

## WHERE'S THE MONEY GONE?

### PRESS RELEASE

The Hull City Supporters' Trust is extremely concerned that the majority of Hull City's £200,000 Away Supporters' Initiative Fund has not been deployed for its intended purpose.

Despite intensive efforts to question club officials, the Trust (and other members of the Fans' Working Group) has been unable to garner any meaningful information about how the remaining Fund is going to be spent.

It's April next week and there are four away matches left this season – the Trust finds it totally unacceptable that there remains a lack of clarity about where the ASI Fund is to be spent. Regrettably, we are left fearing that the club may have used the money elsewhere, rather than spend it on enhancing the away match experience for Hull City supporters.

The Away Supporters' Initiative (ASI) is a fund provided to all top flight football clubs by the Premier League, and is designed to improve the experience of away supporters either by subsidising away travel, part-funding away match tickets or taking other actions to enhance the day for away supporters following, or visiting, Hull City. During 2013-14 Hull City's share of this Fund was spent on subsidising travel to several away fixtures distant from Hull, an initiative that drew plenty of praise amongst supporters who loyally follow the club away from home.

For 2014-15, information has to date been far less forthcoming. We understand that a discount was applied to the cost of Tiger Travel for those who attended the Arsenal away match in October; we estimate that this consumed no more than £20,000 of the Fund (see note 1).

At a recent Fans' Working Group meeting the club's representative suggested that some of the ASI Fund has been used to enhance the away fans' experience within the KC Stadium. No further details of what this enhancement work entails, or what it cost, have been forthcoming. We are not convinced that any such expenditure at the KC Stadium has occurred.

We therefore have £180,000 left unspent.

The Fund has been discussed extensively by the Fans' Working Group, of which the Trust is an active partner, and the consensus has been that deploying the money to discount the price of matchday tickets is the best way to spread benefits to all Hull City fans attending away matches. It is a transparent way of allowing fans to see how the Fund is used. And it supports the wider

**Hull City Supporters' Trust** is the trading name of Tigers Co-operative Limited, a Community Benefit Society registration number 29021R.

**The registered address is:**

Hull City Supporters' Trust, 37a North Bar Within, Beverley, HU17 8DB.

**Elected Trust Board Members (10):** G Bielby, C Cooper, M Gretton (Chair), R Harmer, A Hemingway (Treasurer), R Kerr, A Mills, M Scott (Secretary), R Skelton, C Smith.

**Co-opted Trust Board Member (1):** F Beill



call from Premier League Trusts, culminating in today's demonstration at the Premier League's offices in London, to expand and codify the ASI Fund in future seasons as part of the "Share The Wealth" campaign (see note 2).

To date no such discount has been offered by Hull City. With ticket prices for only one away game left to be announced it looks as though either 3,000 away fans will be paid £20 each to receive a ticket and turn up at White Hart Lane (assuming a £40 face value price), or the money will be left unspent.

The club's representative made a vague claim yesterday that measures to improve the "experience" for away fans will be implemented at Swansea and Southampton, matches scheduled for early April. This suggestion was accompanied by no detail whatsoever and as a result we suspect, based on recent experience, that nothing much will be forthcoming. The total lack of clarity will certainly mean that no Hull City fans will be encouraged to attend this match as a result of whatever the club may have in mind.

The club also stated that the Swansea and Southampton matches will also feature a survey of away fans to garner views on how the remaining money should best be spent. This is a plan with the dubious distinction of being doubly pointless – first because such consultation is what the Fans' Working Group is there for; and second because the survey will be far too late to be of any use this season. It's a ridiculous suggestion designed, we believe, to introduce yet further delay in spending the ASI Fund. This is totally unacceptable.

The Allams have talked about running the club as a business with ruthless efficiency. Ask the amateur sporting clubs currently being hurried out of the Airco Arena, they will tell you how ruthless the Allams can be under the guise of the Stadium Management Company. We sincerely hope that this ruthlessness doesn't extend to diverting the ASI Fund into areas that do not directly benefit away supporters or enhance the away fans' experience. That would, if the case, be shameful and outrageous.

**The Trust calls on Hull City to stop the obfuscation and spend the remaining money by significantly discounting the ticket prices for the Crystal Palace and Tottenham Hotspur fixtures in April and May. Ticket sales for Crystal Palace commence in earnest on Monday, so it's not too late. These are both critical matches where two City wins, cheered on by a passionate away following encouraged to turn out in force, could propel the club to Premier League survival.**

**Let's see the money please, Mr Allam. You were given it to spend on Hull City away fans. So please do just that, and show us how that has been achieved in a transparent manner. It's the least your football team's most loyal supporters deserve.**

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#### Notes to editors:

1. Hull City's fixture at Arsenal in October 2014 attracted 2,900 away fans according to the matchday programme. The majority of City fans make their own way to the match, especially for London fixtures, rather than use the club's organised travel. Added to that, a significant number of people in the away end that day clearly had little or no allegiance to Hull City, we presume because they purchased their tickets on the secondary market, and were extremely unlikely to have travelled to the Emirates Stadium via Tiger Travel. We believe at best that 1,000 fans travelled with Tiger Travel for this match, expending no more than £20,000 of the ASI Fund.
2. <http://www.fsf.org.uk/latest-news/view/premier-league-london-tv-deal-march>
3. Hull City Supporters' Trust is the trading name of Tigers Co-operative Limited, a community benefit society. The Trust is a democratic, not-for-profit organisation comprised of football supporters. It is committed to strengthening the voice of supporters in the football club's decision-making processes and strengthening the links between the club and the community it serves. The Trust's vision, objects and aims can be found here - <http://hullcitysupporterstrust.com/hcst-vision-aims-and-objectives/>
4. All media enquiries in the first instance should be directed via email to [contact@hullcityst.com](mailto:contact@hullcityst.com), a spokesman from the Trust will be available for interviews arranged via this means of contact.