

Halifax Town Supporters' Trust

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2009 AGM

Wednesday 17 August 2009 :: 19.00
Southdale Lounge, The Shay Stadium, Halifax

The Halifax Town Supporters' Society Ltd (trading as the Halifax Town Supporters' Trust) is required to hold its AGM within 6 months of the end of each financial year (rule 31). Tonight's meeting is therefore late. Although unrelated to the Trust, unavoidable delays were caused following the death of two of the secretary's close relatives. Further delay was caused trying to secure a venue that was available for two consecutive Wednesdays (this is necessary in case the AGM needs to be deferred per the constitution).

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. To receive and approve the minutes of the 2008 AGM
3. To receive and consider the accounts, balance sheet and the report of the Society
 - a. Appoint auditor
4. To discuss and consider changes to the HTST constitution
5. Any other business
 - a. Elections
 - b. Questions and answers

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Minutes of 2008 AGM

Held at The Southdale Lounge, Shay Stadium, Halifax on Wednesday 16th July 2008 at 7.30pm.

Present: J Haymer (chair), D Linley, J Meynell, M Bishop, M Butterick, G Butler, N Fletcher, A Alderson, G Probets, C Gledhill, G Bowers, L Sykes, M Yates, M Reddy, P Holroyd, J Forster, P Lassey, D Taylor, G Townsend, R Taylor, J Monaghan.

Apologies: B Whiteoak, A Collins, A Heaton, G Privett.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the seventh AGM of the Halifax Town Supporters' Trust and each Board Member briefly introduced themselves to all attendees, who had each been issued on arrival with the Board's 2008 AGM report and a copy of the previous year's AGM minutes.

1. APOLOGIES

Were advised.

2. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE 2007 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting held on 31/07/2007 at the South Stand Lounge, Shay Stadium, Halifax were received and approved.

Proposed – P Holroyd
Seconded – M Yates

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE ACCOUNTS, BALANCE SHEET AND THE REPORT OF THE SOCIETY.

The accounts and balance sheet were received and approved.

Proposed – P Lassey
Seconded – C Gledhill

It was agreed that the auditor would be re-appointed for the 2008 year on condition that amendments to the constitution removing the need for an audit (in favour of an independent examination) would be presented at the following AGM.

Proposed – M Reddy
Seconded – C Gledhill

Time was allowed for attendees to review the various reports of the Society as presented in the 2008 AGM report. Several points were debated, in particular in relation to the Society's involvement with the Shay Stadium Trust and the expected agreement to allow the lease for the Stadium to be returned to the Council.

4. TO DISCUSS AND CONSIDER CHANGES TO THE HTST CONSTITUTION

Several changes to the Society's constitution were proposed by the board for review by attendees. Further explanation was provided where requested and votes taken to approve the changes to the following rules:

Rule 1 (75% majority required) – passed.
Rules 20.a, 54.a, 57, 58, 61, 64, 72 and 111 (50% majority required) – all passed.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The appointment of A Alderson, M Bishop, M Butterick, A Heaton, J Meynell and J Monaghan to the Society Board was approved.

Proposed – C Gledhill
Seconded – M Reddy

The Chair formally closed the meeting at 20.55pm and thanked everyone for his or her attendance.

Foreword

by Dave Boyle, Chief Executive, Supporters Direct

As the football public watched the players of Barcelona parade the European Cup after beating Manchester United in Rome in May this year, the Barcelona fans were doing more than vicariously cheering their heroes as they made it happen. It wasn't just that their money paid for Samuel Eto'o and Lionel Messi, scorers of their two goals but that they had turned the club around in 2002 and put it on the path to success.

The club is a mutual, owned by 130,000 members worldwide who in 2002, elected a new regime under Joan Laporta to run the club. Laporta promised to sort out the finances after years of poor performance on and off the pitch that had left the club a shadow of its former self. Members were especially worried that the old guard's plans to turn things around involved challenging the long-held tradition that the club's shirt was not for sale to commercial sponsors, something which made the club legendary across the football world.

Contrast that with Manchester United. The club has been loaded with £600 million of debt, which achieved not a single productive goal other than transfer ownership from a reasonably diverse set of shareholders to the Glazer family from the USA. Manchester United fans could do nothing about this, and since then, have been able to do nothing about challenging spiralling ticket prices at the stadium. The club now works in the interest of the shareholders, and the servicing of those shareholders adds to the cost charged of punters and the service they receive. And if they don't like it, they can take their custom elsewhere.

Mutuality and sport are a perfect fit, because they resolve the central tension that runs through most sports enterprises – the balance between the economic and sporting goals of the club, between the club's status as a business and as a cultural institution.

A club has a set of stakeholders who have many expectations of it. They want it to be successful on the pitch; they want it to respect the club's history and tradition, and to respect the effort poured into it by generations of fans; they want it to understand its place in the community and to make a positive impact upon it; they want it to be solvent and they want it to be affordable.

Many of these hopes are clearly contradictory. In simple terms, there are three key objects a club can achieve: affordability, success and solvency. You can have two at any one time, but rarely all three. In every case, the people who will live with the decision are the fans, who will bemoan a poor team, bemoan high prices or lament the club's insolvency.

Taking those objects, the overall performance of clubs suggests they're pretty poor at managing the relationship between them. The fact that ticket prices have outstripped inflation by around 1000% suggest that they haven't negotiated the affordability very well, and with over half the English professional football clubs having been in administration since 1992, insolvency has proved a tough one too. And success? Well, only four teams have won the league since 1992.

Even though they are the stakeholder group most affected, what is astonishing is that they have no say whatsoever in the decision-making process. The decisions about salary levels, ticket prices, club strategy and so on are all made by the board with no meaningful input from fans.

That's the main benefit of mutuality – accountability for poor performance. Democracy enabled the members of Barcelona to change the strategy to winning effect. It's not that mutual clubs will do better (though on average they do) but that when they don't do as well, the people to whom it matters most can do something positive about it.

Supporters Direct have been working to bring mutual values to bear in spectator sport since 2000. We form groups of supporters who organise around their club and take as much of the club into the collective ownership of the group as possible. The groups are mutuals, registered as I&P societies. There are now over 160 across the UK, in football, rugby league and rugby union. 13 clubs are owned by a supporters' trust, with another 40 having an elected director representing the supporters in the club.

Whilst the peculiarities of professional sport differ from many of the more obviously commercial sectors in which mutuals operate, there is one clear principle we share - that accountability makes for better enterprises. For individual members, there is a stake in the enterprise and a better service undertaken for them and only them and for the institution, there is a mechanism to correct poor performance and bring stakeholders along as partners, rather than customers dragged kicking and screaming towards a brave new financialised future in which they have little say in developing and less interest in its achievement.

FC United of Manchester made history this year with their innovative season ticket scheme. The board wrestled with the dilemma of knowing they needed to raise £125,000 from fans for the club's operating costs, but knowing that some fans would be struggling in the teeth of the recession. They quickly realised that they were wrestling with a problem of defining what was affordable, which was ultimately a subjective matter. So, why not just ask fans to pay what they could afford?

As with Radiohead giving away their last album for free, the more pessimistic assumed that fans would free ride and say they could afford much less than they could in fact give. They didn't reckon on the fans delight in confounding expectations.

The club was formed against the backdrop of the Glazer takeover of Manchester United in 2005, and naysayers predicated that 'it would be all over by Christmas'; four years and three promotions later, they sit in the Northern Premier League with average gates higher than their hosts at Gigg Lane, Bury FC, with plans for a new stadium in Manchester at an advanced stage. The club is an IPS, with over 1500 members electing the Board and setting policy. They decided in previous years to not raise ticket prices, and not to have a sponsor.

The beauty of their mutual structure became clear as they passed the £125,000 target just before the start of the season. Club Spokesman Jules Spencer said:

"It's very pleasing to hit our cash target, but the success of the campaign cannot be measured in purely monetary terms. Success in this instance is measured by the fact that we have fulfilled our commitment to providing affordable and accessible football. And it is measured by the fact supporters have been empowered to be able to influence the future of their club. It has worked exactly as we'd hoped it would.

"Some supporters who could afford to pay a bit more than they did last year, have done. But importantly those who could not afford to pay as much as the previous season have been able to renew their tickets by paying less. We were the first to introduce such a scheme and it'll be interesting to see if any other clubs follow suit".

It's safe to say that the needs of lower-income fans are not at the forefront of most clubs, but at FC United they are, because the fans are the members who run the show. The club capped their success by being the well-deserved recipient of this year's Co-operatives UK Excellence Award for promoting Co-operative Values and Principles.

Chair's Report

Things haven't been quite as stable over the last twelve months as I am sure everyone would have liked. The sacking of Jim Vince, murmurings of 'behind the scenes' discontent and a final league position of 8th ensured a disappointing first season for the fledgling club. To top it off the owners of the club continue to show complete disregard to HTST and its members.

We are mindful that there was little in the way of a pre-season last year and it would be unfair to not compliment David Bosomworth and his colleagues for the areas in which progress has been made.

The professionalism shown in certain areas supersedes anything I can remember since becoming a supporter of Halifax Town back in the 1980's. The corporate brochure for example puts the club across as an extremely credible organisation for local businesses to come on board and support. Hopefully this will be the case!

The clubs best signing to date was probably that of Peter Stajic into the role of Sales & Marketing Executive. The commercial side of a football club is probably the most vital, yet an area which has quite often been ignored in the past at Halifax Town. This was identified immediately however and Peter can boast a solid first season at the club as an employee.

Commercial income is important to the future success and stability of the club, but it should be remembered that we only have a small although extremely loyal fan base. New ways of raising funds need to be introduced which do not rely on the same small band of supporters.

Our fundraising efforts have taken a bit of a backseat as we felt it important to allow Peter the opportunity of having a clean run in his first season in the role. Whilst over the years the Trust has run at least one raffle per season, we have been mindful to not tread on the toes of the football club.

Attracting new supporters onto the terraces has to take priority over the next 12 months although it is unfortunately not as easy as it sounds. There are two main factors when it comes to attracting new fans to the club – success on the field and a strong, credible and professional image in the community which FC Halifax Town serves.

Building a winning team is of course the job of the manager and I am sure everyone wishes Neil Aspin the best of luck. Success off the field is a responsibility shared by us all – from boardroom level down to the supporters on the terraces – and it is essential that we all unite as one.

The clubs owners do continue to let themselves down badly in this regard. Their continued show of ignorance towards the Trust leaves a bitter taste not only in the mouths of those on the Society Board but also many of our members. We are not different from the other supporters of the club; we want exactly the same thing – success. Yet we continue to hit a brick wall when it comes to communicating with the clubs owners.

Earlier in the summer we were told that our help in organising the Open Day was not welcome even though we had absolutely no interest in taking any share of the profits. Our four-figure sum offer for a page in the matchday was rejected and to top it off, we have been banned from doing any form of sponsorship with the club.

It simply contradicts the owners' continued appeal for everyone to work together.

Inexcusably Mr Bosomworth has done his best to retain a divide which has existed from last summer by renegeing on a number of promises and attempting to push the HTST out of sight, and out of mind. Whilst the Chairman and his fellow directors see no place for the Trust at FC Halifax Town, this is of course not their decision to make.

The football club is an institution made up of the local community so whilst they may own, control and even dictate what happens to FC Halifax Town as a company, they do not and won't ever be able to control FC Halifax Town as an institution.

HTST will exist much longer than their ownership of the town's football club. As an organisation we will continue to be vigilant and have the courage of our convictions to speak openly and frankly when we hold concerns over how the club is operating. We want to be an organisation made up of activists rather than objectors and thankfully, to the owners' credit, we have had little to say or object to over the last 12-months.

The couple of months prior to last year's AGM saw the Trust battered and bruised by a number of resignations plus comments made – many inaccurate – about the infamous Plan B. In view of this we decided that a year of consolidation, where we would attempt to build bridges, increase our community activities and offer help and support to the football club, was the best way forward.

We have worked to put something back into the community which consequently portrays the club in a positive light. People may argue that our community work is done under the HTST banner but we are representing FC Halifax Town and ensure that we are always professional in how we go about our work.

The football club, as an organisation, has a history of being controlled by a small minority almost always without debate. The supporters have been raised on such a diet which is why many see the idea of the supporters' voice being heard as an alien concept. Our challenge has been, and remains, to educate the support base about their unequivocal right to at least have an input in the direction of the organisation closest to their heart.

It is very important to know what decisions are being made which affect us, why they are being made and by whom. It is not good enough to just accept at face value that those who hold the power are doing a decent and honourable job. A lack of transparency and accountability are currently two of the biggest issues which are currently affecting the beautiful game. They are also two issues which continue to blight the ownership of Messrs Bosomworth, Ham and Peacock at FC Halifax Town – only they can change this.

We will continue to work to promote FC Halifax Town in the community with the benefit of helping the club develop its fan base and numbers through the gate. Halifax Town, under previous regimes, has a history of failed opportunity in terms of exploiting the potential of the locality and the Trust, with or without the club, can make a difference in this area.

Thanks as ever to our members and corporate partners for their continued support.

Gavin Butler

Secretary's Report

Society Board

Following a turbulent 12-month period for the Trust in which 12 members of the Society Board tendered their resignations, it is pleasing to report that since the 2008 AGM only one member of the Board has resigned.

For the sake of completeness it must be reported that during 2008 a total of seven members of the Society Board resigned their positions. Five of these were recorded on the previous year's AGM notes, and included Allan Baker, Roger Bottomley, Pam Burton, Anne Stajic and Mark Yates.

The other two were Mark Butterick and Jack Haymer. Jack, the former club's Vice President agreed to be co-opted onto our Board just prior to the 2008 AGM in order to help the Trust through a difficult period, and stepped down immediately after chairing the AGM. His tenure was always expected to be brief and he left the Board with our sincere thanks.

Mark resigned in September 2008 citing concerns about our Code of Conduct which he had earlier agreed to be bound by.

Business Friends and Pub Pals

You may recall that during the year we felt compelled to offer a repayment of membership fees to all our corporate partners due to being unable to fulfil one of the key membership benefits. It was customary for the club to provide a page in the matchday programme for our use, within which we were able to thank all the businesses that supported our organisation. During the previous six seasons the HTST has paid more than £1,800 for this privilege.

From our point of view it was a win-win situation for all concerned. The businesses paid their HTST membership fees, which we used to help pay for our page in the programme, within which we kept our members up-to-date on Trust issues and attempted to recruit new members. The business, the Trust, the club and members all benefitted.

As it subsequently became clear that we would not be provided with space in the programme for the 2008-09 season, we decided to cease recruitment of further corporate partners for the foreseeable future until and unless this situation was remedied. We did, however, offer all our existing partners the chance to renew their membership and pleasingly many did.

A total of five refunds were claimed while most of the rest replied stating that a refund wasn't necessary.

Paul Holroyd

Treasurer's Report

For any organisation, losing over 80% of their assets in a year can only be considered disastrous. That those assets were a shareholding in Halifax Town, built up by the supporters over a number of years, make it even worse.

Not surprisingly the liquidation of Halifax Town AFC Ltd had a knock on effect on the Trust finances. Over 150,000 shares and £10,000 in loans were written off overnight, resulting in a substantial on-paper loss on the balance sheet. Of course these paper accounts do not tell the full story as the money was never invested expecting any sort of return. Instead the loss of fans part ownership and influence in the running of their club is the true loss to all supporters of Halifax Town.

Within the accounts there are some points of interest.

- Commercial income was down over the year, perhaps in part due to having lost Pete Stajic's undoubted skills in this area from the previous year – although of course we are pleased to see Pete putting those skills to use for the club itself now. In addition the majority of proceeds from the Festive draw at the end of 2007 were passed to the club in January 2008, to help with the club's stricken financial situation.
- A sum of £1,400 was paid to the Halifax Town Youth Trust as sponsorship and support.
- £740 was paid to our solicitors to prepare the paperwork for the transfer of the Trust's shares to the consortium, who at the time were seeking to build up their shareholding. The consortium had agreed to meet our legal costs; unfortunately this did not happen.

Thankfully there was some ray of light amidst the doom and gloom! The final cash position was around £1,000 up, helping to build up funds for when they are next needed. It is also anticipated that the £5,000 loan the Trust made to the Shay Stadium Trust upon its creation will be repaid shortly; something which was due earlier in the year but which we have been patient in waiting for.

Andrew Heaton

Auditor

It is proposed that Mr John Adcock FCCA be appointed auditor for the accounting year ending 31/12/09.

The Shay Stadium Trust

As members will be aware, the redevelopment of the East Stand at the Shay is well underway and should be completed around Christmas time.

A couple of Society Board members were recently given a tour of the building site and were impressed with the progress. There are still various walls and partitions to be built but it is possible to get a good feel of the layout. The various offices, changing rooms, toilets, food kiosks, bars, etc, are taking shape and the view from the back of the stand is impressive.

There are a collection of photos on our website – www.htst.org – and we will hopefully add to these as the development nears completion.

The Shay Stadium Trust does still exist as an entity, but is due to be liquidated shortly following the surrender of its lease back to Calderdale Council. We feel it appropriate at this time to place on record our thanks to a number of people who have been involved in the long and difficult journey in seeing the development finished.

HTST member, Peter Lassey, was the brains behind the document – *The Shay: a Stadium for Calderdale* – which got the ball rolling back in 2002. Peter had the vision of a community stadium, and with the help of a working party made up of board members from both the HTST and the FaxTrust, the document persuaded the council and both clubs to sit around a table to discuss a realistic way forward for the stadium. Peter later went on to be the HTST's first representative on the Shay Stadium Trust.

Richard Harris and Allan Baker also deserve our thanks for their commitment and dedication as our representatives on the SST. We should also thank Margaret Wilson and Malcolm Powell who have been the representatives of the rugby club's supporters'.

Geoff Butler shared Peter Lassey's vision of the community stadium concept, and has shown a remarkable level of patience and commitment in developing and progressing the redevelopment of the Shay. In the dual role of Stadium Manager and SST Chief Executive, he has had to juggle his various responsibilities whilst being a diplomatic peace-keeper between two clubs who at times remained reluctant to work together.

Thanks also go to the independent directors who have been diligent, responsible and dedicated. They have been Roger Simpson, Keith Butterick, Simon Hartley, Alan Walker, Philip Hellawell, Michael Steele (Company Secretary), and last but not least Calderdale Council observer, Gerry Norrie.

Things haven't always gone to plan, and it was never the intention for the lease of the stadium to end up back in the hands of the local authority. But this maybe is the Shay Stadium Trust's greatest achievement – changing attitudes at Calderdale MBC.

Having had their fingers burnt in the past, the Council for years were reluctant to even show the slightest interest in the Shay Stadium. However, SST have successfully shown that the Shay need not be something to be viewed negatively, but something which can be an asset to the community of Calderdale.

Council Leader Cllr Stephen Baines deserves our appreciation for having both the courage and vision to bring to a positive conclusion something which had for too long been an embarrassment to the two clubs, their supporters and the public of Calderdale.

Halifax Town Centre of Excellence

HTST have been proud over the last 12-months to be associated with and sponsors of the Halifax Town Centre of Excellence and Youth Team. Our sponsorship saw the name of the Trust printed on the shirts of each age group, U-9s to U-19s, and also helped fund a number of scholarships.

We value greatly the job that Des Hazel, Nick Fletcher and all the staff at the Centre do not only in developing the best of local talent but also promoting FC Halifax Town in professional light. We have listed our reasons why we feel FC Halifax Town needs a Centre of Excellence.

1. **It feeds the Youth Team** – Next season approximately ten Youth Team players, out of a squad of 16, will be products of the CoE.
2. **It is a potential profit raising arm of the club** – The CoE is totally self-funding and costs the club nothing to operate. Any players which progress into the first team and gain a transfer will represent a 100% profit for the club.
3. **It serves the community** – It is a vehicle for local youngsters aspiring for a future in football in which they receive the benefit of the centre's expertise. They are coached in the correct environment and by the right people.
4. **It increases the fan base** – The CoE reaches right out across a 60 mile catchment area as well as embracing the best of local talent within the Calderdale area. Many of these young players would not have been interested in Halifax Town without our existence. Some, and perhaps their parents, will, almost certainly, become fans.
5. **It may produce players of a high quality** – With a wide recruitment policy that embraces finding and attracting quality players at a very early age, combined with a diligent 10 year coaching programme, the CoE should produce high quality players.
6. **It will be ready if, and when, the club enters the Football League** – It takes 5 to 10 years to build a mature, effective CoE. If the Club have ambitions to return to the Football League in the foreseeable future then the time to build the CoE is now.
7. **It is, by design, a quality organisation** – In order to be properly effective the CoE needs to compete in a games programme against CoE's of other professional clubs. Permission from the Football League is required if we are to play against these sides and a strict audit has to be passed in order to receive the permission.
8. **It completes the package of a club's remit** – Serving the first team, commercial activities and youth development should constitute the remit of a good, professional club.
9. **It provides an opportunity for career development** – As well as helping potential footballers progress in the game, there are approximately 50 young players currently playing

professional or semi professional who have graduated from the CoE over the last 3 years. It also provides learning opportunities for coaches, referees, physiotherapists, etc.

There is a misunderstanding by some of what the CoE is about, what it does, why it exists, etc, so we have also listed some misconceptions concerning the organisation.

- 1. Ex-Football League clubs dissolve their centres when relegated to the Conference** – There are several examples of ex-Football League Clubs who still operate a CoE including Wrexham, Cambridge, Scarborough, Boston, Chester and Mansfield to name but a few.
- 2. It will not receive Football League permission to operate** – The Centre has been audited by the Football League and has their permission to continue operating. To pass the Football League audit the Centre has to hit minimum operating standards in a number of areas including, among others:
 - Playing pitches** - these have to be of exclusive use to the CoE, conform to the minimum/maximum size per age group, are all at one venue, have separate toilet facilities for parents, separate changing facilities for officials, be reasonably flat with a good surface and be properly marked out.
 - Training facilities** - these have to provide so many square metres of training area per player, a separate waiting area for the parents, toilet facilities, indoor training facilities and be exclusive to the CoE on the night.
 - Staffing Levels** - the Centre has to provide 2 coaches per team, a goalkeeping coach, a physiotherapist, a Head of Development and a Centre Welfare Officer.
 - Policies** - the Centre has to have written policies on a number of issues including Child Welfare, Health and Safety and Codes of Conduct to name just three. It also has to ensure that these policies are implemented and properly policed.
 - Training and qualifications** - the staff must attain minimum qualifications depending upon their position and the Centre must ensure adequate training takes place.
 - Player assessments** - protocols relating to player assessments must be followed including the players receiving twice yearly feedback via formal interviews.
- 3. It cannot operate without money from the club, which could be put to better use** – The Centre is completely self funding. Its business plan sets its parental contributions at a level that ensures that it can continue to meet the high performance standards demanded by the Football League in key areas.
- 4. It will not produce players for the club** – The Centre is now the major provider of players to the Youth Team. The Youth Team players are selected on merit and at present the Centre players are of a higher standard, generally, than players recruited from other sources. Players are not yet progressing into the first team, although 6 or 7 Youth Team players did train with the First Team last year mainly due to a] the lack of a reserve team prevents the Youth Team players from adjusting to the transition and proving their worth to the First Team manager in a relatively risk free environment and b] the process of producing Youth Team players for the First Team is still in its infancy.
- 5. The Centre will not keep its players because they cannot be signed on Football League Schoolboy Forms** – Whilst it is true that Halifax cannot register its players on schoolboy forms, that does not necessarily mean that it will lose the better ones to Football League Clubs. Only 5 players have been poached in the last 3 years - and all of those were spotted in local league summer tournaments. Since the Centre has now altered its rules on these tournaments, preventing players from appearing in them, the chances of this happening again are much slimmer. Football League Clubs are not permitted to scout at the CoE matches without the Centre's permission - thus restricting the possibility of players being spotted. Players of outstanding ability will be pushed in the direction of the Centre's 'Partner Clubs' who will pay generous compensation packages. Furthermore the 'Partner Clubs' – who will be Premiership Clubs – will send their 'rejects' to the CoE and FC Halifax Town Youth Team. Some of these may well be good enough for the First Team. Lastly the vast majority of the Centre's outstanding players, currently running at somewhere in the region of 30 to 40 players, are still registered with the Centre.
- 6. The process of charging parents is not sustainable and immoral** – Primarily the Centre charges for the player to receive professional coaching in a correct environment. The parents are aware that it is difficult for them to achieve this elsewhere and are, therefore, happy to pay. Those who can't afford to pay are offered scholarships. The deal is not that the CoE will guarantee them that their children will be professional footballers - the deal is that the CoE will

offer them a package that they will find difficult to obtain elsewhere and that the player's talent will take him where he deserves to be. The Centre also agrees to open doors for the players with potential to become professional footballers - if not through Halifax then through the myriad of contacts they have within the game. It is common for parents to pay professional sporting coaching in a number of sports e.g. swimming and karate to name but two.

7. **The Centre's experience is that the process is sustainable** - the Centre is still growing in terms of both quality and quantity and is projected to do so for the foreseeable future.
8. **Other Centres of Excellence do not charge parents** – York City and Bury are 2 examples of Clubs that also operate a charging policy.
9. **It pulls scarce sponsorship resources away from the club** –The majority of the CoE sponsors are drawn from contacts not previously connected to the Club and introduced to the Centre via youth development. We also deal with sponsors who will sponsor youth development but not the main activities of the club.

We will continue to provide assistance to the CoE and support their aim of providing FC Halifax Town with talented youngsters who are ready for the next step up.

Year Summary

Over the last 12-months we have:

- Launched a new Charity of the Year initiative which sees HTST raise both funds and the awareness of a worthy local charity.
- Supported the development of young, local talent through our sponsorship of the Halifax Town Centre of Excellence & Youth Team.
- Brought the FA Cup winners' trophy on a tour of Calderdale.
- Made numerous offers of help and support to the owners of FC Halifax Town.
- Built on our relationship with both Supporters Direct and the Football Supporters' Federation.
- Become an affiliated member of Football Supporters' Europe and attended its 1st AGM in Hamburg, Germany.
- Represented the best interests of the supporters on the Shay Stadium Trust.
- Continued to build an emergency fund for a time in the future when required – be it 2, 5, 10 or 15 years.
- Been vigilant over what decisions are being made, and why.
- Listened to the views of our members and ordinary fans.
- Networked with members of other Trusts to find best ways of working and new ideas.
- Encouraged our members to take part in the Associa Football Supporters' survey.
- Being professional in all our contact with other organisations, which included FC Halifax Town, the Football Association, the Unibond League, the Football Supporters Federation, Football Supporters Europe, Supporters Direct, Overgate Hospice, Calderdale Council, the Hipperholme & Lightcliffe Sports College, the (North Bridge) Saturday Morning Disabled Sports Club, and Tesco.

Hopes for the Coming Year

Open to discussion. Over the next 12-months Halifax Town Supporters' Trust hopes to:

- Convince the owners of FC Halifax Town to trust us – we only want what is best for FC Halifax Town.
- Increase membership.
- Increase the awareness of why Halifax Town Supporters' Trust exists.
- Become more active on a matchday.
- Work with the local police authority on issues which affect FC Halifax Town supporters.

- Work with the Shay Stadium Safety Team on issues which affect FC Halifax Town supporters at home games.
- Increase both our fundraising and community activities.
- Continue to develop the Charity of the Year initiative.
- Continue to positively represent FC Halifax Town in all our community activities.
- Support a new charity calendar launched by AFC Halifax.
- Hold a novel fundraising event.

Constitution Changes

Rule 84

It was discussed at last year's AGM that due to the financial costs of auditing the Society's accounts, it would be preferable instead to simply submit the accounts for Independent Examination (IE), which is a form of lay audit.

This is allowed for in law, though our membership of Supporters Direct requires that we only request our members approve an IE if our income for the year in question is less than £25,000.

What is an Audit?

An Audit is a review of the Trust Accounts in line with the codified International Standards of Auditing (ISAs). The Audit not only checks the veracity of the figures but also considers the adequacy of the underlying accounting records, the processes in place to ensure that all transactions are accurately recorded and whether the Trust has performed in compliance with its Model Rules or Constitution.

ISAs are onerous regulations governing the way the Auditor performs their role. The Auditor is required to maintain comprehensive records that describe how they planned their work, the processes they undertook in carrying out that plan and 'evidence' to support each of the conclusions they have reached.

The end product of an Audit is the Audit Report contained within the Accounts.

What is an IE?

It is not governed by statute and is not governed by International Standards of Auditing. It therefore carries significantly less weight than a full Audit. In essence, an audit will assure members that the accounts are right, whilst an IE will confirm to members that there is no evidence to suggest the accounts are wrong.

The IE does amount to an Independent Review of the Trust Accounts and therefore goes some way to meeting the principle of openness by providing a level of comfort to Trust Members that the accounts presented at the AGM have been subject to an independent review. Nevertheless, it is for the members to decide whether the IE is sufficient as a form of scrutiny of their Society Board members.

Whilst the process of IE will provide more information to members than a simple balance sheet, or a lay audit conducted without any guidelines, by its very nature, it cannot be seen as a replacement for an audit. If members have any doubts they should vote to retain a Full Audit.

Whilst independent examiners do not have to hold a professional accountancy qualification, the Trust Board members must appoint a person suitable for the circumstances of the Trust. An understanding of accountancy principles and accounting standards will be needed and where possible a qualified accountant should be selected.

Summary

There are two options.

1. Members choose to retain the current rules whereby the Society is forced to submit its accounts for audit each year.
2. Members choose to accept the necessary changes to the constitution that allows the Society Board to submit a resolution at each AGM seeking permission to submit the following year's accounts for IE instead of an audit. Even if the constitution is amended, members may force an audit by disapproving such a resolution.

Why change?

The primary reason is cost. An IE is significantly cheaper to commission than an audit.

The First IE

If approval is given today to make the necessary changes to the constitution, we then need to seek approval for the changes from the Financial Services Authority. Assuming such approval is given, we can then submit a resolution at the 2010 AGM seeking approval to submit the 2010 accounts for IE.

This means that even if approval is given today, the current year accounts (2009) will still be subjected to an audit.

The Actual Change

<i>Current</i>	<i>New</i>
<p>The Society Board will in respect of each year of account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. cause to be prepared a revenue account or revenue accounts which; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. singly or together deal with the affairs of the Society and any subsidiary company or society as a whole for that year; and ii. give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure of the Society and any subsidiary company or society for that year; b. cause to be prepared a balance sheet giving at that date a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the Society and any subsidiary company or society. 	<p>The Society Board will in respect of each year of account ending on 31 December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. (unaltered) b. (unaltered) c. In any year of account, the Society shall not be required to appoint auditors if it is exempt under the 1968 Act and has disapplied the obligation to do so in accordance with the 1968 Act. d. In any such year, an Independent Examination of accounts under the guidelines recommended by Supporters Direct and all references below in Rules 24, 34, 85, 86, and 89 to 'audit', 'auditor(s)', and 'audited' shall be read as 'independent examine, independent examiner and Independently examined' respectively and rules 87, 88, 90, 91 and 92 shall not apply. e. Any decision to disapply the requirement for audit must be passed by the appropriate margins laid down under the 1968 Act at the Annual General Meeting prior to the Annual General Meeting at which the accounts for the year in question are to be laid before members. f. No decision to disapply shall be valid if the accounts laid before the Annual General Meeting at which the decision is being taken indicate that the turnover of the society in that financial year is higher than the specified threshold for audit exemption in the Supporters Direct Membership Policy, should such exemption be allowed under that policy.

Note that clause (d) in the 'new' column may be altered to comply with FSA requirements, and approval by members today is to be taken as approval that this particular clause may be amended as necessary prior to the constitution being revised. The Society Board does of course undertake to notify members if any amendment was necessary, though no such amendment will change the spirit of this specific change (which is to ensure the constitution makes sense and remains enforceable if and when an IE is approved by members for any given year).

Rule 111

This rule confirms the Society's registered office. We wish to change this from the Shay Stadium to the chair's home address. This is necessary due to the current development at the Stadium, and will be reviewed in time for the following AGM.

<i>Current</i>	<i>New</i>
<p>The Society's registered office is at HTST, c/o THE SHAY STADIUM, SHAW HILL, HALIFAX, HX1 2YT.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">...cont...</p>	<p>The Society's registered office is at 9 MILNER CLOSE, GREETLAND, HALIFAX, HX4 8JZ.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">...cont... (unaltered)</p>

Elections

A nominations for membership of the Society Board was received from Martin Reddy. As there are enough vacancies on the board it is proposed that he is elected unopposed.