

# Hendon Football Club Supporters Trust



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## Minutes of the Special General Meeting held at the Banqueting Suite, Claremont Road on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2006 at 1.00 pm

Present: Simon Lawrence (HFCST Working Group)  
Mike Harte (HFCST Working Group)  
John Neville (HFCST Working Group)  
Bryan Roberts (HFCST Working Group)  
Dave Garner (HFCST Working Group)  
David Bedford (Vice-Chairman, Hendon FC)  
Chris Rogers (Acting Secretary, HFCST)  
Other members of the Supporters Trust

Simon Lawrence welcomed everybody to the meeting, and introduced those sitting at the top table. He outlined what the meeting would cover, namely the status of the Trust, including membership and finance, the current state of negotiations, and fundraising.

Supporters Trust status: The Supporters Trust now exists officially, as at Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006. We have a set of rules, the first of which defines the name as Hendon Football Club Supporters Society Limited. The Society is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 – 78.

Under the rules, an Annual General Meeting will be held each year. Other meetings, known as Special General Meetings, will be held as necessary, and a number are expected to be held over the next 12 months. The Annual General Meeting, when held, will convert members of the Working Group to members of the Society Board, subject to any other nominations and elections. Because of the need to concentrate on other matters, it is not intended to rush the AGM – it is likely to be held at the start of next season.

Membership: As at the start of this meeting, 200 people have joined the Society, breaking down as 178 standard members and 22 Under-16 members. Of these, 154 so far have paid their membership subscription. This is good news after a few weeks, but the bad news is that the membership figure could be much higher if all members made an effort to recruit family, friends, and workmates into the Society.

Finance: At £10 per standard member and £5 per Under-16 member, the Membership fees amount to £1890 per annum. So far £1460 of this has been received. One-off donations pledged amount to £5676, of which £3566 has been received.

64 individuals have committed to supporting the Society through a monthly standing order. This will bring in £21,046 per annum. Not all standing orders have been received – those that have will produce £11,460 in a full year.

Based on these figures, the Society will have approximately £23,000 to run the football club, based on standing orders and membership fees, but this figure will fall to £13,000 if no further pledged standing orders are received.

The Society's bank balance is about £6,000 at present.

Latest Developments: Simon asked David Bedford to speak about the latest developments. David opened by stating that he was glad that Simon had recovered from his illness; this was greeted with applause from the floor.

The Working Group had followed several options since the last meeting. The possible groundshare with Wingate & Finchley had not been taken any further. Kingsbury Town then approached us for meetings to discuss a possible groundshare, and discussions led further into the possibility of amalgamation. The position of the Working Group was that a merger with Kingsbury was preferable to groundshare, and ballot papers had been sent to the Society membership to vote on these options.

However, in the last 5 days, Kingsbury Town have withdrawn both the groundshare and merger options, as a result of which Kingsbury Town's chairman has resigned.

As at today, there was no option to be presented to the meeting. Further, the ballot would not be held, as there was no point in holding a ballot on something that no longer exists.

DB had met Andrew Landesberg of the Arbiter Group to bring him up to date on the current situation. Andrew said that, regardless of the position on the sale of the land, Claremont Road would not be available to the Club next season.

The future: DB and the Working Group are confident about the Club continuing. The Ryman League are being kept informed of our situation, and are supportive, Nick Robinson, the League Secretary, especially so. It seems that the League are preparing a list of ground grading requirements for various step levels which the Club could use.

Various individuals and additional sponsors not connected with the Society (yet) have offered to support the Club to the tune of £40,000 next season. This is additional to the £23,000 already mentioned.

The Working Group would continue to look at groundshare and/or amalgamation options with other clubs.

At this point, the members were invited to ask questions which were answered by David Bedford and Simon Lawrence.

*What is the position with Edgware Town?*

It appears that Andrew Landesberg knows the owners of the site and has made contact with them, but we don't know what the results of this are.

*Have we looked at Wembley FC?*

This is a possibility, to be followed up after this meeting.

*What is happening about the £300,000 from the Arbiter Group as mentioned in the last meeting?*

Andrew Landesberg believes that the Arbiter Group have a responsibility towards the Club, and that

he expects the Club to receive some money after the sale of the lease. An amount to be expected was not mentioned.

*What is the position regarding the sale?*

The Arbiter Group and Barnet Council are holding ongoing negotiations over the sale of the lease. Barnet Council have reached agreement with developers over the sale of the land, on which there is a restrictive covenant. There will be a Land Tribunal meeting in July or August about this covenant. We believe that Barnet Council and the Arbiter Group are aiming to exchange contracts over the sale of the lease sooner rather than later, possibly before the Local Elections in early May.

A member said that he understood that newsletters had been put through letterboxes locally stating that objections to the sale have been raised and that the whole matter was now up for de-discussion. The Working Group had no knowledge of this.

*What happens after the sale of the lease?*

The Council and the Arbiter Group are keen for the sale of the lease to go ahead. Once the sale is completed, any negotiation by us with regard to the future of Claremont Road will be with Barnet Council. Once the Council have bought the lease back we may be able to negotiate with them about continuing at Claremont Road if they find that they cannot use the land for housing, i.e. if the Land Tribunal refuse to lift the covenant.

*When will we have to notify the Ryman League that we are continuing?*

We believe by 31<sup>st</sup> May at the earliest, but we also believe that we can ask to drop a level or two after confirming our continuation. It appears that the League will do all it can to keep us in the Ryman League next season, and may extend some deadlines if that will help us.

*The website quotes figures of £25,000 by the end of June and £100,000 per season. Is this correct?*

These were initial figures to aim for. If all the pledges come in, we will be about 25% of the way there. We are unlikely to meet those figures.

*Have overtures been made to Barnet Council to suggest alternatives for us to continue?*

We were unable to do so until recently because the Society did not formally exist. Now it does. However, given Barnet FC's difficulties in getting anything out of the Council, it is felt that the Council have little or no interest in football in the borough. This might change after the Local Elections in May. The Working Group also advised that all of its current energies were being applied to fundraising and establishing a groundshare arrangement or merger in time for 2006/7 season.

*Why does the Hendon & Finchley Times hardly ever mention Hendon FC?*

That is outside our control and would have to be taken up with the paper. It was pointed out that nobody owned up to being from the paper at the previous meeting.

*What happens to our history if we amalgamate?*

The history of the clubs involved in amalgamation will continue to exist in parallel.

*Now the background to the original sale has changed (ie the fact that Copthall is no longer a viable option), do the Council know this, and would they have come to a different decision?*

The Council know about the changed background, but we don't know if they would have made a different decision.

*Is it worth approaching the Council about this?*

For the Working group, no. David Bedford suggested that other members were at liberty to make contact to Barnet Council in order to discuss the Council's responsibilities towards Hendon Football Club. Gerry Phillips agreed to make contact with Barnet Council. However, even if we obtained a lease at no cost, we do not have enough money to run the Club at Claremont Road.

*What about the option to fold?*

This is still an option in the longer term, but neither DB nor the Working Group believe we are at that position yet. If folding is seen to be more viable in the future, another meeting will be held to decide on this. There is also an option to be "AFC Hendon" in something like the Spartan South Midlands or Combined Counties Leagues at step level 5, where there may be minimal or no wages paid to players and management.

*How much would be needed to run the Club at level 4?*

The £65,000 previously mentioned, but this would not happen at Claremont Road. By groundsharing, we would save a considerable sum, including £30,000 on rent and £12,000 on insurance, offset by the cost of groundshare. By dropping levels, we would also save on wages, which could be up to £120,000 per year.

*Wembley and Edgware have been mentioned – how far away are we looking?*

Basically the new ground would have to be inside the A40 / M25 / A1 area, though we could go slightly east of the A1.

*What happened with Kingsbury Town?*

We did not fall out over money. We don't know what caused Kingsbury to pull out, and may never know.

*Are there any other Ryman Premier clubs in a similar position?*

Slough don't have their own ground, nor do Wealdstone, and all work has been stopped for some time on their new ground. Chelmsford have just moved to a new ground, Fisher are sharing at Dulwich. It's probably true to say that most clubs inside the M25 have problems of one sort or another.

Alan Ainsworth said that Brent Council might support us over the possibility of using Willesden Stadium when rebuilt.

Peter Dean thanked the Working Group and David Bedford for all their hard work, and he urged the meeting to show their support in all ways including financial.

Fundraising: 32 members walked from the Club to Harrow Borough. Thanks were expressed to John Neville for organising this. It was hoped to make a similar walk an annual fundraising event. Half of the proceeds of the walk would be donated to St Luke's Hospice, Kenton.

The next event is the Wrestling Night on April 8<sup>th</sup> following the Chelmsford Match. Steve Lytton said that it was difficult getting everything in place, particularly lots of free help from promoters and wrestlers. Steve said that 200 tickets were available and 75 have been sold; special thanks to Dave Garner for selling 30 (towards the end of the Windsor match following, Steve said that ticket sales had reached 120).

Dave Garner would be promoting a “Snowball” lottery in the near future. Entry would be £5 per month (although individual members would be able to make multiple entries), and cash prizes would depend on entries. He hoped to be able to offer a big prize in December.

A ‘buy.at’ facility had been set up on the Trust website. When shopping online, members can access over 100 leading retailers - such as BT, Thorntons, Marks & Spencer and John Lewis - using the Hendon Football Club Supporters Trust webshop. Every time a member uses the webshop to go to a retailer’s web site and subsequently buys something, the member would automatically earn money for the Trust.

Simon asked all members without current email access to provide an email address, either their own or that of a friend or neighbour, and/or a stamped addressed envelope to allow the Society to post things out at minimal or cost. The stamped addressed envelope should be renewed when necessary. He also asked everyone to think of ways of raising finance, and to convert pledges of money to cash.

At this stage, those with matchday duties left the meeting. There was then time for a few more questions.

*Sometime ago a Trust was set up for the benefit of Hendon FC. Can the Society obtain the proceeds of that Trust?*

That Trust was set up with four trustees including Mike Hogan and Peter Dean (Peter had left the meeting for his matchday duties, so was unable to answer). Income from that Trust had been used in the last 10 years or so for special projects. It would not be possible to obtain any of the capital in that Trust, but it might be possible to acquire the income. The Working Group will do what they can to work with the other Trust to get the annual income into the Society if at all possible.

*Is there a possibility of sharing at Boreham Wood?*

This is a possibility, especially if Boreham Wood’s Chairman wants to obtain extra funding.

*If we groundshare or merge, what would happen to the reserve, youth and Ladies sides?*

The reserves would probably be dropped, the Youth section is in effect already self-funding, so could continue. We have no knowledge about the Ladies section.

The meeting closed at 2.30pm