



## Unified Football Supporters Organisation National Game Network Meeting

*Mechanics Institute Manchester  
103 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 6DD  
20<sup>th</sup> January 2019  
12.30pm till 3.00pm*

### **Staff officers present:**

Nicola Cave – *National Game Network Manager [NC]*, Andy Walsh – *National Game Development Officer [AW]*, Maria Horner – *Fans For Diversity Campaigns Officer [MH]*, Malcolm Clarke – *UFSO Chairman [MC]*

### **Network members present:**

Tony Roome – *Leyton Orient Supporters Club [TR]*, Mark Axon – *Nuneaton Borough Supporters Trust [MA]*, Jordan Tyms – *Altrincham FC [JT]*, Peter Jones – *Wrexham AFC [PJ]*

### **Network members online:**

Robert Street – *Billericay Supporters Trust [RS]*, Richard Tomkins – *Hereford United Supporters Trust [RT]*, Viv Ware – *FC United Of Manchester FC [VW]*, Phillip Mitchell – *Dulwich Hamlet Supporters Trust [PM]*, Glyn Jarvis – *Grays Athletic FC [GJ]*

Meeting started 12.40pm

### **Agenda Item 1. Introduction & Welcome**

**AW** introduces the meeting and explains the format.

**AW** asks members if they are happy with the agenda items listed to be discussed. The members indicate they are happy with meeting agenda.

**AW** asks members if they have any items they would like to raise to be dealt with under “Any Other Business”

**TR** raises two points; 1) for the meeting to discuss the recent broadcasting of 3pm Saturday matches via the EFL subscription service iFollow and 2) To raise awareness of CONIFA to the network.

**MC** welcomes members to the meeting and briefly runs through the structure of the new organisation and outlines his own role on the FA Council as the National Game Supporters Representative.

## **Agenda Item 2. Membership**

**AW** discusses the structure of the network, the importance of the inclusion of non-league Welsh clubs into the network and raises awareness of the recently issued first draft of network meeting standing orders.

**AW** introduces the elected National Game representative on the National Council and discusses the vacant positions.

**AW** asks the members for their comments on the standing orders.

**TR** asks the following questions on the standing orders;

- 1) Are these standard standing orders adopted by all the other networks?
- 2) Paragraph 4 references the regularity of the network meetings and **TR** wishes to dispute the inclusion of the word “usually”
- 3) Who will call network meetings and what will the process be for members who wish to call extra meetings?
- 4) Paragraph 7 references speakers being limited to a maximum of two minutes on the floor on each issue, **TR** wishes to dispute this.
- 5) Asks whether there will be elected positions within the network ie Chair? And if so, how will these roles be established?
- 6) **TR** disputes the item in the election policy which refers to the person standing for election providing a photograph with their nomination and feels this goes against recent HR advice.

**AW** responds to **TR**'s points as follows;

- 1) Explains that these are a draft standing orders based on a template used by supporters trusts and adapted for this network. Happy to make adjustments based on network members suggestions. No other networks have adopted any standing orders at present.
- 2) Suggest the word “usually” be removed, asks the members present if they have objections, no objections received.
- 3) **AW** states there is no method in place for members to call meetings outside the scheduled meetings which will be scheduled and organised by the officers of the network. **AW** asks for suggestions from the members present. **PJ** suggests that meetings are called based on the urgency and severity of the issues raised. **AW** agrees with **PJ**'s comments and says he will look to seek guidance on this from the National Council.
- 4) **AW** suggests that at any meeting standing orders can be suspended where there are issues which require extended debate. **MC** suggests not introducing limits pending a review on how meetings run. **PJ** states the Chair of the meeting should make a decision as to whether a speaker has exceeded a time limit.  
**AW** agrees remove the line regarding speaking time limits from the standing orders with no objections from the members.
- 5) **NC** raises that the Chair should be selected from the members of the network who have been elected to represent the network at National Council. **RS** agrees with the point raises and suggests the Chair is rotated through the elected representatives to ensure equal spread of work and expectation and for the Chair to be whichever of the elected reps is present in the room.  
**AW** agrees to take guidance from the National Council on this point.
- 6) The members agree to remove the requirement for candidates to supply a photograph.

**AW** raises the requirement to elect two network representatives to fill the current vacancies.

**MC** states the first National Council meeting is set for 10<sup>th</sup> February leaving the network very little time to complete a ballot to elect representatives.

After some discussion in the room it is agreed for **RS** to attend as the sole representative of the network and we will look to elect representatives to the vacancies using a correct and reasonable timeline.

## **ACTION POINTS**

**AW** to remove “usually” from paragraph 2 of the standing orders.

**AW** to remove the speaking limit paragraph from the standing orders.

**AW** to seek guidance from National Council regarding method of members calling meeting outside the usual scheduled meetings and process for appointing roles to the network.

**AW** to remove the paragraph regarding candidates requirement to provide photograph from election policy.

**Staff officers** to circulate a call for nominations for the network representative positions to the network.

## **Agenda Item 3. Casework & Structured Dialogue**

**NC** delivers an update on recent casework items, variety of casework undertaken and a brief outline of the history of structured dialogue between supporters and their clubs as well as the most recent report from structured dialogue meeting with the National League.

**TR** asks for clarification on the National Leagues stance on observing the Saturday 3pm blackout.

**NC** responds that the National League are in favour of the blackout and have no intention of seeking to broadcast any of their matches during any of the international break exemption periods despite being notified by the FA that this would be a possibility for them.

**PJ** asks about the discussion between **NC** and the National League regarding financial fair play and whether they have plans to introduce measures in line with the EFL and PL.

**MC** makes the members aware of the recent joint regulatory reform paper submitted to the FA and advises of upcoming meetings between the UFSO and National Game representatives at the FA.

## **ACTION POINTS**

**NC** to circulate a briefing on ifollow and the 3pm blackout to the network

**NC** to circulate the most recent draft paper on regulatory reform presented to the FA

**NC** to obtain the previous motion made to the National League AGM by Grimsby Town regarding the introduction of FFP in the National Leagues for reference.

**NC** to chase the National League for a date for the next structured dialogue meeting proposed for late February.

## **Agenda Item 4. Campaigns**

**AW** provides an update on some of the campaigns he has been involved in namely the Supporting Football Is Not A Crime campaign where they feel that the application of the law when it comes to football fans is inconsistent across different forces.

**PJ** asks for some examples and **AW** cites two recent cases around restrictions placed on supporters regarding transport to away games.

**TR** encourages the members to get involved in their local Independent Police Advisory Group where there is one in place.

**MC** raised that possible avenues to obtain clarification on advice given by forces to football clubs would be to submit freedom of information act requests.

**MH** gives an update on Fans For Diversity. She is focusing on getting supporters together to encourage wider attendance from different communities.

**MH** gives a number of examples of recent work including the Curzon Ashton community football tournament, helping Worcester fund transport to games for the over 50's in partnership with Age UK and Worcester Wheels and the upcoming Daggers Against Racism day.

? asks what the criteria for receiving funding assistance is.

**MH** replies that there is an application form which she will circulate to the network but they try to consider any applications providing they are creative and about working with communities.

**JT** provides an update on his position as Inclusion & Diversity Officer at Altrincham FC.

**PJ** provides an update on the Wrexham AFC inclusivity and diversity work and raises a recent issue with racism at a Dover game which the club has been keen to address and resulted in a number of bans being issued.

**MH** reiterates that successful campaigns are not always about spending large amounts of capital, rather about clubs having the will to look to make the ground accessible and welcome as many fans from different communities and groups as possible.

**MH** provides a brief update on working alongside Level Playing Field, the experts in stadia accessibility and disability issues. She feels this is exceptionally pertinent at non-league level with clubs often challenged by older grounds and limited resource.

**PM** raises that March 8<sup>th</sup> is International Womens Day and Dulwich will be celebrating by producing bespoke scarves.

### **ACTION POINTS**

*AW to circulate details on how to find your local Independent Police Advisory Group*

*AW to circulate links on guidance supplied by the Supporting Football Is Not A Crime campaign*

*MH to circulate the details on how to apply for project funding from Fans For Diversity*

*NC to circulate details on Women At The Game*

### **Agenda Item 5. Governance & Communications**

**AW** provides an update on governance and the aims to develop improved communication in the network with the intention of regular communication and encouraging peer to peer support and information sharing.

**RS** poses the question on how to pull people into engaging with the network and **RT** suggests providing a regular newsletter.

**PM** suggests the network communicates via a hub where examples of what work and projects they are undertaking.

**TR** raises a concern that the new organisation format divides fan groups by league and level and we need to ensure all members are able to discuss and come together over issues that affect the wider game.

**NC** advises that this is the purpose of the National Council and the network representatives on the council will feed into those issues and report back to the network.

**TR** makes members aware that the next regional meeting of the southern fans groups is scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> February at Milwall.

**NC** makes the members aware of the existence of the SD hub and the resources previously available to SD members on this platform.

### **ACTION POINTS**

*NC to enquire about the registration of a bespoke twitter handle for the National Game Network for targeted engagement.*

*TR to circulate information about the next regional meeting for southern based supporters.*

*NC to make enquiries on the future of the SD Hub and digital training and networking assets she has produced.*

## **Agenda Item 6. Any Other Business**

The first point raised by **TR** regarding IFollow and the 3pm blackout has already been covered during the casework update.

**TR** makes the members aware of CONIFA and asks if there are any connections with the organisation already.

**NC** advises that Paul Watson spoke at the last SD members day and that there are existing connections with CONIFA and encourages the members to look at the work they do and how we can connect with them.

### **ACTION POINTS**

*NC to circulate information about CONIFA.*

## **Agenda Item 7. Date of the next meeting & venue**

**AW** proposes the dates of the next two meetings as 26<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and 29<sup>th</sup> September pending network members approval.

**RT** enquires about location of the meeting. **AW** responds that members will be polled, and the location will be in the location with the most popular response.

### **ACTION POINTS**

*AW to set up poll to establish location of next meeting.*