

Community vision



LiviforLife Open Meeting Livingston FC - A Vision for the Future

On Sunday 5th April 2009 the LFL Trust presented its vision of a new future for Livingston FC - a vision for a club with greater emphasis on community values, stronger relationships with local businesses, and wider opportunities for the community of West Lothian to become involved in the work of the club, or develop a career in football.

The LFL Trust, along with many other fans, have become increasingly concerned in recent weeks about the number of press reports and rumours regarding the club's finances and the way the club is being run. We have developed a **Business Plan** with firm strategies and clear financial projections, showing how Livingston FC can survive and look forward to a **sustainable** future.

SOME QUESTIONS WE'VE BEEN ASKED

"Does the Trust want to take the club into administration?"

It is difficult to answer this question without knowing exactly what the precise liability is and who all the creditors are. The club debt would have to be tackled in order to bring some stability back, but

this needn't necessarily involve administration. The Trust would not rule out administration provided that it was in the best long term interests of the club. As far as taking the club into administration goes it is not something that is within the power of the Trust to do. This is something that is done by creditors.

"Does this Business Plan mean the Trust has an agenda against the current owners?"

Absolutely not. Putting a plan in place to run the football club is normal Trust business, regardless of who is in charge or owns the club. It's been accelerated by current concerns and reports, but producing a blueprint for a sustainable future is something we have always been working towards.

"How can the Trust take over a business heavily in debt?"

Putting together a robust and realistic Business Plan is the first step and we feel that we have achieved this. The Trust will need to work with everyone who has a financial interest in Livingston to bring the plan to fruition should the need arise. That means creditors, staff, shareholders, Council and financial institutions.

"Where will the Trust find the millions of pounds required to run a football club?"

Quite simply we do not believe that millions of pounds are required to run a football club of our size. Our plan is based on a sustainable and prudent fiscal policy where expenditure matches income pound for pound. We will work with everyone in the local community to rebuild and develop relationships and will aim to structure the business so that it is self-sufficient.

"How can a bunch of volunteers run a Football Club?" "Who will be in charge of the club..." "... will the Trust Board be taking prominent positions within a new Board of Management at the club?"

The Trust would not run the club. Our plan contains the structure of management at the club as we see it.

"Football clubs are community assets. They can be held by the community for the benefit of all, but this requires an imaginative and inclusive approach from the clubs. When clubs were first established it was for a common cause and this must become the driving incentive again. The cash crisis in football means that a new settlement is necessary - one that confers rights and responsibilities on all the participants in a club."

Peter Hunt, extract from 'Back Home - Returning Football Clubs to their Communities, Chapter 3 - Back to the Future - Football and Communities' Published 2003 Mutuo

The Trust remains as non-profit volunteer organization, supporting the running of the club, with a representative on the club board, and will continue to donate funds and grants to the club. The club Board of Management will be open, democratic and inclusive, and will include board level input from the wider West Lothian community and the supporters. All board posts will be unpaid.

“The fans want SPL football - why should they support a plan which may take the club into the lower divisions?”

We believe what most Livingston supporters want first and foremost is to have a team to watch on a Saturday afternoon that they can be proud of. We have ambitions for the club like all supporters do, but these must be realistic and cannot be allowed to jeopardise the club's existence as has happened in the past. Our plan is based on a club operating at the current level - whether it remains there, goes up or goes down will depend almost entirely on the level of support it gets from the local community as a whole.

Will the Trust maintain full time football?

The Trust plan as it stands includes provision for a first team squad of 16 players training and playing on a full time basis, supported by a full time youth team. Based on our current, conservative income projections this is the size of playing staff we believe the club can realistically afford. Our vision for the club is clear in terms of matching income and expenditure and ending the overspending the club has done under various owners. It follows that if the Trust plan was put into practice and income turned out to be higher than anticipated in our Plan, then there would be scope to spend more on salaries and increasing the size of squad.

“What if the local businesses and the people of West Lothian don't respond to a community-led club?”

The job of the Livingston FC's management team would be to run a club in which the community can be justifiably proud and we are confident that if run properly the business community and population will respond.

Come and have a chat

The LiviforLife Trust are holding two Open Evenings at the Livi Inn, Livingston Village, at which members of the Trust Board will be happy to discuss the Trust's vision of a community-led club, and our Business Plan defining the future of the club.

The evenings will take place on **Monday 4th May and Monday 11th May from 6.30pm** and are casual open events at which anyone with an interest in the future of Livingston FC can join us for a drink and a chat. We will be open to all questions, concerns, ideas or thoughts put forward and are particularly keen to hear from people who, for whatever reason, have doubts or concerns about the viability of the Trust's vision for a new future at Almondvale - should one be needed.

We all know that our club is going through difficult and testing times, with grave concerns for it's survival, and press reports have been very negative towards the club. What is important is that all fans of the club, whether they are Trust members or not, are able to have their say in what could turn out to be the only option for a future for the Club, should the worst happen.

We would be delighted to see you at either of the Monday night events, even if you can only manage along for a few minutes. Your input would be most welcome, and we hope that the Trust's supporters and doubters alike can see it as an opportunity to have your say in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.

So come along to the Livi Inn for a drink and a chat. Hope to see you there.

We strongly believe that sufficient support exists within West Lothian to sustain full time professional football. Things have gone wrong in the past not through a lack of support, but through over-ambition and expenditure out of line with income.

To view the LFL Trust Presentation and Minutes of the Open Meeting, visit www.liviforlife.co.uk

The Community Club Commitment

The Trust's Business Plan requires the supporters to take a realistic view of the current financial state of Scottish football, and an honest appraisal of our club's current standing within the Scottish game.

The plan is a radical change to previous fiscal policies at the club, and is built on viable, realistic financial projections, plus a strong belief that this club must win back the respect of the local population and the business community. The future success of Livingston FC on the football stage is wholly dependent on the club having a stable and sustainable financial platform from which to build and progress.

A Community Football Club does not preclude success on the football pitch but those successes cannot be bought with funds we cannot afford to pay back.



*Image
Steven
Carrie*

Background to the LFL Trust

The LiviforLife Supporters Trust was formed in 2004 in the wake of administration and we officially launched in September of that year.

The Trust has a 1% shareholding in Livingston FC, and has assisted the club with funds of over £32,000 through grants and the share purchase. As Livi shareholders our members have the right to know that Livingston FC is operating under sound financial management, and that it has a secure future as part of the wider West Lothian Community. **The LFL Trust board has a responsibility to its members to ensure that we have an alternative plan ready to be implemented should we be required to secure the club's future.**

Join the LiviforLife Trust and become a shareholder in Livingston FC

You can get a membership form from any member of the Trust Board or by emailing us at enquiries@liviforlife.co.uk, or you can download one from the Trust website at www.liviforlife.co.uk.

The **LiviforLife Supporters Trust** is a non-profit co-operative society run by fans of Livingston FC under the auspices of **Supporters Direct in Scotland**

www.supporters-direct.org

Supporters Direct
in Scotland

the supporters' trusts initiative