

HULL CITY SUPPORTERS' TRUST

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Registered as Tigers Co-operative Ltd. under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 – 78

This annual report summarises the work of the Hull City Supporters' Trust during the year March 2017 to February 2018.

It will be presented to the shareholders of the Trust at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday 10th March 2018, as well as being published on the Trust's website.

The structure of this report is as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Chairman's Report
3. Secretary's Report
4. Treasurer's Financial Report
5. Financial Statement (31/12/17)

Hull City Supporters' Trust is the trading name of Tigers Co-operative Limited, a Community Benefit Society registration number 29021R.
The registered address is
 HCST, Suite 2, 117-119 Walkergate, Beverley, HU17 9BP.

Elected Trust Board Members (7): G Bielby, (Chairman), R Richardson, (Vice-Chairman), P Fleming (Treasurer), G Cannon, S Dyson, P Walton, S Pye
Co-opted Trust Board Members (2): I Bunton, P Johnson
Secretary: R Mathers

The Hull City Supporters' Trust Partners are:

Aspecs Opticians, Brookes Menswear, Circle 87 Café, Co-op Energy, Cross Solutions Chimney Sweep, Dinostar, EasyPeasyPrint, Essence Holistics, Finesse Internet, Frying Farmer Fish & Chips (Aldbrough), Fudges Den (Filey), Harpers Fish & Chips (Beverley), Hemingway Bailey Ltd, Hornsea Walking Football Club, Hull City Ladies FC, Leasing for Business, Nudge Websites, Photo Express, Rob McFadyen ADI, Ska & Soul, Skin Deep, Wags & Whiskers, William Gemmill Social Club, Wine On-Line. **Full details can be found [here](#).**



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third Hull City Supporters Trust (HCST) AGM, which is my second as Chairman.

In writing this introduction for today's meeting it's both daunting as well as quite surprising just what can happen during a year. 2017 was a huge year for Hull with our UK City of Culture status. I'd also suggest it's been a huge year for HCST too but more of that later in my Chairman's Report.

As last year I'd like to formally thank your Board of Directors and your Secretary without whom HCST would simply not exist as you see us today.

During the year we lost one Director mid-year when Greg Whittaker resigned to take on a role at the BBC. His input and particularly his organisation and written input for the website posts and team of writers were missed.

Today, Phil Walton has also decided to stand down as a Board Director, so I thank them both for their input, support for both myself and the board. Enjoy your time without me chasing you for comments and opinions on the matters we deal with.

Much as it's sad to see people leave the Board, it does then give opportunity to welcome new Directors to offer fresh opinion and strengthen us further, which we will cover shortly.

As I stated last year HCST is constantly evolving and we've changed dramatically during the three years I've been privileged to serve as a Director. Both Ryan Richardson and I are the only two surviving Directors from the "City Till We Die" movement. Ryan and I have steered HCST away from being a single-issue protest group into one of the more active Supporters Trusts in the country. So I must acknowledge two people for enabling us to remain so active.....thank you Assem and Ehab Allam we couldn't have done this without you!!

Ryan and I are both standing for re-election today as under HCST rules, any Director can only serve for three years before seeking re-election, so we hope to gain your approval to continue later in this meeting.

Can I remind you all that HCST Board members are volunteers, but most of all we are all passionate Hull City AFC supporters. I'm fortunate in now being semi-retired so I can devote more time than most others to my role, but I couldn't work effectively without the support and guidance I receive from all Board Directors and our Secretary.

My family say I'm obsessed with football. Sadly, for me in the last five years since "Huddersgate", football has often taken a back seat for football politics! When accused of being obsessive I deny that and simply claim I'm passionate. Passionate to make a difference, passionate to see supporters' rights observed and passionate for Hull City Supporters in particular to be respected by our Club. *(They'll still say I'm obsessed and as none of them will read this or are here today, I will admit they may be correct.....let's just say I'm passionately obsessive!)*

Remember today is the day that you, the members, have your say. You can question your Board formally and give your Board direction, endorsement or bring us to account. We are always available here on a match day, but today it's formal rather than informal.

Thanks for attending today and I hope you enjoy the meeting.

Geoff Bielby – Chairman



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

So as my second report as Chairman this should be easier to pull together you'd think? Well it's been a very busy year but thankfully my HCST email trail came to the rescue

MARCH 2017

Post our previous AGM, I continue pressing the Club to work with HCST and the FSF on Virgin Media "Twenty's Plenty" campaign for our away game at Stoke City. Sadly, following a "guidance note" from the Premier League (PL) our club quickly fell in line with most others and insisted tickets were charged at normal price and any excess over £20 had to be reclaimed directly from Virgin Media!

APRIL

The Club tweaks membership scheme for the 2017/18 season. In summary, more cheap adult seats, West Upper closes, only 3 price zones BUT still no Concessions and the Junior fans and Founders club one season amnesty on pricing ends!

I attend the PL Structured Dialogue meeting on 25th April with Richard Scudamore and all 19 other PL Clubs. Scudamore apologises for not pressing Hull City on Concessions in 2016 and outlined actions being taken by the PL against the Club.

The Club announce and invite fans to apply for their new 'Supporters Committee'. Eight fans are to be "chosen" from 169 applicants. HCST, Hull City Official Supporters Club, (HCOSC) and Senior Tigers plus the Electric Eels also invited.

The first Supporters Committee meeting is held on 26th April although the club owners were not present.

BBC locally raise the issue of queues and inadequate stadium turnstiles at the K.Com. The SMC are pressured and I along with Lisa Jewitt, (Hull FC Voices Chair), meet and appear on the Burnsy show on Radio Humberside to add our experiences. This is now an on-going issue being monitored by Authorities through the Safety Advisory Group.

MAY

HCST are invited together with other fans group leaders to assist with the crowdfunding appeal of Mark Harrison and Darrel Cooks, (*the now ex-groundsman at the K.Com*), for their unfair dismissal case against the SMC. We agree to help to publicise the case for them.

I meet Councillor Mary Glew with Lisa Jewitt regarding nominations for Centenary Plaques acknowledging late Hull City as part of a project to recognise '100 great Hullensians'. Despite several attempts, Hull City Council had failed to get a reply from the club and so contacted myself at the Trust. I'm then invited to join the monthly 'Centenary Plaques' committee meetings.

JUNE

The PL confirm the ongoing commission investigation of Hull City breaching PL 'Rule 8' on Concessions and agree that our HCST correspondence with the PL can be shared with the English Football League, (EFL), as we switch our attention to lobbying them on Concessions post our relegation to the Championship.

I'm approached by a new betting concept company named "FansBet" to consider offering a betting service for Hull City fans where HCST would receive a share of any profits.



Constant calls for renewed protest action from fans during June leads HCST to make it clear we won't protest directly and suggest a separate Protest group should be set up. Hull City Action For Change is eventually started as a fully independent umbrella organisation of various fans and fans groups.

JULY

FSF & SD hold their AGM at St George's Park near Burton on Trent. Threats of divorce prevented me from personally attending as it clashed with a family event. *(See, my passionate obsession does have limits!)*

The 2nd Supporters Committee meeting is held, the day after the team play a friendly match at Craven Park! HCST are represented by Graham Cannon who gave a 'mixed' assessment on what he observed and once again the club owners failed to attend.

I am contacted by a football club investment agent who has interested parties wanting to buy the club! Such discussions have continued since last Summer and I've been made aware recently that there are still interested parties although our current league position does not help!

AUGUST

The FSF propose a 'Kick Off Times' survey to monitor the inconvenience supporters are faced with. Sue Dyson offers to assist and represent HCST but as yet nothing has materialised.

SEPTEMBER

The PL Commission ruling announced finding Hull City in breach of PL Rule 8. It is the opinion of the Trust Board that weak, ineffective sanctions are imposed on the Club and I write to Senior PL Management to express our disappointment of their actions.

The Independent Football Ombudsman (IFO) also give a damning verdict on the clubs' mis-selling of Membership Scheme passes. His comment *"It is unacceptable, and unprecedented, that a club should choose not to co-operate so that the IFO can fulfil his given role"* is not one that can be mis-understood.

Phil Walton represents HCST at the FSF Fans Group meeting in London on 14th.

Pete Fleming and I meet Stephen Brady, *(Leader of Hull City Council)*, and Matt Jukes, *(HCC Chief Executive)*, at The Guildhall. It's an annual meeting held with HCST but specifically the SMC Lease and club ownership are the main topics of conversation.

The EFL confirm their position on Concessions within their Rule.....in short they don't have any rules on Concessions!

The FSF are pressed to begin a National campaign to encourage the EFL to amend their own Rules on Concessions.

PROUD MOMENT ALERT! The Centenary Plaques for Billy Bly, Raich Carter and Andy Davidson are unveiled at the excellent Tiger Rags Exhibition that had been masterminded by Les Motherby of Amber Nectar fame.

I'm asked to co-host the Plaques event with Mary Glew and I was able to invite family members of all three players plus Ken Wagstaff, Malcolm Lord, Rob MacDonald and Dean Windass, *(who represented the club as an ambassador)*, to attend the day.

Ian Ashbee was asked but unfortunately was working, but he apologised on Twitter that he couldn't attend. *(I'd have died a happy man had he made it!)*



It was a wonderful event after four months work had gone into it. Exactly what a Supporters Trust should be doing!

OCTOBER

As Hull Fair was approaching.....'Gategate' begins!

HCST host the FSF Yorkshire Regional meeting in the Old Town. Several Yorkshire club fans representatives attended including Leeds United Barnsley Bradford City and Huddersfield Town. Concessions were high on the agenda and the Yorkshire Region fully supported our campaign. Club governance was also discussed at length at the meeting.

Steve Pye represents HCST at the 3rd Supporters Committee meeting. Another mixed review and once again the club owners absent.

HCST are invited to attend the 'Hull City Hall of Fame' panel meeting to select from 20 shortlisted candidates.

The club immediately begin promoting the event as 'Tigers Hall of Fame'. I'm challenged by Tom Rowell, (*who was the clubs' Marketing & Communications Manager at the time*), for my and HCST Social media condemnation of this move. He assumed from our opposition that I'd not attending the meeting. I explained that I had every intention of attending especially as the original idea had come from HCST after a suggestion from Matthew Rudd, who is a HCST member and another fan of Amber Nectar fame.

I attend and participate in the meeting but ask the Club directly to rename the event as the '*Hull City Hall of Fame*' or even '*The Tigers Hall of Fame*'.

The following Saturday the first phase of protest action during the Sky TV broadcast home games against Nottingham Forest holds up the match!

On Monday 30th I'm advised by the Club following management meetings post- match, that 'Tigers Hall of Fame' is confirmed and no changes!

NOVEMBER

1st November we issue a press statement formally withdrawing HCST support for the 'Tigers Hall of Fame'. It's a difficult decision that was heavily debated by the Trust Board as a 'Hall of Fame' is a much-needed historical necessity.....but not with that name!

On 15th November I chase the Club on the Vice Chairman's statements in his Hull Daily Mail interview suggesting he was willing to meet supporters. The same day HCST are invited to send one person to meet the owners on 22nd November at an extra Supporters Committee meeting!

Following that first four-hour meeting, the next evening Gregor Robertson, (*journalist from The Times writing as "The Journeyman" each Monday*) requests to meet me. Hull City are his chosen club for an article and we meet prior to the Bristol City game. The article was superb thanks to him also meeting several Board and HCST members before the match who all gave him their views of our current plight.

Safety Advisory Group (SAG) changes are proposed and initially HCST are invited to attend meetings, but to avoid the SAG becoming 'political' it's decided to temporarily end Supporter representation at the December meeting.



DECEMBER

HCST produce a detailed pricing model relating to concessions. Previously there was some great work by former HCST Directors Cath Dyson and Alan Hemingway in 2016 on this subject and this was picked up by current Board Members Pete Fleming and Ian Bunton to rework the model.

It's presented by me at the 2nd meeting attended by the Allams on the 14th. *(Another 4-hour session)*. For the record, yes, I also presented two scarves on behalf of the 'Action for Change group'. At the time it was a light-hearted end of meeting exchange with jokes on both side from Assem and myself!

JANUARY 2018

Following a rest and holiday early in the New Year, I decide I'm not busy enough and I'm nominated by HCST, *(seconded by Kat Law of Tottenham Hotspur Supporters Trust SD National Council and FA Council member)*, for a Supporters Direct National Council position. There are six nominees for five positions, so it goes to an election.

At the January HCST Board meeting, we agree our stance at the next Supporters Committee meeting which is scheduled for 7th February.

We also consider the FansBet proposal that had been formulised and decide to defer a decision until this Summer. Partly as we are so busy as a Board, but also because of the current undercurrent in the media about Football's close association with Betting Companies.

FEBRUARY

On the 7th, the SC meeting lasted 90 seconds! Ehab accused me and HCST of making "veiled threats" and claimed I insulted them with the HCAFC Scarves! *(He obviously didn't find it as funny as his father!)*

That action led to Ehab arranging a second Burnsy interview within a week. *(I think Burnsy owes me a beer!)*

I was asked by a club official to clarify my position which resulted in me making a personal statement in the HDM.

Cancelling the meeting almost guaranteed the protests that we saw at the televised Sheffield United match on 23rd February that I'd warned about in the article that was *misunderstood* to be a "Veiled threat!"

Another point to highlight post the aborted meeting on the 7th is that we had more than 80 HCST membership renewals and new members – thanks must go to Mr Allam for our February recruitment drive.

In the SD Election I manage fifth place from six candidates and I'm appointed to serve one year on Supporters Direct England and Wales National Council.

Monday 26th, we return to the table as part of the Supporters Committee. Assem and Ehab unfortunately did not attend as expected, but they had passed Executive responsibility to the Senior Management team to work on the Supporters three main issues:-

- Branding
- The Club Crest
- Concessions

At the time of writing this is an ongoing situation.



I feel we are finally making some progress with the Club and I remain cautiously optimistic.

In summary with all the above, it's been quite a year!

Geoff Bielby - Chairman



SECRETARY'S REPORT

It really doesn't feel like 12 months since we were presenting to our Members at the previous AGM. Back in March 2017, Hull City were in a relegation fight, a new manager had been recently appointed and the relationship between the fans and the current club owners was at best 'fractured.'

A year on it would be tempting to say that nothing has changed but whereas the team are playing in the Championship, (*arguably a league we should be more comfortable in*), away from the pitch is there reason to be cautiously optimistic?

The main issues that our Members tell us are important to them remain with the continued lack of concessionary ticket pricing at Hull City home games as well as an apparent reluctance by the Club's marketing department to use the teams recognised playing name and nickname.

Like the Club, as a Trust we have also suffered a decline in Membership numbers, as fans become disillusioned with the ongoing and well-publicised issues with the owners, (*and maybe some general apathy with 'modern football?'*), and the team continuing to struggle this season to date.

However, when reviewing the current Membership numbers, what is really encouraging to see is the percentage mix, (*77% as of March 1st*), of 3 year and Lifetime Members that clearly understand and support what we stand for as a Trust and how we continue to raise issues on behalf of Hull City supporters at both local and national level with the relevant football authorities, and where required with the support of Supporters Direct and the Football Supporters Federation, of whom we are fully affiliated to both organisations.

This was evident post the aborted Supporters Committee meeting on February 7th, where both organisations offered support to the Trust once the situation was being reported in the media. In our dealings with the club, we aim to remain professional and act in the best interests of the wider fan base always and it's reassuring to know that support is available to the Trust at national level when some individuals within the club fail to recognise this approach.

We do receive some local criticism that we do not organise 'protest activity' against the current club owners, but the Rules and parameters of the Trust are constantly accessible on our website for anyone to view and as Geoff explained in the introduction, we have moved on from being a single-issue protest group.

That said, as a Board we do understand the frustration amongst the protest organisations that have been active in recent months and ultimately, we all want the same thing in a successful team we can all enjoy supporting and for the wider fan base to become more united that would appear to be the case currently.

The latest Supporters Committee meeting did at least finally offer some hope that progress may be made on resolving some of the issues causing a divide between the club and the fans and hopefully a new, recently appointed Head of Marketing & Communications can make greater progress than her predecessor.

On a more positive note, we have been delighted to sponsor Hull City Ladies first team goalkeeper Amy Halloran this season. They receive no support from the professional club and so every penny is vital to their operation. At the time of writing it's really pleasing to see them at the top of their league table with an excellent chance of promotion over the coming weeks.



We were also pleased to contribute to the banner made in memory of the late Les Mutrie that was recently donated to his family and remain happy to consider any request to support initiatives involving City fans and the local community.

For myself it's been a busy year in managing my Trust duties with a demanding work schedule, but thanks to an understanding wife, (*and a good broadband connection*), I generally manage to keep on top and even managed 2 recent appearances on '*Football on Five!*'

I would however like to be busier dealing with e-mails and correspondence from our Members. The Board and myself all give up our time to represent you, but your suggestions and feedback are always welcome, and you'll always receive a response.

So, in 12 months' time, I'm confident my opening paragraph will not be a repeat of the one above and that as Members of the Trust and Supporters of Hull City, several issues with the club will have been resolved and we're all enjoying our football once again.

I thank all members for their continued support to the Trust and encourage you all to tell a family member or friend to join us as together we can only be stronger and ensure the voice of the supporters is heard and consulted with on issues affecting us all.

Richard Mathers - Secretary



FINANCIAL REPORT

For the year of 2017 HCST have provisionally made a deficit of £1,333 (*2016: £3,089 deficit*). This reduction in the deficit for the year is largely due to the exceptional costs incurred in 2016 on the Red Card protest. Income excluding donations amounted to £3,756 (*2016: £5,184*), the reduction being due to members not renewing.

In 2016 we had donations of £1,093 towards the cost of materials for the red card protests of £3,089 meaning the net cost to the Trust amounted to £1,756.

Where members take up multi-year membership only the appropriate proportion of these subscriptions is recognised in the current year with the remainder deferred for future years. In the case of 3 year membership £4 is recognised in the first year with £3 being recognised in years 2 and 3. In the case of lifetime memberships £4 is recognised in the first year and then the following nine years. At the end of 2017 we had £5,303 (*2016: £4,374*) of deferred membership on the Balance Sheet to release to future years.

Costs were slightly lower at £5,089 (*2016: £9,366; or £6,428 excluding protest costs*) with the main year on year fluctuations showing reduced postage costs being partly set off by increased IT costs. There were no charitable donations in the year (*2016: £650*) but the Trust did make a contribution of £120 to the Les Mutrie flag. The player sponsorship of £350 (*2016: £nil*) was paid to Hull City Ladies' team which is currently not affiliated to Hull City AFC.

The costs of merchandise are written off on receipt and the stocks on hand not valued and carried in the balance sheet.

The closing cash balance was £12,632 (*2016: £14,090*). In addition to these cash figures at 31 December 2016 we also had £7,044 held in a separate bank account relating to funds collected on behalf of the Megan Pratt, a City fan who tragically died during 2016. These funds were distributed to good causes close to Megan as instructed and the bank account has now been closed.

During 2016, no costs were spent on the artwork project.

As a reminder, none of the HCST Board Members are paid for any of their time and travel costs are only reimbursed at cost for long distance travel to attend FSF and Premier League meetings in London.

The accounting records are maintained and accounts prepared by the Treasurer; Hemingway Bailey invoice HCST £72 per year to cover the cost of the Cloud software used to maintain financial records.

Peter Fleming, HCST Treasurer



HCST Draft Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2017

	2017 Draft £	2016 Final £
Membership	2,589	4,384
Merchandise sales	1,167	800
Donations	0	1,093
Gross Income	<u>3,756</u>	<u>6,277</u>
Cost of merchandise	2,133	2,035
Postage	473	1,496
Software, website and email costs	1,044	550
Protest costs	0	2,938
Printing and stationery	169	529
Subscriptions	165	60
Travel	140	133
Bank and PayPal charges	334	656
Charitable donations	0	650
Player sponsorship	350	0
Other costs	281	319
Gross expenditure	<u>5,089</u>	<u>9,366</u>
Deficit for the year	<u>(1,333)</u>	<u>(3,089)</u>

HCST Draft Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2017

	2017 Draft £	2016 Final £
Cash and bank balances – Trust	12,632	14,090
Cash and bank balances – Megan	0	7,044
Current assets	<u>12,632</u>	<u>21,134</u>
Creditors	771	1,858
Megan's fund	0	7,044
Current liabilities	<u>771</u>	<u>8,902</u>
Net assets	<u>11,861</u>	<u>12,232</u>
£1 Ordinary shares	733	1,073
Unredeemable shares	27,352	26,979
Total shares	<u>28,085</u>	<u>28,052</u>
Accumulated deficit	(21,527)	(20,194)
Members deferred income reserve	5,303	4,374
Reserves and non-current liabilities	<u>11,861</u>	<u>12,232</u>