



THMT NEWS

May 2011

Election Special

Ahead of the Scottish parliamentary elections this special edition of *THMT News* looks at the politicians and parties looking to earn your vote when Scotland goes to the polls on May 5th. THMT, in association with Supporters Direct Scotland, has written to all the prospective candidates standing in the Ayr and Carrick, Cumnock & Doon Valley constituencies to ask them to support and fund Supporters Direct Scotland if they are elected and to highlight the work THMT are doing locally. Here are the responses we have received along with a brief summary of the party's manifesto pledges on supporters' trusts:

Manifesto Pledges

Conservatives



The Scottish Conservatives have made no manifesto commitment for the Scottish Parliamentary elections but in their manifesto for last year's UK General election they pledged to reform the governance arrangements in football to enable co-operative ownership models to be established by supporters.

Labour



The Scottish Labour Party state in their manifesto that they are committed to supporter involvement in the running of football clubs and have pledged to offer financial and organisational backing for Supporters Direct Scotland.

Labour would work with football authorities to ensure that professional clubs are accountable to their stakeholders, run transparently and on sound financial principles, with greater involvement in local communities and enhanced supporter representation.

Liberal Democrats



The Scottish Liberal Democrats have pledged to support the involvement of democratic community organisations and co-operatives in the governance of football.

SNP



The Scottish National Party have pledged to work with Supporters' Trusts to ensure an enhanced role for these important organisations in our national game.

Ayr Constituency Candidates

Chic Brodie (SNP)



"I am delighted to support Supporters Direct.

As someone who played at all levels, except senior professional, I despair that money, and particularly TV money, is killing my game which as you say used to have a particular social element. In fact only two weeks ago I bumped into the guy who was goalie for Dundee Schoolboys when I played inside left (I know - that dates me). I hadn't seen him for over 25 years but it was as if it was yesterday when we played.

Got to get that back and initiatives such as yours are very welcome and has and will have my unstinted support."

Gordon McKenzie (Labour)



"Firstly, I'd like to congratulate the new Board of the Trust for its offer to work with Ayr United Football Club in the current trying economic circumstances. Only with all the stakeholders working together, will community clubs prosper. Let's hope that the run-in to the end of the season results in a deserved step up for the club.

Secondly, I have noted the considerable success of the Ayr United Football Academy over the last several years. From the original impetus by the Trust, it has developed into a model community-based charitable organization, built on a fantastic mix of professional core support and extensive volunteer delivery. Its partnership ethos and desire to deliver health and well-being, as well as sporting outcomes, does it great credit.

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Having a Trust Director as part of the Supporters Direct Board will give your organisation a place at the centre of current thinking on the issue of supporter involvement.

Scottish Labour believes that protecting the integrity of Scotland's professional sport is vital and we have indicated that we will work with governing authorities to ensure that professional clubs are accountable to their stakeholders, run transparently and on sound financial principles, with greater involvement in our local communities and enhanced supporter representation. More than that, Scottish Labour will continue and enhance support for Supporters Direct, to give football fans a say in our national game.

As someone who has been actively involved in the game, I am fully behind these sentiments.

When elected, I will work with you and your colleagues, and others interested in the future operation of the club, to deliver a community-based club that is admired throughout Scotland."

John Scott (Conservatives)



"Many thanks for your email regarding Supporters Direct and I have no hesitation in giving my support to the position expressed in the UK Conservative manifesto.

I am very much in favour of ordinary football fans having a much bigger say in how their clubs are run and as the enabling body for this, Supporters Direct has a vital role to play in that process. More generally I am an enthusiast for co-operative models, being co-convenor of the Cross Party Group on Co-Operatives in the last parliament, and so I see the encouragement of supporters' trusts as being a logical extension of that co-operative principle.

If as a nation we want to see a greater role played by fans in the running of their sports then the support mechanism to facilitate that must be an adequately resourced one and so my own view would be that Supporters Direct should be fully funded to achieve that ambition."

Eileen Taylor (Liberal Democrats)



No reply.

Carrick, Cumnock & Doon Valley Constituency Candidates

Andrew Chamberlain

(Liberal Democrats)



No reply.

Adam Ingram (SNP)



"The SNP strongly supports the community ownership of local sports facilities. We have invested heavily in funding to support the creation of social enterprises and we will encourage local communities to engage with these funding streams to take forward their plans.

These funding streams, detailed in the Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan encompass approximately £1.2m for SPORTSMATCH. This supports grass roots sport projects that encourage participation at community level, especially with youth groups. It aims to match commercial business sponsorship on a pound-for-pound basis.

Further, the SNP is determined to keep working with the SFA to ensure the recommendations of the McLeish Review into Scottish Football are delivered. Included in these recommendations was for greater fan representation thus this will be encouraged and pushed for by the SNP. As part of working with the SFA, we will fulfil our commitment to invest £4m from sportscotland in the Youth Action Plan to ensure that the youth game is developing grassroots football in Scotland. We will also work with Supporters' Trusts to ensure an enhanced role for these important organisations in our national game. In addition, we last month announced £1m funding for the Scottish Communities League Cup.

Finally, we are keen to support the growth of football in Scotland more generally. Through our Cashback for Communities scheme, we have invested over £40 million of crooks' cash over the past four years in improving facilities, and running community projects that simply would not have existed otherwise. During that time more than half a million young people have taken part in CashBack activities. We intend to expand this even further, by broadening the range of crimes from which crook's assets can be seized. A central part of the next phase of Cashback will be the development of a network of all-weather

pitches across Scotland – something which sports clubs told us was essential in order to ensure year round viability.

The SNP recognises the invaluable work done by Supporters' Direct Scotland and is proud to support projects such as the Scottish Communities League Cup. We understand the supporters' need for a voice in the future design of Scotland's football community as they are the grassroots of football in Scotland and we will aim to implement the recommendations of the McLeish review to give supporters' a bigger role alongside the SFA."

Peter Kennerley (Conservative)

"Thank you for your email. I was interested to learn of the work of the trust, and support the manifesto commitment of the UK Conservatives. Naturally, if elected I would hope to support your work, although I hope you will understand that I cannot commit to deliver the level of funding at this stage."



Richard Leonard (Labour)

No reply.



In addition to voting for candidate in the Ayr and Carrick, Cumnock & Doon Valley constituencies, local voters will also elect MSPs from the South of Scotland regional list. Including the four main parties, THMT wrote to the Green Party candidates standing for election in the South of Scotland region. The Scottish Green Party had two MSPs in the last Scottish Parliament and, if the polls are correct, may be able to exert some influence in the new parliament as they would be a credible ally for a minority SNP or Labour government.



Green Party

The Scottish Green Party would extend community 'right to buy' to cover Scotland's football clubs, so fans would have first refusal when their club comes up for sale and has pledged to create a £1 million fund to help finance community buyouts of football clubs.

Alis Balance (Green Party)

Lead candidate - South of Scotland Regional list



"Greens do indeed support the idea of Community buy-outs of football clubs. Just as land buyouts have invigorated rural communities, so returning football clubs to ownership by their supporters can do the same. We would like to see fans involved in taking the important decisions, not merely seen as a way of making money for the shareholders.

Green candidates fully support your aims for Ayr United FC to become a community club, and if elected would welcome the chance to discuss with you ways in which we might help you reach that goal."

The following parties also have candidates standing in the South of Scotland region: All Scotland Pensioners Party; British National Party; Scottish Christian Party; Scottish Socialist Party; Solidarity; UK Independence Party.



For more information about the party manifestos and the elections, visit the Supporters Direct Scotland website.



Contact & More Information

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