



RED & WHITE ARMY

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR ALL SUNDERLAND SUPPORTERS

Attendees	<p>Elected Interim Representatives Andrew Hird(AH) Chair Jane Hughes (JH) Vice Chair Michael McAllister (MM)Vice Chair Cath Reid (CR) Secretary David Rose (DR) Policy co-ordinator</p> <p>Co-opted Representatives Martyn McFadden A Love Supreme Paul Nelson LGBTQ Ian Crow SMB Jim Gilling BLC Chris Carr Disabled representative Michael Ganley SLG Keith Charlton SLG Les Cooper Corporate representative Michael Oates Roker Report Michael Lough Wise Men Say James Laws Under 18 Rep</p>
Apologies	Rebecca Barr - Away supporter representative, Hayley Branton - SAFC Ladies, Ryan Griffiths – Treasurer, Gordon Armstrong – Ex Player & Supporter, Shaun Dowd – Family Zone rep.
	Tuesday 12 December 2017
Venue	The Peacock, Sunderland 19:00

Welcome

AH opened the meeting thanking everyone for attending and welcoming co-opted members to the group.

Members introduced themselves and provided a brief summary of their background.

Update on RAWA relationship with SAFC

AH explained due to work commitments he was unable to attend a very brief meeting with the SAFC CEO earlier in the day, DR as policy co-ordinator attended the meeting.

DR gave an update on the meeting in which the main aim was to secure a date to meet properly with representatives from RAWA and begin the process of structured dialogue. SAFC, on their part, wanted to be sure that RAWA is as representative as it can be and not an insular group. DR provided an update on the group's progress so far.

The message from the club is that they are looking forward to having a productive dialogue and have agreed to meet on 16th January. The structure, agenda and attendees will be agreed in the coming weeks.



Date of first AGM

AH proposed the first AGM should be held at the end of the current season; MM seconded the proposal. AH advised this would be a good time, as the group would have an opportunity to attend two meetings with the CEO and senior management, this would also give the current officers and representatives time to bed in. It was suggested maybe linking the AGM to a world cup fixture so that once constitutional affairs were complete there could be a social element and a chance for attending members to get to know each other. A date will be confirmed asap followed by a format etc.

Dialogue with SAFC

On discussing dialogue with SAFC it was agreed R&WA should:

- look for expertise to assist with strategy and governance, looking for help and assistance with finance and business plans; Les Cooper has offered to support R&WA as much as possible with this by engaging his accountant who is also a Sunderland supporter.
- Look to set up sub groups to look at specific issues, maybe two or three members of R&WA attending meetings with the appropriate staff at SAFC.
- Look to mail shot R&WA members asking for help and assistance in specific areas, for example finance.

It was agreed by those present, when attending meetings with SAFC, R&WA will look at a range of objectives with the aim of discussing around six main points. RAWA will also seek input from supporters on social media. Message boards and encourage emails from our members.

A discussion took place with input from all present, in looking at club governance, the following list was identified:

- What is the (business) plan for SAFC in the short, medium and long term?
- Clarity required on the short term of SAFC- is SAFC actually for sale?
- Are SAFC to spend money on player recruitment?
- Clarity on competitive budget is available to the manager?
- Clarity required on SAFC spending on loan deals, contributing to load player wages; also clarity on loan fees
- At what point will SAFC be in a position to spend on player recruitment?
- Are details available as to the wage ceiling at SAFC?
- Was there a strategy for the sale of SAFC last season, especially when there was some interest? Some supporters feel this delayed SAFCs preparation for the start of the season.
- In trying to sell SAFC, what is the owner looking at from potential buyers – what are the “red lines” to sale? It has previously been documented a number of previous parties were interested in buying SAFC, at the time the owner advised they did not meet the owner’s criteria and were not suitable. Can you confirm what the owner’s criteria is and why the potential new owners were not suitable?
- In reviewing SAFC, are you now at a level you want, have previous mistakes now been resolved – where are we on the “curve”?
- At what point can the club begin to invest again to enable the manager to recruit players for promotion.
- Who is the CEO accountable to? Are there non-executives who will hold execs to account?



AP1: DR to contact other supporter groups throughout the country if they have dialogue with their clubs and have asked the questions RAWA have identified. If they have, have their clubs provided the information.

Club communication

Ellis Short recently held a media interview to update supporters and whilst not all questions were answered RAWA welcome such moves to communicate and feel supporters would like to see the owner provide regular updates like this.

A number of supporters have commented on the lack of communication from SAFC. R&WA would like to discuss a communication policy with the club. The clubs “out-of-touch” approach to social media has been mentioned in various circles.

Supporter Experience

As well as discussing Club Governance, RAWA would like to discuss fans experience with SAFC. None of the following are set in stone or have been tested for consensus amongst members but the potential areas of discussion are:

- Improving the atmosphere at the stadium
- Moving supporters from premier concourse to lower bowl
- Moving away supporters back to pitch side
- Fans Zone – the fan zone was very popular with fans of all ages.
- SAFC are in danger of losing a generation of young supporters. Ticket pricing is very good. Performances on the pitch aside, what can be done and are there things we can learn from other clubs?
- Concern over the number of bars and kiosks now closed within the stadium
- Stadium looks tired, a supporter on RTG suggested wall art as on display at A Love Supreme Office, around the concourse. This could be carried out in conjunction with local college and possibly The Foundation of Light.
- Chris Carr representing disabled supporters identified disabled supporters who are pitchside are not under cover and do get wet during bad weather.
- There are not enough lowered curbs in the approach to the stadium for supporters who use a wheelchair.
- DR and Shaun Dowd (Family Zone rep) recently visited Middlesbrough Football Club family area, Middlesbrough have worked a lot with local traders to provide a better experience, including providing rooms within the stadium where local WH Smith use as a library for local youngsters (they use their season ticket as a library card). Holding swap shops for Match Attacks, where players also attend and provide swap cards. Rather than have empty kiosks, invite local traders in.
- Paul Nelson said the click-and-collect system has worked really well

RAWA will continue to listen to supporter input on fan experience as we collate ideas for agenda items.

AP2: CR to approach SAFC to see if they could look to issue disabled supporters pitchside with plastic ponchos to keep them dry



AP3: AH will pull together a suggested agenda for the meeting on 16th from input in this meeting and from the input of members via emails, suggestions on social media and via the SMB co-opted rep.

Roles, Responsibilities & Communication

Communication

Following the initial set up of RAWA, AH now needs to delegate some of the tasks involved with the group. DR advised we now need to promote and update social media. Suggestions included use of Twitter before, during and after games, running polls on man of the match etc – ways of engaging supporters to increase awareness of the RAWA. Tweeting from away games could be useful where comments could compare quality of food and drink on offer, the approach from stewards etc. Members will be asked to help with social media, Michael Lough has volunteered to take the lead, use twitter on match days and then encourage members to help to spread the load.

IT Requirements & Finance

The group discussed our current online presence and it was agreed that RAWA needs a fully functioning and well-designed website. RAWA's current landing page is limited but was perfect for launch in order to project the mission statement etc. DR advised we now need to look at ideas for fundraising to develop and maintain a new website. Les Cooper advised he has a web developer, Les very kindly offered to cover the cost of creating a website as well as the maintenance. R&WA thanked Les for this very kind offer. Martyn McFadden offered to create a design and functionality spec.

AP4: Martyn McFadden to work on design and functionality and Les Cooper to engage with his IT resource to create the new website.

Membership Events & Community Engagement

DR updated RAWA on Fans Supporting Foodbanks – an initiative that the FSF are helping out with.

Liverpool & Everton supporters from the FSF national council have created donation points on match days which has become hugely successful. They work along side their local foodbank networks (the latter providing all the necessary expertise).

RAWA discussed the possibility of arranging a foodbank collection, this could possibly be held within the "fan zone". This would also require help from our members to help promote news of the collection and to man the collection point. RAWA will talk to the club about working together on this given they recently launched the "bring a tin" initiative. RAWA will speak with the local foodbank network to develop this.

AH thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting. Date of next meeting to be confirmed.