

**THE FSA.
ANNUAL REVIEW
2018_2019**



BY FANS FOR FANS

**STRENGTH COMES IN NUMBERS...
JOIN THE FSA AT THEFSA.ORG.UK**

FSA.

CONTENTS

- 04. ABOUT THE FSA**
- 08. TV & THE FA CUP**
- 12. COMMUNITY OWNED CLUBS**
- 16. TICKET PRICES**
- 18. CLUBS IN CRISIS**
- 22. INTERNATIONAL**
- 24. AWARDS 2018**
- 26. AWAY FANS SURVEY**
- 28. SUPPORTER LIAISON OFFICERS**
- 29. SUPPORTER ENGAGEMENT**
- 30. FANS FOR DIVERSITY**
- 34. STAND UP FOR CHOICE**
- 36. CASEWORK: FAIRCOP**
- 40. NON-LEAGUE**
- 42. FSA NETWORKS**
- 44. EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE**
- 46. #ICYMI**

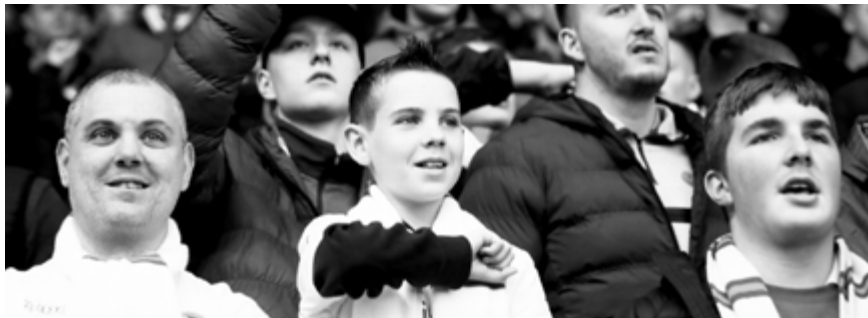
Editor – Michael Brunskill

Editorial team – Liam Thompson, Garreth Cummins

The FSA's Annual Review 2018-19 has benefited from the contributions of Amanda Jacks, Andy Walsh, Anwar Uddin, Ashley Brown, Christine Seddon, Dave Pennington, Debs Dilworth, Jane Hughes, Kat Law, Kevin Miles, James Boyes, Lily Brunskill (and The Crystal Gems), Malcolm Clarke, Maria Horner, Martin Cloake, Matt Walder, Nicola Hudson, Nina Donkin, Paul Corkrey, Peter Daykin, Richard Irving, Roger Ellis, Tom Greatrex, Vicki Haddock, and many others who we should have remembered, some of whom probably even deserved a namecheck. Oh, and all at Solution Group including the work experience kids (even the feral ones). All images via PA Images unless otherwise stated.

ABOUT THE FSA

ON THURSDAY 22ND NOVEMBER SUPPORTERS MET IN CENTRAL LONDON TO FINALISE THE MERGER OF THE FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS' FEDERATION AND SUPPORTERS DIRECT INTO ONE ORGANISATION - AND THE FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS' ASSOCIATION (FSA) WAS BORN.



THE FSA IS THE NATIONAL, DEMOCRATIC, REPRESENTATIVE BODY FOR SUPPORTERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

We are the leading advocates for supporter ownership, better fan engagement, cheaper ticket prices, the choice to stand at the match, protecting fan rights, good governance, diversity, and all types of supporter empowerment.

The breadth of work is huge and difficult to sum up in a paragraph or two, so we hope this Annual Review fills that role in showcasing our work across the football season.

As the national organisation we have regular contact with the Premier

League, the EFL, National League, and the FA, as well as a whole host of other organisations within football such as the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA).

Football is for all and we work closely with organisations such as Kick It Out and Level Playing Field to ensure that core belief is happening in the real world. We have supported the establishment of scores of BAME and LGBT fans' groups over the past few seasons.

We are founder-members of Football Supporters Europe (FSE) who represent supporters across the continent and heavily involved in the organisation, with two members who sit on FSE's Committee (Kevin Miles and Paul Corkrey).

As secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Football Supporters Group, we have strengthened the voice of fans within Parliament in recent years.

Our casework helps hundreds of fans every year who feel they've been poorly treated by their clubs, stewards, or police. We give those fans a voice, the best possible advice, and even legal support.

We pioneered the concept of Fans' Embassies and have helped fans of both the England and Wales men's national teams at tournaments across the planet. We are proud to have replicated this service, for the first time, at the Women's World Cup 2019.

GET INVOLVED

The FSA is by fans, for fans - we couldn't deliver results without the countless hours invested by our volunteers across the country, throughout the leagues. If you are passionate about one of our campaigns, lead a fans' group, or think you have skills we can put to use, then get in touch.



Malcolm Clarke, Chair



Tom Greatrex, Vice chair



Kevin Miles, Chief executive

Malcolm Clarke (Chair, the FSA) - Malcolm is a Stoke City and York City fan who is one of our two fan representatives on the FA Council. Malcolm was chair of the FSF throughout its existence and has a big interest in reforming football governance and power structures.

Tom Greatrex (Vice chair, the FSA) - Tom co-founded Fulham Supporters' Trust and was chair of Supporters Direct. He was a Labour/Co-op MP and is chief exec of the Nuclear Industry Association. Tom is also a fan rep on the FA Council with special interest in good governance and fan ownership.

Kevin Miles (Chief executive, the FSA) - Kevin was appointed FSA chief executive having previously held the same position at the FSF. He oversees our staff team, the long-running England Fans' Embassy service, and sits on Kick It Out's Professional Game Guidance Group.

OUR CONSTITUTION



You can download our constitution:
www.bit.ly/fsa-constitution

MISSION STATEMENT:

We are an inclusive, independent, democratic organisation working with supporters, governing bodies, leagues and clubs to drive positive change in football through supporter engagement at every level of the game. We nurture and develop supporter networks at local, national and international levels, working with supporters' trusts, clubs and individuals to initiate and support campaigns on issues of concern to football supporters, encouraging good governance, supporter representation on club boards, community-ownership and sustainable stewardship of football clubs. A commitment to diversity underpins all of our activity and we oppose all forms of discrimination or violence in relation to football.

OUR STRUCTURE



FSA Board: Nine members elected by the National Council plus the chair and vice chair

NATIONAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:

Chair	Malcolm Clarke
Vice chair	Tom Greatrex
Premier League	Katrina Law (Tottenham Hotspur Supporters' Trust), Dave Pennington (Manchester United Supporters' Trust) and Dave Kelly (The Blue Union).
Championship	Geoff Bielby (Hull City Supporters' Trust), Rick Duniec (Leeds United Supporters' Trust), and Teddy Bellamy (Millwall Supporters' Club).
EFL 1 & EFL 2	Antony Wilkinson (Blackpool Supporters' Trust) and Roger Ellis (Sky Blue Trust).
National Game	Rob Street (Billericay Town Supporters Society), Richard Tomkins (Hereford United), Simon Cope (Scarborough Athletic).
Supporter-owned clubs	Neil Le Milliere (Exeter City Supporters' Trust), Tim Hillyer (Dons Trust), Nick Duckett (FC United of Manchester).
Fans for Diversity	Chris Paouros (Proud Lilywhites), Malcolm Hirst (Port Vale Supporters' Club) and Shin Aujla (Apna Albion).
Associate organisations	Ally Simcock (Pint of Vale), David Michael (My Old Man Said), and Dave Tomlinson (Sandbach Travelling Alex).
Individual representatives	Christine Seddon, Fiona McGee, Kristine Green, Martin O'Hara, Peter Daykin, and Steve Powell.

Networks are entitled to three elected representatives and the responsibility is with those networks to fill the positions. See more on FSA networks under Network Engagement. Nine members are elected from the NC to make up the board alongside the chair and vice chair. The Board: Ally Simcock, Chris Paouros, Dave Pennington, Fiona McGee, Malcolm Clarke, Martin O'Hara, Peter Daykin, Roger Ellis, Tim Hartley, Tim Hillyer, and Tom Greatrex.

MEMBERSHIP

THERE ARE THREE CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP FOR THE FSA AND THEY ARE ALL FREE:

JOIN THE FSA:
[WWW.THEFSA.ORG.UK](http://www.thefsa.org.uk)

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Open to all fans.

AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP

For supporters' groups who fulfil key criteria relating to constitution, affordability, independence, democratic structure, annual accounts and diversity policy.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

For entities such as regional or non-democratic supporters' groups such as atmosphere groups, club-based fan forums, fanzines, or digitally based collectives.

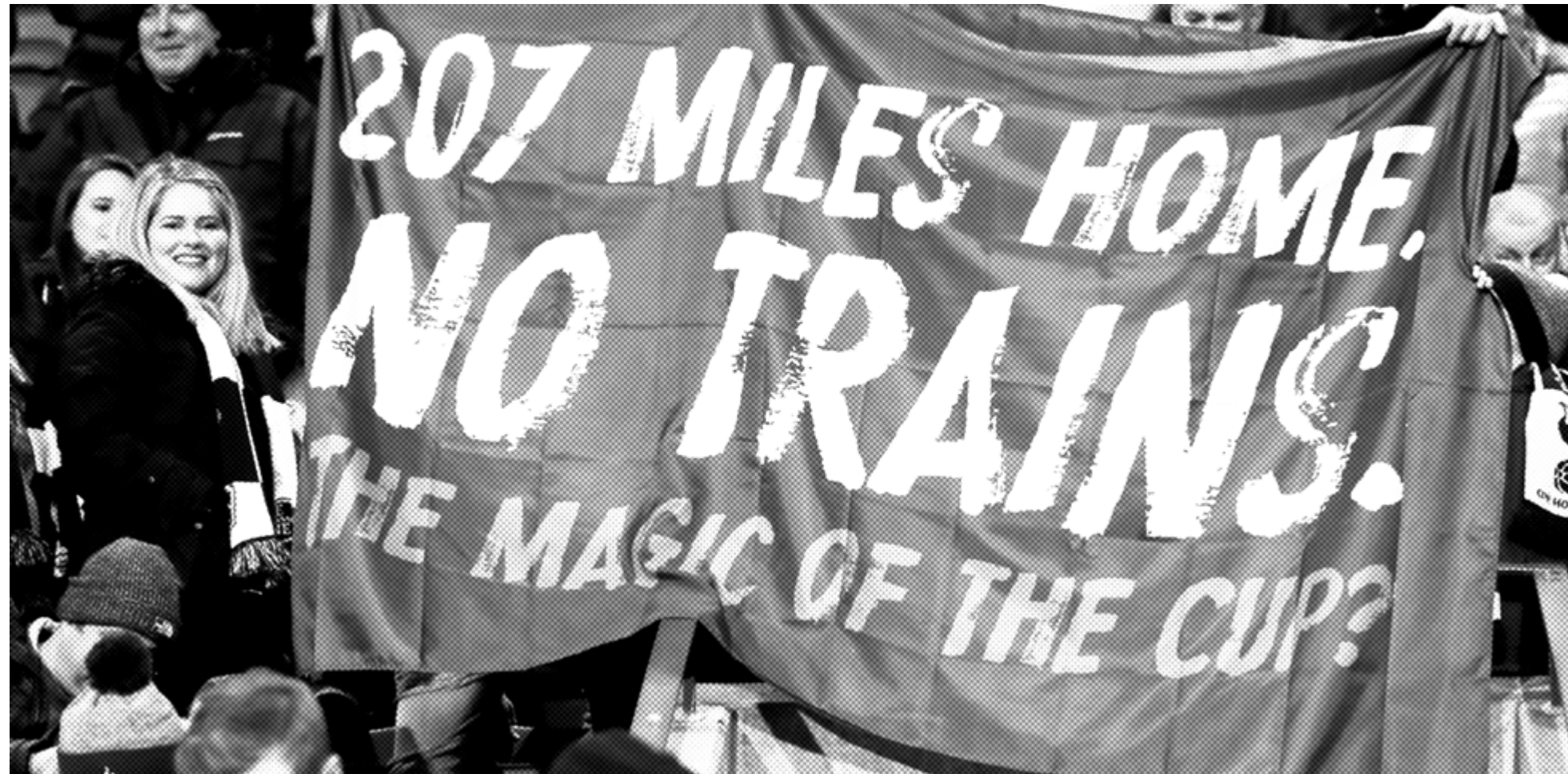
All tiers of membership are embedded in our structure, weighted towards affiliate members who receive more positions on our National Council and more votes at the AGM - five per group as opposed to one vote per individual member or associate group.

Policy is set primarily at the AGM following democratic processes although the National Council can make interim policy if required during the gap between AGMs. While the networks can set up campaigns they can't unilaterally set policy - that must be done at the AGM or via the National Council.

CONTACT:

Email: info@thefsa.org.uk
Phone: 0330 44 000 44
Address: 1 Ashmore Terrace, Stockton Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR2 7DE

TV & THE FA CUP



THIS SEASON'S FA CUP WAS THE FIRST UNDER A NEW SIX YEAR INTERNATIONAL TV DEAL REPORTEDLY WORTH £820M TO THE FA - AND ITS EFFECTS BECAME CLEAR IN THE THIRD ROUND.

Normally one of the highlights of the footballing calendar, the third round was fragmented to meet the needs of broadcasters in various territories across the world.

The headline result was that only 10 of the 32 ties were played at the

traditional Saturday 3pm kick-off time. The remaining 22 games were spread across the weekend, starting with Tranmere Rovers vs Tottenham on Friday evening and ending up with Liverpool away to Wolves on the Monday night.

TV selections were compounded by compressed timescales between the draws - for example, Grimsby Town fans were unable to get back from their late-Saturday kick-off against Crystal Palace. This denied many Mariners the chance to see their team in what could have been the biggest game of their season.

"THIS HAS GONE TOO FAR AND IT IS TAKING AWAY SOME OF THE MAGIC OF THE FA CUP.

THE FA CUP THIRD ROUND ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON IS ONE OF THE ENDURING TRADITIONS OF A WONDERFUL COMPETITION. TO HAVE FEWER THAN A THIRD OF THE 32 MATCHES KICKING OFF AT 3PM ON SATURDAY IS BOTH EXTRAORDINARY AND VERY SAD."

FSA chair Malcolm Clarke

TV HELL 2018-19

TV: GOING TO GET WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER

In recent seasons the relationship between match-going fans and TV has deteriorated significantly - and next season it could get a whole lot worse as the number of televised games is set to increase once more.

Saturday 3pm kick-offs will become a rarity for many fans as 200 of the 380 Premier League games will be broadcast across the 2019-20 season.



Similarly, in the EFL Sky's new five year deal allows them to broadcast 138 league matches a season - with the option to increase that to 158 games in the final two years of the deal.

This all adds up to more and more inconvenience for fans trying to plan their travel to games - more days off work, more time spent travelling through the early hours and more time away from family and friends.

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

Back in 2017, the big issue with TV was the Premier League failing to meet its own deadlines on releasing the TV fixtures. The Premier League has committed to giving fans six weeks notice of changes, but over the 2017-18 season, more than half of the division's TV fixtures were announced late.

Rafts of TV fixtures often came weeks late, leaving fans to gamble on train tickets and accommodation for away games causing supporters to, rightly, kick up a fuss. We released numerous statements calling on the Premier League to get its act together and raised the issue with former-chief executive Richard Scudamore directly.

This season, the situation has improved. TV selections have been released on time for the most part - but one problem has been replaced by another: the rise of conditional picks. Broadcasters are now releasing TV selections on time, but completely disregarding them further down the line and carving up weekends long after the initial selections have been made.

The first taste of this in the 2018-19 season came as a result of the delays to the construction of Tottenham Hotspur's new stadium.

Spurs were initially picked by Sky Sports to play Manchester City at home on Sunday 27th October. Tottenham were unable to fulfil the fixture on this date due to the build issues and a clash with an NFL game at Wembley - so the game was moved to the Monday night slot.

However, Sky Sports were unwilling to give up the now-vacated TV slot so transferred the Manchester United vs Everton game, originally slated for early-Saturday, into the late-Sunday slot.

The move meant that the inconvenience that should have been limited to Spurs and Manchester City fans left thousands more out of pocket. Manchester United Supporters' Trust (MUST) described Sky Sports' behaviour as "naked commercial opportunism".

MUST pushed the Premier League and Sky Sports to compensate supporters, but the broadcaster was unmoved - telling the Trust that the move was a commercial decision to preserve their "Super Sunday" brand.

"While expressing sympathy for affected supporters however they have sought to shift responsibility for any compensation to the Premier League and ultimately to our own club that did not instigate the fixture change," MUST said.



"THIS REGRETTABLE, BUT SADLY PREDICTABLE, BUCK PASSING AND IMPASSE IGNORES THE VALID CLAIMS OF SUPPORTERS WHO REMAIN SIGNIFICANTLY OUT OF POCKET."

Not to be outdone by Sky, BT Sport also got in on the conditional picks show by somehow putting fans of four Premier League clubs out with their selections around the League Cup final weekend. The broadcaster inexplicably chose Manchester City as it's number one pick for the mid-week games 48 hours after the final (despite City being 9-0 up on aggregate in the semi-final at the time).

City predictably went through to the final but rather than lose the TV game to their own short-sightedness, BT Sport simply brought in other teams off the bench to fill the slot vacated by Manchester City's League Cup final clash - Burnley, Crystal Palace, Leicester City and Newcastle United fans were the victims - bringing their games forward with just four weeks notice.

MISSING: LAST HOME GAMES OF THE SEASON

The penultimate weekend of the season was carved up not once but twice by broadcasters who sought to secure the most lucrative fixtures possible - regardless of the impact it would have on fans looking to see their teams at home for the final time.

With Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur proceeding to the semi-finals of the Champions League, Sky Sports decided to change their original selections made for the penultimate game of the season. Liverpool's trip to St James' Park to play Newcastle United, chosen for a Sunday 4pm kick-off on May 5th existed in limbo for a few weeks before ending up as a Saturday 7.45pm kick-off.

Similarly, Spurs' game against Bournemouth, which was due to be played on the Monday night, was shuffled back to a Saturday kick-off. Manchester City against Leicester City, originally picked for an early Saturday kick-off off, was transferred into that empty Monday night slot.

Ray from Man City Fan TV said: "Two weeks notice is absolutely scandalous."

"THIS GOES BEYOND WHO YOU SUPPORT, IT GOES BEYOND THE TRIBAL NATURE OF FOOTBALL, WE SHOULD ALL BE STANDING TOGETHER BECAUSE IT'S RIDICULOUS. THE PREMIER LEAGUE SHOULD NOT BE PUNISHING OTHER FANS BY FORCING THEM TO BUY NEW FLIGHTS, NEW HOTEL BOOKINGS, OR GETTING MORE TIME OFF WORK."

COMMUNITY-OWNED CLUBS

SINCE 2000 SUPPORTERS DIRECT HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN BRINGING DOZENS OF FOOTBALL CLUBS INTO COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP THROUGHOUT ENGLAND AND WALES. THE FSA'S RICHARD IRVING GIVES US A RUNDOWN ON HOW OUR COMMUNITY-OWNED CLUBS FARED IN 2018-19.



SUCCESS STORIES

Community-owned clubs were led this season by title winners **City of Liverpool FC**, who won promotion to the Northern Premier League North West Division. They were run incredibly close by Bootle FC who managed a superb winning streak of 20 consecutive games to finish just two points behind.

Unfortunately for City of Liverpool FC they couldn't make it a league and cup double as they were defeated by fellow community-owned club **1874 Northwich** in the League Cup final.



(CC) James Boyes

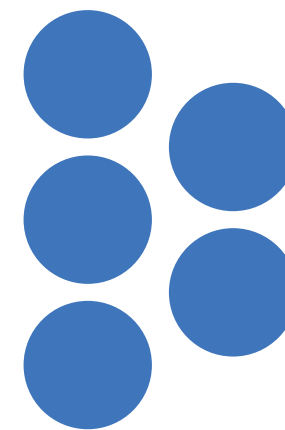
Tonbridge Angels navigated their way through Isthmian Premier League play-off matches against Haringey Borough, Merstham, and Metropolitan Police to elevate themselves to the National League South next season. All this came after a fourth place finish some 23 points behind champions Dorking Wanderers.

Club chair Dave Netherstreet told us: "It is great for all the people who have supported the club over the years and who have helped the club through some of the really tricky moments of the last five years."

"IT IS HOPED THAT THE PROMOTION AND THE COVERAGE PROVIDED BY BT SPORT OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE WILL PROVIDE THE NECESSARY BOOST FOR THE COMMUNITY TO GET BEHIND US AND HOPEFULLY PUSH ON."

THE EFL

OUR HIGHEST RANKED CLUB, WYCOMBE WANDERERS, IN THEIR FIRST SEASON BACK IN LEAGUE ONE, FINISHED IN 17TH PLACE. IN THE SAME DIVISION AFC WIMBLEDON FACED AN UPHILL STRUGGLE TO AVOID RELEGATION BACK TO LEAGUE TWO, HAVING SPENT MUCH OF THE EARLY PART OF THE YEAR IN THE RELEGATION ZONE.



A run of just one defeat in their final 12 games secured their safety in a season also made memorable by a superb 4-2 win over West Ham United in the FA Cup fourth round before eventually being knocked out by Millwall. With just one more season to go before their move to a new ground back at Plough Lane in Wimbledon these are exciting times for the club.

In League Two, **Exeter City** were in with a chance of reaching the play-offs with just a handful of games to go, but a poor run of two wins in eight games put paid to their hopes.

Following a solid 2017-18 season, **Newport County** put together an astonishing campaign that led them to Wembley and a League Two play-off final against Tranmere Rovers which, ultimately, saw them defeated by a last-

minute winner at the national stadium. Their season had many other highlights as, once again, they beat higher level opposition in the FA Cup, defeating Premier League Leicester City and Championship side Middlesbrough before finally succumbing to Manchester City at Rodney Parade in the fifth round, despite holding the Premier League champions until the 51st minute.



(CC) James Boyes



(CC) James Boyes

COMMUNITY-OWNED CLUBS



NON-LEAGUE

In the National League, **Wrexham** will have to spend at least another year outside the EFL as the strength in the league of Leyton Orient and Salford City prevailed, and the club fell to defeat at the hands of Eastleigh in the play-offs.

Near neighbours **Chester** finished three points short of the National League North play-offs while **Darlington**, in their first year back in the division, finished a creditable 16th.

Unfortunately, after four seasons in the National League North, **FC United of Manchester** were relegated back to the Northern Premier League.

Our representatives in the National League South, **Bath City**, reached the

play-offs only to be defeated in the qualifying round by Wealdstone in front of more than 2,200 fans at Twerton Park.

In the Southern League Premier Division South, **Merthyr Town**, **Dorchester Town**, and **Hendon** all finished in mid-table, whilst in the Southern League Premier Division Central, **AFC Rushden and Diamonds** and **Banbury United** finished in ninth and 17th places respectively. At the same level in the Isthmian Premier Division, **Enfield Town** and **Lewes** couldn't reach the heady heights of Tonbridge Angels but finished in 10th and 11th places respectively, the latter in their first season back at Step Three.

A special mention should also be made of the Lewes Women's team, who in their own first season in the FA Women's Championship finished ninth

in a division containing Manchester United, Tottenham Hotspur, and Crystal Palace.

In the Isthmian League North, at Step Four, **Grays Athletic** improved on their 16th place finish last season by finishing seventh, despite still ground sharing at Aveley. They will look to push for promotion back up to Step Three next season.

Scarborough Athletic's hopes of reaching the Northern Premier Division play-offs were dashed with just one game to go following eight league defeats since New Year's Day. The club ended their first season at the new level with an eighth place finish. Boro also reached the North Riding Senior Cup final for the second successive year, beating Marske United 3-2 on penalties after a 2-2 draw at Middlesbrough's Riverside Stadium.

Our other Northern Premier League clubs, **Hyde United** and **Bamber Bridge**, finished in 10th and 16th places respectively, with Hyde attracting a crowd of nearly 800 for their final day clash against Stalybridge Celtic.

Our two teams in the Northern Premier League First Division West, **Runcorn Linnets** and **Prescot Cables**, both missed out on the play-offs, finishing in sixth and seventh place – with the former missing out on goal difference to Ramsbottom United. In the Southern League Division One Central **Kempston Rovers** finished 13th.

At Step Five, **City of Liverpool** aside, our other three teams in the North West Counties Premier Division endured mixed fortunes. **Congleton Town** were some way behind City of Liverpool in third, **1874 Northwich** finished 10th, but did win the League Cup, and **Litherland REMYCA** finished 15th.

Fisher were another of our teams to steadily improve and finish third in the Southern Counties League East Division, while our two remaining Step Five clubs, **Peacehaven** and **Telscombe** in the Southern Combination Premier and **Saffron Walden Town** in the Essex Senior League finished tenth and fourth respectively.

At Step Six, **AFC Liverpool** finished third in the North West Counties First Division North, **Hinckley AFC** 16th in the Midland League First Division. In the Wessex League Premier Division, **Newport (IOW)** finished sixth, **Wythenshawe Amateurs** took fourth place in the North West Counties League Division One South, and **Newark Town** achieved ninth place in the Central Midlands League.

In their first season of competition, **Clapton Community Football Club** took the Middlesex County Football League Division 1 (Central and East) title pipping Stonewall FC by one point and gaining promotion in front of 1,200 fans. A league and league cup double follows an incredibly successful year which, amongst many other things in their community, saw them sell more than 12,000 of their famous second strip shirts to owners across the world. Finally, in the Welsh Football League, **Ton Pentre** endured a difficult season finishing bottom of Division One.

Here's hoping for a successful 2019-2020 season for all our clubs!

FA CUP TICKET PRICES



THE FA AGREED A REDUCTION IN TICKET PRICES FOR 3,000 TICKETS AT THIS YEAR'S FA CUP FINAL FOLLOWING LOBBYING EFFORTS BY SUPPORTER REPRESENTATIVES – BUT MANY FANS REMAIN UNHAPPY WITH THIS SEASON'S PRICING.

1,500 tickets in the lower band behind both goals (3,000 total) at Wembley Stadium were reduced from £115 to £70, a total saving for supporters in those areas of around £135,000.

Fans are still unhappy with the high costs of attending the Wembley fixtures – particularly the thousands paying in excess of £100. Manchester City's 1894 Group said: "This year's final prices have been dressed up as price freezes whereas in reality they are massively out of step with the cup final prices in other major European countries.

"How many true fans who have been going for decades have had to miss out because of the prices? Once you price traditional fans out, who will replace them?"

The FA's decision to reduce the ticket prices followed concerted lobbying and discussions with supporters, led by supporter organisations around the country and our supporter representatives on the FA Council.

Tom Greatrex, our FA Council supporter representative said: "Fans have rightfully raised concerns about the ticket prices we've seen at Wembley for the semi-finals and finals – some of the highest for national cup finals in European football.

"THE FA NEEDS TO REMEMBER THAT WITHOUT DEDICATED SUPPORTERS FILLING WEMBLEY FOR THE CUP FINAL IT WOULDN'T BE THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOOTBALLING CALENDAR THAT WE KNOW AND LOVE."

Last season, the FA was criticised for introducing inflation-busting price hikes without consulting supporters – the FA responded by meeting fans and increasing the concessionary saving on the most expensive tickets (from £10 to £25) and committed to not increasing the price of semi-final and final tickets beyond the rate of inflation until 2022 at the earliest.

Tom said: "While this is a step in the right direction, we feel the FA could go further in making the Wembley fixtures more affordable for match-going fans.

"Supporters are integral to the success of the competition – a competition which the FA markets on its tradition, authenticity and atmosphere."

Alongside supporter organisations at club level, the FSA will continue to push the FA for a fundamental review of ticket pricing at the FA Cup's Wembley fixtures, as well as other issues impacting the competition this season – such as kick-off times, travel difficulties and disruption caused by broadcasting selections.

MORE TO DO

BACK IN FEBRUARY IT WAS CONFIRMED THAT THE POPULAR AND SUCCESSFUL £30 AWAY TICKET PRICE CAP IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE WOULD RUN FOR ANOTHER THREE SEASONS.

The current competition-wide cap was introduced at the start of the 2016-17 season, following sustained campaigning by supporters across the country led by the then-FSF under the "Twenty's Plenty" banner.

Since its introduction three years ago, the £30 cap on away prices in the Premier League has saved millions of pounds for away fans.

FSA chief executive Kevin Miles said: "We have always argued that away supporter attendance needs to be encouraged if the atmosphere and spectacle of a live football match is to be sustained.

"WE STILL BELIEVE MORE CAN BE DONE AND WE CALL ON THE PREMIER LEAGUE TO LOOK AT WAYS TO FURTHER REDUCE CONCESSIONARY TICKET COSTS AND SUBSIDISE FANS' TRAVEL COSTS WHEN GAMES ARE MOVED FOR TV."



EFL AWAY PRICES UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Beyond the success of the £30 price cap in the Premier League, ticket prices remain a thorny issue in the EFL.

With other leagues such as France's Ligue 1 also introducing competition-wide price caps for away tickets (€10) the EFL Championship has suddenly become one of the most expensive places in the world to be an away fan.



According to analysis by journalist Dubas Fischer published this year, 80% of Championship matches had standard, advanced, adult tickets priced at £30 or less - with 77 fixtures coming in above that.

The average cost of an away ticket in the division stands at £27.04. The worst offenders included Leeds United, who charged visiting fans an average of £37.82 per ticket; Birmingham, meanwhile, charged £19.12.

EUROPEAN PRICES: FANS CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

You may have noticed some English teams did very well in European competitions this season, but that success has made for some (very) expensive seasons for fans following their teams.

Too many big clubs in Europe charge visiting supporters far too much. Barcelona were one of the main offenders this year, charging Liverpool and Manchester United fans €119 to see their teams from the top tier of Camp Nou.

Both clubs stepped in to subsidise the price, and said they would be charging Barcelona fans more to make up the difference in the return legs - something we've been describing as "revenge pricing".

Liverpool's Spirit of Shankly group said: "Success comes with expense, but that does not have to mean extortion – Barcelona's pricing structure for this stage of the Champions League is an elitist joke."



We continue to lobby UEFA on such extreme price gouging and the pressure is beginning to tell - president Aleksander Čeferin conceded earlier this year they would have to consider competition-wide price caps.

CLUBS IN CRISIS



There's no set definition of a club in crisis but fans know it when they see it - if it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck.

Clubs with an endless stream of unpaid creditors and fall outs with HMRC. Owners who react to fan protests with self-defeating threats. Media calls for FA action. Player wages going unpaid.

Even within a club's own fanbase not every single supporter will comfortably accept the label but there comes a point when everybody knows, including the football authorities.

The easy part is identifying the clubs in crisis and analysing their problems but the tricky bit is finding ways to fix the problem.

As supporters we see football clubs for the uniquely special entities they are: history, importance to the local community, decades spent going to games with friends and family or taking your own kids.

But legally they are businesses and they exist within the laws of the land.

We see an unscrupulous owner running our beloved club into the ground. The law sees a business owner making his or her own decisions about their own investment and won't intervene, as long as they follow the laws of the land and pay tax.

The Conservative Party sees itself as the party of business so there's been no legislative movement and the past few years have hardly been ideal terrain for that anyway, given the enormous focus on Brexit.

THE EFL

The EFL has in recent years prided itself on how few administrations have actually occurred, although that has changed now with Bolton Wanderers going into administration.

Of course the scarcity of clubs in administration was hardly consolation to supporters of Blackpool, Charlton Athletic, Coventry City, Hull City, Leyton Orient, Morecambe, or others who have all fallen out with owners at various points in recent seasons.

The problem is tightening up rules which are written by owners with a vested interest. The EFL sees itself primarily as a members club not a regulator.

Meanwhile the FA has never fully grasped its own role as regulator, instead shifting its focus to the national teams, disciplinary issues, and grassroots administrative matters.

WHAT THE FA NEEDS TO DO

Our proposals to the FA rest on two key principles. Firstly, that the significance of football clubs is properly recognised. These are not just ordinary businesses, whatever the law might say, and if you are involved in the football industry you must recognise that.

Clubs are cultural commodities, the biggest expression of community identity in our country, with loyalty built up over generations. They should be afforded levels of protection in keeping with listed buildings or conservation areas. It is not appropriate to treat them as if they were supermarket or mobile provider.

Secondly, massive conflicts of interest exist within the game and they must be removed. The Premier League, EFL, and National League are effectively member bodies for football clubs and supporters don't accept that self-regulation works.

Regulatory decisions should be taken by people with a suitable level of independence, with support from external expertise where needed, to avoid the conflicts of interest which currently exist.

The FA is the best placed organisation to do this and should be the game's regulator.

FA PROPOSALS

Beneath these core principles we have made a series of proposals to the FA including a new Code of Practice on the Stewardship of Football Clubs.

While the FA, Premier League, EFL, and National League have all taken steps in recent years to protect clubs, their actions are too often undermined by the actions of a small number of renegade owners.

The Code of Practice on the Stewardship of Football Clubs would set out new guidance for clubs (and owners) on a range of issues which have caused problems over the years - name changes, playing colours and badges, stadium location, and training facilities.

Prospective owners should outline business plans that demonstrate their capability to run a football club sustainably, in accordance with the Code of Practice and its requirements to engage with the club's supporters and other stakeholders.

Crucially, proposed owners shouldn't be allowed to use shares in a club to raise funds to complete their purchase. This restriction would avoid repetition of recent examples where new ownership has seen significant new debt loaded onto a club, rather than the new owner.

Owners should also have to deliver a bond to the FA which the owner forfeits if the club failed to honour wages, tax commitments and so on. Proposed owners would continue to be subject to current checks and directors should face their own separate checks.

If our proposals are put into force and implemented there'd be a significant reduction in the number of clubs in crisis. Without real action the supporters of those clubs will continue to suffer.

The damaging actions of a small handful of rogue owners overshadows the good work at the majority of clubs and reflects poorly on the game's commitment to good governance.

Good owners must stand up, be counted, and make their case alongside supporters. It's in all of our best interests.

FSA ACTION

Our proposals presented to a meeting of the FA Board, a first for a supporters' group. The Board welcomed the proposals and asked us develop a more focussed package to take forward for implementation, with the FA, Premier League, EFL and National League. Further meetings with the FA and the leagues are scheduled. The FSA AGM in June 2019 will be asked to endorse the proposals.

CLUBS IN CRISIS



FURTHER READING

If you'd like further details on our proposals - 10,627 words of further detail! - we're happy to send the full set of proposals with supporting appendix to members. Get in touch.

The work has been coordinated by FSA chair Malcolm Clarke and special thanks should go to Roger Ellis (Sky Blues Trust) whose expertise has proven invaluable.

FROM THE GROUND...

On 13th June 2019 it was announced that the Oystons were finally out of Blackpool FC with lifelong fan Simon Sadler taking a 96% shareholding. Blackpool Supporters' Trust (BST) said they were "delighted" with the news that the Oyston's 31-year reign was finally over.

"For years, we as supporters have campaigned with vigour and with decency to see the regime change at Bloomfield Road, with little support from the football authorities," said BST.

"We will continue to campaign with energy for wholesale regulatory reform of English football. We owe it

CORE PRINCIPLES:

1. CLUBS MUST BE RECOGNISED FOR THEIR CULTURAL IMPORTANCE. THEY ARE NOT NORMAL BUSINESSES.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST HAVE TO BE REMOVED. CLUBS CANNOT REGULATE THEMSELVES AND THE FA MUST STEP IN.

to colleagues at Coventry City, Bury, Bolton Wanderers, and all the other clubs who have been failed to make sure that their plight continues to be highlighted."

For BST chair and FSA National Council member Christine Seddon the hard work begins now. "Everything needs rebuilding, from the training ground and the Bloomfield Road pitch through the academy system, the managerial set-up, the squad," said Christine. "It's a new start that lies ahead - new owners, new infrastructure, new staff, new kit, new sponsors, new ambitions. The only real constant, as at any great club, is the fan base."



INTERNATIONAL

FREE LIONESSES

FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR WE HAVE EXTENDED OUR FANS' EMBASSY SERVICE TO FOLLOWERS OF THE WOMEN'S GAME, WITH THE LAUNCH OF FREE LIONESSES, OUR FANZINE FOR FANS OF THE ENGLAND WOMEN'S TEAM ATTENDING THE 2019 WORLD CUP IN FRANCE.

Offering our usual mix of behind the scenes advice and assistance along with a presence in each host city around every game that England play, we hope that this will mark the beginning of a long-running relationship following the women's team at major tournaments, which highlights our ongoing work in the

women's game more generally. At the time of going to press England had qualified for the last 16 through victories in their opening three group stage games. We will hopefully be with them all the way to Lyon for the final on Sunday 7th July.

You can follow the team on Twitter [@FreeLionesses](https://twitter.com/FreeLionesses)



FREE LIONS

After a (perhaps) longer-than-expected stay in Russia last summer, the Free Lions fans' embassy team could have been forgiven for looking forward to a little break.

Given the unusual situation of England's Nations League match against Croatia in Rijeka being played behind closed doors, they got a few extra days off before travelling to Seville in October for England's excellent 3-2 away victory against Spain, securing England's qualification for the Nations League finals this summer.

There they joined hosts Portugal along with Switzerland and the Netherlands, who likewise topped their Nations League groups.

The disappointment in the performance on the pitch in Guimarães in the semi-final against the Netherlands didn't detract from another great trip, and another surprising penalty shoot-out victory, this time against Switzerland. We're almost beginning to make a habit of them.

Free Lions continues to go from strength to strength as we've now racked up 167 issues, and we're already looking forward to autumn trips to Prague, Sofia, as well as a first fixture away in Kosovo, on our route to the Euro 2020 finals.

FSA CYMRU

Following last year's trips to the USA and China things were 'back to normal' for the Welsh fans' embassy team this year, finishing off their Nations League campaigns with games in Denmark and Ireland.

While Dublin and Aarhus are not too far off the beaten track, their trips to Elbasan in Albania for a friendly in November 2018, and a Euro 2020 qualifier in Osijek in Croatia (June 2019) tested the limits of their preparation

that little bit further, before rounding off this season's activities with a match in the Hungarian capital of Budapest.

Our colleagues at FSA Cymru provided their fans' embassy services at each game, along with fundraising efforts for local orphanages with their partners Gŵl Cymru.

Unfortunately defeats in both June fixtures leaves Ryan Giggs' men with an uphill task of qualifying for next summer's tournament.

FSA Cymru will continue to work with the FA of Wales, with particular focus on the issues of ticket harvesting and issues around providing ID at matches to ensure that named ticket holders get in.

FSF AWARDS 2018



WITH MORE THAN 366,000 VOTES CAST, THE FSF AWARDS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VIRGIN MEDIA ARE THE LARGEST SUPPORTER-LED AWARDS IN THE UK, AND THE 2018 EVENT RETURNED TO THE TOWER OF LONDON TO CROWN THE BEST IN THE GAME.

Arsenal's Beth Mead picked up the trophy for the Women's Player of the Year, with Mohamed Salah topping the fans' vote for the Men's Player of the Year award, holding off competition from runner-up Eden Hazard.

Salah said: "Thank you for this award, it means so much to me because it was voted for by supporters."

"Usually I share any awards with my teammates and all the staff at Liverpool, but on this occasion I would like also to dedicate it to the Liverpool fans for their incredible support. Thank you."

Other winners on the night included Sky Sports duo Gary Neville and Martin Tyler, Football365.com and the Guardian, who picked up a hat-trick of awards for best newspaper, best podcast, and best writer.



THE FULL LIST OF WINNERS OF THE 2018 FSF AWARDS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VIRGIN MEDIA:

MEN'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR
MOHAMED SALAH (Liverpool)

WOMEN'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR
BETH MEAD (Arsenal)

AWAY DAY OF THE YEAR
PRESTON NORTH END

FAN MEDIA OF THE YEAR
ARSEBLOG

CLUB PODCAST OF THE YEAR
FROM THE ROOKERY END (Watford)

COMMENTATOR OF THE YEAR
MARTIN TYLER

FANS FOR DIVERSITY AWARD
PROUD LILYWHITES (Spurs)

FANZINE OF THE YEAR
POPULARSTAND (Doncaster Rovers)

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
THE GUARDIAN

ONLINE MEDIA OF THE YEAR
FOOTBALL365.COM

PODCAST OF THE YEAR
THE GUARDIAN FOOTBALL WEEKLY

PUNDIT OF THE YEAR
GARY NEVILLE

RADIO SHOW OF THE YEAR
606

SUPPORTER LIAISON OFFICER OF THE YEAR
TONY BARRETT (Liverpool)

WRITER OF THE YEAR
BARNEY RONAY

NATIONAL GAME COMMUNITY AWARD
CURZON ASHTON FC

FOR THE FULL SHORTLISTS IN EACH CATEGORY, HEAD TO WWW.BIT.LY/FSF-SHORTLISTS

AWAY FANS SURVEY



SINCE IT BEGAN BACK IN 2012, MORE THAN 20,000 OF YOU HAVE TAKEN THE TIME TO GIVE US YOUR OPINIONS AS PART OF OUR AWAY FANS SURVEY.

We collate ratings on everything from the price of matchday pies to the position of the away sector and everything in-between.

All your feedback (good and bad) gets passed to clubs via their Supporter Liaison Officers. We also share our datasets with each of our affiliate supporter groups, so they can see the concerns away fans have about their ground, and can take them up with their own club.

Because of the work we've done over the past eight years, clubs are able to see where they are, whether the changes they are making have had an effect, and the areas in which they still need to improve.

Data is all well and good but we also give people the opportunity to offer specific comments which the survey might not cover.

Some of the comments are well thought out, well constructed pieces of feedback highlighting specific areas of concern that need to be addressed. Others, not so much. Judge for yourself which is which.

We've also anonymised some clubs as we find they're more likely to act on criticism when they're informed privately - public shaming often leads to them digging their heels in.

THE GOOD

- I really appreciated the welcome that the [Club]'s fans and club put on for us, it was relaxed, friendly and welcoming - which definitely didn't prepare us for just how dirty their team was!
- Great vibe at the outside bar - police on horseback really friendly too, stewards in the away end sensible and relaxed about standing and goal celebrations. Impressive.
- It's the stewards that make it for me. Been a couple of times now and they're one of the best. The fact that they are happy to let you out to have a smoke at half time is brilliant. Just shows what intelligent people you have as stewards.
- For once in away end plenty of ladies toilets! It was a community day and [Club] had organised very good events for children including those visiting and with learning disabilities
- The ability to use contactless cards is very good and other clubs should copy.
- Excellent DJ playing before the game in the away end. Played songs that were for the away fans.
- Didn't see any police, even outside the ground. Congratulations to whoever was in charge on realising that none were needed for this fixture.
- A lovely gesture at the end of the match to hand out the pastries that hadn't been sold.
- Excellent leg room. Excellent fanzone with band playing, food outlets and real ale outside of ground. Very friendly atmosphere. Good pricing at £20.
- [Club] bring a bit of what is good about non-League to the match day experience. They are friendly from the off and treat away fans as adults. Not all away fans will respect that but on the night I went it worked very well.
- Police at [Club] are excellent. Pre match Twitter and face to face.

THERE WAS FREE COLD WATER IN THE CONCOURSE TO DRINK - A GOOD TOUCH.

- Nice to see the local police be proactive and helpful with respect to away supporters on social media they're probably up with the best policing I've seen on my travels. South Yorkshire Police take note.

MUST DO BETTER

- The half-time "entertainment" was by far the worst I've ever seen in a sporting arena of any description, utterly dreadful.
- My son was picked out by a sniffer dog and IMMEDIATELY treated like a criminal. The reality was that the dog wanted his used McDonalds wrapper in his pocket. No apologies from the security staff. Very embarrassing to be searched in front of big queues who automatically think you are guilty.
- PA system far too loud and intrusive - completely destroyed the ability for either home or away fans to create any kind of atmosphere despite best efforts.
- As with every ground, get more staff serving at the bars. It's not rocket science.
- I'd like there to be more TVs for away fans so that they can watch an earlier game which is being televised live and it would encourage fans to get in the stadium earlier and buy refreshments.
- Before kick off the home team was announced but not the away team which I found disrespectful.
- When leaving the match, the lighting was not particularly good and this combined with the poor car parking surface, positioning of the away coaches and damaged street furniture was not good, and could have been dangerous.

THE UGLY

- If there is ever a competition for most mean minded but complacent club in the entire universe, [Club] can count on my vote.
- Their clappers used by the home fans are a total embarrassment and should be banned from football completely.
- Can't fault the stadium. Refreshments poor, cocky, arrogant, fawning PA at half time. It's [Club], wouldn't expect anything different.
- Many seats were very dirty. Pigeons!

[GROUND] IS A S**T HOLE, FLATTEN IT AND START AGAIN.

SUPPORTER LIAISON OFFICER

TONY BARRETT



THIS YEAR'S SUPPORTER LIAISON OFFICER OF THE YEAR WINNER (P24-25) WAS LIVERPOOL'S TONY BARRETT, WHO HAS HELPED TRANSFORM SUPPORTER RELATIONS ON MERSEYSIDE.

"I don't think the club was out of touch necessarily," Tony says about the state of play when he came into the role. "But the relationship between the club and supporters had definitely become strained."

Before Tony joined discontent had been rising and things came to a head in 2016 when the club published planned ticket price hikes, leading to protest in the stands and walkouts led by Spirit of Shankly and Spion Kop 1906. The club listened and backed down.

"I was approached by Liverpool several months before I took the role," said Tony, who has a background in journalism, becoming a respected voice amongst Scousers along the way.

"It was a special moment for me and a huge honour - and it would be a fundamental change in career," he said. "But it was a chance to influence the club and make a positive contribution."

So how can a club the size of Liverpool balance the interests of its traditional

local support and its growing international audience?

"A major challenge for Liverpool, like any big Premier League club is retaining that local connection as the Premier League goes global - because like it or not it has become global.

"Traditionally you had a dressing room to community connection, but when the likes of Jamie Carragher and Steven Gerrard move on, how do you maintain that link?"

Liverpool have launched numerous community initiatives, such as Red Neighbours in the L4 postcode to bolster its presence in the immediate neighbourhoods around Anfield.

"We all want what's best for the club," Tony says. "But at any big institution there's going to be competing interests, competing ambitions - you just have to try to do what's right for the club. And not everyone's always going to agree with you or the club's position."

Compared to the nadir of the 2016 walkouts, relations on Merseyside are now much warmer.

"The biggest improvement over the last 12 months has been the embracing of supporter culture. You've got to listen to supporters and have that network to draw on but there needs to be more understanding of the role.

"Fans need to know that the SLO is often the one fighting their corner in meetings. There's a real person behind that role that just wants what's best for you and the club."

RIP JONATHAN

Sadly at the tail end of 2018 Jonathan Waite, the respected and well-liked Supporter Liaison Officer at Tottenham Hotspur, died suddenly at the age of 48.

Jonathan was a genuine advocate of fans within the game and his work at Spurs led him to win the SLO of the Year Award at our awards in 2016. "It was impossible not to like, respect and get on with Jonathan," said Katrina Law and Martin Cloake, co-chairs of Tottenham Hotspur Supporters' Trust.



"HE DEALT WITH EVERY CHALLENGE - AND THERE WERE MANY - WITH PATIENCE AND GOOD HUMOUR.

"HE LISTENED AND HE ADVISED AND GUIDED, AND WE LEARNED SO MUCH FROM HIM. SIMPLY PUT, HE JUST GOT IT." THST

SUPPORTER ENGAGEMENT

Premier League and EFL clubs are mandated by their respective leagues to meet with fans twice per season, at a minimum, and no issue should be "off-the-table".

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) guidelines are in place and the leagues have incorporated versions of these into their rulebooks.

Last year we surveyed fan groups to find out how their clubs were implementing supporter engagement and to assess the picture was across-the-board - afterwards, feeding that information back to the sports minister. Seventy three clubs were covered in the results.

HERE'S WHAT SUPPORTER GROUPS TOLD US:

- 84% of clubs are meeting with supporters at least twice per season. This matches previous survey's results which reported 85%.
- 94% of clubs are fielding appropriate people - either owners, directors

and/or senior executives. This is up 8% from the previous year.

- 39% of respondents said their club either misunderstands or doesn't act upon the guidelines, although this is an improvement as almost half (48%) of fan representatives said the same last year.
- 86% didn't believe, or were unsure, that clubs would be sanctioned by a league for not conforming to regulations.

Deborah Dilworth our EFL network manager, said: "The survey shows dialogue is in a healthy state, but unfortunately there remains a handful of clubs where this isn't the case.

"THERE'S DEFINITELY ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT AND WE'LL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FANS AT CLUBS WHERE THE GOVERNMENT'S GUIDELINES AREN'T BEING MET."

The research also showed that fans want a clear distinction between promotional or social fans forum-style events and engagement meetings - where 52% of fans wanted to hear from CEOs on more difficult topics such as ownership and financial data.

FSA ACTION We will continue to raise cases where engagement guidelines aren't being met with DCMS, the EFL, and Premier League.

MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is a public document signed between two parties, such as a fan group and a club. The MoU isn't legally binding, but it does commit both parties to certain practices, such as a commitment to open dialogue. Think financial analysis, stadium issues, and ownership of the club.



It's an attempt to move away from club v fan dynamic to a more constructive relationship.

Doncaster Rovers, Fulham, Grimsby Town, Norwich City, Nottingham Forest, and Rochdale AFC have already signed MoUs with their own club's supporters' trusts.





FANS FOR DIVERSITY

FANS FOR DIVERSITY

It's been another busy year for the Fans for Diversity campaign as we continue to grow and develop our work across all strands of diversity.

Almost every weekend somewhere in the country there will be a Fans for Diversity event, and we're extremely proud of the work we've done helping supporters over the last five years.

Our work has expanded rapidly to cover all diversity strands - covering LGBT, black and ethnic minority backgrounds, disability - so that fans from all walks of life feel confident coming to us for help with their initiatives.

GUIDANCE GROUP

The 2018-19 season has been the first year where the Fans for Diversity Guidance Group has been in full swing.

The group is a small network of like-minded individuals from across football who provide valuable feedback on the current work of our campaign, as well as suggesting and exploring new areas of work.

The Guidance Group is a great way for supporters to get involved in the Fans for Diversity campaign and help promote diversity at the match. We're extremely grateful for the advice and support the group has given to the FSA already.

CLUB FORUMS

It's been a privilege for Fans for Diversity to take part in many club forums this season - events which give supporters a direct path to talk about diversity issues with their players, coaches and senior management.

Our most recent club forum at the time of writing was at Griffin Park with Fans for Diversity's Anwar Uddin, Brentford's manager, players, and Liam Rosenior on a panel answering fans' questions. We covered some big topics such as 'would you pull your players off the pitch if they received racist abuse?' which showed how valuable these events are - we look forward to rolling out more club forums in the 2019-20 season.

AWARD WINNERS: PROUD LILYWHITES

The Fans for Diversity award is now in its third year and the winners of 2018-19 prize were Proud Lilywhites for their fantastic work on LGBT issues.

Established in 2014, the Proud Lilywhites have become a well-established and respected group within the supporters' movement - in the last 12 months they've helped Tottenham Hotspur Foundation appoint a dedicated LGBT co-ordinator and embed LGBT inclusion in the club's work.

Co-chair Chris Paouros said: "We were delighted, we weren't expecting it at all. There's so much brilliant work that goes on in this area. So the fact that we've been recognised for the work we've been doing over the last four years is wonderful."

WHEN FOOTBALL UNITES



THIS SEASON THE BURGEONING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN FANS OF BRADFORD AND LINCOLN CITY WAS THE SUBJECT OF A NEW FILM CELEBRATING THEIR RELATIONSHIP VIA THE FANS FOR DIVERSITY CAMPAIGN.

When Football Unites is a short documentary by film-maker Liam Sullivan that documents the blossoming relationship, and cultural exchange, between the Lady Imps Supporters Association and the Bangla Bantams.

The two groups made contact through the Fans for Diversity network back in the autumn of 2018, meeting for the first time at Valley Parade in October. The Bradford City hosts taught the visiting Lincoln City fans how to make pakora, took them round the Bantams' ground and visited the Bradford City Fire Memorial.

Then in November the Lady Imps returned the favour - hosting a group of Bradford City fans at Sincil Bank and taking them to the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial centre in Lincoln.

Fans for Diversity campaigns officer Maria Horner said: "This was an opportunity to bring two very different groups together through football to meet and learn about each other.

"TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO ORDINARILY WOULD NEVER HAVE MET - BUILDING UNDERSTANDING AND FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH THE POWER OF FOOTBALL."

The film debuted back in January at the Natural Science and Media Museum in Bradford and is set to be shown again in July during the Bradford Festival.



NON-LEAGUE: PROMOTING INCLUSION

There are huge numbers of people who haven't experienced a match but who carry misconceptions and fears; some based on negative media coverage, which hasn't until more recently begun to balance out with the reality of the match going experience.

So over my first year with the FSA it's been a pleasure to extend the Fans for Diversity campaign's ground-breaking work into non-league football - showing people that there is great live football on their doorstep, and helping those who wouldn't normally consider it get into the matchday habit.

OUR IMPORTANT WORK HAS THREE KEY AIMS:

- To communicate with people who may not think football is for them (which includes underrepresented groups and marginalised communities), and to build bridges between those people, existing supporters and football clubs to create space for a welcome to everyone at football.
- To help support those groups to become more visible and accepted



into the landscape of the football community. This in turn should encourage more people to attend matches, support their club and community.

- To educate and challenge the narrative around discrimination and abuse. One way we do this by bringing people of different backgrounds together in solidarity - football is for everyone and if you share the same team even more so!

And the elephant in the room? Yes, there are still problems with racist and homophobic abuse and all manner of other abuses. There is no quick fix, but as individuals we can make a difference; visible support for our campaign partner Kick it Out - wear a sticker, re-tweet the message against discrimination, help your fellow supporters by endorsing or getting involved in projects which bring people together - and find a way to make a matchday welcome for those who may be different to you, even if it's just a smile.

In non-league we're encouraging clubs to start somewhere, to reach out into their different communities and to try to engage supporters in that process. While you may think it's easier to work with a small club - fewer departments or individuals to be involved in making

decisions - often a bigger club will have a single point of contact and some resources too, which can help. With smaller clubs it can be harder because the people involved are very much focussed on week to week survival and ensuring the match goes on!

This leaves less time for the 'nice to do' projects, but where there is a will, we find a way to help.

There is a lot to love about non-league - those in it, know it. It survives and is cherished thanks to dedicated individuals, supporters and volunteers, yet sometimes it's invisible in its own wider community - I'd like to see that change.



Maria Horner,
Fans for Diversity campaigns officer

STAND UP FOR CHOICE



CAMPAIGN AWAITS GOVERNMENT REVIEW

The campaign to reform the all-seater legislation covering the top two divisions of English football has been chugging along in the background as we await the outcome of a Government review to be published.

Last year, the Sports Minister committed to reviewing the legislation and commissioned independent analysts to look at all the evidence surrounding the issue.

We eagerly await the outcome of that report and fans having the choice of how they watch their football.

WOLVES MAKE STATEMENT

In May 2019 Wolves announced plans to install more than 5,000 rail seats at Molineux. They will become the first Premier League club to retrofit rail-seating type accommodation into an existing stand.

Seats in the Sir Jack Hayward Stand will be replaced this summer by the rail seats and all seats in the Stan Cullis quadrant will be fitted with an independent barrier.

The club said they were proud of the move and say both areas will fully comply with the Sports Ground Safety Authority's (SGSA) most recent guidance.

Head of the FSA's standing campaign Peter Daykin described Wolves' commitment to offering their supporters choice as "great news".

"Government and SGSA are committed to evidence-gathering across a range of different standing technologies and stadium designs," Peter said.

"WE HOPE THAT THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE SUCH A LARGE INSTALLATION OF RAIL SEATS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE GAME PROVIDES A LOT OF DATA THAT CAN FURTHER PROGRESS THE DEBATE."

SUPPORT FOR CHANGE REMAINS STRONG

Almost two-thirds of MPs believe the all-seater legislation governing the top two flights of English football should be reformed, according to data released this year from YouGov.

The polling company recently asked 100 MPs whether they wanted to see a change in the law to allow licensed standing areas at the top of English football. 62 of those asked backed the choice to stand, 22 were against and 15 were undecided.

YouGov also polled 2,000 adults on the same question and nearly half backed reform, with a third undecided. Only one in six were against changing the law.

Support was significantly higher among those interested in football and more familiar with the issue. Seven out of ten adults surveyed who said they had an interest in football were in favour of reform.

This rose further amongst those described by YouGov as having a "strong interest in the game" to almost eight out of ten.





CASEWORK: FAIRCOP

WE ALL KNOW TROUBLE AT THE MATCH IS RARE - BUT IT CAN HAPPEN WHICH IS WHY WE'RE ALWAYS ON HAND TO HELP SUPPORTERS WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN A SPOT OF BOTHER. WE CONTINUE TO OFFER ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO FANS ROUND THE CLOCK WHO FEEL THEY'VE BEEN TREATED UNFAIRLY BY THEIR FOOTBALL CLUBS, POLICE OR OTHER AUTHORITIES.

ON THE PITCH

Pitch incursions became a hot topic this season after one high-profile moron invaded the pitch to assault Aston Villa midfielder Jack Grealish during their visit to St Andrew's back in March.

Despite this particular idiot being arrested and receiving a custodial sentence within 48 hours the national media went into overdrive about the potential for disorder and a return to the 'bad old days'. Pundits were lining up to deliver their hot takes - one ex-pro even suggesting there should be armed police in the stands.

The hysteria was ramped up even further the following weekend when a small number of Newcastle United fans, after a last minute equaliser at Dean Court, spilled over the shin-

high advertising hoardings onto the perimeter of the pitch. Cue more calls for clampdowns on This Sort of Thing. A number of Newcastle fans who were unlucky enough to be pushed over the small barrier onto the pitch (and subsequently whisked away by the authorities) got in touch with us for advice and we put them in touch with Football Law Associates who represented them in court. The fact that the fans left court without banning orders shows once again the importance of legal representation.

Across the media we argued that dragging fans through the courts for celebratory pitch incursions was not in the public interest. The authorities should be able to use their discretion, and we want to see fans dealt with in a more proportionate manner.

IAGS

We're generally the first point of contact for fans when things go wrong, and we can point them in the direction of specialised legal advice - but it's not all negative. This season has seen the growth of a new area of work for us - Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs).

IAGs are groups of supporter representatives who act as critical but constructive observers of policing operations around football matches at your clubs - providing direct feedback to police on their matchday activities.

FSA caseworker Amanda Jacks said: "We've always recommended Police should consider the views of fans - who are the largest stakeholders at football matches - and engage with the feedback they provide.

"ALREADY, IAGS HAVE HELPED MAKE POSITIVE CHANGES AROUND THE COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY WITH WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND THE METROPOLITAN POLICE."



YOU'RE UNLIKELY TO HAVE SEEN THIS IN MANY MAJOR NEWS OUTLETS BUT FOOTBALL-RELATED ARRESTS HAVE FALLEN ONCE MORE - CONTINUING A LONG-TERM TREND TOWARDS HISTORICALLY LOW LEVELS ACCORDING TO THE LATEST HOME OFFICE STATISTICS.

Over the 2017-18 season there were 1,542 football-related arrests, a 6% decrease of 96 on the previous season. Additionally the number of live football banning orders, and new banning orders issued, also fell.

There has been a steady decline in the total number of active football banning orders in the last seven seasons.

ARRESTS DOWN BY 43% (-1,352) FROM 3,174 IN NOVEMBER 2011.

"It's very pleasing to see football-related arrests falling again," said Amanda Jacks FSA caseworker.

"Any match-going fan will know that the overwhelming majority of supporters are well behaved and that matchdays mostly pass without incident - these figures once again reflect that."

The arrest rate was just 3.5 football-related arrests per 100,000 attendees - comparing favourably to other large scale public events.

Of all competitions with 30 arrests or more, League Two had the highest arrest rate of 8.6 per 100,000, while European club competitions had the lowest of 1.2 arrests per 100,000.

DODGY STEWARDING? DON'T SHRUG IT OFF, GET IN TOUCH!

Over recent years, we've seen police increasingly reducing the number of officers deployed in stadiums - rightly so in these times of austerity. A football match is a private event. The club's safety and security team are ultimately responsible.



It's not unreasonable to suggest that clubs have been reliant on police, and as a result haven't invested as much as they should have in stewarding, training and recruitment.

We recognise that stewarding is a difficult job that isn't well paid, but nonetheless these are the people that clubs are employing as front-of-house staff. There is a certain irony that clubs who are so acutely aware of their image and their global brand don't stop to consider the impression that stewards can create.

We've recently surveyed supporters on policing and stewarding - it's telling that results so far indicate overwhelmingly that stewarding at clubs doesn't make supporters feel valued. We're also concerned about the far too frequent reports across the leagues of stewards exerting what appears to be excessive and unnecessary force against supporters.

This is something we will be working on in more detail next season.

STEEL CITY DERBY POLICING

In a consultation led by the FSA earlier this year, Sheffield United and Sheffield Wednesday fans condemned the policing of the Steel City Derby.

More than 1,000 supporters took part in our survey examining South Yorkshire Police's operation before and after the Sheffield derby held at Hillsborough back in March.

The results paint a damning picture of the operation, particularly post-match as Sheffield United fans left the Leppings Lane end at Hillsborough - 72.6% of fans surveyed said the post-match policing of the derby was worse than it had been at previous fixtures.

Additionally, 70.7% described the management of the exit from the stadium as very poor, a further 14.8% described it as poor. Just 4.3% described it as good or very good.

ASKED TO GIVE A SCORE OUT OF 10, WITH 1 BEING VERY POOR AND 10 BEING EXCELLENT, THE POST-MATCH OPERATION WAS RATED ON AVERAGE AS 1.9 OUT OF 10 BY SUPPORTERS.

The pre-match score fared slightly better, though was still rated poorly by fans, averaging 4.2 out of 10 from all respondents.

Amanda said: "There is no doubt that the results of this survey should give all stakeholders ample food for thought. Unfortunately, South Yorkshire Police's approach did not meet

supporters' expectations of how a modern high-profile fixture should be handled. Supporters have expressed serious concerns about the force's communication, conduct and approachability."

Among those who took part in our survey, only 11 described police instructions post-match as "clear, audible and helpful". Almost 80% of those who attended the match believe South Yorkshire Police are worse than average when compared with other forces around the country.



When asked how derby policing could be improved, supporters of both clubs said the force should have more proactive interactions with fans (66.7%). Respondents also felt fans should be more involved in pre-match planning (65.1%) and pre-match communications should be improved (53.3%).

Don't expect and accept - if you've seen or been on the wrong end of shabby treatment, get in touch:

AMANDA JACKS
07703 519 555
@FSA_FairCop Twitter

NON-LEAGUE



Award-winning Curzon Ashton



(CC) James Boyes

FANS CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER ACCESS

Our Fans for Diversity campaign has teamed up with leading disability charity Level Playing Field and the Northern Premier League to help non-league clubs improve access for disabled fans.

The partnership will offer support and guidance to non-league clubs across the division who are looking to appeal to a wider range of supporters and improve disabled access at their grounds.

Fans for Diversity campaigns officer Maria Horner said: "We'd like to create a culture of understanding which, ultimately, results in more disabled fans coming to games and supporting their local side."

Clubs in the Northern Premier League can sign up to the new 'Disability Inclusion Charter', created by Fans for Diversity and Level Playing Field, to receive specialist advice on their facilities and how they can improve.

"PART OF THAT COMES DOWN TO ACCESSIBILITY AND FACILITIES," MARIA SAID. "BUT WE ALSO WANT TO TRY AND SHINE A LIGHT ON AND SHARE SOME OF THE POSITIVE STEPS THAT CLUBS ARE TAKING TO MAKE SURE FOOTBALL IS A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT."

The charter will demonstrate to clubs that improving access is not just about large capital projects like installing ramps and electric wheelchair lifts – but the many small, low cost ways non-league grounds can be improved for disabled supporters.

Level Playing Field's Ruth Hopkins said: "There are a number of low cost and no costs ways to make your clubs accessible to disabled people and signing up to this charter and working with us and the FSA will be the first step in making improvements and enhancing your club's reputation."

Clubs in the Northern Premier League will receive an information pack explaining the aims of the charter and be invited to attend presentation sessions that will raise awareness and help club staff understand the needs of disabled supporters.

"At our level of the game football must be accessible to all parts of the community," said Northern Premier League chairman Mark Harris. "So we fully support a programme of better education for clubs that will help them expand their support base and offer a better fan experience."

NON-LEAGUE AWARD WINNERS

Harrogate Town FC were named as the 2018-19 winners of the Best Away Day in non-league at the National Game Awards in association with Buildbase. This was the second year that we have partnered with the Non-League Paper to recognise the clubs who are the best at welcoming fans across steps one to four of non-league.

We recognise that facilities and resources vary at the different levels of the game, and so categorised nominations at each of steps one to four of the National League System. A judging panel sifted through the nominations we received from fans before deciding the winning club at each level (see below).

THE WINNERS WERE:



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4

NATIONAL GAME COMMUNITY AWARD

Back at our awards in December 2018, we also presented our first National Game Community Award, aimed at showcasing the variety of community outreach work undertaken by non-league football clubs.

The award recognises those clubs that involve supporters and community delivery partners to make a positive impact in their local community.

The winners on the night were Curzon Ashton FC of the National League North, who topped a shortlist that included Altrincham, Boston United, Eastbourne Borough, Hartlepool United and Wrexham.

FSA NETWORKS

FSA NETWORK MEETINGS PROVIDE OUR AFFILIATED AND ASSOCIATED SUPPORTERS' GROUPS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHAPE OUR CAMPAIGNS AND POLICY. THEY MEET A MINIMUM OF THREE TIMES PER YEAR AND EACH NETWORK HAS THREE REPRESENTATIVES ON THE FSA NATIONAL COUNCIL.

There are networks for the Premier League, Championship, EFL Leagues 1 and 2, the national game, community-owned clubs and Fans for Diversity - the latter having a core purpose to address diversity issues, with members being appointed under a process approved by the National Council.

While all affiliate and associate fan groups are entitled to attend network meetings, giving their own points of view and helping shape debate, only affiliate members (i.e. democratically structured groups) can vote at meetings. Individual members may be invited to meetings, too.

Networks have autonomy to dictate their own campaign priorities, although they can't set policy by themselves.

Any decisions which impact the entire organisation must be agreed by the AGM or National Council, should a decision be needed between AGMs. Network disputes would be referred to the FSA Board, with their decision requiring FSA National Council approval.

The vast majority of our work is carried out within policy areas that are already defined - we all want to see affordable ticket prices, for example, and good governance within the game - so it's rare that specific campaign ideas need approval from the AGM or National Council.

As fans we all share a similar ethos but this flexibility allows each network to set its own priorities within an organisation that has a responsibility to the wider membership.

It is possible that a Premier League decision could, for example, be popular among top-flight fans but have negative consequences for those lower down the pyramid. That's largely a theoretical issue at the moment, as fan groups across the leagues are typically consistent in their views on the majority of subjects, but never say never.

Nonetheless, the AGM and networks give all fans the opportunity to debate such issues, and a route onto the National Council, while the overarching FSA structure provides safeguards to manage any tensions in a fair and democratic way.



TONY WILKINSON

(Blackpool Supporters' Trust and League 1 & 2 Network Representative):

"The network meetings are a great chance to speak with other trusts and supporters' group members, the contacts made become useful to call on if they can provide help or advice, and this is something that can grow for everyone's benefit.

"THE SHARING OF IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND INTERESTING PROJECTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE NETWORK IS VERY USEFUL INFORMATION THAT CAN BE UTILISED AT YOUR OWN CLUB. IT'S EARLY DAYS FOR OUR NETWORK BUT THERE'S GREAT POTENTIAL FOR COLLECTIVE CAMPAIGNING AND SHARING OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS."

DAVE PENNINGTON

(MUST and Premier League Network Representative):

"A Premier League network of trusts existed under Supporters Direct auspices, and that was expanded to non-trusts by the FSF pre-merger.

"That network first met with the Premier League in July 2016 and worked hard on the Twenty's Plenty campaign, which itself led to the £30 away cap.

"We focus on common matchgoing issues - particularly ticket prices, TV fixtures and travel matters. Groups also network directly between themselves, sharing information and data to help local lobbying.

"Supporter groups involved in European competition collaborated extensively, sharing major away supporter safety issues to help with match planning and travel arrangements. We provided a lot of advice to Burnley supporters travelling in Europe, and that was welcomed."

GET INVOLVED

The FSA is by fans, for fans - we couldn't exist without our members

All representatives are listed in the opening section of the annual review 'About the FSA' which also explains more about the structure of the organisation. Each network is entitled to have three elected members sitting on our National Council. If you'd like to get involved, speak to your local supporters' group to find out who is representing them at our meetings.



EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE

HOW MUCH MONEY IS ENOUGH MONEY? THE CONCEPT OF A EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE THE LATE-80S BUT THE IDEA THAT WON'T DIE HAS ONCE AGAIN RESURFACED – THIS TIME LED BY JUVENTUS CHAIRMAN ANDREA AGNELLI AND THE EUROPEAN CLUB ASSOCIATION (ECA).

Unsurprisingly, the primary motivation behind the proposal appears to be money, with many of the bigger clubs across Europe looking enviously at the worldwide television revenues secured by the Premier League in particular.

The new format from 2024-25 would involve a Champions League of 32 teams, a Europa League of 32 teams, and a Europa League 2 of 64 teams – with a maximum of five teams from the same national league per competition.

The knock-on effect on English football could be huge. Instead of eight groups of four teams each playing in the autumn, they're going for four groups of eight – which means competing clubs would play 14 times between September and December.

Adding that number of games into an already crowded fixture calendar would signal the end of the League Cup while the FA Cup would become a midweek competition without replays. The Premier League would reduce in size to 16 or 18 clubs.

There's even been talk of the European fixtures taking place at weekends, pushing our league fixtures into midweek slots – which would make life more difficult for away fans in particular, and destroy the traditional culture of weekend league football.

Once initial membership of the new Champions League is established, there'd be promotion and relegation of eight teams from the 32 at the end of each season – with the four semi-finalists of the Europa League being promoted, and only four places available to clubs based on domestic performance.

With the five English teams unlikely to finish outside the top 24, there'd be no prospect of any other English team qualifying for Europe again.

GOOD RIDDANCE TO THEM?

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT THE AVARICE OF JUVENTUS, BAYERN MUNICH AND THEIR ILK? SADLY, THE PROSPECT OF SO MUCH BROADCASTING MONEY GOING TO THE ELITE EUROPEAN CLUBS WOULD HAVE A HUGE NEGATIVE IMPACT RIGHT DOWN THE ENGLISH FOOTBALL PYRAMID.

If they start playing Champions League matches at weekends then the blackout of televised matches at 3pm on a Saturday will soon be a thing of the past, meaning that all down the pyramid clubs will be competing directly against televised football. With the potential for a drastic reduction in the Premier League's

broadcast income, the money that filters down in the form of solidarity payments would take a significant hit.

Last season, Championship clubs shared £72.6 million, League One clubs £16.3 million and League Two clubs £10.9 million of Premier League TV income. The loss of this solidarity money could push a number of EFL clubs over the edge financially.

Premier League clubs have spoken unanimously against the changes saying "qualification for the Champions League and the Europa League must continue to depend on current domestic performance." Presidents from the Bundesliga and La Liga registered their opposition while fifteen Serie A clubs also opposed the plans.

It's also important to remember that fans at the most successful domestic clubs don't back these plans. Liverpool supporters might have loved seeing their team win the Champions League but that doesn't mean they want to breakaway from domestic football.

FSA ACTION Fans can have decisive voice and we'll be at the forefront of any campaign, along with our colleagues at Football Supporters' Europe, as we learn more about their plans. Watch this space.

At the start of June, the ECA clubs voted against the draft reform put forward by Agnelli – but this hasn't stopped those behind the proposals. The ECA is due to meet UEFA in the Autumn to push for changes.



SIX REASONS TO OPPOSE A EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE

1. Promotion and relegation based on sporting performance – from the bottom of the pyramid to qualification for Europe
2. No to closed leagues or franchise football – qualify on results, not through history or heritage
3. Weekends are for domestic leagues – protect fan culture, home and away. No live broadcasts on Saturdays at 3:00pm
4. We want competitive leagues – no to even more concentration of wealth and on-going domination by a fixed few top clubs
5. Domestic football comes first – protect the pyramid and cup competitions
6. Share the wealth – the money from elite football should be shared across the whole game

#ICYMI

OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR THERE ARE ALWAYS QUITE A FEW STORIES WHICH DON'T FIT NEATLY INTO THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS, SO WE THOUGHT IT WAS WORTH RECAPPING A FEW OF THEM, IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

- On the Ball campaign for free period products to be available at football grounds, and they've achieved success at almost 90 clubs now. They started in Scotland, with Celtic being the first to sign up, and have since taken their work south of the border, and even into Europe.



(CC) OnTheBall

- Fans Supporting Foodbanks aka FSF - now where have we heard that before? - continue their great work across the UK, with many FSA affiliates now running their own foodbanks on matchdays to support the local community. Get in touch if you'd like to be involved.
- The proposed sale of Wembley Stadium to Shahid Khan eventually fell through, but not before we surveyed thousands of fans to see what people thought. 58% thought the FA should never sell, 32% would have sold if the deal was right, and 10% thought the FA should not own its own stadium.
- The BBC carried out some interesting research which highlighted a significant gap between actual and reported attendances in the Premier League. It's a bugbear for many fans. We told the Beeb: "If clubs know the actual number of fans through the turnstile, rather than the number of tickets sold or given away, then there's no reason they shouldn't publish that figure."





WWW.THEFSA.ORG.UK

Phone: 0330 44 000 44 | Email: info@thefsa.org.uk

1 Ashmore Terrace, Stockton Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR2 7DE