



Barnet Supporters Trust

This document seeks to explain the basics of Supporters Trusts and their relevance to Barnet FC. On this page, we provide a brief summary. This is followed by a more detailed Q&A on the following pages.

Executive Summary

1/ The basic definition of a Supporters' Trust is a democratic, not-for-profit organisation of supporters, committed to strengthening the voice of supporters in the decision making process at a club, and strengthening the links between the club and the community it serves.

2/ A Supporters' Trust differs from a Supporters Association both in terms of its objectives – such as seeking an active stake in a football club – and its legal status, as an incorporated Industrial and Provident Society. Nowadays, the vast majority of Football League clubs have a Supporters' Trust.

3/ A Supporters' Trust that is strong can bring about proven commercial benefits to a football club in terms of higher attendances and an increase in levels of volunteerism and participation.

4/ While a Trust has not legally been formed at Barnet, a lot of work has been done over the past year to develop the Trust concept – including promoting the club in the local community. Following favourable votes first to set up a Trust and then for the SA to work to form a Trust, everyone is now working together to develop a strong Trust at Barnet.

5/ The Trust would have a more formal organisational structure in comparison to the BFCSA, based around a board of people with clearly defined responsibilities. The Trust would do everything that the SA currently does and more.

6/ The Trust would aim to provide a range of benefits to supporters, such as an active stake in the football club and engagement in a range of activities aimed at increasing involvement and influence. Through helping build a strong club off the pitch, we would also seek to bring tangible benefits on it.

7/ The Trust would help the club through publicising its matches and other activities, increasing levels of volunteerism and helping develop and cement bonds in the community.

8/ Tony Kleanthous, the club chairman, is fully aware of the advantages and working of Trusts in football through the roles he has on the wider world of football and is fully supportive of the BFCSA converting to a Trust.

9/ We are now embarking on a period of consultation with members, in which we will be asking whether they wish for the Supporters Association to become a Supporters Trust.

10/ For further information, please see <http://www.supporters-direct.coop> or contact either:

info@bfcsa.co.uk

info@beestrust.co.uk



KEY QUESTIONS

1. What is a Supporters Trust?
2. How does a Trust differ from a Supporters Association?
3. What are the benefits of the Trust model over the Supporters Association model?
4. What is the history of BFCSA and Bees Trust?
5. How would the organisational structure of the Trust differ from the BFCSA?
6. What would the Trust do for supporters?
7. What would the Trust do for the club?
8. What do Barnet FC think?
9. What is the timetable?
10. Any other questions?

1. WHAT IS A SUPPORTERS TRUST?

The basic definition of a Supporters' Trust is a democratic, not-for-profit organisation of supporters, committed to strengthening the voice of supporters in the decision making process at a club, and strengthening the links between the club and the community it serves.

Supporters Trusts are set up with the assistance of Supporters Direct (SD), which was formed in 2000 as an initiative of the UK Government. Its goal is to '*promote sustainable spectator sports clubs based on supporters' involvement and community ownership*'. SD has helped set up over 170 Supporters Trusts at Football and Rugby clubs in the UK. Barnet are currently one of only fourteen clubs in the Football League without a Supporters' Trust.

The Trust model has, in recent years, become widely recognised across the political and the football world as the best way of securing supporter representation at football clubs.

In short, a Supporters' Trust is:

- Seeking influence (through either a significant minority, or a majority shareholding)
- Seeking involvement (via a place or places on the board)
- Not for profit
- Inclusive
- Sustainable
- Democratic
- Transparent

2. HOW DOES A SUPPORTERS TRUST DIFFER TO A SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION?

2.1 Aims and objectives

The BFCSA exists to further the welfare of Barnet FC supporters through the provision of services, such as social events as well as legal advice, through the Football Supporters Federation (FSF). The 'Supporters Association' (or 'Supporters Club') model is the traditional one.

In contrast, the Trust model has developed over the past two decades. It is a model with cross-party political support, as well as the backing of UEFA. 58 of the 72 clubs in the Football League now have a Supporters Trust.

A Trust exists to gain an active stake in the football club. A Trust is about developing a two way relationship between the club and the fans; where the fans promote and help the club in return for a real say in how the club run. This relationship is about engendering a sense of community and ensuring that supporters are consulted in the major decisions affecting the club. This influence is developed through a number of avenues such as holding shares and acquiring a seat on the club's board. This is not the objective of organisations working under the Association model.



2.2 Legal Differences

As well as differences in aims and objectives, there are also some important legal differences between Supporters Associations and Supporters' Trusts:

1/ A Supporters' Trust is an incorporated body, whereas an association is not. This means that legally it is distinct from its members. In practice this means:

- a) A Trust has limited liability. If an Association was sued and the existing funds and/or insurance did not cover the loss, the individual members are liable for the bill. With a Trust, the members have limited liability and are protected.
- b) A Supporters Association does not have what is termed 'a legal personality', which means it cannot legally hold shares. In practice they are owned by an individual on its behalf. The small BFCSA shareholding in Barnet FC Ltd is held on its behalf by its Chairman, Eddie Thompson.
- c) A Supporters Trust is an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) – which is a legal entity with a constitution that is registered with the Financial Services Authority (FSA).
- d) As an IPS, a Trust is subject to a greater level of regulatory control compared to an Association. This embraces areas such as expenditure (which must be in accordance with the organisations aims) and having its members list made publicly available through a registered office.

Although in some ways it may look like a charity, and has the name 'trust', it is not a charitable organisation, but has a legal status similar to a limited company, albeit a not for profit one.

2.3 The 'Trust Community'

Through the establishment of a Trust at Barnet, we would be able to tap into the Trust community. This consists of:

- a) Supporters Direct – who provide funding and support in all aspects of the Trust's life.
- b) Other Supporters' Trusts - who share the same values of working towards supporter influence at their respective clubs.

3. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A TRUST MODEL OVER A SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION MODEL?

Supporter community ownership can consist either of a majority shareholding (for example at Exeter City) or through a significant minority shareholding (for example at Swansea City where the Trust owns 20%, or at York City where it has 25%). Our aim would be to demonstrate our value as partners to the club, willing to invest time and effort that has a genuine commercial value and to be recognised with a significant minority shareholding and a directly elected representative on the board.

This section draws heavily from research conducted by SD on a range of clubs where a Trust has a majority stake (e.g. Exeter and Lincoln) and those where it doesn't (e.g. at Torquay and Colchester) conducted which is outlined in the briefing paper – '*Business Advantages of Supporter Community Ownership in Football*'. The case studies below help to underline the benefits of majority stake supporter ownership.

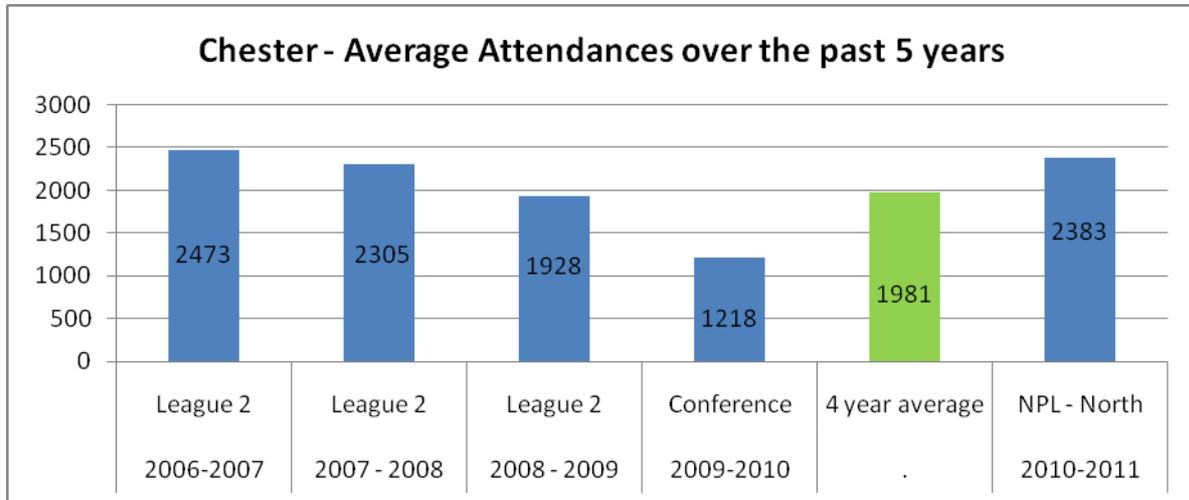
3.1 Higher attendances – case study: Chester

One of the key aims at Barnet is to grow the fan base. The club have tried all sorts of initiatives, such as giving away tickets to school children. These have had mixed success. There is always room for fresh ideas and new ways of thinking.

Chester City FC, on the other hand, have experienced a turbulent time in recent years. In 2010 the club folded and was reformed as Chester FC. The new club plays at the same stadium as Chester City FC did, but began life as a supporter owned club several rungs down the football pyramid.

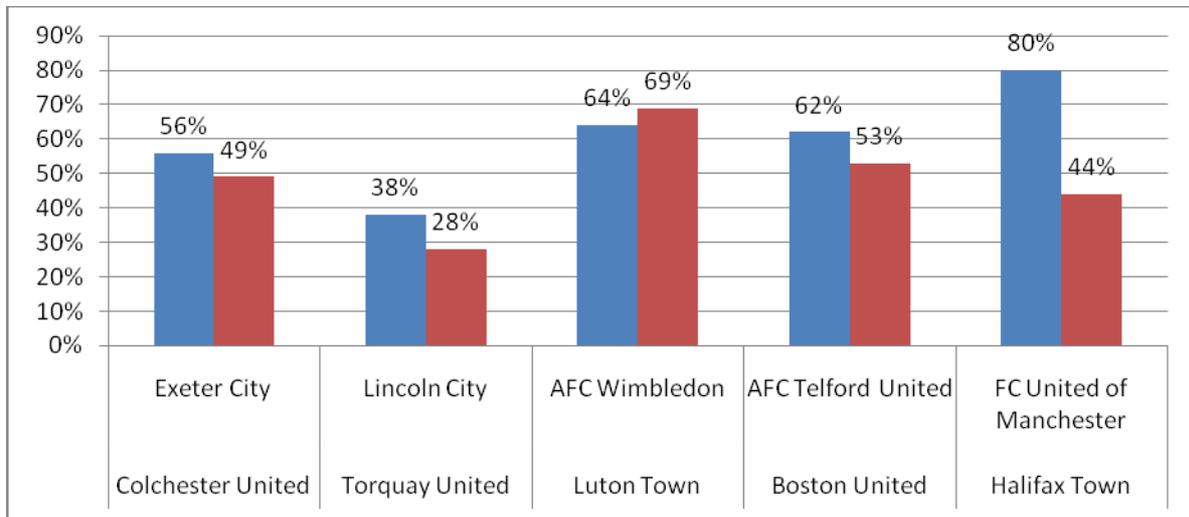


As you can see, in spite of playing at a much lower level, attendances have shot up. The effect is even more remarkable once the lower visiting attendances in the northern league are taken into account.



3.2 Greater resilience

Where supporters have a key stake in the club, they tend to be more resilient. SD asked fans at different clubs if their attendance level would remain the same if the team were performing poorly. The chart below compares clubs in respective divisions, from Exeter/Colchester (FL1) to FC United/Halifax (NPL).



Blue Line – Clubs where supporters have a major influence

Red Line – Non supporter owned

This helps to reinforce the story at Chester – whereby the far lower level of the team in 2010/2011 did not adversely affect attendances.

3.3 Increase volunteerism

One of the key aims of a Trust partnership model is to increase the level of volunteerism at the club. We already have a certain level of volunteerism – for example supporters helping to clear the pitch when it snows.

However, there is evidence that when supporters have a genuine stake in a football club, levels of volunteerism increase. This has commercial value. At Exeter City, for example:



'lots of supporters are prepared to do things for the club – for free, profit-free, at cost price etc. You have a huge hitherto untapped resource, which suddenly becomes available. That can mean you get all sorts of work done for free, which otherwise at a 'normal' football club, you'd be paying for. Your costs go down. At the end of every game, you'll see people sweeping the ground, as with all football clubs; the difference is that at Exeter City they're doing it for free, they're supporters who at the end of a game will pick up a broom' (Neil Le Milliere, Exeter City Supporters Trust)

SD's evidence shows the level of fan involvement, aside from simply attending matches, is higher amongst clubs where supporters are heavily involved, with 52% agreeing with the statement 'I feel very involved in my club' compared to 26% elsewhere. (SD paper 4, p31)

3.4 The application to Barnet

The above examples show the clear business benefits of supporter influence at football clubs. However, this does not necessarily require a majority ownership stake. There may be value in our seeking to emulate the Swansea model. At Swansea, the Trust has a 20% stake in the club and an elected supporter on the club board.

It should be noted that whilst share ownership and a fan-elected board member are long-term aims of the Trust there is a lot to achieve before being in a position to ask for them. We need to prove ourselves as an organisation to both the fans, by being an active and relevant organisation to a larger proportion of the fan base and the Club, by proving the new initiatives we are putting forward are successful.

Whilst Tony Kleanthous is well regarded in the game, he is unlikely to want to be Chairman of the club forever. Barnet have not been immune from problematic owners in the past, nor are immune from them in the future. Financially, there is also a great instability in the game. According to SD: *'The rate of insolvencies is such that 55 clubs have gone into insolvency proceedings since the formation of the Premier League in 1992.'* Having a strong Trust run club, while not insuring against this, at least insures against a future owner without the best wishes of the club at heart.

4. WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF BFCSA AND BEES TRUST?

The idea of having a Supporters Trust at Barnet ('Bees Trust') has been floated over the past season. In this section, we aim to explain more about the 'Bees Trust', the BFCSA and why the BFCSA put a motion to its members at the AGM, asking:

"In principle, are you supportive of the Supporters Association working together with the "Bees Trust" as a single trust organisation?"

4.1 Who decided to form a Trust (the process up to 17th February 2011)?

The idea initially came from Oliver Deed and Peter Bampton-Clare, two Barnet supporters of many a year, who were heavily involved in the past in the KBA campaign. This was following research on the wider Trust movement, as described above.

Before presenting to the BFCSA committee, they looked into the process of setting up a Trust and made initial contact with SD. Whilst it was always the intention to work with the BFCSA as soon as possible, it was decided first that some preliminary research on the Trust model was required.

Oliver and Peter worked with fellow Barnet supporter Chris Nash, who also works for the Football Supporters Federation (FSF) and has extensive knowledge of both the FSF and SD. Chris was able to provide the relevant initial contacts. These were:

Steve Powell – FSF Director of Policy & SD board member
James Mathie – Development Manager, SD

An initial meeting was set up with the FSF and SD, in order to flesh out a little more about the principles of Trusts. The process that was followed since was advised by Supporters Direct.



The first step was a communication of the plans to the committee of the BFCSA on 11th December 2010. There followed, with an SD representative, a presentation to the BFCSA committee on 10th January 2011. The purpose of this presentation was to explain the Trust model and take any questions. Tony Kleanthous was updated simultaneously.

The second stage was an open public meeting of Barnet supporters to present the principle of a Trust (provisionally the 'BeesTrust') to take a vote on whether a Trust should be formed at Barnet. The meeting was marketed to supporters via leaflets handed to supporters at all entrances to the ground prior to the home games against Southend (29th January) and Torquay (12th February).

At the end of this meeting, there was an overwhelming backing by thirty-four votes to nil, to set up a supporters trust at Barnet. A small minority of people either abstained or did not vote. On this night, it was determined that a Trust would be created at Barnet.

4.2 Working together with BFCSA to form one single organisation – (the process up to the BFCSA AGM)

Following the open meeting, there were further meetings with the BFCSA – during which time the SA committee came back with two broad views:

- 1/ It was preferable to have a single supporters' organisation at Barnet.
- 2/ The Trust model was the best one for the modern day.

At the April 2011 BFCSA committee meeting, a long discussion was held about the benefits of the Trust model. James Mathie (SD) was on hand to explain what a Trust is all about, and Peter Bampton-Clare was present to answer questions about the Bees Trust. A vote was held at the end of this meeting about whether to put to SA members the question of whether the Trust should emerge from the SA. The committee voted in favour of putting this to members, with 8 committee members in favour, 2 against and 2 abstaining.

Regular, often weekly, meetings were then held by a working group consisting of members of the BFCSA committee, including its chairman and the Bees Trust group. These worked out a lot of the logistics, most notably:

- 1/ Working through, and setting up a draft constitution, signed by the BFCSA chair among others.
- 2/ Creating on a basic structure chart (see next section 5.1 – BFCSA chair version).
- 3/ Setting up a registered office (a legal necessity for keeping the members list and for official documents to be sent to).

This process **did not** include setting up a Trust as a legal entity and registering it with the FSA.

4.3 What happens next?

The BFCSA will be working with SD over the next few weeks to finalise the mechanics of the vote on whether the SA should become a Trust, along with the timetable should this motion be supported. Details will be sent to members of the BFCSA ahead of an Extraordinary General Meeting to be held in October 2011. At this meeting, a discussion will be held on the exact details being proposed for the new Trust, and members will vote again on whether or not to ratify them.

4.4 Trust activities

Whilst the Trust does not yet exist as a legal entity, this has not stopped us being active in the local community, in partnership with many on the BFCSA committee. These activities included:

4.4.1. Promoting BFC matches on the street

We have operated the street stalls on Barnet High Street on the morning prior to each of the final six home games of the season, printing leaflets to advertise the matches and then talking to



passing shoppers. This has generated huge interest in the club, something that has been recognised by the club.

'Bees' Trust have made a fine step to whip up enthusiasm for the Bees cause'. (Dennis Signy, Barnet FC website, 18 March 2011).

We are currently working on developing the stalls next season, in conjunction with the football club.

4.4.2 Promoting BFC events on the street and at the East Barnet festival

We have worked to promote events put on by the club, notably the recent community day. This involved running a street stall in Barnet High Street to promote the event and helping out with the stalls on the day.

4.4.3 Promoting the club on the radio

We have appeared on Hospital Radio Barnet promoting both club and Trust.

4.4.4 Working with local businesses

We are forging mutually beneficial links with local businesses, including the Spice Carriage, who have offered sponsorship money for Trust activities in exchange for our marketing the restaurant in Trust publications. The Trust has also produced Amber and Black rock promoting Barnet. Some of this has been distributed at the Street Stalls and was also handed out to youngsters attending the Lee Harrison testimonial.

4.4.5 Working with local charities

A key part of promoting the club in the local community is doing what we can to help local charities. The club already does an excellent job helping charities to raise money at home games and we would like to build on this by constructing firm links between Barnet FC, its supporters and some of the many fantastic local charities operating in Barnet.

We have already forged links with Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, including enrolling volunteers for the charity. We have also met to discuss how we might be able to help them with their fundraising efforts and have collected £50 for them in just a couple of hours for them at a recent street stall.

5. HOW WOULD THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE TRUST DIFFER FROM THE BFCSA?

In this section, we set out the difference in the activities and organisation of a Trust and an Association.

5.1 Existing BFCSA Structure & Activities

The existing BFCSA carries out wide range of functions, as shown here:

No.	Item
1	POTY event and end of season trophies
2	AGM with attendance by a club 'personality'
3	Meetings with the chairman, manager and senior players
4	Community Day



5	Christmas Fair
6	International Supporters Liaison
7	FSF representation/Legal Advice
8	FSF Quiz Team
9	Public Liability Insurance guaranteeing compensation IF the SA is legally liable to pay compensation
10	General Knowledge Quiz
11	Music Quiz
12	Live Bands
13	Supporter Football Team, including a match vs. 1st team
14	Members list/cards
15	Accurate and timely financial accounting and audited accounts
16	Accurate meeting minutes
17	Prize Draws
18	Programme notes at every home game
19	Annual Newsletter
20	BFCSA Website providing significant levels of stats not available on the club site

5.2 Trust Structure

The Trust would carry out all of the functions currently performed by the BFCSA, noted above, and many more besides.

Many of these new activities would be those carried out in prior months under the 'BeesTrust' banner, as explained in section 4.4 above, such as promoting the football club on the streets and building partnerships with local charities and businesses. Others would be legal requirements relating to the status of the Trust as an incorporated body.

Input from Barnet supporters as to what they want from their supporters organisation is key and will form part of the consultation process leading to the January 2012 launch.

The Trust structure would consist of a board of seven people, consisting of a chairman and six other roles with specific portfolios – similar to that of a company board of directors. In addition, the Trust would appoint a Secretary.

The portfolio areas would be determined by the first elected board and may evolve over time, but would typically include such portfolio areas such as 'Director of Community Liaison' and 'Director of Projects and Events'.



Within each portfolio area – there may be one or more sub-committees. Sub committees allow members who do not want a formal Board role to still contribute, and enable work to be progressed outside of the Board meetings. Each elected committee member will be solely responsible for their area to ensure that the members of the trust and Barnet supporters in general are fully involved in their work. Sub-committee structures /members are non-elected and allow for any supporter to get involved with an area of work that interests them, both on an ad-hoc or more committed basis and at a time of their convenience.

The objective is to achieve a group of hard working committees ensuring that every aspect of being a Barnet supporter is covered and promoted for the greater good of everyone who wants long term sustainable success for Barnet Football Club.

5.3 Getting involved

Who can get involved? Anyone and Everyone!

We want as many Barnet supporters as possible to get involved with the setting up of the new Trust and in continuing to expand our ideas for promoting the club in the community and enhancing the supporter experience for existing Barnet fans. We had lots of ideas about things we'd like to do on both of these fronts, but they are all dependent on people willing to get involved. We also feel strongly that the more members are involved, the better the Trust will be.

6. WHAT WOULD THE TRUST DO FOR SUPPORTERS?

6.1 Representation: One of the primary aims of any Supporters' Trust is to promote the interests of supporters and try to make sure their views are taken in to account.

As well as representation, the Barnet Supporters Trust also aims to provide a number of other benefits to improve the experience of being a Barnet supporter. These will include:

6.2 Regular communications – We hope to produce a fortnightly or monthly newsletter/Fanzine for Barnet supporters, featuring information, features, interviews and competitions. We will also be on hand with a stall in the Pavilion each match day to take any questions.

6.3 Member discounts at local businesses – We have been busy securing sponsorship from local businesses in order to fund the activities we wish to pursue. As a result, we will soon be compiling a list of local businesses (including restaurants, pubs and shops), that will offer discounts to Trust members.

6.4 Social events -The Trust would hold a number of social events throughout the year. These will include popular events previously run by the BFCSA, such as music and general knowledge quizzes. Following meetings with other Trust's, we have a few more ideas, such as a referee's night. We aim to run events as desired by members.

6.5 Man of the Match: We would like to give supporters the opportunity to choose a man of the match after every home game. Trust volunteers would stand by each exit at the end of every home game and ask supporters to vote for their man of the match. We would then hope to be able to present the award to the relevant player, and perhaps conduct a brief interview with him, in the Pavilion after the game. Alternatively, the Trust proposes a text by phone option, which would make participation even easier, and could raise welcome funds for the Trusts activities.

6.6 Surveys: We aim to organise detailed and regular surveys of Barnet supporters, to find out supporters' views on the club and different aspects of the experience of being a Barnet supporter. We would then hope to use the results of these surveys to work with the club in order to develop an optimal supporter experience, which in turn will, we hope, attract more supporters to the club.



7. WHAT WOULD THE TRUST DO FOR THE CLUB?

Central to the Trust is promoting the club in the wider community – doing what it can do help take the club forward. We have a number of ideas of how we might be able to work together to do this:

7.1 Publicity: The Trust recognises the importance of boosting attendances in order to give the club the best chance of success on the pitch. With this in mind, last season the Trust produced flyers advertising upcoming home matches. These were distributed in pubs, shops and other local businesses and were handed out in busy areas, including at our street stalls. We will also help distribute materials the club produces. For example, the Trust handed out flyers advertising the club's recent Community Day. We are currently in talks with the club how we can use the street stalls to the best advantage in order to maximise the messages the club wants to communicate.

7.2 Community survey: We plan to undertake a community survey in which local people are asked a number of questions about Barnet FC and their views of the club. This will have the benefit of providing us with evidence about how aware local people are of the existence of the football club, where it is, what interest they have in the club and what prevents more of them coming to games. As a result, we will be able to work with the club to better target advertising and publicity in order to attract the maximum number of local people to Underhill.

7.3 Barnet Community Trust: The club do an incredible amount of fantastic work in the local community; with soccer schools, after-school initiatives (such as the Kickz programme) and maintaining a strong presence at local events such as the East Barnet Festival. Supporters have the manpower to assist to Janet with specific projects; publicity and applications for grant funding, as well as mobilising supporters to volunteer and help run stalls at local festivals, or to distribute promotional material.

Note - The Barnet Community Trust is separate to the Supporters Trust.

7.4 Build links with local charities: A key part of promoting the club in the local community is doing what we can to help local charities. The club already does an excellent job of helping charities to raise money at home games and we would like to build on this by constructing firm links between Barnet FC, its supporters and some of the many fantastic local charities operating in Barnet.

7.5 Building links with local businesses: Barnet FC is a real community club, as this can be seen through the strong links it has formed with a number of local businesses. The Trust aims to work with the club in forming new links between the club, its supporters and local businesses. This will benefit the club through additional sponsorship, more supporters through discounts and special offers for Trust members and the businesses themselves by the increased custom that Barnet supporters will provide.

7.6 Volunteerism: There are a wide range of skills amongst the Barnet fan base. The Trust will act as a vehicle for volunteerism when required, for example when volunteers are needed to clear snow off the pitch, paint parts of the ground and so forth.

7.7 Mystery shopping: We would like to work with the club to develop a mystery shopping programme, the results of which will help inform the club on specific aspects of the supporter experience that Barnet fans are satisfied with, and which they feel could be improved. This will be part of the Trust's aim to be a "critical friend", working closely with the club to provide comments and suggestions about what supporters enjoy and what they feel could possibly work better. We hope this will result in attracting more supporters and making current supporters more satisfied with the product they receive.

7.8 International: The Trust wants to promote Barnet FC as a destination for international football fans, including the thousands of football lovers in other European countries who regularly travel abroad, including to Britain, in pursuit of new football experiences. We hope this will support Paul Fairclough's new role in building links between Barnet FC and clubs in other countries. A



further part of the Trust's international work will be finding ways to engage with local ethnic and national minority communities in order to build links between them and the club. John "Village" Adkins has already performed an admirable role as the club's International Liaison officer and such his achievements should be duly noted.

8. WHAT DO BARNET FC THINK?

It is worth stating that whilst we will be a totally independent organisation, Tony Kleanthous, the club chairman, is fully aware of the advantages and working of Trusts in football through the roles he has on the wider world of football and is fully supportive of the BFCSA converting to a Trust.

"Being better is not just being louder on a terrace; it is actually about really supporting and understanding, working together. I'd like our supporters to be educated, to know things about football that other supporters don't know, to understand their club intimately, and to work with us so we don't fight each other but instead we work together... We can't grow without our supporters. We have to all grow together. And we have to grow together with understanding. I don't want one of these clubs where we dictate to you and you protest about us... We're all in this together. And that's where, for me, I get frustrated because sometimes some of our supporters forget we're all in this together.... If you want to be involved with this club, we're open to it, we want you all to be involved with this club and I want us to work together, but it has to be done in a proper, structured way." (Tony Kleanthous, BFCSA Interview, 2009)

As well as receiving praise from Dennis Signy around the street stalls to promote matches, the Trust working group have built a good relationship with the club's commercial manager, Darren Wood, agreeing how we can work together more effectively in the forthcoming season.

9. WHAT IS THE TIMETABLE?

July 22 to August 8	Review transition process and timeline
August 8	SA Committee Meeting – Agree consultation process, timeline and determine consultees
End September /Start Oct	Open night – What do you want from your supporters organisation?
September 12	SA Committee Meeting
September 13	Mail postal voting papers
October 3	Deadline for voting slip return
October 10	SA Committee Meeting
October 13	Extraordinary General Meeting

10. ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

Further information about the workings of Supporters Trusts', and many frequently asked questions, can be found on the SD website at <http://www.supporters-direct.coop>

You can also contact us in person or by email to:

info@bfcsa.co.uk

info@beestrust.co.uk