

## ITEM C

### **Report by Society Secretary to Scarborough Athletic FC Board Meeting to be held on 18 February 2009**

#### **Strategy to Retain Existing Trust Members and Encourage New Trust Members**

##### **1. Current Position**

The membership position as at 14 February 2009 is as follows:-

Total Membership	499 comprised of:-
Bronze Members	382
Silver Members	38
Gold Members	12
Family Members	37
Junior Members	22
Corporate Members	8

The members who have opted not to renew include 102 Bronze, 1 Silver, 0 Gold, 18 Family, 7 Junior and 2 Corporate. Currently I am in correspondence with 30 members whose memberships have expired. .

On the basis of the figures outlined above anticipated income through membership subscriptions in a full year is approximately 15.25k. The gold, silver and bronze subscriptions generate over 85% of this income.

##### **2. Retaining Members**

Since the launch of the Trust we have had 629 members in total so to date we have 'lost' 130 members (slightly over 20%) which inevitably includes all the supporters of other clubs who joined as a show of support in the early days but were never going to stay.

In order to try and predict what the trends are in relation to retaining members I have looked back over the last 5 months to our first AGM in September 2008 and during that time we have 'lost' 15 members, 14 bronze and 1 junior. In addition there are the 30 members mentioned above who I am still trying to get to pay their memberships. In reality we may lose some of these members but I would not anticipate more than 15 will not renew.

On the whole the Trust has a good track record for retaining members especially the Gold and Silver members whose numbers have remained almost constant from the outset.

I strongly recommend that members are issued with new share certificates, badges and membership cards now the FSA has agreed the rule and name changes approved at the AGM in September. There is a strong case to issue new membership cards each year so that members receive something tangible in exchange for their subscription fee.

Unfortunately due to the rules relating to VAT we cannot offer any financial inducements to members to stay as members or upgrade to Silver or Gold as their subscription fee would then become eligible for VAT and at present they are exempt.

### **3. Recruiting New Members**

We are still recruiting new members but this is not due to any concerted effort by the Trust. Since the early weeks of our first season in the NCEL we have done little to encourage new members.

There is no active attempt to recruit new members at home matches and nothing advertising the Trust even to encourage fans to think about joining. The same can be said about the website where Trust membership is not prominent and over a period of time application forms have disappeared further and further down the downloads page. The online application forms do not have a standing order mandate form on them to encourage members to pay this way.

All the issues described above can be addressed immediately and I propose the following:-

- (i) We have a poster produced as soon as possible advertising membership which can be displayed at home matches and other locations.
- (ii) We have a dedicated small area advertising membership at home games for the remainder of the season - I will see if I can get someone to do my turnstile so that I can do this if necessary.
- (iii) The forms on the website and those we give out should be changed to include a standing order mandate section.
- (iv) The website should be updated to make membership more prominent with details about why it is important and the benefit of being a member.

We don't know why fans join the Trust or equally importantly why they don't so propose we conduct a survey at one or two home games before the end of the season to find out.

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### **4. Other Member Issues**

Our stated intention to issue a monthly newsletter to members has never been achieved and in my opinion is not achievable unless we can identify someone who is willing to undertake the task. Between us James and I can probably manage to produce and issue 4 newsletters a year but certainly no more. Those members who receive copies by e mail only represent around 65 to 70% of the membership with the remaining 160 or so being enveloped and posted. Our intended move to the Intouch database will not deal with this issue.

On reflection I don't think the 2008 election process went as smoothly as it might

have with delays in ballot papers arriving from the USA. I am sure this deterred some members from participating in the ballot because the closing date kept having to be moved back. The way the ballot is organised this year requires some forethought and forward planning.

## **5. Recommendations**

I recommend that the Board approves the following:-

- (i) that members are issued with new share certificates, badges and membership cards now the FSA has agreed the rule and name changes approved at the AGM in September.
- (ii) We issue new membership cards each year so that members receive something tangible in exchange for their subscription fee.
- (iii) We have a poster produced as soon as possible advertising membership which can be displayed at home matches and other locations.
- (iv) We have a dedicated small area advertising membership at home games for the remainder of the season.
- (v) The forms on the website and those we give out should be changed to include a standing order mandate section.
- (vi) The website should be updated to make membership more prominent with details about why it is important and the benefit of being a member.
- (vii) We conduct a survey at one or two home games before the end of the season to find out why fans do or don't join the Trust.
- (viii) We make a decision on the number of newsletters to be issued each year at this meeting.
- (ix) An item is included on the March Board agenda to review the 2008 election process and agree how the 2009 ballot will be organised.

**Richard Adamson**  
15 February 2009