

WST AGM 2015

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION A

Summary: To oppose the imposition of the "bubble" and restricted travel arrangements

Proposer: Andy Pierce and Phil Davies

"This Trust in general meeting assembled resolves to oppose the imposition of so-called "bubble" matches or other travel restrictions on supporters of Wrexham AFC, believing such restrictions do not contribute to the maintenance of public order and represent an unwarranted restriction on the liberty of supporters of Wrexham AFC to peacefully go and do what they please when they please. Further this Trust resolves to instruct the Society Board to lobby the appropriate police and public authorities on this matter, both within Wales and in England, and to co-operate and campaign with other club-based and national supporters' organisations."

Proposers Background Information

In this proposed resolution we are asking you, the members of Wrexham Supporters Trust and Wrexham AFC to vote on the subject of Bubble policing at future Wrexham AFC fixtures. You will be deciding whether or not we, the Supporters Trust membership accept these policing methods being imposed on fans of our club, and also if we wish to instruct the board of Wrexham Supporters Trust and of Wrexham AFC to actively oppose these policing methods, and reject them as a viable form of policing at all future Wrexham AFC matches. For two seasons running now 'Bubble Matches' or 'designated travel restrictions' have been imposed on supporters of Wrexham AFC for our matches with Chester FC. It is our fear that these draconian policing methods will continue in the coming season 2015/16 for a 3rd consecutive season. However, with Tranmere Rovers now relegated to the National League, we face the stark reality of not two, but four Bubble match fixtures in one season.

This blanket approach to policing affects every single Wrexham fan wishing to attend in some way shape or form, and in many cases prevents lifelong fans from even attending the match for various reasons.

Last season for the Monday night game at Chester, the early bus departure times of 17:45 meant many Wrexham fans couldn't get from work in time, despite the game only 12 miles down the road not kicking off until 2 hrs later at 19:45. People living and working within the vicinity of Chester are unable to travel direct to the stadium as they have always done, thus missing a game taking place 10 minutes from where they have been all day. The reasons against Bubble matches are many, and I'm sure you've heard many of them before. Town centre inspector Paul Wycherley, one of the commanders for 'Bubble' matches, recently stated of the derby day risk element: "Our surveillance is intelligence led – so we already know who these fans are"! In that case why are we all being punished?

Last year we requested NWP liaise with Lincolnshire police to see how they successfully police the Lincolnshire derby between Lincoln and Grimsby without the need for the Bubble. This still hasn't taken place, highlighting the fact that NWP are unwilling to explore other avenues.

As fans of Wrexham AFC we are in a very special position that few fans in the country can boast of. We own our football club! And therefore we can also influence the decisions that directly affect us as members and supporters.

If you are unhappy at being herded onto buses for a 12 mile journey, sick of being of being treated as a criminal because of a minority despite having no criminal convictions, or simply fed up of being dictated to in a supposedly free country?

Society Board's Background Information opposing the resolution:

The Board understands the reasons for Resolution A but cannot support it as it implies that the Club should withdraw cooperation with the "bubble" aka the "safe travel" arrangements.

The Board asks members to consider very carefully before voting on a resolution which, at first glance, may appear attractive.

The Board agrees that the imposition of these restrictions seriously curtails the freedom of movement of law abiding fans (the overwhelming majority) and that they do not necessarily prevent disorder.

The Board is determined to return the games against Chester back to normal as soon as possible. The Reclaim the Game initiative was the start of that process.

However, the Club has no power to veto arrangements made by the Police and Chester FC for our "away" fixture. Whilst we can make representations, ultimately it is for them to decide what happens at Chester. If the authorities at Chester insisted on safe travel arrangements, and we declined to cooperate, then the match would probably proceed without tickets being made available for Wrexham supporters.

We have been given no indication that the Tranmere fixtures will be subject to restrictions.

The Board believes that cooperation and consultation rather than confrontation are the best means of achieving our aims.

However, the Board has an important duty to safe guard the best interests of Wrexham AFC including, crucially, its financial well-being. The decision to impose the restrictions is not ours but we will redouble our efforts to persuade the authorities that the restrictions can be relaxed and removed.

The Board undertakes to work with all stakeholders to return these games to normal as soon as possible and in a way that does not expose the Football Club to unacceptable risk.

It is important to understand what those risks might be.

In the Board's view (based on advice) if the Club declined to cooperate with the arrangements for Chester supporters visiting the Racecourse there is a risk of the following occurring:

- that the safety advisory group (chaired by the local authority, advised by the Police and which the Club attends but is not a member of and thus has no right of vote on the final decision) might decline to issue a safety certificate for the fixture. Without one the match

could not take place and the Club would face very severe sanctions (which can range as far as expulsion) from the National League; or

- that the safety advisory group would insist on a substantially increased police presence resulting in much increased cost to the Club and consequential loss of very important income; or
- that the safety certificate would only be granted without away fans attending thus depriving the Club of very important income;
- and, in any event, that the fixture would at the very least revert to a Sunday with a kick off at 1pm.

Based on the best possible advice, the Board believes that these risks are realistic possibilities of withdrawing cooperation.

For these reasons the Board, whilst understanding and agreeing with the sentiments behind it, advises members to vote against this resolution and allow the Club to continue to work towards the normalisation of the fixture.

RESOLUTION B

Summary: This is another resolution concerning the “bubble” and also kick off times

Proposer: Paul Taylor

“The Society, Wrexham Association Football Club and all Director's that serve on both the board of the Wrexham Supporters Trust and Wrexham Association Football Club shall reject any imposition of transport restrictions on any supporter of Wrexham Association Football Club and any supporter of a football club that travels to play at The Racecourse Ground. Supporters of Wrexham Association Football Club and any football club that travels to play at The Racecourse Ground must be allowed to travel to a football match by independent means. We shall also reject any kick-off time that is before 3.00pm on a Saturday or Sunday unless we would make a financial gain by doing so by appearing on television”.

Society Board’s Background Information opposing the resolution:

As with Resolution A, the Board understands the reasons for Resolution B but cannot support it as it instructs the Club to withdraw cooperation with the “bubble” aka the safe travel arrangements.

The Board asks members to consider very carefully before voting on a resolution which, at first glance, may appear attractive.

The Board agrees that the imposition of these restrictions seriously curtails the freedom of movement of law abiding fans (the overwhelming majority) and that they do not necessarily prevent disorder.

The Board is determined to return the games against Chester back to normal as soon as possible. The Reclaim the Game initiative was the start of that process.

However, the Club has no power to veto arrangements made by the Police and Chester FC for our “away” fixture. Whilst we can make representations, ultimately it is for them to decide what happens at Chester. If the authorities at Chester insisted on safe travel arrangements, and we declined to cooperate, then the match would probably proceed without tickets being made available for Wrexham supporters.

We have been given no indication that the Tranmere fixtures will be subject to restrictions.

The Board believes that cooperation and consultation rather than confrontation are the best means of achieving our aims.

However, the Board has an important duty to safe guard the best interests of Wrexham AFC including, crucially, its financial well-being. The decision to impose the restrictions is not ours but we will redouble our efforts to persuade the authorities that the restrictions can be relaxed and removed.

The Board undertakes to work with all stakeholders to return these games to normal as soon as possible and in a way that does not expose the Football Club to unacceptable risk.

It is important to understand what those risks might be.

In the Board's view (based on advice) if the Club declined to cooperate with the arrangements for Chester supporters visiting the Racecourse there is a risk of the following occurring:

- that the safety advisory group (chaired by the local authority, advised by the Police and which the Club attends but is not a member of and thus has no right of vote on the final decision) might decline to issue a safety certificate for the fixture. Without one the match could not take place and the Club would face very severe sanctions (which can range as far as expulsion) from the National League; or
- that the safety advisory group would insist on a substantially increased police presence resulting in much increased cost to the Club and consequential loss of very important income; or
- that the safety certificate would only be granted without away fans attending thus depriving the Club of very important income;
- and, in any event, that the fixture would at the very least revert to a Sunday with a kick off at 1pm.

Based on the best possible advice, the Board believes that these risks are realistic possibilities of withdrawing cooperation.

This resolution specifically mentions kick off times. The Club is committed to working towards normal kick off times wherever possible. If the Club did withdraw all cooperation with the safe travel arrangements then the Board believes that the prospects of the Chester fixture reverting back to a 3 pm kick off on a Saturday are highly unlikely in the present climate. The better way of achieving normal kick off times is to work with the authorities to seek a gradual normalisation of all arrangements including kick off times.

To simply "reject" unattractive kick off times, as the resolution demands, would result in the safety advisory group reconsidering the safety certificate and could lead to even less attractive restrictions of the type we mention above.

It also may be financial viable for the Club to hold a game earlier than a 3pm kick off that is not on TV.

e.g. Wales are due to play Australia in the Rugby World Cup on Saturday 10th October 2015 with a 16:45 kick off and Wales also play Bosnia away in the Euro Qualifiers on the same day. If we have a scheduled home game that is not on TV then this resolution would not permit the football club to move to an earlier kick off even though it would have a detrimental impact on gate receipts

For those reasons the Board, whilst understanding and agreeing with some of the sentiments behind it, advises members to vote against this resolution.

RESOLUTION C to be considered with RESOLUTION D which is an alternative resolution

Summary: To publish the Society and Club accounts in advance of the AGM

Proposer: Paul Taylor

“Wrexham Supporters Trust and Wrexham Association Football Club accounts shall be provided to the membership no later than seven days prior to an AGM”.

Proposer’s background information:

This is a self-explanatory resolution to ensure that the members have chance to consider the Society and Club accounts in advance of the AGM.

Society Board’s background information opposing the resolution:

The Board understands the reasons for this proposal and broadly agrees with them but proposes a slightly different wording as set out in Resolution D.

Members should vote for this Resolution or Resolution D

RESOLUTION D – to be considered with RESOLUTION C

Summary: This is the Society Board’s alternative resolution to Resolution C

Proposer: The Society Board

“Wrexham Supporters Trust and Wrexham Association Football Club accounts shall be provided to the membership a maximum of seven days and a minimum of two days prior to the relevant Annual General Meeting of each body.”

Proposer’s background information:

The preparation and auditing of accounts needs careful consideration and may occasionally be subject to unavoidable delay. Whilst the Board agrees that the membership should have sight of them in advance of the AGM they request some flexibility regarding timescales. Not only to ensure sufficient time to finalise them but also (and particularly regarding the Club accounts) to ensure that there is adequate time to properly brief the media and thereby ensure that potentially complex documents are presented objectively to the public.

Members should vote either vote for this Resolution or Resolution C

RESOLUTION E

Summary: To provide for circulation of proposals for a SGM

Proposer: Paul Taylor

Any proposed resolution outside of that year's AGM shall be circulated to the membership by whatever means possible in order that the proposed resolution can gain enough signatures to call a Special General Meeting in which the proposed resolution can be voted on.

Proposer's background information:

This would enable a member that proposes a Special General Meeting the chance to gather the required number of signatures. It would be nigh on impossible to get the required number of signatures from members through word of mouth or putting out an appeal on social media.

Society Board's background information opposing the resolution:

The Rules already provide for 20 members or 5% of the membership, whichever is greater, to have the power to convene a special general meeting of the Trust. Further, if a topic became so important as to require a special general meeting then it is highly likely that the elected Board members would be minded to call such a meeting themselves- including after being lobbied by members seeking the same. A further safeguard exists in the post of the independent Trust Secretary whose role includes acting as a "guardian" of the Society and the proper application of its Rules. Members can raise their concerns with him/her including a request to hold a special general meeting. The Secretary is at liberty to circulate, using all available media channels, such a request to members if appropriate. No issues have been raised with the application of the current procedures. As it stands, the proposed resolution would compel the Board to circulate a request for signatures whatever the proposed reason to hold an SGM including reasons which were contrary to the Rules and the Objects of the Trust. For those reasons the Board advises the membership to vote against the resolution.

RESOLUTION F

Summary: To authorise the use of Trust funds to invest in Wrexham AFC

Proposer: The Society Board

“That immediately following the 2015 AGM, the Trust Board be authorised to invest up to a further £150,000 in Wrexham AFC Limited (a 100% subsidiary of Wrexham Supporters Trust) during the period following the 2015 AGM up to the 2016 AGM”.

Proposer’s background information:

This is the annual resolution by which members authorise the Trust Board to invest funds in the football club as they deem fit during the year up the maximum figure of £150,000.

RESOLUTION G

Summary: To authorise the reappointment of the Trusts auditors

Proposer: The Society Board

“That McIntocks Partnership Limited are reappointed as statutory auditors of the Society for the 2015 financial year”

Proposer’s background information:

This is the annual resolution needed to reappoint the Society auditors for another year.

