

QUESTIONS FOR CUSG MEETING ON MON 26 APRIL 2021 FROM USERS OF THECUMBRIANS.NET FORUM:

QUESTIONS FOR THE CLUB – ANSWERS FROM NIGEL CLIBBENS UNLESS STATED

Q: Do the clubs owners feel completely stupid for calling a businessman, wishing to help the club, as allegedly having “dubious business practices” and instead running to EWM/Phillip Day for a loan, that according to the times and the Financial Times has dubious business practices by not paying creditors or landlords and having inadequate working facilities in Bangladesh (and not paying what’s due) while at the same time creating a sub company to transfer the profitability assets too and letting it be ran by Phillip Days mate Simpson?

Looking back six years to 2015 is not something anyone has considered. As I have said before, it is in the past.

Q: Does anyone involved or previously involved in EWM have any say in the running of the club?

The only person involved or previously involved in EWM who has any ‘say’ in the ‘running’ of the club is John Jackson.

As a director of Holdings John Jackson has one vote on that board alongside five other directors. Holdings is not involved in day-to-day decisions. As I said in answering questions in Feb 2020:

Q12 “The chairman and director of football work very closely alongside John Jackson to agree spending and funding to support.”

Q34c “In terms of running the club, JJ does not attend games or the club, he is not involved in operational matters or football. His involvement is remote, with a very light touch. His role is not involved in running the club, it’s focused mainly on simply monitoring our finances – like forecast cash requirements and monthly accounts and budgets and, if required, to consider material contracts we enter into. This allows him to be the link with EWM on the commercial funding agreement, and things of interest to EWM when required.”

Given his other commitments and his role, as described above, his involvement was always very limited. Since the funding of EWM had ceased, and the insolvency of EWM, that involvement has also reduced accordingly.

Q: Why is John Jackson still registered as a director?

In the same way as he previously represented EWM, John is the nominee of the new holder of the debt previously advanced to 1921 by EWM, and acts as the main contact point for them.

Q: Who is paying David Holdsworths wages?

This was detailed in an interview I did to N&S in February:

<https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/19115417.carlisle-united-chief-edinburgh-woollen-mill-loans-shirt-sponsorship/>

It was also explained on the website.

David is an employee of 1921 (like all the club staff and paid directors). 1921 pays the wages of all the staff, including David. This has always been the case.

Before David joined the club, 1921 had no budget allocated by Holdings to afford a Director of Football.

When EWM provided cash support to 1921, it meant we then had funds to afford to pay for the role. So, while 1921's costs have increased, EWM provided loans to pay for it, meaning it didn't draw cash from elsewhere within the club.

This was ring-fenced money from EWM for that specific role - meaning 1921 couldn't use that EWM loan money to spend on something else – like players (as some fans have asked). It was loan money specifically to provide additional expertise to target improvement in the direction and management of the football operations of the club, to help bring on-field success and manage the football risk.

Since May 2019, because 1921 has not been drawing money from EWM, 1921 has been paying the wages but also funding the role from its own resources - not EWM borrowings.

Q: What is the plan for succession now. John Nixon mentioned at a fans forum this was nearly done apart from EFL logistics. Is this now dead?

Last week David Holdsworth gave an update on succession from his point of view:

“That’s something that will remain private.”

... before going on to then expand and say:

“As for the way forward, that’s going to be for the Holdings board and whoever else ... I think that will come out in the wash, at the relevant time.”

All the individual shareholders and CUOSC remain committed to succession. Also see Q14 below.

Q: Why did the club quickly remove sponsorship from football index a disgraced company yet still keep EWMs another disgraced company?

The situations are not the same and I disagree with the comparison you make.

We have a long-standing and continuing relationship with those involved at EWM, and that has now extended to its successor organisations. EWM was hit very hard by the covid lockdowns, like many high street retailers.

Football Index's failure is different.

The different circumstances make our approach necessarily different.

I am sure the way we deal with EWM on this matter doesn't surprise anyone and shouldn't - it simply reflects the position and ongoing relationships.

Q: How much is the Thomas Graham's shirt sponsorship worth?

We would not disclose that – just like every other club.

Q: Was it a desperate situation trying to find someone?

Obviously it is commercially important to have a main shirt sponsor, and if one steps aside it is a priority to replace. In the midst of a covid crisis devastating many businesses – it is a very difficult time to achieve that. The timing of the manufacturing process also impacts.

Adding all that together means it's a challenge, and one that needs addressing, but that cannot remotely be described as 'desperate'. That is an inappropriate description.

Q: Why wasn't it tendered out?

It is important to have a sponsor logo put on shirts when they are manufactured.

To wait and do it later costs a lot more and reduces the profit margin. It takes longer to add a logo later, it is logistically more difficult (extending delivery times and quality control) and the risk that the logo fails and peels is far higher. All that means the manufacturing process cannot be held up unless the benefit of waiting is high.

As soon as it became clear EWM would be standing aside, in the remaining time available pre-manufacture, the approach recently detailed by David in the media was followed.

Tendering out or going through a long process in these circumstances was not realistic or the right decision given the benefit of an early deal compared with the uncertainty of a deal later.

We are delighted to have Thomas Graham on board. The response from fans has been fantastic which shows the esteem and standing the business has in our community. The logo on the shirt looks great on the designs I have seen, it is subtle and fits really well with the club colours (avoiding a big transfer sticker that you sometimes see).

Q: Why has the Director of Football and/or other members of the club's hierarchy refused interviews with Jon Colman throughout 2021?

That is not factually correct.

David Holdsworth did an interview as recently as last week and gave interviews during the January window.

I did a long interview with Jon in February which extended over a number of days.

Other 'members of the club's hierarchy' do not generally do interviews and leave comment on all club matters to myself and David.

Q: Why have we not heard a peep from Nigel Clibbens?

That is not factually correct.

There are 30 minutes of video interviews from me in late February and eight interview pieces, and also the N&S interview above.

Additionally, there has been comment on club issues like catering.

I met CUSG fans groups in January and March and gave updates on a variety of topics:
<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2021/march/cusg-minutes-from-the-march-meeting/>

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2021/january/cusg-minutes-from-the-january-meeting/>

NC met CUSG again in April and answered the 20 questions here.

Q: ... or David Holdsworth for months?

There was a series of interviews in January around the transfer window.

There were five interview pieces from DH last week – including comment on kit and EWM.

Q: Why have the 2019/20 accounts still not been released when we are in April 2021?

This was detailed in an interview I did with N&S in February:

<https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/19115417.carlisle-united-chief-edinburgh-woollen-mill-loans-shirt-sponsorship/>.

It was also explained on the website.

"It is likely, meanwhile, that United's accounts for 2019/20 will appear later than normal. Last year the Blues' 2018/19 accounts were published in March but it may be three months later this year. "There's an extension of all accounts now until June 30," Clibbens said. "So normally we file near the deadline and we haven't thought about when we're filing just yet,

due to the uncertainties around coronavirus. But there's a general exemption to allow all businesses to file three months later now."

We would normally have filed the club accounts and held our AGM by 31 March 2021. I understand this is at the end of the time available, making the events reported on in the past, but that is club policy.

The audit of the financial numbers (profit and loss, balance sheet etc) was fully completed by October last year. However, the specific circumstances of coronavirus and the EWM administration (with the impact afterwards on our debt arrangements) means, despite the audit being completed some time ago, there are one or two matters to resolve. These are normal issues associated with our audit, but they are made more time consuming to deal with in this particular year.

The Coronavirus crisis means there is a general legal exemption from the Government this year, which allows companies like us to file later, to deal with these sorts of situations. The end deadline is 30 June 2021. The delay this year, has no impact on our activities or embargo implications.

Q: On the 27th March when we lost at home to Cambridge, in his post match interview, Chris Beech stated that "they (the owners) are very pleased on how it (the season) has gone. Is this true?

David dealt with the season in his interviews last week.

Q: How do they feel that we have probably blown a golden opportunity for promotion, having topped the table at New Year?

Everyone is clearly very disappointed we couldn't carry the results from the first 23 games on for the second half of the season.

Q: What's the club's strategy is to perform better on/off the pitch from here on in? Not the goal - "we'd like to be a solvent championship club by 2030 etc" - but the specific steps the club are going to take over the next X years? Be warned any waffle will be interpreted as you're just making it up as you go along.

The club strategy is detailed here:

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/siteassets/documents/cufc-accounts-up-to-30-june-19.pdf>

It has been published publicly and is there for all fans to see.

This covers our overall objective and vision:

- Our four strategic objectives across our strategic activities of football, business, academy and community.
- It details steps we are taking on an off the pitch, and ...

- The key risks we face.
- It includes financial and non-financial key performance indicators.
- It has objective data measures covering all aspect of every aspect of the club on and off the field so we (and fans) can track performance on and off the pitch.

“The Club’s overall objective remains unchanged ... Working Together, building a Sustainable and Successful Club that we can take Pride in.”

“Working Together in a joined up, co-ordinated way, with people in place with the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes. We need to have all the necessary resources in place in terms of finance, physical assets and human resources across the wider Club. We aim to be open, honest and straight talking, making decisions and doing things for the right reasons putting the “Club First”.

Here as some *quote extracts* from it – to give flavour. Behind all these, 1921 has actions aimed at achieving them. I have included just a few simple examples of actions for illustration [in CAPS].

ON THE PITCH:

“Our key priority remains achieving progress up the football pyramid starting with promotion to League 1 ... our immediate short-term target is promotion to League 1.”

“We want to provide entertaining and winning football that our fans, especially at home, want to come and see and can afford to watch.”

“We are striving to continuously improve the effectiveness of our [football] spending ... Focusing on many non-financial football factors:

- *team management [CONTINUITY – AVOID HIRE AND FIRE].*
- *talent identification, player scouting and recruitment [MORE RETENTION, LESS CHURN, LONGER DEALS, SECOND DEALS].*
- *player coaching and development [BRINGING THROUGH TALENT, LOWER SQUAD AGE, MORE ASSETS ON THE PITCH].*
- *football philosophy [UNITY BETWEEN DOF AND COACH – DOF RECOMMENDS WHICH COACH TO HIRE].*
- *match tactics, game preparation, analysis, [RECRUIT ANALYST AND INVEST IN IT AND DOF].*
- *team development and cohesion [REDUCE PLAYER CHURN BY MORE RETENTIONS AND DEAL RENEWALS].*

“We need to balance “contingency” spending on non-contributing players and focus our spending on players playing minutes on the pitch, while maintaining squad depth for unpredictable circumstances.” [ALLOCATION OF BUDGETS FOR NON-FOOTBALL CAPEX].

“...loans and Academy development players to supplement the core squad, to maximise the effectiveness of our budget” [WALKER, MALLEY, WATT, SORENSON].

“The Director of Football role is a key part of our plan to make improvements across all our Football areas and to balance short and long term football decision making.” [NEW DOF ROLE WITH FULL CONTROL OF FOOTBALL].

OFF THE PITCH:

Finances:

“We are working on the basis of being a self-sustainable club independent of external financial support.”

“Build reserves which are important to provide contingencies against uncertainties”

“We remain focused on increasing the Contribution and cash we generate from:

- *our own underlying recurring operating activities (before any windfalls from uncontrollable Football Fortune).*
 - o *grow income*
 - o *minimise fixed costs and overheads*
- *investing in young players and trading them, especially Club Developed Players from our Academy, to subsidise Total Football Expenditure and provide cash for reinvestment across the whole club.*
- *building a long term ‘legacy bank’ of future contingent sell-on cash inflows from player transfers .*

“Balance resources on and off-the-field.”

“Our long-term aim remains to grow and direct as much cash into our annual Football activities as we can without neglecting investment in other areas of the club.” [MAINTAIN FOOTBALL BUDGET DURING COVID].

“Use Football Fortune to increase football spending above sustainable levels for the short term. Cash from cup success and player sales can make a big difference if that additional cash is used productively.”

Investment:

“Invest in income and cash generating business activities and assets off-the-field. That includes physical assets, expertise and people knowhow. This remains our biggest challenge. It requires capital, planning, long term vision and entrepreneurial risk taking.” [MOVE TO IN HOUSE CATERING].

“We continue to make modest improvements where we can and where necessary, subject to financial constraints, but the task is becoming more challenging.”[WEST STAND ROOFS, PITCH INVESTMENT].

“We have made it clear in prior years, the stadium is a top priority to address. There remains no ability for the Club to self-fund a new stadium from normal trading activities. This severely constrains the options. It requires resolution of questions over succession before any meaningful progress can be made.” [SEE SUCCESSION BELOW].

Academy:

"We are committed to Club Developed Players coming through as:

- elite professional footballers to play in our First Team (in League 2 and be capable of playing higher in the league pyramid). This is the Academy's top priority. [CHARTERS/BRANTHWAITE].*
- players who add significant value to the first team squad for future sale and reinvestment [BRANTHWAITE/MCCARRON/GALLOWAY/COSGROVE].*

"We are investing more cash to retain extra players after their scholarship." [DEVELOPMENT PLAYERS IN 20/21, DIXON, CHARTERS, BELL, BREEZE, FISHBURN IN 21/22].

This is based on operating as a Category 3 academy.

Fan engagement:

"Engaging more with fans, business and the rest of our community and providing more detailed, transparent information about the club." [LIKE THESE QUESTIONS, CUSG, DETAILED ACCOUNTS, REGULAR FAN UPDATES DURING COVID].

"We firmly believe fan representation on the inside of the Club, on the board, with a proper voice and influence, is beneficial to all and helps the Club achieve its goals. [CUOSC ON BOTH BOARDS].

"We want the Club to make more of a difference in the community. As a Club we also continue to support community and charitable causes wherever possible." [WORK OF CUCST].

Succession:

The holdings board's approach to achieving a succession is continuing. The position hasn't changed. The club wants and needs succession. The shareholders still want others to step in. But as I have said before it needs someone with the resources and plan, and who wants to.

Until that happens, as well as implementing plans day-to-day, in the ways detailed above, 1921 board is taking all the steps it can to make the club as attractive and ready for investment to make the process as simple as possible.

That means making it more viable and sustainable and removing obstacles that could be a problem, and that have put off interested parties in the past, led to aborted deals, or could in future. That means:

- Keeping the cash under tight control now – minimising cash losses and cash injections needed in the interim (to keep debt down and avoid any crisis); [NO LONGER DRAWING ON EWM BORROWINGS].*
- Tidying up the balance sheet as far as possible:*

- o avoiding a build up debt [NO LONG-TERM DEBT INCREASES CURRENTLY EXCEPT INTEREST ACCRUING] or creditors or other financial liabilities [LOW CREDITORS].
- o working through legacy financial problems leaving fewer initial issues for a new owner to clean up and sort out – allowing them to focus on development and improvement not crisis management.
- Tidying the funding structure to make doing any deal easier ...
 - o getting rid of the director loans in advance of a sale. [ALL DIRECTOR LOANS GONE].
 - o simplifying the funding structure so we don't have multiple funders and financial stakeholders. [ONLY DEBT IS TO PIONEER, EWM SUCCESSOR AND NORMAL OVERDRAFT AND MORTGAGE].
- Improving our day-to-day management, systems, procedures and compliance so new investors have a 'clean' and credible operating business, with minimum off-the-field issues when they invest.
- Improving the P&L – reducing losses, keeping costs down and avoiding long term obligations allowing the flexibility to direct new money to develop and improve not spend on legacy issues. [LOWER CASH LOSSES].
- Keeping all the shareholders aligned ready to deal on agreed terms. [INDIVIDUAL SHAREHOLDERS AND CUOSC WORKING TOGETHER NOT BLOCKING PROGRESS].
- Avoid the club becoming a distressed sale vulnerable to opportunistic 'investors' or a desperate sale [CLUB HAS NO IMMEDIATE CASH OR CREDITOR PRESSURE]; we have seen this is a real issue at other clubs and learned lessons here.
- Keep the club on the back pages not the front pages to make it a credible organisation to take on - learn from the past mistakes. [NOT A CLUB IN CRISIS AS WE SEE WITH OTHERS LOOKING FOR INVESTMENT IN THE PAST – CHARLTON, BURY, BOLTON, SUNDERLAND ETC].

This plan and approach is independent of results and has not changed because of the results since Christmas.

Q: Did the club have a sufficiently robust covid control policy in place?

Absolutely yes. Throughout we have had a strong approach to compliance. All our covid policies met and continue to meet all the requirements of the EFL. They were reviewed and approved by the EFL. We had routine but independent inspections to come in and observe and check them too.

As guidance changed and new information emerged, we changed quickly and adopted a very cautious approach. We shared updates and experience from clubs with other outbreaks to follow best practice with all the football staff to reflect them in their work and behaviour.

The way we have dealt with covid and our policies, systems and approach were all important in building confidence to allow us to be the first club to have fans back in England, and then increase capacity.

I am happy our policies have always been and remain sufficiently robust.

Q: Who was tasked with developing and implementing said policy as applied to the playing and coaching staff?

CEO Nigel Clibbens, Covid Officer Suzanne Kidd and Football Covid Officer Gavin Skelton.

With support from Ross Goodwin, physio, the club doctor and the EFL.

Q: Why did the virus cause such catastrophic damage to our playing staff in comparison to other clubs where outbreaks occurred?

We don't know the actual damage caused to other clubs where outbreaks occurred, do we? I have seen no proper reliable studies looking at the facts of that. So that makes comparisons impossible. I have read many reports from other clubs and discussed their actual experience them. We tend to see it through our eyes only, looking at our own club. Other clubs have anecdotally said they felt covid has been very damaging to them too.

In our own case, what I believe has been crucial is we have been faced with multiple exceptional issues, not just covid, at the same time – these also followed on from each other. This has made the extra disruption we have faced deeper and longer lasting.

Q: I'm not interested in a figure if we do but can the ownership unequivocally state that we don't receive a fee for every appearance that Henderson makes for Man Utd.

Sometimes I cannot give the information you want. What I can say is this:

The standard arrangements for appearance-based add-ons in transfers are that a 'payment' accrues every 'qualifying appearance'.

That means the previous club is due money, but you don't necessarily get it paid there and then. Typically, payment is made periodically - say every 10 qualifying appearances.

Some appearances 'qualify' and others may not – eg EFL Trophy games.

A start may earn more than a sub appearance.

An appearance may also not count at all, or be worth less, if it's after a certain time in the game.

In the case of Dean Henderson, our deal is typical of all that.

I cannot detail anything more specific.

Contrary to reports elsewhere, whilst it is unlikely ever to be transformational for us, it looks like it will continue to bring valuable income, and that will be welcome.

Q: For the media team, why is your pre game twitter content so poor compared to other clubs? Sometimes there has been nothing on there until after 1 o'clock on a Saturday when other clubs have been building up to the game with interviews etc and I Follow adverts all morning.

(Answered by Andy Hall, media officer)

Thanks for the questions, this is the good thing about football, it brings opinion and constant challenges, and encourages review, rather than any sense of complacency.

Our lead-up to every game has all of the above, and we tend to time the build-up of the release of adverts for iFollow, interviews and previews to coincide with the "user" analytics which, over the years, have shown our highest click-through and hit rate timings during a day.

I think this particular question may have arose after a Tuesday night game, when we left match build up for the following game until the Friday afternoon. The reasoning behind this was that Lewi Alessandra was making career appearance number 500, so we gave our regular Thursday morning press call over to his interviews for that. Such was the interest from the media that Lewi ended up doing an hour before training with the press, and 30 minutes after. Where we would normally have been producing pre-match content, the focus was on this magnificent achievement. The match build-up, therefore, was delayed until Friday, after Lewi's coverage had been completed. This doesn't happen often but, in this case, and I'm sure you'll agree, it was the right thing to do.

In a normal week the build-up articles are always timed to complement other stories we are launching, so that we don't overload one period of a day, with minimum content at other times.

Interestingly, just a few weeks ago an independent Twitter reviewer tweeted about us being the most prolific English professional club in terms of readable, engaging content. I'm sure you'll have seen the tweets relating to this.

That tells us we're doing something right. But, by the simple fact this question has been asked, it shows us that we need to continually review our processes. If we have fans who don't agree, we need to address why that is.

What I will say is that some clubs tweet live from their pre-match press conferences, which naturally increases content - we will never do this. We have an agreement with all of our media partners that this is counterproductive. We tend to agree which content from our press conferences is a priority, and agree timings when we will all release it together.

That's why you often see us tweeting at the same time as our media partners about the same thing. If we drip feed quotes out, as some other clubs do, it reduces the number of people who feel they need to read/watch/listen to the content when it is released in full.

Along with our local media partners we have agreed that the important thing for all of us is to achieve as many readers, viewers and listeners as we possibly can. Hence I don't think we will change our policy of not tweeting live during press conferences.

In terms of Twitter and Facebook, our reach and engagements are now in the millions over consecutive 28-day periods. This is phenomenal for a League Two club and something we are very proud of.

Again, that doesn't mean we're complacent. We will continually review our content, particularly if we receive something like this, where it demonstrates that some people think we should be doing more.

Have you anything specific you feel we should do? If so we would be glad to hear it.

Q: Also why does our manager do his interviews by phone?

This is simply a product of the Covid environment and protocols to reduce risk. As part of the process of submitting match day media protocols, to allow us to host matches in the first place, we spoke to BBC Radio Cumbria about the fact they would not have access to the Red Zone, which would cause a challenge for their live post-match interviews.

Very quickly we came up with a very good and workable solution which maintains covid safety for the club, and for the radio station. That was to conduct their interviews by phone, in the same way we conduct our standard press conferences by Zoom.

Interestingly, for midweek games, it almost always guarantees the manager is on air, live, before the Sports Programme closes down. This isn't always the case when it's done face-to-face.

Being interviewed by phone doesn't change what questions are asked, there is no censorship and, I will repeat, it is the best way possible in these strange times to maintain a safe environment.

Additionally, there is no time limit set on the length of a phone interview. There are occasions when I will interrupt and ask the interviewer to end it asap, but that only happens when a number of agencies are present and when we all have different deadlines to meet.

This can happen at any time, whether it's on the phone or done in person – we have so many media contracts to adhere to and satisfy. We do always make sure that the interviewer feels they have asked the pertinent questions before we bring their interview to a close in this manner.

By working together in this way, we find that everybody is getting what they need. Trust between the club and its media partners is high, and the working relationship is as strong as it ever has been. That all comes from things like this – looking at the problem, finding the best solution and putting it all in place as smoothly as possible.

QUESTION FOR CUOSC – ANSWER FROM NIGEL DAVIDSON

Q Part 1: What is with all the diversity stuff lately and trying to implement it on everyone?

Put simply, it is the responsible thing to do. CUSG are being proactive on the matter by creating a Statement of Intent on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

As is clearly visible across the media, social media, clubs and supporter organisation's news feeds for the last couple of years, incidents of racism and homophobia in football have been increasing, particularly online and the impact of the pandemic has only worsened the situation.

Although there have only been a few smaller issues at Carlisle, there is always the potential to have a major one. So, in part, CUSG want to put something in place to prevent that happening, whilst wanting to be prepared for it if it does unfortunately take place. Those incidents over the past 18 months, which involved supporters, supporter groups and others, were not straightforward to deal with as there wasn't any guidance to work to.

There are several BAME players at Carlisle United and an ever-increasing diverse community in the city and beyond and CUSG want to have a process in place to ensure protection for that community if there is an incident, whilst having the tools to deal with it for our supporter groups and supporters via the Statement of Intent.

Guidance was needed and a consistent approach was proposed and agreed, so now if any incidents occur each group can follow the guidance to try to achieve a positive outcome and all will know we are taking the same consistent approach.

Q Part 2: Why did you deem it necessary to dictate a policy to all CUSG groups?

It was not dictated to the CUSG Group members, it was 'proposed for discussion' and all groups have had their say both on the process and the content of the statement.

Racist and homophobic abuse is currently a massive issue across the football world at all levels and maybe instead of asking 'why we have it', maybe asking 'Why haven't we got it' would be more appropriate? The Statement of Intent exists to help protect our supporters and our community from racist and homophobic abuse, whilst providing guidance on how to deal with incidences that occur. It is a positive message and highlights the fact that there is a welcome for all at the football club, the supporter base and the community.

CUSG is a group of supporter organisations and this work was undertaken to protect the supporters, the groups and anyone connected with Carlisle United.

Q Part 3: Why did you feel it necessary for all groups to share data?

See point above regarding incidents that had taken place cross-group. It was a suggestion made as part of the discussions to facilitate the reporting process if incidents occurred, but

it was deemed to be too complex to try to implement, hence the consistent approach offered by the Statement of Intent that each group will follow if required to do so.

Wider Context:

One member of the CUOSC board sits on the national Fans for Diversity Guidance Group, which is a joint initiative between The Football Supporters Association and Kick It Out. This group is doing some important work across the UK bringing communities together and making football a welcoming place for all to enjoy whether as a player, supporter, employee etc. and there is a plan to do more community and diversity work with the football club going forward, where this link will prove invaluable.

The Guidance Group is currently looking at the reporting process for racial and homophobic abuse to try to make it clearer and easier to report incidents of abuse, with the hope that a change in the law could take place to make this possible. Unfortunately, many incidents are either not reported or only taken so far because of a flaw in the law surrounding reporting and the Guidance Group hopes to contribute work which aid that change.

For more information on the work of the Fans For Diversity Guidance group please see the following links:

The FSA

<https://thefsa.org.uk/our-work/fans-for-diversity/>

Kick It Out

<https://www.kickitout.org/Pages/Category/fans-for-diversity>