



# THMT NEWS

Issue 6

April 2012

After an extended winter break, THMT News is back with Issue 6, bringing you all the latest news from the Trust and beyond. On the pitch, the six months since the last newsletter has been very eventful with two good cup runs bringing us a trip to Hampden Park and the Club some much needed revenue. In the league there have been some spirited performances but First Division survival hangs in the balance. It's certainly going to be a nail biting end to the season.

## Fans Survey

Over 11,000 Ayr fans attended Hampden in January however home gates this season for league games have averaged less than 1,500. Attracting just a small proportion of those fans that made the trip to Hampden Park to Somerset Park on a more regular basis would be a huge boost to the finances and fortunes of the Club. In order to see what could be done to improve attendances, THMT are this month launching a survey to allow fans to have their say.



Trust Chairman John Dalton, who continues in the role after the recent AGM, said: "We're coming into a crucial part of the season and we would urge as many Ayr fans as possible to get along to Somerset Park and support the team. We

know that Brian Reid and the players really appreciate it.

"In the longer term, supporters are the lifeblood of any football club and the Trust is keen to ensure Ayr fans continue to back their side and in greater numbers".

The survey can be found online at: <http://survey.thehonestmentrust.co.uk> and will remain open until the end of the season. This is your chance to tell us about your experience of being an Ayr United fan. The survey should only take a few minutes to complete as most questions simply require a box to be ticked and responses will be treated in the strictest confidence. We hope the results will be useful for the Club going forward and we will also put any issues that arise to the Board.

## Player of the Year

It's that time of the season again, who will your player of the year be? Skipper Mark Roberts was last season's winner with over 50% of the votes but with a number of worthy candidates it could be a closer contest this year so be sure to email your choice to:

[enquiries@thehonestmentrust.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@thehonestmentrust.co.uk). Voting closes on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April and the recipient of the Ally McLeod Player of the Year award will be presented with the trophy following the Dundee game on 28<sup>th</sup> April.

## Can we do it for the Academy?

The 2012 Irn-Bru can collection is now in full flow and Ayr United are already leading the competition that could earn the Football Academy a massive £10,000 towards the development of the Ayr United stars of the future.

The competition runs until the 5th May and the simple aim to collect the most Irn-Bru and Irn-Bru Sugar Free and other Barr's soft drink CANS to clinch the biggest possible share of the £70,000 on offer.



You can put your empty cans in the special distinctive Irn-Bru bins which have been situated at Tescos and Morrisons in Ayr or take them along to the club shop at Somerset Park where there is also bin.

Last year the Academy came third and this year, with your help, they are determined to get first place and the £10,000 prize



### **Recycle your old CDs & DVDs for United Futures**

The Academy are not the only ones collecting! Have you got a pile of CD's you don't listen to anymore? DVDs you never watch? Well, THMT have signed up to a scheme to turn your unwanted CDs and DVDs into cash for United Futures, our fundraising initiative raising money for the Academy, the Trust and local charity South Ayrshire Young Carers. Music Magpie have agreed to pay us 50p for every suitable CD album

or DVD. So, check your loft, glove box and under the bed and please donate any CDs or DVDs you no longer want.

Get in touch if you have any CDs or DVDs we can put towards our fundraising. Email: [alistair@thehonestmentrust.co.uk](mailto:alistair@thehonestmentrust.co.uk)

Look out for more ways you can support United Futures in the coming months.

### **Vics Open to the Community**

Whitletts Victoria – Ayr's Junior Club, has been incorporated as a not for profit Company Limited by Guarantee. The move is designed to give the club a community focus and will involve a membership scheme where supporters and members of the local community can become members of the club and have a say in the running of and the future of Whitletts Victoria.



Announcing the new constitution for the Club, Vics Chairman Colin McTrusty said that the new scheme will give the club a stronger link with both the football community and the local community in Ayr.

“This scheme will result in Whitletts Victoria being wholly owned by its members who will have the ultimate say in the future of the club and the direction that it takes. In recent years there has been a major turnaround in the clubs' fortunes on the park. Jim Geddes and the players have done a tremendous job and we are now well placed for a promotion push to the Premier League but this is about giving the local

community in Ayr ownership and involvement of the club.

“We are laying the foundations for Whitletts Victoria to be at the heart of the footballing community in Ayr, to give the people of Ayr a stake in the Clubs’ future and develop into a real force in junior football.”

The scheme was devised by The Honest Men Trust, who have been assisting the Club since their forced eviction from their Voluntary Park home last year. THMT Chairman John Dalton welcomed the announcement and said that he hoped that this would be a new beginning for the Club.

“We are delighted that this process has been completed. It was welcomed by the committee at Whitletts Victoria and they have to be congratulated for seeing a new vision and direction for the Club. Hopefully now the local community will see the benefits of having a strong junior side in the town and back the scheme and become involved with the club to ensure not only the future development of the Club but also the local community.”

In line with the Clubs’ new status, Vics’ are launching a new membership scheme that will allow anyone to become a member of the new community based company. Memberships priced at £10 per annum and can be found at: <http://www.whitlettsvictoria.com/col.asp?cid=39> or available at Vic’s home games.

### **Offensive Behaviour Act**

The new Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012 came into force on Thursday 1st March.

The act provides for two new offences: Offensive Behaviour related to football and Threatening Communications.

The first offence covers sectarian and other offensive chanting and threatening behaviour related to football which is likely to cause public disorder. The second offence strengthens the current law covering threats of serious harm and criminalises threats which incite religious hatred.

Further information on the Act can be found here: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/law/sectarianism-action-1/football-violence/bill>

### **Supporters Direct launch a Fans Plan**

Supporters Direct Scotland, the voice of football supporters’ trusts in Scotland, has published The Fans’ Plan – key recommendations to shape the future of Scottish league football based on the results of supporters’ surveys over the past two years and a detailed analysis of the issues facing the game.



The Fans’ Plan calls for:

- greater competition within Scottish league football structures;
- equal funding for each team in a league;
- support for clubs by central league management to increase the average attendance over a season of 20% by 2016, and achieve an average stadium capacity utilisation of 65% within 10 years;

- two leagues of 16 teams, and a qualifying league of 10;
- re-introducing the League Cup, with a mini-league qualifying format structured on a geographical basis with four teams in each group;
- improved training and professional development for all players including greater use of Modern Apprenticeships and post-career planning;
- the establishment and implementation of a strong club licensing scheme;

SDS spokesperson, Alan Harris commented: “The future of Scottish league football lies in the hands of its supporters and Supporters Direct Scotland has gathered the views of fans for the past two years: the most comprehensive surveys of football supporters in recent times. Fans are clearly telling us, we want more competition, more even distribution of funds among clubs, investment in the game, especially developing its talent from grassroots, and a greater say for supporters in clubs and national football.”

Alan Harris added: “Our approach is fairly simple. It’s about creating a virtuous circle for the long-term benefit of Scottish football. Too much of the present has been driven by short-term fixes and quick wins. However, that approach is unravelling at every level of the game. The time is right to re-build the foundations of the game in Scotland. We are proposing that a combination of league re-structuring, a re-formatted League Cup and more even distribution of development funds, can continue to attract the all-important television

sponsorship, create more competition between clubs and widen the game’s attraction to bring supporters back. This is our path to the more sustainable development of Scottish league football.”

An executive summary of the Fans Plan is available on the Supporters Direct Scotland website [here](#); whilst the full document can be downloaded as three separate PDF files: [The Problem](#), [The Proposal](#), and [The Detail](#).

### Get in touch.

Website: [www.thehonestmentrust.co.uk](http://www.thehonestmentrust.co.uk)

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Ayr United Community Initiative – The Honest Men Trust.  
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