be the next to become financially undressed. Football and its demanding mistress finally seem to have realised that they may not, after all, be the most compatible of bedfellows.

Much has been said about the moral duty of Granada and Carlton to deliver on their promises and it has been good to see most of football united in its desire to recoup what is owed. But we should certainly not be shocked that these two affluent media organisations are renegeing on their deal. It comes as little surprise to those supporters who have been shoved continually from pillar to post at the behest of television companies, that those same companies are now revealed to have little or nothing of the game's real interest at heart.

The crisis does offer a real opportunity for football, for its clubs and governing bodies, to get their act together. Recent history, however, suggests that football supporters across the land should not hold their collective breath for the opportunity to be grasped. Rather than expecting moves toward a more equitable distribution of football's considerable annual income, it

seems more likely that the fractious politics of the game, and the powerful vested interests, will continue to characterise the wider landscape.

Just a moment's reflection, though, would show that financial health at the lower regions of the pyramid, benefits even the most illustrious of clubs. Clubs rely on each other for players, for income, and they rely on each other for competition. It is little coincidence that the esteem in which the FA Cup is held has plummeted so dramatically, at a time when the competitive balance between clubs across divisions has been so clinically and deliberately disrupted.

In the midst of these stormy waters it has been good to see Supporters Direct getting further recognition for a vision based on common sense, good governance and an appreciation that supporters might just have something positive to contribute other than an increase in the sale of pies. In fact, Ministers of the Crown are increasingly looking to Supporters' Trusts to help dig football clubs out of these deep and seemingly insurmountable holes, before the waves come crashing in.

In the wake of the collapse of ITV Digital, Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, told Parliament, "The government



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will work alongside football to provide practical help, largely through grassroots organisations and Supporters Direct, which has been very successful in establishing fans' trusts as a better way to manage clubs and helping clubs that have recently suffered difficulty". The Secretary of State recognised the 'excellent work' of Supporters Direct and the need 'to link fans more directly with the financial security and future of their clubs.'

Taking the game forward, for all those with a stake in the game, will require a significant collective effort. It is reassuring that the work of Supporters Direct and the fans in general are seen as having a pivotal part to play. Indeed, after an *annus horribilis*, in which our national game has lurched from one embarrassing situation to another, the expansion of Supporters Direct and the growing number and influence of Trusts around the country has the potential to reinvigorate the domestic scene.

Such progress is promising, but it ultimately needs to be part of a broader sea change that sees clubs, governing bodies, supporters and also the players, working together to promote football as a sport first and a commercial opportunity second. We need to mould a game that knows how to balance income and expenditure, and one that recognises that Mansfield has as much right to a football club as Manchester. The French have been pretty good in recent years at producing a successful footballing nation. The coaches they have exported haven't been too bad either. Perhaps if all those involved in our own great domestic game, which has so much excitement and even greater potential, demonstrated a little bit more of that famous French fraternité, the benefits would be there for all of us, across the entire game, to enjoy.

# 57 varieties of success



**Brian Lomax**  
Managing Director,  
Supporters Direct

Welcome to the seventh issue of our quarterly Newsletter, and the second edited by Matt Holt. You will see one change immediately, and that is our Scottish supplement, reflecting the expansion and growth of Supporters Direct over the last three months – long awaited, now achieved. We are delighted to welcome our new colleague James Proctor, who will be based at Robert Owen House, Bath Street, Glasgow, the home of the Scottish Co-op. As I write, James is with us here in London for the start of his induction, but I know he will hit the ground running, having been chair of the Raith Rovers Supporters' Trust since its inception. This Newsletter will be printed in a format whereby all English and Welsh readers receive Scottish news and vice-versa. We hope this will promote the maximum degree of fraternity and communication between all Trust supporters and members.

The number of Trusts established has now reached 57. At one level there are, as in the old advertising slogan, 57 varieties, because every Trust is a unique combination of

individuals and local circumstances. At another level, however, there is a remarkable unity within the movement, and similarities abound. The vast majority of Trusts have chosen the Industrial and Provident Society structure, and of the few who did not, several are now in the process of moving towards it.

We firmly believe in this model on the basis of our own experience over the last two years. It represents the most democratic, most transparent, and best regulated option available; and it gives the movement an unimpeachable public credibility. This is vital in our dealings with Government, the Civil Service, the Football Authorities and the media.

Recent references by Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, to Supporters Direct in the House of Commons indicate that we have established our credibility and may expect an enlarged role in the football world of the future. Of one thing I am certain – Supporters Direct is here to stay.

# Farewell to Feethams: a stadium retrospective

Steve Duffy  
Darlington Supporters' Trust

**“D**arlington FC – not everything in black and white makes sense” was the playful adaptation of an advertising slogan on a fanzine’s T-shirt a few years ago.

Being a Darlington fan is rarely straightforward, but supporters have been staring very hard into their pints of Guinness over recent months. It’s as you might expect at a Division Three club that is preparing to move into a new 25,000-seater stadium, with all mod-cons, while fans are unhappy as the team struggled and with worries of cost-cutting to follow.

But Darlington Supporters’ Trust is one of the luckier ones in that we were not born out of a crisis. Launched in relatively calm waters last September, we’ve had time to plot a careful course and build up our membership gradually. We’re not dealing with administrators, debts, or imminent demise.

At the same time, share ownership is not on the agenda nor is there a straightforward route to fans’ representation either. We’re pragmatic. So establishing links with the local community was an achievable aim and worthwhile for a new Trust, and the imminent stadium move gave us something to get our teeth into.

“Farewell to Feethams” was an idea that grew out of the certain knowledge that our club was leaving its home of 120 years and little if anything would be done officially to mark this historic event.

Now if you haven’t been to Feethams, you may not know what a lovely little ground it is. I’ve been to the grand old stadiums like Highbury and Villa Park, which are special. With Feethams, it’s a unique charm. You walk through Darlington’s own “twin towers” entrance, around the boundary of Darlington Cricket Club, past the scoreboard and into the stadium, with the park and river behind. Shame the football sometimes spoils it, some might say!

The project simply involved black and white photographs being taken of the last few months of the old ground, capturing the match day atmosphere,

the supporters and images behind-the-scenes. These would be exhibited and later have a pride of place in the new stadium.

I contacted Darlington Camera Club, who could be forgiven for thinking we were a little mad, with an idea from a group of football fans who’d only been together for a few weeks. But the idea appealed to them and a dozen members were soon enthusiastically on board.

Next, we approached the council-run Darlington Arts Centre. I’d like to think my persuasive sales pitch knocked them dead, but they were certainly a little shrewder. Nevertheless they agreed to host an exhibition remarkably quickly and a date was agreed within minutes. The hard work started from there, but a football film season, young people’s fanzine project and a girls football coaching course followed as associated events.

The next hurdle involved convincing the football club. They may not have quite understood what we were doing at first, but we’ve been very grateful for their co-operation since. Quite a number of staff inside the club bent over backwards to help the photographers. A club director joined our steering group and opened a few doors when they were needed, as well as co-piloting a plane when Camera Club chairman Jim Lycett took some aerial shots of the ground.

The photographers started work in January and soon blended in. A retired scientist and academic, Jim has a passion for photography and a wonderful eye for landscape, as well as what I’d describe as an impish, infectious enthusiasm. But most of them knew as much about football, as we did about photography. Of the 12 amateur and professional photographers who eventually took part – their largest project in living memory – few had ever been to a football match before. They included a retired engineer and a police forensic photographer (I’ve been tempted at times to chalk mark the pitch where the central defence should have been).

The photographers, working in small groups, took

1,200 images over four months. Occasionally the odd one strayed into forbidden areas, like unannounced in the visitors dressing room. They were soon sent packing. But the photographers received a great reception from fans, although some couldn’t quite understand how Darlo fans could look so glum and show so little animation. Years of practise, we told him.

The selection process soon showed the project to be a great success and there were soon friendly fights over favourites. But the hundreds of negatives taken will be given to the Trust to hold a permanent archive, which will hopefully make up a little for the loss and destruction of hundreds of other photographs taken before the 1960s.

**If you haven’t been to Feethams, you may not know what a lovely little ground it is... Shame the football sometimes spoils it, some might say!**

The Northern Echo newspaper kindly offered to display what archive they had, while appealing for supporters to lend old photos and memorabilia from their own collections. We’ve had an online “Best Match at Feethams” poll, as well as recorded memories in sound from older supporters.

But outside our black and white world, there was a shade of grey. Doubts were expressed as to whether the club would move to the new stadium in August. At the time of writing, work is continuing and Christmas is looking the likely date. But this is still our last chance to celebrate Feethams, even though we now know we’ll

start the season – Darlington’s 120th – in familiar surroundings. While we half-jokingly suggested “The Long Goodbye” as the exhibition’s new title, we ploughed on securing the essential funding. Supporters and business kindly sponsored individual photographs, while the Northern Arts board agreed to a lottery grant.

As far as the wider Trust is concerned we’re holding our first AGM in June and have other areas of interest we’re busy working on, including practical projects which will benefit fans and the club. We can hear the wolf howling in the distance, but he’s not at our door yet. You may not have heard of our centre forward (that’s Barry Conlon by the way), but unless you’ve been away for a long holiday you’ve probably read somewhere of our owner and chairman – Mr. George Reynolds.

Press articles on the “outspoken” George usually summarise his biography as a “multi-millionaire, former safe-cracker, chip-board tycoon.” He’s certainly a chip off a block few Darlington supporters have encountered before. He came in and saved the club when it was on its knees, and it’s very much his new stadium, which he sees as a revenue generator off the field to pay for the club’s continued existence. Warnings of football living beyond its means pre-dated the ITV Digital affair in this part of the North East.

There has been no official Trust dialogue with the chairman to date. That’s not to say there’s been silence from the boardroom. Far from it. Fans’ forums, including an infamous speech by his wife which led to a players’ walk-out, are fairly regular. But it’s not a conventional template to work with.

As a Trust, we’ve moved on, kept a dignity and looked at ways of working positively, with the good of the football club always at the heart.

We hope the photographic exhibition will be remembered on its artistic merits, but hopefully it will also have given the Trust some purpose in its early development.

Continued overleaf



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Continued from previous page

The project started off with a small group of Trust members shouldering a lot of work. That burden is now shared as we've welcomed more local activist members on board, who've brought fresh enthusiasm. It's also helped a group of football fans, some of whom knew each other vaguely before, develop a decent working relationship and level of trust. That could prove vital for whatever lies ahead.

Farewell to Feethams – Darlington Arts Centre, Vane Terrace, Darlington, July 12th–August 24th. Admission free. For more information please see [www.darlotrust.co.uk](http://www.darlotrust.co.uk)

## SUPPORTERS' Trust of the season

Jonathan Michie  
Supporters Direct

**B**eckham? Owen? Vieira? The fans? The big news of the season is no longer going to be who wins Player of the Year. From now on, the important award will be the Supporters' Trust of the Season.

Supporters' Trusts have been making fantastic contributions to the life of their clubs. This is true across the Leagues, in England, Wales and Scotland. It has been recognised by the football authorities, by Government, the media and others. From now on it is to be officially recognised through an annual Supporters Direct award, sponsored by the Co-operative Bank, for the Supporters' Trust of the Season.

Trusts will need to demonstrate their commitment in practice to the Supporters Direct principles of being democratic, inclusive, and affordable, as well as following good practice in both their internal organisation and public work. The judging panel will be looking for evidence of activities in and for the local community, such as anti-racist work; impact in the media, on the club and more generally; originality in approach; and progress made in recruitment and in achieving the objectives of the Trust.

Trusts face very different situations, problems and possibilities. To allow the range of situations to be recognised, there will be three awards, of £500, £300 and £200. The prize money can be donated to charity or used by the Trust to further their own development.

The winners will be announced and the awards presented at the Supporters Direct annual conference on September 12th.

Do you think your Trust deserves recognition for its efforts? If so, please contact Supporters Direct for more details at Supporters Direct, Birkbeck, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX or email [enquiries@supporters-direct.org](mailto:enquiries@supporters-direct.org). Completed applications must be received by Paul Lawler, The Co-operative Bank, PO Box 101, Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP by Friday 5th July.

## QPR1st celebrates its first year

David Price  
QPR1st



**O**n April 4th, QPR1st staged its second rally, almost exactly a year after its first. The contrasts between the two were striking.

Then, 1,000 people filled Hammersmith Town Hall for a meeting that took place only weeks after QPR had gone into administrative receivership and at a time when the team was busily working towards relegation. Things really looked bleak for the club, which looked close to the end of the road. The 1,000 gathered heard a small group of enthusiastic speakers, with the welcome support of local MP Clive Soley and Mayor Andrew Slaughter, who were desperate to rally them to the cause. The cause was the preservation of QPR via the formation of a football Supporters' Trust. No more, said the trust, should Rangers fans be peripheral to the thoughts of those in charge at the club. The club must return to its community.

The meeting bound Rs fans together in a way that I will never forget, giving the trust's interim committee an undeniable and authoritative mandate to get on with the job. Subsequently, we have held well-subscribed elections for officers and we have established a paid-up membership of around 650. We represent our members to the club at regular meetings and we have become a regular conduit for the transfer of information, some official and some not so, to our members and to the broader fan-base. The club has told us that the deal to take the club out of administration will include some form of fan representation, although it is yet to confirm the details.

This second meeting was different, not least because of the passage of time. The club remains in administration, although we are being promised weekly that its re-emergence into the real world is imminent. The team, meanwhile, despite being almost completely rebuilt using other clubs' castaways, was in the process of finishing a creditable eighth. QPR fans were far less anxious about the future, rightly or wrongly, taking the arrest of the team's decline as a sign that things are at last going in the right direction. Average attendances climbed from just above 10,000, in Division One, to

touching 12,000 in Division Two.

About 750 returned to Hammersmith, to see on the stage some of the same enthusiasts, albeit older and wiser, plus the Mayor and Supporters Direct Managing Director Brian Lomax. Alongside them were the club's Chief Executive, David Davies, and our manager Ian Holloway, who gave an inspiring speech that clearly came right from the heart. Once again, two hours seemed to whistle by, ending in an enthusiastic re-endorsement of all things QPR. For the QPR1st committee it was a great triumph and a big boost to morale. After a year of hard work fighting to establish the Trust and, at the same time, badgering the club for information on its financial situation, I was not the only one to reach April feeling tired, jaded and more than a little futile. The meeting has helped all of us to re-charge and re-focus.

As chair of QPR1st, I was somewhat apprehensive about holding a second big meeting. I had worried that people were less anxious about what was going on at the club and, consequently, would feel less of a need to attend. I was wrong about that and I am glad that our committee made the decision, prompted by Brian Lomax, to go ahead with the meeting.

I would recommend holding a meeting like ours to any of the other trusts that have sprung up since we started. Think big and ask people, who you know wouldn't dream of attending, to speak. This rally didn't just do us a pile of good. It sent those there home with hope rekindled and they passed on their experiences to friends who were unable to attend. Many left talking of joining QPR1st, whilst others signed up on the night. Others will come on board.

And it did the club some good too, with David Davies gaining a hall-full of respect and with Ian Holloway heading rapidly towards deity-status for more than a few Rs fans.

[www.qpr1st.co.uk](http://www.qpr1st.co.uk)

# One foot on the board and five fans take charge

**Keith Whitfield**

**Plymouth Argyle Supporters' Training and Development Trust**



Some of you might have noticed a few changes at one of football's far outposts – Plymouth Argyle. For one thing, that club with "potential" but little else actually won something. OK, it was only the Nationwide Division Three championship, but you've got to start somewhere and, more than that, they scored a division points record into the bargain.

That's not all that's changed. The board changed too. Out went Dan McCauley after years of acrimonious relations with the Argyle fans and in came five men who were undoubtedly green-blood Argyle fans first and wannabe directors a well-distant second. First among these equals was Paul Stapleton, previously treasurer and founding member of the Plymouth Argyle Supporters' Training and Development Trust. PAST&DT was set up in 1996 with the main aim of taking over the under-16 youth policy and other parts of the youth programme that the club had deemed not viable. From having to find enough cash to fund those aspects of the youth programme that the club wanted to discard, Paul had to deal with all the other issues that affect the club's well-being.

But this was not the case of a Supporters' Trust taking over the running of the club a la Lincoln or Chesterfield. This was a very Plymouth coup. We do things differently down in the far South West. Our team wears green shirts. We are proud of being uniquely called Argyle, and of the mysterious origins of that name. Similarly, our supporters' take-over of the board was unique – in its very own way.

Following trenchant criticisms of his managerial style (or lack thereof) at shareholders' meetings and in the local press, Dan McCauley invited two of his fiercest critics, Paul Stapleton and Ken Jones, onto the Board of Directors. Paul and Ken accepted the invitation but



**The new board included Argyle's best-known supporter, Michael Foot.**

**Plymouth-born, he has been a loyal supporter of the Greens since 1921, no doubt taking particular delight in the string of fine left-wingers that the club has produced.**

continued in their roles as leading lights in the Supporters' Trust and both took a keen interest in the emergence of Supporters Direct. However, an attempt led by members of the trust to put together a broad based consortium to buy McCauley out failed miserably.

News of "outside interests" wanting to buy the club prompted a further attempt at putting together a fans' consortium. This centred on a small group with enough spare cash to purchase McCauley's controlling interest and eventually to pay off the debt owed by the club to his company.

The new board included Argyle's best-known supporter, Michael Foot. Plymouth-born, he has been a loyal supporter of the Greens since 1921, no doubt taking particular delight in the string of fine left-wingers that the club has produced. On hearing of the proposed

consortium from new vice-chairman, Peter Jones, he immediately asked to be included, saying that he didn't want to miss this opportunity.

So Plymouth Argyle entered the 2001/2 season with a new board and a new chairman and vice-chairman. Unfortunately, at first, the results on the pitch did not change for the better. Following two home defeats and an away scoreless draw, the team quickly went two down at Rushden and Diamonds. Paul Stapleton began to question his sanity. But just before half-time a revival started that lasted all the way to the championship. For good measure, it was led by the Plymouth-born striker Mickey Evans.

Off the pitch, the new board have set about changing the facilities, habits and attitudes of a club that was beginning to get used to being in the footballing basement. In doing this they have had three main assets to help them. The first was three-quarters of a new stadium, financed by the local council, the Football Foundation and a soft loan from the previous chairman. The second was a charismatic manager who had learnt his trade in the upper echelons of Scottish football, Paul Sturrock. The third was a set of fans, eager for success, and prepared to back the new board to the hilt.

So Plymouth Argyle have ended the 2001/2 season as champions of their league, with a Board of Directors who are all life-long supporters and a Supporters' Trust that is thriving and keen to help the club maintain its steady supply of young talent. This may not be typical of the average Supporters' Trust, but we like to be different in the far South West.

The Plymouth Argyle Supporters' Trust website can be found at [www.argyletrust.org.uk](http://www.argyletrust.org.uk)

## Become a Director of Supporters Direct

Supporters Direct wishes to expand its Board of Directors by inviting applications from existing Supporters' Trust members to serve on the Board.

The successful applicant will become a full Director of Supporters Direct, which is a not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee. The Director will attend approximately six Board meetings each year and other occasional meetings of Board sub-committees, as appropriate. The position is unpaid, but travelling expenses are covered.

We would like an active member of a Supporters' Trust to join our Board and help formulate our strategy and oversee our work. We are preferably looking for someone with a background in, or experience of, marketing and/or fundraising.

It is the policy of Supporters Direct to promote equality of opportunity. We welcome and encourage applications from groups currently under-represented including women, black and ethnic minority groups and people with a disability. The principles of fair and open competition will apply and appointments will be made on merit. Political activity will not be a criterion for appointment but candidates must subscribe to the objectives of Supporters Direct.

Please send nominations, including a CV and covering letter, detailing your skills and trust involvement (to be verified by a referee who is a senior officer in a Supporters' Trust) to: Brian Lomax, Supporters Direct c/o Birkbeck College, Malet Street London WC1E 7HX Closing Date: Friday July 5th 2002. (This replaces the previous deadline, notified on our website, to allow Newsletter readers to apply).

# A history of Enfield Town Football Club – so far, so soon, so good



**Peter Coath**  
Press Officer, Enfield  
Town Football Club



**T**he history of Enfield Town Football Club is short yet remarkable, for it shows just how much can be achieved when the dedication and enthusiasm of the ordinary football supporter is focussed and channelled in the right direction. The story begins prior to September 1999, when Isthmian League Enfield FC became homeless.

The fortunes of this once great club had taken a sharp downward turn during the 1990's, with the club losing its coveted place in the Conference after being on the brink of promotion to the Football League. The club finished runners-up in the Isthmian League on five occasions, but were refused promotion after winning the league in 1995 due to financial irregularities. It was at this point that the supporters' unrest first became evident. A short-lived and disastrous ground-sharing arrangement with Saracens Rugby Union Club was followed by the Enfield FC Chairman's decision to sell the lease of the Southbury Road stadium, the club's home since 1936, back to the local council for redevelopment. The main intention was to reinvest the profits in a new, Conference-graded stadium at a site in Cheshunt. The scheme was doomed to failure however, as the Chairman soon found out that only half of the proceeds would go to the club, and that this money would be held in a jointly-controlled account, to be used only in building a new stadium. The shortfall in cash ruled out his planned stadium in Cheshunt and

revised plans were presented to the club's supporters. After backing the scheme initially, we were now less than enthusiastic about the whole affair.

At this stage, the supporters began to take an active role in the future of the club and in participation with the local council a 'Task Force' was set up to identify possible sites for a new stadium. The Task Force consisted of a mix of supporters and council officers, with the Enfield FC Chairman also involved. Three sites were short-listed and unveiled to the expectant supporters at an open meeting at the Southbury Road stadium early in 1999, but the club's Chairman seemed to be reluctant to make a commitment, instead still showing a preference to move to Cheshunt and press on with the unpopular revised scheme.

The doors closed at the Southbury Road stadium for the last time at the end of September 1999 and the club began sharing a ground with St Albans City FC, many miles away in Hertfordshire. The effect on the club was disastrous. The borough lost not only an excellent stadium, but also a highly regarded Football in the Community scheme. Support dwindled and the team, previously top of the league, began to struggle. The supporters' representatives on the Task Force stepped up the pressure on the Enfield FC Chairman, with the aim of bringing the club back home to the borough. The Enfield Supporters' Trust was formed and began negotiating with both the Chairman and the council. A plan was hatched to ground-

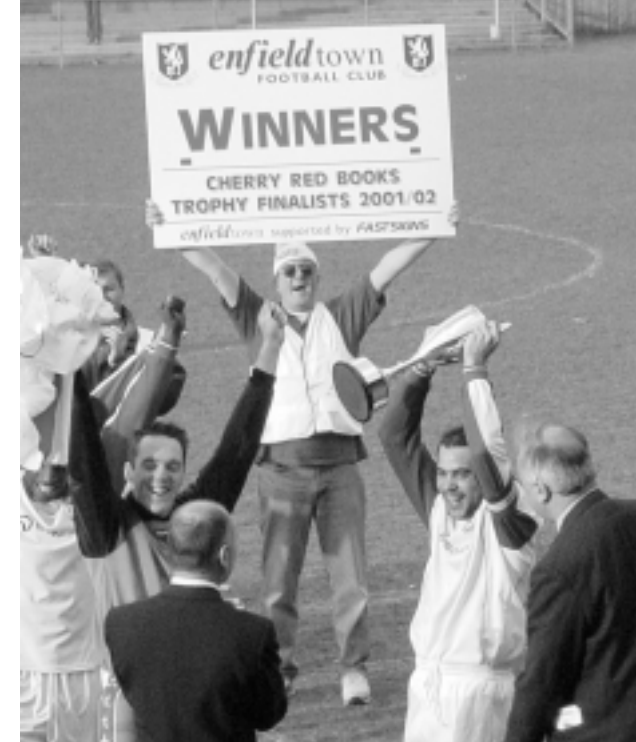
share with Brimsdown Rovers FC in the short term, in order to bring the club home. The Chairman, however, instead signed a long term agreement ground-share deal with Borehamwood FC. The Enfield Supporters' Trust now went through a period of transformation, thanks to the involvement of Supporters Direct. Together, they turned the Trust into a democratic organisation and it was a new-look supporters' action group that now confronted the Enfield Chairman.

The trust now switched emphasis to the control of the club itself, with the trust offering to take over control in exchange for the bulk of the money still jointly held following the sale of the Southbury Road stadium. The Chairman refused to negotiate, and it was from this that the radical idea of breaking away and starting afresh was hatched.

After a meeting of the trust in June 2001, eighty-nine per cent the supporters voted in favour of forming a new club and Enfield Town FC was born. The club registered with the Middlesex FA, was accepted into the Essex Senior League, and a ground-share deal with Brimsdown Rovers FC was arranged, all within days of the club being formed. Remarkably, the supporters disproved any notions that they would refuse to accept a drop of four divisions, by switching to the new club in droves. Season ticket sales broke the one-hundred barrier by July and only thirty one days after being formed the club played its first ever match, a friendly fixture against new hosts Brimsdown Rovers, in front of three hundred and fifty people.

The many ex-Enfield FC personalities that had moved over to work for 'The Town' – from turnstile attendants and stewards, secretaries and administration personnel, to former team manager Jim Chandler – swayed many towards the new club. Chandler built an exciting team, a mix of youth and experience, containing many old favourites from Enfield FC. The club consolidated its financial status through advertising, a sponsorship deal with First National, not to mention many generous supporter contributions.

Enfield Town got off to a storming start on the pitch and raced to the top of the Essex Senior League table by mid September. The first-ever competitive home game, against Leyton, attracted a huge crowd of five-hundred and sixteen. Subsequent home games saw the attendances settle around the three-hundred mark and despite some atrocious weather at the exposed Brimsdown ground this figure remained constant throughout the season. The club also began its involvement with the local community – running training sessions for local play-schemes, participating with the local council in a 'History of Black Footballers' exhibition, and working with the national campaign to Kick Racism out of Football. We are also working closely with the Middlesex FA, the local authority and other clubs in the borough, and intend to launch a new Football in the Community scheme as soon as possible. An enclosed ground will provide a base for these activities and also provide improved facilities for



children and less mobile or elderly supporters.

As far as the ground is concerned, negotiations continue apace, with the local residents expressing understandable concern over the effect on their environment. A change in administration following the recent local council elections, also poses a challenge that the club will have to face.

Success soon came to the club on the pitch, though, with Chandler's team winning the Cherry Red Books Trophy and finishing a creditable second in the Essex Senior League behind Leyton. Further trophies were added before that remarkable first season concluded, with Leyton being overcome in the Essex Senior League Cup Final, and Ryman Division One Wealdstone being beaten in the final of the Middlesex Senior Charity Cup. Adding the league's runners-up shield to the total, that made a haul of four trophies in the club's first season, with individual honours also being gained by Daniel Clarke, who won the Essex Senior League's Don Douglas Trophy for finishing the season as the highest scorer, with thirty-seven goals.

The biggest success, though, was the continual progress made by the club. Formed through the loyalty and dedication of its supporters, and capably guided by Supporters Direct, Enfield Town FC began building on very firm foundations. It has achieved success both commercially and socially, with many supporters once again watching a senior football team playing within the borough that it represents. We plan to match success on the pitch with a well-managed and truly community-based club. A real objective in the longer run is for the Club to work towards FA Chartered Community Club status.

Overall, Enfield Town Football Club succeeds because it is there for the people. The club only wishes to develop, there is no individual making any profit from any of the club's activities, and all revenue generated is ploughed back into the club. It has been a remarkable success story and looks set to continue.

[www.enfieldtownfootballclub.co.uk](http://www.enfieldtownfootballclub.co.uk)



# Supporters gather for regional conference

**Dave Boyle**  
Supporters Direct



Over eighty people attended the Supporters Direct mini-conference held at Wigan on March 24th at the JJB Stadium. It was the third regional event, following on from previous conferences held in Huddersfield and West Bromwich, and attracted members of trusts already in existence and supporters looking to set up trusts at their clubs, in rugby league as well as football.

Despite the Sunday morning start, supporters travelled from as far afield as Norwich to exchange ideas and gain practical advice on setting up and running a successful Supporters' Trust. Sessions were held on elections, club AGMs, marketing, communicating with members, and the roles and responsibilities of the Society Board in an Industrial and Provident Society. In addition to



these smaller workshops, attendees heard from Professor Derek Fraser, Chair of the Independent Football Commission. In his address, Professor Fraser asked for supporters not to prejudge the IFC, but instead to give it the time and opportunity to get results and assess it on its track record.

Building on the success of the events already held, the next two regional events to be held will firstly be in London over the summer for London and the South East, then later in the year in Bristol for clubs along the M4 and M5 corridors. The regional conferences offer an excellent opportunity for members and officers of trusts to get together and exchange ideas and success stories. We would like to offer special thanks to the Co-operative Group, and to Stephen Lewis in particular, for their hard work and support in the hosting of the event.

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## Ask Trevor Brooking

In a new feature, Chairman of Sport England and BBC Television Commentator, Trevor Brooking, has kindly agreed to respond to questions posed by readers for the forthcoming issue of the Supporters Direct Newsletter, due out in September. Your questions may concern the Supporters' Trust movement, the role supporters play in the modern game, or other related football issues.

Please forward any questions to Matt Holt, Supporters Direct, Birkbeck University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX  
t 020 7631 6740  
f 020 7631 6872  
or email [m.holt@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:m.holt@bbk.ac.uk)

# Get in training: developing a Supporters' Trust training programme



**Dr Christine Oughton**  
Director of the Football Governance Research Centre

Over the past two years there has been a remarkable growth in the demand from, and capacity of football fans to establish mutually owned and controlled members' organisations – Supporters' Trusts – as a mechanism by which to gain a voice in their club. Supporters Direct has provided individual support and guidance, underpinned by a comprehensive information base, including that provided online. The recommended form of mutuality that trusts are taking – an Industrial and Provident Society – brings with it a complex set of legal and financial responsibilities. At the same time the range and diversity of clubs involved is considerable – from small non-League clubs such as Enfield with primarily a local presence, to clubs such as Manchester United with its global presence and fan base. The aims and objectives of trusts therefore also vary – some may be struggling to gain recognition by the club, others have found themselves in the position of taking over the club itself.

Trusts require a wide range of expertise and skills to meet these objectives. The Football Governance Research Centre, in partnership with the Co-operative College has been working to identify the current and future training needs of trusts with a view to developing a comprehensive training programme for trust members and officials. Firstly, the results from the 2001 *State of the Game* questionnaire survey of all trusts, as well as other

supporter groups, were reviewed, as was the feedback from the 2001 national Supporters Direct conference. Secondly, a 'Training Needs Analysis' was undertaken, using representatives from the Boards of four different trusts operating in different contexts – from listed PLC clubs to private limited companies to clubs wholly owned by the trust. We are grateful to all those who took the time to participate in our survey and case studies and for sharing their views with us. As a result of this we have identified six key areas for education and training:

- 1 The way trusts operate including the nature of their legal and financial framework, roles and responsibilities, and conducting elections
- 2 Sustaining the trust including fundraising, ensuring accountability to the membership, and publicity
- 3 Football clubs and corporate governance issues including strategy at the club's AGM, and achieving a presence on the club board
- 4 Working with local communities including strategies to involve the wider community, and promoting the trust
- 5 Committee skills including organizing and chairing meetings and team working
- 6 The wider mutual and co-operative context for trusts including an awareness of co-operative and mutual organisational forms.



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To give shape to what will be a greatly enhanced training agenda for trusts, we are proposing to develop a four stage training and education package:

### Stage 1

A series of regional meetings involving workshops on the key strands identified above using interactive approaches

### Stage 2

Establishing and running a Supporters' Trust induction pack – including a series of structured and accessible learning materials with dedicated units which could be tackled individually by committee members. The materials will be based on an interactive approach and linked to tutor led workshops involving the committee as whole. Units to include:

- i. information on the way trusts operate
- ii. basic committee skills
- iii. co-operative values and principles
- iv. presentation skills, including dealing with the media
- v. IT training
- vi. football clubs and governance issue

### Stage 3

Sustaining the trust. A similar format to the new members induction pack but with more in-depth case studies reflecting the diversity of trusts and club experience. Units to include:

- i. roles and responsibilities, eg treasurer
- ii. working with the media
- iii. working with your local community
- iv. promoting active membership
- v. developing and maintaining a website
- vi. becoming a Board member

### Stage 4

Development of online learning materials for the above objectives. These proposals have been developed based on the information we have gained from surveying and interviewing trust members. We would welcome any further comments from trust members on these proposals and any suggestions for other training sessions. Please e-mail your views to Lee Shailer: [l.shailer@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:l.shailer@bbk.ac.uk)

# Supporters Direct

## Supporters' Trusts have so far been established at the following 57 Clubs

### Aberdeen

www.afctrust.org

### Aston Villa

www.villashares.co.uk/trust/main

### Aylesbury United

www.21cd.vdirect.com

### Bath City

### Bishop Auckland

www.myweb.tiscali.co.uk/cowey/home/rsupporters

### Bournemouth

www.bisa.afcb.co.uk/ips

### Brentford

www.beesunited.org.uk

### Bristol Rovers

### Bromsgrove Rovers

thisisworcestershire.co.uk/worcestershire

### Bury

### Cambridge United

www.cambridgefansunited.org

### Carlisle United

www.ccuist.org

### Celtic

www.tcweb.co.uk/celtictrust

### Chester City

www.supportchester.co.uk

### Chesterfield

www.cfssweb.net

### Crystal Palace

www.cpst.org.uk

### Darlington

www.darlotrust.co.uk

### Doncaster Rovers

www.vikingsc.co.uk

### Dover Athletic

committed.to/dafctrust

### Dumbarton

www.sonstrust.net

### Enfield Town

www.enfieldtownfootballclub.co.uk

### Exeter City

www.ecfc.co.uk/trust

### Hull City

www.tigersco-op.co.uk

### Leyton Orient

www.loft.cwc.net

### Lincoln City

www.redimps.co.uk/fans/view/page\_index

### Manchester United

www.shareholdersunited.org

### Mansfield Town

www.team-mansfield.co.uk

### Middlesbrough

### Morton

www.gmst.org.uk

### Newport (IOW)

www.geocities.com/newportiowfc

### Newport County

www.nelmes.net

### Northampton

www.ntfctrust.co.uk

### Norwich City

### Nuneaton Borough

www.supporttheboro.org.uk

### Oxford United

www.oxvox.org.uk

### Partick Thistle

www.ptfc.co.uk

### Plymouth Argyle

www.argyle.org.uk

### Port Vale

www.valesupporters.co.uk

### QPR

www.qpr1st.co.uk

### Raith Rovers

www.raithtrust.org.uk

### Reading

www.rfsc.co.uk

### Rotherham United

www.rufctrust.org.uk

### Salisbury City

### Sheffield Wednesday

www.owlstrust.com

### Southend United

www.susc.co.uk/main/trustfund

### Stockport County

www.stockportcountytrust.org

### Swansea City

www.swanstrust.freeserve.co.uk

### Swindon Town

www.truststfc.co.uk

### Tottenham Hotspur

www.tottenhamtrust.org

### Tranmere Rovers

### Walsall

www.walsallfctrust.co.uk

### Warrington Wolves

### West Bromwich Albion

www.baggies.com

### West Ham United

www.whust.co.uk

### Wimbledon

www.thedonstrust.org

### Wrexham

www.winsgroup.co.uk

### York City

www.ycse.org.uk

## Supporters Direct Newsletter

Edited by Matt Holt

Many thanks to all the contributors, colleagues and Teresa Dearlove for the design.

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If you would like to advertise in this newsletter please contact Matt Holt  
☎ 020 7631 6743

**Supporters Direct** was set up in 2000 by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to promote the establishment and development of supporters' trusts as a means of giving football supporters a greater say in how their club is run.

Andy Burnham MP (chair)

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