

News Sheet

from the Sheffield Wednesday Supporters' Society

November 2008

Issue Number 10

SWFC and Wednesdayite - A New Chapter?

The difficult relationship between the SWFC Board and Wednesdayite has been a problem for several years. It has also led to problems not just between Wednesdayite and the club but also between groups of fans. Despite our efforts, we have been unable to convince some doubters that we really are only interested in doing what we can to help the club. At last, it now seems that we might all be turning the page to a new chapter.

A year ago, Wednesdayite tried to get some dialogue going but the attempts stalled after a couple of meetings. Then, following the club's AGM last November, it seemed that prospects for communication might improve.

At last, a month or so ago, we were approached by the club to arrange a meeting between Wednesdayite representatives (Darryl Keys and John Gath) and members of the SWFC plc and Football Club Boards (Geoff Hulley, Ken Cooke and Ashley Carson) and CEO Kaven Walker.

The meeting appears to have been a success. A number of issues were raised by the club and by Wednesdayite and were discussed openly and positively. Since then, we have been in regular communication, in person, by phone and by email.

Signs that we are developing a sensible working relationship can now be seen. The club is providing us with facilities to hold our Wednesdayite board meetings straight after home games using one of the club's meeting rooms. As you will see elsewhere in this issue, we are holding our own AGM in the Foers Lounge at the club. These may be just a small development but the significance is enormous.

We are now talking to club representatives and staff about how we can work together on a number of initiatives. We are looking at the possibility of Wednesdayite becoming official Academy sponsors.



The SWFC Board have given us their support and encouragement in some of the activities we have suggested for fund raising for specific issues. The barrier to us specifying where donations would be used has been removed.

It is now our intention to hold more of our members' meetings and functions at the club using SWFC's excellent facilities.

In the last month, we have submitted a document to the SWFC Board giving a list of ideas, suggestions and concerns for their consideration. This document includes suggestions from Wednesdayite on a possible plan to seek funding for squad development from the ranks of Owls fans.

Will there still be disagreements? There may well be. Constructive criticism and debate is nothing to be feared, both ways. Has a new chapter really begun? Watch and listen. We certainly hope that it has.

Up The Owls.

We apologise for the long delay since the last newsletter. Issue 9 was produced, several times, but as each version was due to go to press, we were expecting significant developments. As a result, publication was delayed. Unfortunately, each time, the news did not materialise and the issue was withdrawn.

Boost your chances of winning



at www.e-vwd.com/wednesdayite

or click on the e-lottery logo on our web site at www.wednesdayite.com

ACT NOW! MEMBERSHIP OFFER FOR LIMITED PERIOD

For a limited period only - until 31 December - get annual membership of Wednesdayite for JUST £5 !!!! That's a whopping 50% OFF our usual membership fee AND there's more!

For every fan who takes up this offer, we will donate 50% of their membership fee to the SWFC Academy - so by joining you are also helping our future stars at SWFC. The only conditions are that you must register on our website and use paypal for your payment! It really is THAT simple.

As a member you will receive all the usual membership benefits - a share certificate (if over 18), a personalised plastic membership card, discounts on Wednesdayite services, newsletters, access to our Members Lounge at the Niagara and your say in at least 2 surveys each season.

**JOIN NOW AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
EXISTING MEMBERS - DON'T MISS OUT!**

If any existing member renews by paypal, via our website their renewal fee will be halved to just £5 - this is subject to no end date and is offered as a thank you to our existing members who have shown great loyalty through their membership over the past few years. Thank you!

Take Over Talk

It was disappointing that Geoff Sheard was unable to prove funds to us after such a protracted period and as a result we had to withdraw our offer to sell our shareholding to him/his consortium. We believed this was the natural consequence so that the fans were not kept hanging on to false hope when we could not see how a deal could be completed.

This, of course, does not prevent him from obtaining his stated aim of a 29.9% shareholding in SWFC through the 3 other major shareholders and it is a matter for them to make their own decisions in this regard. Should Mr Sheard be able to prove funds

continued on next page

Take Over Talk (continued from page 1)

to the satisfaction of our legal advisers in the future, we would be happy to revisit the situation. However any such approach would require a determination by way of a fresh member ballot given the intervening developments and in the meantime we feel it is important that ongoing efforts to secure fresh investment are not otherwise hampered.

In that connection, we see little realistic prospect of anyone coming along and writing out a big cheque to solve our problems - and particularly not in this turbulent and difficult economic climate. If this is true, and if we want to retain our best players, then the only and quickest way that the Loan Notes and the Bank can be repaid is by us gaining promotion to the Premier League. It would be nothing short of a miracle if our thin squad could achieve this, competing against teams with much more strength in depth and much more ability to compete in the transfer market.

So, if promotion is the only way forward, everyone connected with the club MUST find a way to invest in the squad - because if we don't, then all the current unattractive circumstances will prevail.

THIS is the basis of our constructive proposal to the SWFC Board. We believe the solution is from within the fanbase and the local SWFC sympathetic business community. We have called for the Loan Note Holders, the Bank, the SWFC Directors and everyone involved with the club to compromise a little through their loan agreements, deeds of priorities, security, shareholdings and board positions and al-



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Start your on-line shopping at www.buy.at/wednesdayite

low a structure which is attractive enough to bring in funds to boost the squad. If we can find a way through these various interests then the onus will be put on the fans and business community to share the burden of raising funds under this scheme. If it is successful, then it also allows for new members onto the SWFC plc and football club Boards, boosting numbers, boosting skillsets, boosting energy and creativity and boosting contacts. This can only be in the club's best interests and ultimately those of the Loan Note holders and Bank because these measures are suggested for

success - and success will almost certainly lead to earlier repayment of debt.

We await the response by the SWFC Board eagerly. If our solution is not workable, then it is hoped that they can present an alternative. From the many emails and telephone calls we get and the falling crowds, the status quo is not an option. This is the time for strong and courageous leadership from the SWFC hierarchy and come what may, we believe the very least they need to do is find successful leaders from the local community to fill some of the empty seats in the Boardroom to supplement and re-invigorate their strategies, skillsets and efforts.

Half Season Ticket Prices - An Opportunity Missed?

The club announced their half season ticket prices on the 28th October and these will be on sale to Sheffield Wednesday supporters from Thursday 6th November. The vast majority of Sheffield Wednesday fans I speak to have vehemently criticised the club for their 12% increase across the board of season ticket prices. Not only did the club set a dangerous precedent by pricing fans out of coming along to support the Owls, they gave the fan a choice to do something else with their Saturday afternoons.

The club had the chance of enticing back the missing five thousand supporters by issuing an olive branch in the shape of a competitively priced half season ticket. This could have given the club a vital cash injection as well as a signal to those missing fans that the club made a grave error in its match pricing during the summer. There is no question that supporting Sheffield Wednesday still offers amongst the worst value in the Championship.

Below is just a selection of Championship club's half season ticket prices in the cheapest section of the ground. *Not all Championship clubs have released their prices as of yet.

The clubs I have compared Sheffield Wednesday with have better squads and certainly will see a lot more investment in the team come January than us. Bristol City and Reading offer fans that purchase

half price season tickets 10% discount in the club shop, while Birmingham are giving away a DVD with all home games for the current season. Sheffield Wednesday are offering a discount on Wednesday World with a half season ticket purchase, which quite frankly is a rather uninspiring offer.

The West Stand...

So nothing has changed, the lessons of the summer have not been learned. We have the lower west stand, amongst other areas which is unused for the vast majority of our home games, yet have failed to come up with a scheme that maximises our potential while getting the most out of that rather large ground we have.

What a boost it would have been to the club (in revenue terms) and Brian Laws and the team if we could have released a cheaper more family friendly half season ticket in order to fill those empty seats. We would have fans at both ends of the ground and that can only benefit us as a team playing at home.

The half season ticket sales are a most unattractive purchase from a financial point of view and yet again the club will shoot itself in the foot by failing to entice fans back to Hillsborough. This is thoroughly disappointing for all concerned with Sheffield Wednesday and the club really has to do more.

LK

| | Adult | OAP | Junior |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------------|
| Sheffield Wednesday | 224.00 | 122.00 | 122.00 (U18) |
| Reading | 220.00 | 145.00 | 85.00 (U17) |
| Wolverhampton | 218.00 | 126.00 | 99.00 (U17) |
| Bristol City | 200.00 | 130.00 | 60.00 (U16) |
| Cardiff City | 199.00 | 149.00 | 99.00 (U16) |
| Birmingham | 175.00 | 87.50 | 45.00 (U12) |

Audio Help for Visually Impaired Fans

Wednesdayite member, Peter Shaw, is helping the Sheffield Wednesday Supporters' Society launch a scheme to raise funds for better facilities for the visually impaired at Hillsborough which would benefit future generations of Wednesday fans. To spearhead the fundraising, on August 6/7th, 2008, Peter completed a sponsored walk, covering 42 miles within 24 hours across the North Yorkshire Moors.

This walk, known as the Lyke Wake Walk starts off at Osmotherly in the west (near the A19!) and crosses the whole of the moors, climbing 5000 feet in the process, finishing at Ravenscar on the Yorkshire coast. This was a particularly difficult task for Peter as he recently had surgery to remove a cancer and his lymph-nodes from his right leg, which makes walking particularly difficult over short distances. Peter just about lived to tell the tale and despite blistered feet completed the walk in 23 hours 30 minutes, of which almost 21 hours involved constant walking!

In recent years there has been some headphone facilities for the blind in certain seats of the lower west stand in the disabled section; this system is still operational but in 2008 it is isolating, goes against the premise of the Disability Discrimination Act and is inappropriate if we are to have an inclusive stadium. It was great in its day but inclusion is now the order of the day and access audio facilities are infinitely better for the following reasons:

1. Access audio has designed equipment specifically for the purpose of broadcasting description to blind and partially sighted people attending public events.
2. After much research, for a stadium like Hillsborough the recommended facility

is Aural Aide Audio Description system. Aural Aide is a UHF radio system operating in the licence exempt 863 MHz band. The sound quality is crystal clear and the range, up to 200 metres is excellent. Listeners use portable R2-863 receivers and lightweight headsets to hear every word clearly and easily, even at the back of a large venue. This portable wireless listening system is easy to set up, no installation is required and the transmitters and receivers run from standard AA batteries. This new system is currently being used at other sporting arenas including football stadiums around the country.

3. Crucially you can extend the usage by increasing the number of receivers and headsets according to demand. At least 85% of registered blind have some level of vision, if only perception of light so ALL blind and partially sighted people can be encouraged to attend Hillsborough, support the Owls and sit with their family and friends in any part of the ground they choose. Every able-bodied person has this right and so why not extend it to the visually impaired?

4. With Aural Aide Audio Description, two systems can be used simultaneously in the same stadium so you can use a delegated commentator or you can use a patch lead into the mixer of Wednesday World!

The cost of this package is £2210 + VAT. Wednesdayite have currently raised over £1000 and Peter is currently speaking to the RNIB (Royal National Institute for the Blind) regarding the possibility of further assistance in this matter. When the system is up and running it is our intention to ask our patron, David Blunkett, to trial it and apply some quality control to the operation.

Trial for New Wednesdayite Lounge

Following comments from members about the loss of our Lounge, we have now made arrangements with Niagara Sports and Social Club to run a pre-match lounge at their premises. The Club is at the end of Niagara Rd (off Beeleywood Road - S6 1LU) near the roundabout at the end of Lepings Lane, just a couple of minutes walk from the ground and our car park.

Unfortunately, due to prior bookings, they can't provide the room for every match but we thought that members would appreciate the availability of a lounge for at least some of the Owls home games. We will be operating this new version of the

Wednesdayite Lounge for the first time on the evening of Tuesday 9th December before the QPR game. It will be open from 6pm until 7:30pm with free entry for members. We will be charging non-members £1 each, so make sure you bring your membership card.

The lounge will then be available on:
 Fri 26 Dec. (Blackpool) 12 noon - 2:45pm
 Sat 17 Jan (Charlton) 12 - 2:45pm
 Sat 31 Jan (Birmingham) 12 - 2:45pm
 Tue 3 Feb (Barnsley) 6pm - 7:30pm.

Please help us to make a success of this new facility by turning up to use it.

Football Supporters Federation

Wednesdayite Director Dave Barlow recently attended the 1st Meeting of the Football Supporters Federation (FSF) Yorkshire Division at The Old Peacock across from Elland Road. Around 20 Clubs were represented. The division is to be sub divided into 4 regions to get nearer to the real grassroots level.

The FSF National Council are to make their main campaign on safe standing and want the Regional Divisions to do the same. Locally this coincides with the 20 year anniversary of the Hillsborough Disaster. It is therefore hoped that Wednesdayite will incorporate this in their own 2009 plans and play some significant part.

The feeling amongst those present was that a whole generation had now been attending games not knowing what its like to stand at a football match. Every club has a club charter and it is hoped that enough awareness and interest can be raised for a complete consultation to take place with fans via this mechanism.

The next meeting has been earmarked for Thur 27th of November at Oakwell. If anyone is interested in attending please contact Dave Barlow on 07810 366848 or email daveba@botel.co.uk for further information or visit the FSF website www.fsf.org.uk.

The FSF represents all football fans from FIFA right down the football pyramid and you can either join individually or as an organisation. Dave Barlow is the Wednesdayite representative and there are now over 300 clubs/trusts involved.

Help us to Fly a NEW BIG FLAG



Get a limited edition flag pin badge

All you have to do is donate at least £3.00 to our flag fund.

Badges are available on match days from the Wednesdayite Car Park or the Wednesdayite Lounge or by post if you add the cost of postage to your donation.



Wednesdayite

(Sheffield Wednesday Supporters' Society Limited) Registered No 29202R

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the seventh Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the society will be held at the Foers Lounge, 1st Floor South Stand, Hillsborough, Sheffield S6 1SW on Wednesday 10th December 2008 at 7.30pm (doors open 7.00pm) for the purpose of considering the following business:

- To receive a verbal report on the work and role of the Society
- To receive the Trust's Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2007.
- To re-appoint Barber Harrison and Platt as Auditors of the Society until the conclusion of the next AGM
- To ratify the appointment to the Society Board of five members (James Hargreaves, Paul Andrew Holmes, Jessica Derrick, Lee Stephen Keys and Peter Howard Shaw) (see note 2 below)
- Any other business

By Order of the Board
G Cook
Secretary

Notes.

- There were five nominations for the six available positions and therefore there is no need for a postal ballot of members. The candidates' statements will be available on www.wednesdayite.com for your information.
- Voting for the resolutions will be conducted by a poll of members present at the AGM in person or by Proxy. If you are attending the AGM you can vote in person at the meeting. If you are unable to attend you can vote by completing and returning a proxy form (see below) by 8th December 2008.
- If attending in person please bring your membership card as proof of membership to assist in giving you a voting card.
- Non members are encouraged to attend but will not be eligible to vote.

The venue

As you can see from the official notice of the Wednesdayite AGM, the meeting is being held in the new Foers Lounge at SWFC. To get to the Foers Lounge , go over the bridge and into the main entrance, then turn left in reception.

The AGM will be followed by a Q&A and discussion session, with the meeting due to finish by 10 pm. There will be a pay bar open in the Foers Lounge from 7 pm.

Proxy form for the AGM on Wednesday 10th December 2008

I.....(name).....(membership number) being a member of Wednesdayite, hereby appoint the Chairman of the meeting (or if not the Chairman specify name of proxy) as proxy to vote on my behalf at the AGM of the Society to be held on 10th December 2008 and at any adjournment thereof.

| Resolution | In favour | Against |
|---|-----------|---------|
| 2. Receive the accounts for the year ended 31 Dec 2007. | | |
| 3. Re-appoint the auditors. | | |
| 4. Ratify appointment of Board members | | |

Please place a X in one box in respect of each matter

Member Signature Date

Please return this proxy form to arrive no later than 8th December 2008 to Wednesdayite, PO Box 3928, Sheffield S6 9AY.

Extended Funding for Our Primary Coaching Scheme

The success of Wednesdayite's Primary Schools Coaching Scheme has been recognised again by the Co-operative Group, United Region. The group has agreed to extend its generous grant funding for a further year.

This very highly regarded scheme is operated on behalf of Wednesdayite, by Steve Adams. Each week, Steve runs coaching events at two schools, free of charge. The events involve over 400 local primary school children each week. Steve has spent six weeks at Parson Cross School and Athelstan School since the term began and he is currently at Manor Lodge and Meynell.

The scheme, delivered to boys and girls, focuses on participation, fun and a healthy lifestyle and at the same time, promotes the name of Sheffield Wednesday to the schools and the youngsters. It is hoped that this generates a favourable impression of the club and helps to create fans of the future.

Wednesdayite are pleased to be able to offer such a popular programme to local schools. We are grateful for the support we have received from the Co-operative Group and for their efforts in helping us to develop this excellent partnership.

We thank them once again for working with us and Steve Adams on the scheme which has produced such a positive impact amongst local primary school children.

Away Coach 2008/9

The coaches have been well supported this season with several new faces both members and non-members with some of the non-members joining up as a result of their trip with us. This season, for the first time, Wednesdayite ran a coach for an evening away game - to Barnsley!

The coaches are stewarded by 2 Wednesdayite directors Jeff Williams and Dave Barlow and often there are other directors on the coach. Quizzes, football bingo, 'play your cards right', and football scratch cards help to pass the time on long journeys. There is a tuck shop offering crisps, chocolates and soft drinks.

Watch out on our web site for details of forthcoming trips and you can book your place from the web site or by contacting Wednesdayite at the car park or lounge. Alternatively you can phone Jeff on 07961558564 to book or to find out more.

