



At the end of January you will hopefully have seen the exciting news regarding the launch of the PST's youth arm, Next Generations, who will help us look at ways to increase not just the youth membership of the PST but also ways in which we can encourage the younger generation back to Fratton Park. This was an area of specific interest to our previous Chairman Ken Malley, and we would often discuss the lost generation of supporters and how we can get more 16-30 year olds to attend matches. Unfortunately, none of the present PST board fall into that age group and so we have sought out a number of bright, enthusiastic men and women who do. It will be them who lead the direction of this group and bring ideas and suggestions forward to the main PST & PFC boards.

Also announced recently was the Government Expert Working Groups report on supporter ownership and engagement. The group was led by Pompey fan and PST shareholder Joanna Manning-Cooper, and I was asked if I could represent the PST as part of the core group whose other members included the FA, Premier League, Football League, National League, Supporters Direct, Football Supporters Federation as well as representation from other supporter owned clubs. Members accepted evidence from across the world of football, with the Government being represented by DCMS, HMRC and the Treasury.

The group met numerous times over a 15 month period with one of the key aims being to present a consensual report back to the Minister for Sport. Numerous Government reports have talked about football reform but they have never been actioned whereas this report lists 16 clear items that have been accepted by the whole group, meaning the difference here is that something positive will actually happen.

The Portsmouth story formed a key part of the evidence and many of the hurdles we had to overcome in our fight to save the club have now been removed, Trusts will not only be guaranteed a seat at the table but also free professional advice and access to a Premier League funded emergency expertise fund. Another key focus area for the group was to recommend a series of legislative changes to enable both Trusts and supporter owned clubs to benefit from tax breaks, with meetings taking place with both HMRC and the Treasury to identify the best existing models that could most easily and effectively be applied.

The final area was around club engagement with fans, although this has improved significantly in recent years there are still a number of clubs who refuse to meet and discuss critical topics with fan representatives. The report lays out strict guidelines that all clubs must now follow and as such transparency at all clubs should start to improve.

The Pompey story continues to be of interest to many others, and earlier in the month I was invited to speak to a group of Bolton fans who are in the process of setting up a Trust and trying to save their club. Trevor Birch who is working with Bolton to help them find an owner had invited Iain McInnes, Mike Dyer and I up to meet not just the fans forming the Trust but also a number of high net worth fans interested in the PFC ownership model. They had an incredible turn out at the meeting and James Mathie of Supporters Direct (SD) and I ended up presenting to nearly a 1000 people, the four of us then took questions from the floor. As I often do when talking to other fans I focus not only on our own story but talk about the power of fans working together.

We saved Pompey from liquidation because fans got together to work for a common cause, it's such a shame that things have to get so bad before fans of clubs are able to work together en masse. Albeit fans may have differing views of how things should be achieved they all support the same club, and share many of the same goals, yet the best some have to offer is to snipe



from the sidelines. You see this up and down the country, and the Bolton fans who were giving up so much of their own time had already encountered it. The real power of fans is shown when they work together, and each of our members can help boost the voice of the PST by convincing a friend or family member to join up.

One of the things we have committed to do in 2016 is to hold additional open meetings with our members and to seek input on key policy and strategic issues, and we will shortly be announcing the date for the first of these. If you are unable to attend do remember that all of the Trust board can be emailed directly with any questions, ideas etc and we will aim to respond to you in a timely manner.

Finally I must mention Portsmouth FC, which after all is the main reason we are all members of the PST and is undoubtedly the PST's primary business focus. Mark Trapani, John Kimbell and I continue to work with the other PFC Directors to drive the strategic direction of PFC, I hope that fans have seen many positive improvements in the last 2 years but we are well aware that there is more work to do. On the pitch we have recently seen a couple of exciting FA Cup matches with more to come, but we remain clear on our main aim which is of course promotion to League One. Lets hope we can keep filling Fratton Park and give the team the backing to help them achieve this.

Thank you for your continued support and Play Up Pompey!

Ashley Brown, Chairman