

Argyle Fans' Trust Inaugural Meeting

12:30 11th December 2010. Stoke Social Club, Devonport Road, Plymouth

This is a partial note – for the record – of the main proceedings and decisions made at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the concept of a Fans' Trust, to gauge level of support for one to be launched at PAFC, to vote on whether or not to proceed to implement one, and to agree on immediate next steps. Approximately 120 – 140 people attended the meeting. All speakers received great applause... but one more than all others!

Introductory statement Neil Le Milliere from ECFC who is also on the board of Supporters Direct	Neil started the ball rolling by taking his ECFC shirt off to reveal a greenish – (“as green as I am prepared to wear” he said to great applause) t-shirt. He said that Fans' Trusts are not about money, they are about numbers – build the support and we will have a functioning and successful Trust – it is about the supporters and putting football where it is supposed to be.
Lee Jameson (Chair PASALB)	Lee took up the Chair and restated the purpose of the meeting as noted in the Introduction above. He then introduced the speakers who followed, as well as the Interim Committee who have been working on setting up the Trust to date.
Celia Ellacott	Celia read out messages of support from Gary Nelson, David Friio, Neil Warnock, Paul Wotton, as well as from the Bishops of Plymouth and Truro and, movingly, from the late Michael Foot's family.
Dr David Treharne from ECFC	David shared his experience, as founding member and adviser to the ECFC, his main messages being: - don't be taken in by people dismissing the aptitude of fans to run football clubs – it is possible and has been demonstrated to be successful – Fans Can Run Clubs!! - While the experience of other clubs, and of SD, is important and should be used: don't import a blueprint – “build your own Trust and make it yours”!
Oliver Colvile MP	Said he was at the meeting put on record his support for the Trust. He said that, while his power to intervene directly was limited, he would do whatever he could, within the corridors of Westminster, in Plymouth or wherever. He believed that, as soon as the Trust was inaugurated formally, then “it should draw up a strategy to proceed and approach the Board with it ASAP”!
Alison Seabrook MP	As a former player, football lover and Argyle supporter, Alison indicated her support for the Trust and indicated that she felt, as did Oliver Colvile, that this is “not a party issue but one that the local MPs will work together to support”.
Romain Larrieu	An unscheduled but hugely welcome and popular appearance was made by this Argyle legend who spoke briefly, affirming the support of the players for the Fans' Trust. He left for HP to a rousing rendition of “We all dream of a team of Larrieus...”.
Linda Gilroy – former MP and Co-operative Party member	She too offered her support and said that her Co-operative based experience would be useful for the Trust in the future. By taking the Trust forward, “the wonderful Green Army can be given the clout that it deserves” and for which it is renowned across the country. This is about “people rather than money talking”.

Tudor Evans, Opposition Leader on Plymouth City Council	Also speaking in support of the Trust being set up, he said that the Council will to get alongside the club as soon as possible and work with the Fans' Trust to achieve a way forward. £The club is vital for the city and surrounds" he said.
Main Business Item: The Chair then asked for a vote regarding setting up the Trust.	In favour – all present voted in favour Against and abstentions – zero.
Brief observations made by some Committee members	<p>Lee Jameson – interim committee will proceed to move this forward until committee members are elected as soon as is practicable. In this interim period, all discussions and decisions will be totally transparent – all these will be uploaded to the Fans' Trust website. This is a commitment.</p> <p>Jim Benton-Evans – “This is the day we start to get our club back”!!</p> <p>Celia Ellacott – Now we have a vote in favour and with SD presence, we can move forward formally to inaugurate the Trust and will do so after meeting with the SD on Monday 13th Dec. So, the proper inauguration by the interim committee can be finalised around the next match at Orient next Saturday (18th).</p> <p>Jim Benton Evans indicated that the interim committee will suggest a skeleton constitution for the Argyle Fans' Trust thereafter, so that all potential members can see this on the website. The Committee will also indicate the number of positions that will be up for election. Then, a further meeting of the Trust can be held on the day of the next home match after the Christmas period being 15th January, the aim being to elect Committee members.</p> <p>The Interim Committee will set out a process for conducting those elections ASAP. Some points the Interim Committee need to consider:</p> <p>1 - Can only members vote? If so, will members be registered before the meeting?</p> <p>2 – How can members who can not attend meetings a) register as members and 2) vote?</p> <p>It was agreed that a different venue would be chosen. Action: Interim Committee.</p>
Q&A	<p>The floor was opened for comments, questions. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could we use The Guildhall for the next meeting? <i>Will be considered – either way we will ensure a larger etc venue for next time.</i> • Could we have a fundraiser – they had a very successful such events at other clubs? <i>To be considered when we have a constituted Committee etc.</i> • Will the council consider buying back the ground? <i>No options closed at this stage.</i> • Are Fans' Trusts limited only to people who support the club in question? <i>No, they are open to all who are willing to sign up to the constitution of such bodies.</i> <p>Jim Benton-Evans wrapped up proceedings with an impassioned plea to spread the word, we are all responsible o do that and for the next step in the process to take place.</p>
Closure	Lee Jameson closed the meeting at around 1pm and all gathered went to HP to watch the Argyle beat Exeter 2-0 – an omen for the future we all hope!