



# Notts County Supporters Trust

News Bulletin – August 2004

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## A View from the Chair



Well here we are again. By the time you read this, the 2004/05 season will be underway with expectations running high for an immediate return to ... erm, League One. The playing squad is radically different from the one that endured relegation, with Gary Mills busily assembling a squad on a shoestring, which it is hoped will have the right balance of experience and young talent to push for promotion. It is widely believed that we have one of the brightest young managers in the game who has enjoyed successful spells at non-league level, and with new assistant manager Darron Gee and new-look backroom staff is committed to bringing the glory days back to Meadow Lane.

Behind the scenes, work is continuing to cement Notts County Football Club on solid foundations and build for a successful future. That we are in this position is testimony to the hard work and effort of the new owners, and an army of supporters principally mobilised by the Supporters Trust to raise funds to help save our club. The collecting buckets used now deserve as prominent a place in the Meadow Lane trophy cabinet as the Anglo-Italian Cup.

Whilst finances are still very tight, work has continued over the summer to refurbish the social, conference and banqueting areas of the ground – namely the executive boxes, the Meadow Club, and the Marquee Suite – that together form an important source of income. Efforts have also been made to improve Meadow Lane (described by Trust director Stephen Thompson as looking more like a hotel than a football club) aesthetically, placing a greater emphasis on displaying the club's former glories and illustrious past.

On the pitch we welcome a number of new faces, with the arrival of Mike Whitlow who has already been installed as Captain, and the best part of a new look team with the signings of Mike Edwards, Matthew Gill, Julien Baudet, Gavin Gordon, Glynn Hurst, Chris Palmer and Rob Ullathorne. We wish them all well.

Meanwhile off the pitch.....

### **Notts Trust Elections**

It is fast approaching that time of year when a proportion of the Trust Board have to resign their place on the board and stand for re-election should they choose. This is your chance to be involved in the decision-making processes. It is our wish that an election be held, with a healthy number of candidates wishing to get involved and

have a positive role in the future of your Trust. Further details on the forthcoming election process are contained within the pages of this newsletter, whilst members will be mailed nomination forms later this month.

It is not intimidating to be involved and if you really want to know what goes on behind the scenes then this is the place to be. Please, please put your name forward. The more people we have involved the better.

### **Membership renewal**

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all our new members and to thank all the existing members who have renewed their Notts County Supporters Trust membership during the summer months.

Our aim is to continue to be an organisation that actively raises funds, positively promotes the club at every opportunity, and seeks to develop strong links between the Magpies and the local community. The representative that we now have on the Notts County FC Board of Directors means that we can influence decisions that are made at the very highest level.

If you have any issues that you feel need addressing, any fundraising ideas, or wish to become involved in NCST then please do not hesitate to contact us. Notts Trust needs as many supporters to become involved as possible. We have numerous projects that are currently "on-hold" due to us

having to prioritise our efforts, the more people who are actively involved the faster these tasks can be completed.

**[www.nottscotrust.co.uk](http://www.nottscotrust.co.uk)**

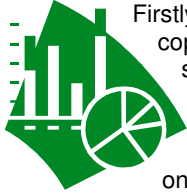
For those of you with internet access, the Trust website is an excellent source of information on the latest developments and has a message-board where you can put forward your own ideas, comments and suggestions. We also plan to continue sending out regular e-mail updates during the course of the season, as well as Trust newsletters, and organising fans' forums to help keep you informed. For those of you without a computer, the Trust also has a regular column in the match-day programme, and we shall continue to send updates to the NEP/local media, but it is not always easy to get coverage as they prefer to concentrate on some other team.

### **And finally.....**

A big thank you to those that have helped the Trust develop and grow since its formal conception in April 2003. A significant amount of work has gone into establishing Notts Trust, and we are now inspiring fans of other clubs to overcome their difficulties and help them have a positive influence in how their club is run. We should all be immensely proud of the role we – the fans – played in helping save our club, and whatever happens this season we should never lose sight of that.

**David Hindley**

## Notts Trust Survey 2004



Firstly, we would like to say a big thank you to everyone who filled in a copy of the Trust's first ever fans' survey. Your views matter and the survey was an important step in collecting these on a wider scale, to find out your opinions on a range of issues, including communications, merchandise, tickets, and toilets! Please continue to contact any of the representatives on the Trust board on any matter that concerns you – you can find us in the Meadow Club and behind the Trust desk in the club shop on match-days.

The response rate was encouraging – the Trust received 238 written and 131 web responses. Of these two-thirds were from season ticket holders – thus our findings arguably could be biased towards those who go on a regular basis. Most of the responses were favourable and in this brief review not all the questions are highlighted. The numbers in detail will be on the Trust website, and paper copies available on request.

In terms of the match-day experience more than 90% think the club has good or better facilities. In particular, the views at Meadow Lane seem to be held in high regard, but the atmosphere is superior at away games (80% rated it 6 or more away, compared to 58% for Meadow Lane fixtures). The toilets score 76% good or better and 67% 6/10 or more for cleanliness, though several of the comments did refer to shortcomings with them. The standard of catering gets an OK rating with 70% scoring it between 5 and 8.

Ticket prices are considered expensive with 43% thinking them poor or worse value. In contrast, season tickets get a much higher approval rating, 68% thinking them good or better value. The catering prices are considered reasonable and around half the fans buy food and drink in the ground. Most of our respondents buy programmes but those who don't think it is a little expensive with only 44% rating it good value and 31% poor value.

About 15% heard racial abuse at the Lane at least once last season, which suggests that the Kick Racism Out Of Football campaign still has work to do. 70% heard offensive language a few times or more, which is not particularly family friendly, though clearly difficult to remedy.

There was not much awareness of the facilities at Meadow Lane for people with disabilities, with over half not having an opinion on their quality. Most people believe the Club now communicates reasonably with their fans (75%) and responds to their views (69%), while 80% believe the Club is heading in the right direction.

The club's merchandise is generally considered to be of reasonable quality and value, while 65% think the club in general gives good value for money. The club's website was rated 7/10 or higher by about 70%. In contrast Magpie World, received a less favourable rating, with 70% rating at 5/10 or less and only 12% subscribing to it.

Responses to questions regarding the Supporters Trust were very positive, with more than 90% of those who expressed an opinion agreeing or strongly agreeing with the positive statements about the Trust. It will be a challenge to maintain such high ratings next year. Most people joined the Trust to help save the club and to give

the fans a voice. 70% rated the Trust website 6/10 or better, so it scores slightly lower than the Club site.

Many respondents also took time to fill in the comments section of the survey. We have read through each one, and compiled a list of the common themes and important issues. Some of these themes, in no particular order, are:

- The Trust is doing an excellent job, and has had a positive influence on the club and has helped represent fans' views
- Pay-on-the-day prices are too expensive, especially for family groups
- The quality of the club shop merchandise was flagged up as being of a low standard, especially the replica shirts
- The female toilets are poor
- Away supporters should be relocated, allowing home fans to use the Kop
- There was also concern that adults and young children have to use different turnstiles when entering the ground, which can cause distress.

We'll be taking these views on board in discussions with the Club, and will feedback in later editions of the newsletter.

Thank you again to those who took the time and effort to complete the questionnaire. We hope that the survey will become an annual occurrence, enabling us to canvas the opinions of the wider fan base. Finally, congratulations to John Rhodes who won the prize draw for the signed shirt.

**Fred Mosselmans and David Hindley**



## Contact us

**E-mail:** [enquiry@nottscotrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@nottscotrust.org.uk)

**Via the Trust website:**

[www.nottscotrust.org.uk](http://www.nottscotrust.org.uk)

**In person:** at the Trust Desk (club shop)  
on match-days

### **By post:**

Notts County Supporters Trust  
Meadow Lane Stadium  
Meadow Lane  
Nottingham  
NG2 3HJ

## East Midlands Trust Training Day, Lincoln, July 17th

The East Midlands Supporters' Trusts held their second annual training day at Lincoln City Football Club who donated the facilities for the day. There were approximately 40 delegates present from East Midlands Trusts, including NCST, and some guest trusts. A number of speakers and facilitators gave presentations and held workshops during the day.

Jacqui Forster, from Supporters Direct, who had organised the event in conjunction with Lincoln, and Bob Ramsey of the Co-operative Party, the main sponsor, gave short presentations to open the event. Rob Bradley, the Chair of Lincoln City Football Club and also a trust member (Lincoln City Supporters Trust own about 30 per cent of the club) gave an entertaining presentation on the trials and tribulations of bringing their club through administration and back to stability. Rob had taken out a mortgage on his house to help the effort although one got the impression that his wife wasn't too impressed. He ended his presentation by pushing the message that football clubs can never afford to stand still but must always look for other opportunities, in particular in making more effective use of their facilities.

Three concurrent workshops were held on The Club's The Hub (using the stadium as a community focus) by Chesterfield's Phil Tooley, Grant Funding by Jane Avery of Co-operative and Social Enterprises and Society Secretary's Responsibilities by The Co-operative College.

After lunch at the second plenary session Matthew Baker of Cobbetts solicitors gave a talk on shares and the difference between private and public companies, to assist those trusts who are buying or seeking to buy stakes in their club. (Currently the Football League does not allow league clubs to

be registered as Industrial & Provident Societies).

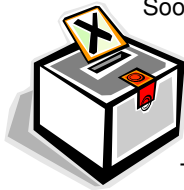
Three more workshops followed. Steve Walsh of Lincoln City and Graham Moran of Notts County discussed the Football in the Community scheme for training young footballers and improving the integration of club and community. Robert Pepper of the Huddersfield trust facilitated a session on trust fundraising. The final workshop was on the interesting subject of "cyber warriors", people who use the Internet to damage supporters' trusts. The best tip is not to feed them.

Much valuable networking and useful interchange of ideas took place in full co-operative spirit during the lunch and coffee breaks. Overall, the second EMT training day was a worthwhile event, bringing together representatives of supporters' trusts to learn, develop and share best practice.

**Co-written by Pete Drew (RamsTrust) and Fred Mosselmans**

**Supporters Direct**  
the supporters' trust initiative

## Elections 2004



Soon we'll be starting the Trust board election process for this year. After a draw at the June board meeting, three elected members John Armstrong-Holmes, Darrin Foss and Nigel King have been chosen to resign from the board at the next AGM in October. Towards the end of August, nominations forms will be sent to all current adult members, i.e. those who have renewed for 2004-5. There are eight places up for election and thus if more than eight members are nominated an election will be held.

If this happens voting slips will be sent to all members with a statement from each of the candidates. Every member will be allowed to vote for up to eight candidates and the eight people with the most votes will be elected to join the six remaining members, who were elected last year, on next year's board. The election will be run by Trust board members who are not candidates, but the counting itself will be done by members of the Luton Town Supporters Trust, with the results announced at the AGM. The term of office of board membership will be two years.

Any of the elected board members will be eligible to stand for election as our Supporter Director. If more than two board members stand, an election for Supporter Director will be held towards the end of the year.

We encourage all members, who both want to and have the time to get involved, to stand. Normally board meetings are held monthly on weekday evenings, but it is the work done outside the meetings by board members and other willing helpers that drives the Trust forward.

**Fred Mosselmans**



### **Trust Directory**

**Chair:** David Hindley  
**Vice Chair & PR:** Keri Usherwood

**Treasurer:** Eric Kerry  
**Secretary:** Nigel King  
**Supporter-Director:** Stephen Thompson  
**Administration:** Fred Mosselmans

**PR Coordinator:** Carole Stapleton  
**Membership:** Phil Marshall  
**Community:** Darrin Foss  
**Fundraising:** Martin Naylor  
**Corporate/Commercial Membership:** John Armstrong-Holmes  
**Other Board members:** Ken Carter  
Alan Scott  
Cheryl Thompson

## Open Day



Many thanks to all Trust members who took the time to visit the Trust Stand, to join, renew or simply have a chat. It's always great to hear your ideas and opinions, and we hope that you found the day both interesting and informative.

As you know, the Open day was organised in conjunction with the club and was the first time since 1996 that Meadow Lane had opened its doors to the fans, allowing everyone to see those areas of the Stadium that are usually reserved solely for the staff and players. The new kit was on show for the first time and although not everybody likes the new design, there were more positives than negatives in terms of fan feedback.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to all of those who volunteered to spend their Sunday to act as stewards and pitch guarders, without you, the day would not have been such a success.

Trying to gauge an idea of numbers beforehand, we all seemed to agree that 1,500 would be a great success, especially when the early morning rain didn't seem to want to stop. By the time the doors opened, a queue of over 150 people were eagerly waiting to have a look around and by the time the doors closed just after 2.00pm, we estimated that approximately 3,000 people had been there, which was a superb turn-out.

Trust Patrons Colin Slater, Dean Yates and Tommy Johnson, all put in an appearance, and the fans young and old raced to get shirts, autograph books and even plaster casts signed. "I can't believe how many people are here, it's fantastic," said Tommy Johnson as he arrived. "Have you signed up many new members?" asked Dean Yates. "I can't get over how many people have asked for my autograph," said Colin Slater. We are immensely grateful to Colin, Dean and Tommy for giving up all, or part of their Sunday to attend and put an extra special shine to the day.

Everything did not go entirely to plan and there are lessons to be learned for next time, but this was the first time most of us had done something along these lines. We hope that this will be an annual close season event, so intend to sit down and discuss areas where we can improve to make some elements run smoother.

Once again, many thanks to all of you who attended, we hope that you enjoyed your day and if one child turned round to a friend the following morning and said "I went to Notts yesterday and got all the players' autographs. It was brilliant," then that has to be seen as a success.

**Martin Naylor**



## **Your Trust – Your Share in Notts County**

Thanks to the pivotal role played by Notts County Supporters Trust and fans like you, Notts County has a future. So why is it so important for supporters to renew their membership or join Notts County Supporters Trust?

Well, to begin with, it is vitally important we don't rest on our laurels. We need to continue the hard work we all started over a year ago to help grow the Trust and it's commitment to Notts County, the Trust Membership and the community of Nottinghamshire.

Our Trust is also seen as one of the best in the country, our membership is one of the largest and our commitment to the club second to none. Trusts tend to be formed at a time of crisis and once those crises have passed, membership falls because there is an impression that the hard work has been done. Nothing could be further from the truth!

The more members the greater the voice we have in our Club and the easier it is for us to make a secure investment in the Club's future. We want to show every other Trust, Notts County Football Club and the wider community that we have grown our membership after the first year. Currently we have around 1500 members; we want this to increase to 2000 over the coming 12 months.

We are also continually looking at working with the Football Club to help raise money to improve the facilities for its supporters; there are various projects that need attention, we can help, we have the skills and commitment the Club needs.

It's been hard work being a supporter of Notts County for the last few years, but at long last we have the chance to take our great Club forward. We can only do this together. Our Trust can only be a success if you join or renew your membership.

**Remember – existing Trust membership expires on 1<sup>st</sup> August!**

To renew your Membership or to join Notts County Supporters Trust:

- ♣ Visit our website to download a form or join on-line
- ♣ Write to us at: Notts County Supporters Trust, Notts County FC, Meadow Lane, Nottingham, NG2 3HJ
- ♣ Or join at the Trust Desk in the club shop on a match-day

**Your share in NCST and Notts County FC is only valid as long as you are a member of Notts County Supporters Trust**