

THE FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS' FEDERATION

FOOTBALL - OUR GAME!



"I tifosi sono il cuore di calcio (the fans are the heart of football)" . John Charles, centre-forward for Wales, Swansea Town, Leeds United, Juventus, Roma, Cardiff City, Hereford United and Merthyr Tydfil, speaking to Turin newspaper "La Stampa", October 1960

The fans' blueprint for the future of the beautiful game

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.** Football in Britain is at a crossroads. Financially, the game's never been better off. It's never had more committed followers both at home and overseas. Yet never have so many clubs been on the brink of financial extinction, nor has the game been so ridden by short-sightedness and self-interest.
- 1.2.** During last season the chief executives of both the Football League and the Football Association were forced to resign. The root cause of both departures? Power and money. The game's elite in England, Wales and Scotland seems intent on keeping an ever-increasing proportion of the wealth generated by the game for themselves.
- 1.3.** The Football Supporters' Federation (FSF), formed on 1 August 2002 unites the former National Federation of Football Supporters' Clubs (NFFSC) and the Football Supporters' Federation (FSA). It represents over 100,000 of the game's most committed supporters in England and Wales grouped in 124 democratic fans' organisations. They follow teams from the Premiership to the non-League pyramid. They follow the English and Welsh national teams at home and abroad.

- 1.3. It's these supporters who travel thousands of miles throughout Britain and overseas every season. Without FSF members there'd be no game. We pack the grounds, sing the songs, provide the passion.
- 1.4. Yet supporters are the one group in the game which is most frequently ignored. No more. Football supporters are uniting around a set of principles which they believe are essential to the future of football. We invite all those who love the game and have its best interests at heart to join with us.
- 1.5. It's time to act before it's too late.

2. SUMMARY

The *Blueprint* calls for:

- The creation of one unified governing body governing all levels of football in England to replace the current multiplicity of leagues and associations.
- The introduction of revenue sharing between all professional clubs where one quarter of all league TV and gate revenue (including executive boxes) is pooled and divided equally.
- Minimum standards of governance, administration and financial control for all clubs to be enforced by the governing body as a condition of membership and league entry, including a "fit and proper" person test for all persons owning or directing a football club
- An annual club licensing system to be introduced over a five year period. A condition of licensing to include a ban on unfunded revenue deficits.
- The creation by statute of a special legal status giving appropriate forms of "not-for-profit" status for sporting clubs
- The Government to permit safe standing areas at stadia where clubs and their supporters so wish
- An end to constant fixture changes to suit television or policing
- Prior consultation with supporters on broadcasting contracts to ensure a fair deal for the matchgoing fan and an end to TV "overkill"
- An end to bans on away fans and an increase in away ticket allocations
- A comprehensive review of the structure of all domestic league and cup competitions and the structure of the season involving supporters at every stage

- Consultation with supporters on the structure of all European and international club and national team competitions and how they relate to domestic competitions
- The development of clear rules in consultation with supporters to prevent any recurrence of the FA appeals tribunal decision to permit the former Wimbledon FC move to Milton Keynes
- The development of clear, legally enforceable rules to prevent clubs selling their grounds without the explicit prior agreement of their supporters and other another ground being provided in the same town
- Involvement of supporters in initiatives to combat racism on the field and in the stands
- An end to discriminatory treatment of away supporters in terms of ticket prices and allocations in both domestic and international competitions and club levels
- The development of a regular TV free midweek evening with no live broadcast Premiership, Football League or Champions' League games for midweek fixtures to encourage live attendance
- An end to the constant above-inflation increase in ticket prices, particularly for lower priced tickets
- Discount ticket prices for younger and retired supporters with national standards on age criteria
- The development of disabled supporters' facilities at all levels of the game including minimum standards
- Involvement of supporters in all policing and stewarding policies affecting them
- Encouragement and adequate funding of supporter organisation and involvement in the game at all levels
- The introduction of statutory independent regulation of the game