



**DUNDEE UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB SUPPORTERS' LIAISON GROUP
SUMMARY NOTES 2017/18 MEETING 2**

HELD AT TANNADICE PARK ON SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER, 2017.

Present:- Colin Stewart (Chair), David Dorward (DUFC), Maureen Phillips (Independent), Blair Loudon (Independent), Derek McFarlane (Independent), Steven Drake (Independent), Stewart Haddow (Independent), John McKenzie (Independent), Andy McCarle (DUSF), Kay Sievewright (ULT), Stuart Campbell (ArabTrust), Tom Cairns (DUBC)

Minutes: Michelle White

Apologies: Moira Hughes (Disability Liaison Officer), John Lindsay

Invited along to the meeting was Jim Laing, Dundee United Youth Development Board and Joe Rice, Head of Communications, DUFC

- Colin welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced the new independent representatives, explaining that the inclusion of independent supporters was to ensure a true cross-sectional representation of fans in the group. He added that although the Federation of Dundee United Supporters and Fans United have declined their invitations to attend the meeting, the door remains open for them to attend meetings at a later date.
- Meetings with the Board and Chairman have been arranged in response to requests from Supporters' Groups. Another meeting with the Chairman will be scheduled for after the transfer window closes.
- ArabTRUST have agreed to lead the fundraising efforts required to erect a statue honouring Jim McLean. The project is estimated to cost around £75,000 and potential locations for the statue have been identified. ArabTRUST asked if other supporter

groups would be willing to support fundraising efforts. Feedback around the table was positive and representatives will approach their respective groups and respond at the next meeting. A sub-group for running the project will be established once interest has been gathered.

- Jim Laing explained that the Dundee United Youth Development Board comprises representatives from ArabTRUST, Dundee United Development Association (DUDA) and Dundee United Business Club (DUBC). Funds raised by the group are kept centrally and ring-fenced for youth development work. The Board consists of a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Paul Sturrock is Patron. To date the group have financially supported a trip to Thailand and majority funding for a youth tournament in Manchester as well as purchasing a Defibrillator and Ice Machine for the GA Arena and funding the post of Head of Academy Science and Medicine. Achieving 'Elite' Academy status is the ultimate goal for the group, working towards the SFA's Project Brave criteria with Brian Grant. It is hoped that development of the Academy structure aspect of the club will entice young players to not only come to United, but to stay.
- Regarding Matchday Ticketing, opinions were gathered regarding the current arrangements. Previous queries regarding cash gates at GFL have already been addressed but ticket prices are still a matter of debate. It was agreed that queueing for tickets made accessing games difficult, particularly for those who work. It was pointed out that, in adhering to SPFL regulations, the club are accountable for those attending matches, and so ticketing is unavoidable. The feasibility of installing a swipe or QR code system will be looked into. The difficulties faced by season ticket holders who would like to bring friends was mentioned. This can be easily resolved by visiting the ticket office who will allow a season ticket to transfer to another seat for a game but it was acknowledged that this information is not widely known and clarification may be required.

The price of the season ticket has been discussed previously and it was agreed that reducing the price at the gates devalues the season ticket. It was pointed out that cup games cannot be included in the season ticket as it costs around £25,000 just to open Tannadice and the opposition takes almost half of the proceeds. Feedback has been requested from all groups for ideas on increasing the value of the season ticket, such as additional benefits, discounts, events etc. The possibility was raised of approaching the Universities to encourage more supporters to attend matches.

- Joe Rice began by describing the structure of the 4-person Media Team and explained that many of the tasks carried out were by volunteers (such as commentary team, match reports and Matchday Twitter updates) and that the Club are very grateful for this help and always looking for volunteers.

The new website is up and running and issues with ArabZone in the transfer are being rectified.

A question was asked about allowing season ticket holders free or cheaper access to ArabZone. It was explained that because of ArabZone, the Media department are self-sustaining but this is something that can be discussed with the board. There are plans to release more free to view content over social accounts moving forward.

When asked if more information about the club could be made available online, it was explained that negative comments and responses bring reluctance to do so.

Many online comments are inaccurate, misleading and often abusive and the club will not respond to abusive posts online.

Resource issues also mean that Groups such as the SLG offer a greater opportunity to discuss and address any issues and the clubs contact page on the website also offers the correct channels to pass on any comments, queries or requests.

The club are looking at ways of improving team visibility in the community. A model was described at Falkirk where players are assigned a school, which they will work with and visit a couple of times a year – this is something that the club is very keen to explore. It was pointed out that many other clubs PR staff operate from their training ground whereas United operate from a separate location, making some activities more difficult.

- Opinions were gathered around the table regarding fan ownership. The overriding opinion was that the supporters in attendance wanted the opportunity to link with the club, perhaps through shares, but were uncomfortable with the idea of fans running the business of the club. Fans are currently feeling disaffected and it is important for the club to be seen to be listening to them. Opportunities to attend meetings like this one and learn more about how the club runs are appreciated. It was acknowledged that while some supporters may ultimately want financial information about the club, those around the table were aware, other than is already out in the public domain, that this is not a feasible request. Upcoming events such as the Q&A were recognised as a positive step towards improving communication between the club and supporters.

Next Meeting 19th November 2017 11am

David Southern and Paul Reid have been invited to attend.