



# MEETING MINUTES

Date : June 24, 2013

Location : Newcastle Labour Club

## Agenda

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME
2. ISSUES/VIEWS VIA EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA
3. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR
4. STEVE WRAITH
5. MIKE ASHLEY OUT CAMPAIGN
6. REBUTTAL FROM "ROLAND" READ BY STEVE WRAITH
7. JOE KINNEAR
8. MIKE ASHLEY OUT CAMPAIGN MOTION



# MEETING MINUTES

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Bill Corcoran welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief outline of NUFC Fans United's history and the need for Newcastle United fans of all views to join together and work with each other and the club to strengthen the voice of supporters and engage with the club. Bill called on attendees of the meeting to join the organisation stating that the organisation needs the "support, commitment and talent" of Newcastle United fans.

Bill stated that two representatives from Newcastle United, Wendy Taylor, Head of Media and Lee Marshall, Fan's Liaison Officer were both present at the meeting to observe the meeting and to talk and listen to fans. However neither would address the meeting because at this moment in time, they simply do not have any information to pass on to fans following the recent events at the club, which have seen Joe Kinnear appointed Director of Football and Derek Llambias depart as Chief Executive.

## 2. ISSUES/VIEWS VIA EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Multimedia spokesperson Zahra that the organisation has received over 500 [questions](#), issues and views sent via email and social media. Due to the number of responses it was impossible to address each individually, though she explained that she had collated the responses and they could be broken down into a number of broad categories. These included concerns over Joe Kinnear's appointment, lack of communication from the club, questions about the club's transfer policy, concerns regarding the sponsorship deal with Wonga, calls for the return of the singing section, calls for Newcastle United to actively support the issue of safe standing, and questions regarding increasing the capacity of St James' Park.

Messages of support to Fans United and the meeting had also been received from Honorary Vice-President of Newcastle United Malcolm Dix, ex Hartlepool United and Darlington player and Newcastle United fan Brian Honour, and former Newcastle United players Pavel Srnicek and Paul Kitson.

## 3. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

The floor was opened up to attendees and a number of issues were aired. The issues raised tended to echo the responses which had come through via email and social media. Most expressed concern over Kinnear's appointment and the lack of communication from the club.

## 4. STEVE WRAITH

Steve followed on from the points raised from the floor and agreed that the club has a problem with communication and that this is a problem which dates back to the 1960s. However Steve highlighted the progress that NUFC Fans United has made. The organisation has built up a relationship with Wendy and Lee from NUFC and one or both now attend every Fans Utd meeting and as a result progress has been made. Steve echoed Bill's earlier comments and emphasised that Fans Utd is an umbrella organisation, open to all Newcastle United fans, regardless of the view.

There were a number of favourable responses to this from the floor.



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## 5. MIKE ASHLEY OUT CAMPAIGN

Graeme from the Mike Ashley Out Campaign, one of a number of groups affiliated to Fans Utd spoke to give their take on Mike Ashley's record as Newcastle United owner. Graeme argued that the "humiliation" of Kevin Keegan and Alan Shearer, the "inexplicable sacking" of Chris Hughton, and the renaming of St James' Park are all examples of a "consistently pursued agenda" by Mike Ashley.

*The appointment of Joe Kinnear to the role of Director of Football and his subsequent behaviour, whereby he has managed to insult fans, the city, the local media and even current players, cannot be viewed in any way, shape or form to be a progressive step for the wellbeing of the club. It has further alienated the very people who are essential to the club's growth and betterment. The subsequent resignation of Derek Llambias has shown how unplanned and arbitrary the decision making process is at Newcastle United.*

*Indeed, recent events are yet another gross error of judgement in a catalogue of PR disasters which have occurred since Mike Ashley bought NUFC in 2007. Among other things, the club has overseen the public humiliation of 2 Club Legends in Kevin Keegan and Alan Shearer, the self-inflicted disaster of relegation in 2009, the unexplained and inexplicable dismissal of a Chris Hughton, the renaming of St James's Park and a continued lack of investment and ambition, which was reflected by the club's extremely poor form last season.*

*Mike Ashley has: overseen all of these events, continually failed to engage the fans and consistently pursued an agenda that has seen a sad demise of the club, both on and off the field.*

*This house declares that Mike Ashley is not a fit and proper person to be the custodian of a footballing institution that has a proud history and tradition and enjoys one of the biggest and most fervent followings in European football.*

*We call for Mike Ashley to consider his position as owner of Newcastle United and to begin a process of exiting before he does any more damage to either the club or his own reputation.*

*We also urge all fans who truly want the club to progress; individuals, fans' groups, magazine and blog editors, journalists, local politicians and proud Geordies everywhere, to unite in solidarity, not only to see the end of this failed era by means of a coordinated and determined campaign of peaceful protest; but also to promote the great assets that are the club and the city, so that we can work in partnership with any interested commercial parties in the future, whereby we can once again build a team and a club to be proud of.*

*Mike Ashley has had far too many chances from the good people of this area and has continued to exploit their loyalty and devotion to the club with a crass and callous disregard for their welfare and opinions.*

*Now is the time for action. We are drawing a line now: Enough is enough.*

*Sell Up and Get out Now; your time is up!*



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## 6. REBUTTAL FROM "ROLAND" READ BY STEVE WRAITH

*Just ahead of your proposed meeting on Monday night, I would urge you to consider all facts and approach the discussion with a clear mind, cool head and the facts at hand.*

*I was beside myself with Kinnear's appointment, happily swept along with everyone else in the world about what an abysmal appointment it was/is, furious that this glorious club could be dragged through the mud....again.....for about the umpteenth time in the last 30 years or so (McKeag, Westwood, Waddle, Gazza, Beardo, Relegation, Cole, Ferdy, Ginola, Dalglish, Gullit, SBR, Shepherd/Hall, Allardyce, Ashley, NUFC for sale x 3, Wise, Jimenez, KK, Kinnear, Relegation, Hughton, [Sportsdirect.com](http://Sportsdirect.com), Wonga, and finally Kinnear).*

*But this week my attitude has shifted. I think it's mainly down to the Telegraph's utterly foundation-free article on our very own Graham Carr leaving (though since time of writing we have been the subject of other topics, i.e. Ben Arfa/Cabaye being "unhappy"). And it smacks of sensationalism, although something I am used to as a NUFC fan - the media deciding now's a good time to put the boot in, whilst smugly adding the line "the fans deserve better". What we actually "deserve" is for journalists to actually do something for us, to find out the real why's of Kinnear's appointment. To look at Llambias and instead of jumping on the "look, this wonderful man left because of the heinous sinner Joe Kinnear - what a laughing stock" actually take a considered view of what Llambias had done. Two Summers in a row, Llambias has messed up our pre-season. He left us short-changed and is THE most responsible for the failure last season. He has done a good job, financially, but footballing-ly has failed miserably time and again. He was around when we went down, he was overseeing Wise/Jimenez arriving, he was there screwing around with Shearer and KK - don't let the media hamper your long term memory.*

*Let's also note that Ashley doesn't have a wide footballing circle. He doesn't go anywhere, with anyone. His choices are going to be severely limited. Somehow Joe Kinnear has penetrated this inner sanctum of trust - Joe Kinnear has done what thousands of journalists have failed to do, and he did it in 4 months at the club. If that doesn't tell you something about the character of the man, then what does?*

*Llambias is gone. Pardew is now more accountable. Ashley has made a change at the club, the intentions simply CANNOT be negative. There is NO point in the club getting relegated. So this single change - Llambias for Kinnear - may be daft, but might I argue that getting swept up in so much hypocritical bullsh!t at the hands of Fleet Street is maybe not the best way to go? Maybe, just maybe, we should take it with a pinch of salt - we've been through far, far worse - grab it with both hands and see what happens? What would be so wrong in standing WITH Joe Kinnear, instead of against him?*

*Just 5 months ago we were jiggling in the streets because we could pull Sissoko and Mapou Yanga-Mbiwa through the gates. 8 months previous to that we were the 5th best team in the country. But today we're in crisis? It shouldn't be so. Us fans should have a Championship mentality, in that anything better than the second tier is a plus. We are never eating at the top table, we don't have flagrantly disrespectful, overtly flamboyant owners. Mayhap one day we will. But until then we should only cast envious glances at North London (not West London, nor the NorthWest of England where oil buys loyalty) and enjoy what we have. Pardew cares, Kinnear cares and I think even the owner has been bitten by the Geordie bug. We should act like a vortex, bigger than anything - if you want in, we'll take you and sod the rest. Not this current mentality, where we pick and choose who can come in. What are we, Eton Boys School????? Bottom line is we have to steel our resolve against Fleet Street, not those within the hallowed walls of NUFC. They're on our team, in some way, shape or form!*



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## **7. JOE KINNEAR**

Joe Kinnear's representative Eddie McIntyre was present to speak on his behalf. Eddie was met with a degree of hostility from the floor and he called for Newcastle United fans to "get off Joe Kinnear's back."

## **8. MIKE ASHLEY OUT CAMPAIGN MOTION**

The statement read out earlier on behalf of the Mike Ashley Out Campaign calling on Mike Ashley to withdraw as Newcastle United owner was tabled by that group and was passed by the majority of attendees.