

Cross Party Group the Future of Scottish Football

3rd October 2017

The Scottish Parliament

Present:- Fulton MacGregor (Convener), James Dornan (Vice Convener), Sheena McCulloch (Secretary), David Hamilton (Scottish Government), Hala Ousta (SFA), Sandy Riach (SDSA), Malcolm Dingwall-Smith (Sport Scotland), Nicky Reid (SPFL TNSV), Calum Beattie (SPFL), Iain Blair (SPFL), Fraser Wishart (PFA Scotland), Edward Corson (MSP Staff), Jeremy Balfour (MSP), Lee Anne Menzies (MSP Staff), Paul Goodwin (SFSA), Simon Barrow (SFSA Chair), Iain McMenemy (Stenhousemuir FC), Gavin Michie (Scottish Women's Football), Greig Mailer (SFA), Andrew Gould (SFA), Allan Stubbs (MSP Staff), Paul McNeill (SFA), George Adam (MSP).

Introduction received from Convenor Fulton MacGregor outlining the purpose of the group. Apologies were expressed for the lack of IT support for the evening.

The meeting opened at 18:15

A roundtable discussion was opened up for the purpose of discussing relevant issues and comments on the topic of Scottish Football and the potential future activities of the group.

1. Andrew Gould offered reading materials, particularly on "grass root's football" and talked about partnerships within football.
2. James Dornan MSP asked how we can resolve the cost issues involved in the game.
 - a. Andrew Gould suggested that local discussions are required.
 - b. Paul McNeill cited Pollock as an example to look at. Also said that it is necessary to know your players, locality, needs, etc. Pointed out that good models are not discussed enough.
3. Fulton MacGregor cited the case of pitches lying empty and children not being allowed to use these, even to the extent of Police being called to remove the children.
 - a. Lee Anne Menzies raised the issue of costs where pitches are publically owned and are now being charged for use.
4. A discussion ensued as to "affordability" or "accessibility" as the main issue. It was agreed that both were equally significant.
5. Jeremy Balfour pointed the lack of communication between Local Authorities and within Local Authorities.
6. Gavin Michie said that there were inequality issues being faced by Women's and Girls teams.
7. Nicky Reid stated that 23 of the top level clubs have Charitable Trusts associated with them. These are looking to the wider element of community engagement.
 - a. George Adam suggested that football should be better at publicising what good is being done by the clubs. Also stated that there were lots of groups with good

ideas but that they don't seem to manage to get together to formulate strategies.

- b. Fulton suggested that this group could start the process.
- 8. Iain McMenemy hopes that this group will sponsor collaboration amongst the football community.
- 9. Sandy Riach stated that difficulties arise when access is denied to "green space" areas.
- 10. Paul McNeill said that organisations and partnerships working together is key.
- 11. Simon Barrow suggested that there was potential for clubs to engage with fans and utilise their expertise.
- 12. Martin Dingwall-Smith agreed that working together can be promoted by this group and we should not be trapped in the "blame game". Also suggested that Local Authorities and the Leisure Industry be invited along to the group to participate.
 - a. Lee Anne Menzies also suggested that Police Scotland should be invited to become involved.

Fulton MacGregor summed up the evening by pointing out that some of the issues discussed were access, both in regards to pitches and green space, as well as access to the sport in general, as well as girls and women's issues, the inclusion of other agencies, and remaining positive in disentangling some of the issues to create more effective solutions.

Date and time of next meeting TBC