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| Officer and Co-Opted Attendees | **Andrew Hird (AH) Chairperson****Michael McAllister (MM) Vice Chair** **Cath Reid (CR) Secretary****David Rose (DR) Policy co-ordinator****Martyn McFadden A Love Supreme****Paul Nelson LGBTQ****Jim Gilling BLC****Malcolm Bramley Senior Citizens** **Gordon Armstrong Former Players Association****Chris Carr Disabled Representative****Les Cooper Corporate representative****Stephen Goldsmith (SG) Wise Men Say****Michael Lough Wise Men Say** |
|  | Approximately 350 members attended |
|  **Apologies**  | Jane Hughes, Ian Crowe  |
| **`** | Monday 30 July 2018 |
| **Venue** | The Montgomery Suite. Stadium of Light |

**Welcome**

AH opened the meeting thanking everyone for attending the very first AGM of RAWA. Introductions were made from RAWA members. AH explained the evening would be in two parts, the first part of the evening being RAWA AGM, there would be a short break before SG would put questions to Steward Donald and Tony Davison.

**Annual Report Summary**

Whilst attendees received a hard copy summary, AH provided an oral summary on why and how the Red & White Army was created. Along with support from the Football Supporters Federation, there were many emails, phone calls and meetings in the back room of a pub in Sunderland.

Red & White Army was formed almost a year ago, where a few supporters got together with existing supporter groups, all who do a really good job, with the aim to build an organisation with enhanced reach and to encompass all demographics of support with the overall visibility and accountability. These fans took on interim positions on the committee, with the pledge these positions would be open to election at an AGM as they sought to create a new democratic, transparent and representative organisation.

In RAWA’s commitment to represent a wide spectrum of supporters, 16 co-opted positions were created with volunteers to fill these positions either direct or via existing supporter organisations. More co-opts have come on board since.

Following a recommendation from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport During 2016/17 season, the English Football League advised all clubs must enter structured dialogue at a higher management level with supporters and organised, democratic and independent supporter groups.

RAWA approached the club to enter into a structured dialogue process, at first this was very difficult, the club had just been relegated, Martin Bain (MB) was open but initially it felt like he was attempting to play RAWA and the existing supporter groups off each other.

AH discussed the two RAWA open meetings which took place in The Peacock pub, where about 100 and then 150 supporters attended to discuss concerns they would like to be raised at the structured dialogue meetings. RAWA canvassed further opinion on social media.

As Short became increasingly distant and no one from the Club was on record as to what the plan was an if the Club was for sale, there was more and more discussion around potential protest – supporters were split on the idea.

GA suggested creating a petition to the club, this attracted more than 10,000 signatures. On the day of the petition, it was leaked Ellis short was selling the club and in fact would be willing to sell club free on condition new owners take on the debt. A second joint fans structured dialogue meeting was held with SAFC where MB was more open and confirmed the club was for sale. Minutes of the meeting were issued with 7 days of the meeting, with 18,000 viewings within first 3-4 days of publication

Moving on to the new ownership, DR commented as a group RAWA want to be critical friends and guardians of our club, entering a new era of transparency RAWA hope this will continue. As supporter base we need to be realistic - whilst it would be nice to spend £10m on a player, the club needs to live within its means, fans need to know the consequences of the club living outside of its means. We don’t want a reckless owner taking out a huge mortgage on the club and gambling with 139 years of heritage.

RAWA recently launched a survey to gather fans views on matchday experiences with support from SAFC. 9,000 fans participated in the survey, responses have been collated and the information shared with SAFC, a joint SAFC / RAWA statement has been released tonight. Suggestions identified included murals / artwork, this could be something historic and linked with Sunderland, there is a large wall space in the South Stand which could be utilised. It was agreed the ground needs to have an identify, previously bars and kiosks within the stadium were named after players; the survey identified supporters want pride and identity around the SoL.

The following are some of the questions/points raised by members from the floor:

Peter Forsyth asked how and where feedback on matchday experience should be fed back.

AH said any feedback on matchday experience should be emailed to: info@redandwhitearmy.co.uk as the survey is now closed.

Will: Has no problem with the cost of food / drinks, the concern identified is the lack of food and queues at available kiosks. The easy serve station has helped with alcohol purchases, but their remains a lack of food availability.

Malcolm: Recently took part in the seat fixing programme, after installing seats, participants were invited to the Black Cats Bar and provided with food. The standard of food was very good, unfortunately the food served in kiosks on the concourse are ‘dross’, it is time supporters raised the issue and looked after ourselves.

Caroline Smith: Prior to last season, supporters received the quarterly Legion of Light magazine, this was stopped without notice, Caroline found the magazine to be very good and enjoyed interviews with past and present players.

Name not provided: Son lives in London, in previous seasons has bought match tickets on iPad. This season he was unable to purchase ticket on iPad, resulting in driving from Peterlee to purchase ticket. When asked ticket office staff why he could no longer purchase ticket on iPad, he was advised it is a new ticketing system.

**3 Election of Officers:**

AH - individual supporters took on committee roles on an interim basis. There have been no new nominations received for an officer position and positions were uncontested. Due to the policy now being implemented and a role not required, it was proposed David Rose relinquish his role as policy advisor to become vice chair, Michael McAllister will relinquish his role as vice chair to become Away supporter rep. AH asked for a show of hands to approve as existing officers be re-instated and a change of role as discussed. This was unanimously agreed.

**4: Co-opted Reps:**

Some of the co-opted reps provided a summary as to what they represent and why they got involved.

**Les Cooper Corporate representative:**

Explained a corporate rep wasn’t on the initial list of reps, he approached DR to discuss Corporate area is not normally an area thought of when discussing supporter experiences. LC advised he hopes to bring his experience to RAWA as he spent years standing on the terraces at Roker Park, sitting in the North East corner, Quinn’s Bar, Black Cats bar and now to corporate hospitality. Corporate is also important to bringing revenue to the club,

**Gordon Armstrong Former Player:**

GA said he had been approached and asked if he wanted to be involved in RAWA as a former player rep; he noted that he was very proud to be approached and to take on the role. GA advised anything he can do to help the football club he would, GA also believed it was the right time for change and for an organisation like RAWA.

**Malcolm Bramley Senior Supporters Association**:

Provided a background to his life of supporting Sunderland. He joined SAFC 55 years ago as an office boy to become secretary of SAFC, he then moved on to Derby County and Gillingham. He returned to the North East 7 years ago joining the Senior Supporters group. The group range in age from 55 to 95-year-old and all have different concerns, including access, disabled facilities etc, the Senior Supporters group meet 1st Tuesday of very month in the Stadium of Light.

**Jim Gilling Branch Liaison Council (BLC):**

JH advised the BLC represents 25 supporter branches in the UK and abroad. When he was approached to join RAWA as a BLC representative, he had no hesitation in accepting. JH believes by working together, we become stronger. Since the new owners have come in, they have been very amicable, working together he can only see great things ahead, we need to work together for the benefit of future generations.

AH thanked everyone for their input and invited members to get in touch if they wanted to get involved as a co-opt or felt there’s an area that RAWA are not representing.

**5 – Motions**

**The full motions proposed are attached to these minutes.**

**5a Supporting local foodbanks**

Kate Townsend is the Foodbank Co-ordinator for Sunderland. Kate explained why foodbanks were introduced and explain the Holiday Hunger programme which has been rolled out across the city, the programme works to support parents who are working but on low salary and being the summer holiday period do not receive free school meals, this has caused financial difficulties to families, some who are unable to purchase enough food. Families are referred to the foodbank organisation via local council, doctors and social services. One of the common reasons for food poverty is the new benefit system and delays in receiving funds.

RAWA have agreed to a pilot foodbank collection on 8 September which is the Fleetwood fixture. There will be food collection points as well as cash collection buckets.

A motion was taken for RAWA to partner the foodbanks. All attendees in favour, no abstentions.

**5b Possibility of commercial partnerships**

Membership of RAWA is free and will remain so, however, the organisation has taken on so many members that we are at tipping point where funds are needed to develop IT platforms for membership mailings etc. A mandate was proposed so that RAWA could explore commercial partnerships.

Will (member from floor): Quite happy for RAWA to explore, however, will RAWA members get a vote? DR responded RAWA are happy to go back to members if there was any chance of the commercial partner being perceived as controversial.

**5c Explore the possibility of a Trust arm of RAWA and therefore tiered membership:**

DR discussed potential tiered membership, RAWA do not wish to take away free membership, but would like to explore a tiered membership. A 2nd tier - a supporter’s trust.

Q from floor: Name not provided – raised concerns over a 2-tier membership system, would shareholders believe they have a bigger say in events? Believing before a trust be set up, RAWA need to go back to members. DR advised at this point it is a motion to explore the possibility.

Q from floor: Martin Ballinger: First wants to thank RAWA committee and co-opted members for setting this forum up last year. MB believes RAWA should be the conscience of the club, currently SAFC is a private company with no option to buy shares, at this time we should all continue to support the club and RAWA as it is.

Comment from floor – suggestion that free members might be happy to donate a monthly or annual amount to help with running costs.

Motion was narrowly defeated.

**5d: RAWA logo**

The current RAWA logo was adopted as something that was previously designed for other use, so it was convenient and extremely helpful to be able to use it when RAWA launched.

John McCabe suggested as we previously discussed the importance of our younger generation, we could consider a competition to design a new RAWA logo and encourage younger supporters to enter.

Motion Passed.

A short discussion followed to identify options to raise funds for general running costs, including pie & pea supper and crowd funding.

AH closed the meeting.