



THMT NEWS

Issue 4
July 2011

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Back to the First

The fixture list is out and journeys to Dingwall, Dundee and Dumfries are being planned; the new home shirt is on sale and being paraded with pride in Ayrshire and further afield and the rumourmill regarding new signings is in full flow but a balated congratulations to Brian Reid and his players and staff on clinching promotion back to the First Division at the first attempt.



In typical Ayr United fashion it was done the hard way. Despite dominating the first-leg of the final against Brechin City at Somerset Park, the visitors somehow escaped with a draw. At half-time at Glebe Park in the return City were ahead in innocuous circumstances. But a second-half display full of character, courage and determination ensured promotion, despite the best efforts of former hero Craig Nelson, and sent the 1500 or so travelling supporters – and many more around the world – into delirium.

It was a day to remember and the players and management were in no doubt the supporters played their part in the success. Speaking before the final, man of the moment Michael Moffat told the official website: “The crowd provide a massive lift to all the players and definitely give

me an extra spring in my step. It’s great to have supporters who are right behind us all the time.” At full-time on Sunday, skipper Mark Roberts was in agreement: “The fans don’t realise how good they can be for us. People think it’s a cliché to say the fans are our 12th man but they really were today”.

Whether it is raising funds for the old floodlights back in the early 1970s or contributing to the Panda Pals Initiative which allowed Brian Reid to strengthen the squad last season Ayr United followers have a long tradition of supporting the Club not just vocally but also financially and in terms of their time and effort. The Honest Men Trust is a proud part of that tradition and as Brian Reid sets about preparing his squad for the First Division, the Trust is also working on ways in which we can assist the Club, the Academy and the wider local community, including through the United Futures initiative which launches this month.

Marko picks up the silverware

After the first leg of the play-off final Mark Roberts picked up the Ally McLeod Memorial trophy from young Trust members Murray Bone and Kia Ferguson as the THMT’s Player of the Year. Marko was the overwhelming nomination from Trust members, gaining more than 50% of the vote.

With 27 goals (not all penalties!) there is no doubt that Mark had a very successful season individually but was also a vital part of the team this season which clinched promotion back to the First Division.



United Futures



THMT are pleased to announce the South Ayrshire Young Carers Centre and Ayr United Football Academy are the two local charities who will benefit from our new fundraising venture throughout the upcoming season. The 'United Futures' initiative will see THMT organising a series of fundraising ventures and events throughout the year with the two local charities being the main beneficiaries.

It is hoped United Futures can raise the profile of these local charities and help raise much needed funds to enable both organisations to carry out the vital work that they do. Trust Chairman John Dalton explains: "United Futures is designed to show that Ayr United supporters can be proactive within the community and show that we all have common interests to improve the wider South Ayrshire community. Every local organisation and charity has its own community with a variety of issues that are specific to them but we believe that we all have a lot in common and our United Futures programme is a coming together of that idea."

John also explained the reasoning behind supporting the two chosen charities:

"The Ayr United Football Academy is an organisation that is very dear to THMT. It was THMT who instigated the formation of the Academy and in its' short time it has proved to be an overwhelming success, both in terms of bringing through young players for the Ayr United first team squad and the work that it has done in the community.

"The Academy is based on the ethos of the Trust movement and because the Academy is itself a partnership organisation, it is perhaps a perfect example of what can be achieved when a variety

of organisations work together for the common good."

Alongside our long standing support for the Academy we were also keen to raise money for other local causes rooted in the local community. Having asked for your suggestions in March's THMT News we are delighted to announce the South Ayrshire Young Carers Service as our second chosen charity.

There are around 175,000 young carers in the UK under the age of 18 who have to assist, support and care for family members on a daily basis who are affected by disability, physical or mental illness or drug and alcohol misuse. This can have a detrimental affect on those young carers, severely restricting their time for social activity with friends, their ability to socialise with their peers and make friends as well as their attendance at school and academic achievement. All of this can lead to problems into adulthood where many can develop issues of their own and struggle to gain and hold onto employment opportunities.

We hope to raise awareness of this programme and raise vital funds to enable the South Ayrshire Young Carers Centre to continue the valuable work that it does to support young carers and help give them time out from their caring responsibilities, to relax and have some fun, something that many other children take for granted.

Shirley Middleditch, Young Carers Information/Development Officer with the South Ayrshire Young Carers Service was delighted to receive the support of THMT.

"Our service is managed by Unity Enterprise which is a social enterprise organization and we work with children aged 8-18 years. These children's lives can sometimes be very chaotic and they don't get much time to have a proper childhood. We rely heavily on external funding to enable us to provide these services and give the Young Carers much deserved time out from their responsibilities. As part of our service we offer group support, 1-1 support which addresses any issues that the young people may have such as

anger management and low self esteem. We also deliver awareness raising sessions to all of the secondary schools in South Ayrshire and this highlights all the issues that Young Carers may face and hopefully find hidden Young Carers at the same time, to ensure that they get the support that they deserve.”

THMT are in the process of arranging a variety of fundraising events over the course of the season but are also on the look out for other innovative ideas from supporters who wish to contribute. John stated “We will be looking to undertake a number of activities, from Race Nights to Sponsored Events and much more over the coming season but are always on the look out for new fresh ideas.”

If you would like to get involved with United Futures, have any ideas or activities in mind that could support the programme we’d be delighted to hear from you. You can telephone John on 07584 583 095 or email enquiries@thehonestmentrust.co.uk.



The closed season has proven to be a busy time for Supporters Direct Scotland. In difficult circumstances, however, SD Scotland is determined to press ahead with its core aims of promoting community ownership, forging strong relationships for change within the game, and securing the funding it needs to move forward. Read on for more details...

Funding...

Supporters Direct is currently facing a major funding crisis. The Football Stadia Improvement

Fund, an arm of the Football Foundation, has blocked an anticipated offer to continue supporting SD nationally via the Premier League Fans’ Fund, following criticism of tweets posted by then chief executive Dave Boyle on his private account on the micro-blogging site Twitter. Now more than ever it is vital SD Scotland secures its own funding to enable the organisation to continue its valuable work north of the border.

To assist SD Scotland, THMT have contacted our two local MSPs, Ayr’s John Scott and Carrick, Cumnock & Doon Valley’s Adam Ingram to ask them to support a motion in the Scottish Parliament originally put forward by Green MSP Alison Johnstone but now re-submitted by Labour’s John Park supporting the work of Supporters Direct. The motion reads:

“That the Parliament notes what it considers to be the outstanding assistance that Supporters Direct has given over recent years to football fans' trusts north and south of the border that have sought to take a more active role in the running of their clubs; recognises, in particular, its help for fans in Mid Scotland and Fife and across Scotland, including the Pars Supporters Trust and the Raith Supporters Trust; welcomes the fans' takeovers of clubs including Stirling Albion, Clyde FC, Clydebank and Dundee; deeply regrets the English Premier League's decision to cut funding for Supporters Direct's work in England, and would welcome a continuation of its valuable work in Scotland for years to come”.

At the time of writing the motion has been supported by Jamie Hepburn (SNP), Willie Coffey (SNP), Alison Johnstone (Green), John Finnie (SNP), Lewis Macdonald (Labour) and has been noted for possible debate when parliament returns from recess in September.

Whilst we sincerely hope that this motion will receive overwhelming support in the Scottish Parliament, we need our politicians to provide more than token support. We need the Scottish Government and other football bodies like the SFA to take this motion a step further and provide a funding package for SD Scotland so that it can continue the valuable work that it has

done throughout Scotland in recent years to support the work carried out throughout Scotland by organisations like THMT.

Scottish Conference...

SD Scotland last month held their 9th Annual Conference at Hampden Park, with THMT well represented amongst the 60 or so delegates. With Scottish football in a time of change – the McLeish report recommending sweeping reforms of football governance, the SPL proposals for a new structure for league football and the certainty of ever-increasing media income has in question – and supporters questioning where the game is going and whether the right changes are being made, the conference brought supporters' trusts together with key representatives of football administration, clubs and players to discuss the vision for Scottish football and the realities of running a successful sport fit for modern times.

changingscottishfootball.net editor *Simon Barrow* summed up the event:

“NEIL Doncaster is a pleasant guy and sincerely believes in what he is doing – but he’s still not listening to the great majority of Scottish football fans or looking at the wider picture. That was the conclusion of quite a number of the sixty representatives of supporters trusts who attended the Supporters Direct Scotland conference at Hampden Park on 4 June 2011.



There were friendly, informed exchanges between the participants and the panel – which also included SFL head David Longmuir, SD’s Dave Boyle, PFA Scotland’s Fraser Wishart and Clyde FC chairman Gordon Thomson alongside the embattled SPL chief

executive. But the gulf in perceptions and frameworks of understanding about the future of the game in this country remained large.

Speaking to *The Scotsman* afterwards, Mr Doncaster was surprisingly frank about having come to the event to talk more than to learn. He declared: *“I think the most helpful thing from my point of view was being able to explain that the choice we have is not between a ten and a 16-team league.”*



But supporters say that this inherent tendency toward “not hearing” among decision-makers at the top of the game is precisely one that needs to change in everyone’s interest – not least the Scottish Premier League itself, which is deadlocked over the proposal for a 10-team structure backed by Mr Doncaster, the biggest clubs and Scotland boss Craig Levein – but opposed by just about everyone else, including other SPL clubs and 88% of fans in Scotland.

(Former) Supporters Direct CEO Dave Boyle, responding to Mr Doncaster’s claim that a larger division could lead to a £20 million financial hole, said that the real issue here was wealth distribution. There was more money coming into football in Scotland than ever before, he claimed. But the huge economic inequality between clubs was undermining the game and leading to decisions which turned supporters off.

Scottish Football League chief David Longmuir also disappointed many at the gathering by apparently not embracing a wider, larger vision for the future. But SD representatives say that, with the stalemate around restructuring plans most of them consider untenable or retrograde,

the need to keep on talking is vital and unavoidable – recognising that even in disagreement there is a genuine common concern for the future of Scottish football at stake”.

In addition to the panel debate a number of workshops were held, including on football finance, fan ownership and running clubs within their means, democracy and football clubs and supporter representation at the highest level of the game. In all, the conference was a great success and left the delegates in no doubt about the importance of supporters trusts and SD Scotland to a healthy future for the game.

*Photos courtesy of Supporters Direct Scotland
Article by Simon Barrow*

Changing Scottish Football blog...

SD Scotland have launched a new online blog which aims to give fans, Supporters' Trusts and those with knowledge and experience of the game at the grassroots a say in its future across the country.

It is an important part of SD Scotland and the trust movement's campaign for supporter representation in the bodies that run Scottish football, community involvement and ownership in our clubs, and changes that benefit all teams and move the game forward positively.

The site features comment, news briefs, key links, ideas for action, headline concerns, dialogue with major figures in Scottish football, SD Scotland input, campaign initiatives and discussion points. The blog is well worth a read and can be found at:

<http://changingscottishfootball.net/>

Whitletts Victoria Update



Throughout the summer, we have continued to support the work being undertaken to bring Whitletts Victoria FC 'back from the brink' and build a sustainable

future for the club. You may recall that last season the club's ground at Voluntary Park was closed following issues concerning the leaseholder, who had no involvement with the club. Since then Voluntary Park has been vandalised and fallen into such a dangerous state that the bulldozers are preparing to move in to demolish what remains of the buildings.

A deal was agreed temporarily to allow the Club to play its' home matches at Dam Park and this has been extended into the coming season while THMT have assisted in drafting up a new constitution for the Club which is currently going through the process of being registered as a not for profit Company Limited by Guarantee. There is also a lot of hard work going on in the background and a lot of new exiting and fresh ideas which, if developed, could see a longer term progression that would not only secure the Clubs' future but may also take Whitletts Victoria to heights never before achieved.

The Vics have arranged two pre-season friendlies, both away from home to newcomers Rossvale and Lugar Boswell before the season kicks off in earnest on July 27th with the Ardagh Cup. The first five First Division league fixtures have also been announced and Vics face a tough start to the campaign as they taken on three of the promotion favourites in their first four matches.

Whitletts have also been drawn at home in the first round of the West of Scotland Cup to Ardrossan Winton Rovers. That tie is to be played on 15th October. Sadly some of the fixtures clash with home Ayr United matches but if The Honest Men are away, and you are not travelling to the match, why not nip along and give your backing to Ayr's Junior Team.

To keep up-to-date with the latest Vics news, including further details about their forthcoming fixtures visit: <http://www.whitlettsvictoria.com/>

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On E-Mail?

If you have received a paper copy of this newsletter but have an available e-mail address, please let us know by e-mailing enquiries@thehonestmentrust.co.uk. Not only will you receive news from the THMT faster, but it'll also save us postage costs. Also make sure to let us know about any change of details.

Looking to Volunteer Your Skills?

The reason we are all members of THMT is primarily we are all Ayr United supporters and care about our club. Recently the club asked for volunteers to paint the boardroom and other various rooms under the main stand which, unfortunately, was not greatly backed by supporters for a variety of reasons. However we at the THMT want to help the Club in ways that are important and we understand that there are a variety of untapped skills amongst our membership. These skills may have been gained from employment, training, hobbies or interests that you may have but even though you may not have given it a second thought, could be very useful indeed to THMT and Ayr United.

If you are interested in giving up your spare time if required to help out, please let us know by getting in touch to allow us to build a register of members skills base that we could utilise if required.

Website: www.thehonestmentrust.co.uk

Email: enquiries@thehonestmentrust.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thmt

Twitter: twitter.com/Honestmentrust

The Honest Men Trust

c/o 15 Quail Road, Ayr, KA8 8LT

Ayr United Community Initiative – The Honest Men Trust.
Registered Industrial and Provident Society Reg. No. 2635 RS



Fixture List

Ayr United			Whitletts Victoria	
09/07/2011	St Mirren (H)	Friendly		
16/07/2011	St Johnstone (H)	Friendly	Rossvale (A)	Friendly
18/07/2011	Girvan (A)	Friendly		
20/07/2011			Lugar Boswell Thistle (A)	Friendly
23/07/2011	Queen of the South (H)	Ramsdens Cup		
25/07/2011	Manchester United (H)	Friendly		
27/07/2011			Annbank United (A)	Ardagh Cup
30/07/2011	East Stirling (A)	League Cup	Maybole (A)	Ardagh Cup
03/08/2011			Girvan (H)	Ardagh Cup
06/08/2011	Hamilton Academical (H)	1st Division	Craigmark Burntonians (H)	Ardagh Cup
10/08/2011			Troon (A)	Ardagh Cup
13/08/2011	Dundee (A)	1st Division	Girvan (H)	Super League 1st Division
20/08/2011	Falkirk (H)	1st Division	Glenafton (A)	Super League 1st Division
27/08/2011	Raith Rovers (H)	1st Division	Cumbernauld United (H)	Super League 1st Division
03/09/2011			Shotts Bon Accord (A)	Super League 1st Division
10/09/2011	Morton (A)	1st Division	Hurlford United (H)	Super League 1st Division