



By Email to chairman@isthmian.co.uk and roger.burden@thefa.com

30th April 2015

Dear Mr Turvey and Mr Burden,

I am writing as Chairman of the Dulwich Hamlet Supporters Trust (DHST).

DHST wants Dulwich Hamlet to be a leading example of a financially sustainable football club that is owned by supporters and has a secure long-term home in East Dulwich. Indeed, the owners of Champion Hill have recently committed to pass the club into fan ownership after their proposed redevelopment is complete. In addition, we campaign for fair and even-handed treatment of football fans.

You will no doubt be aware of our involvement in recent campaigns to ensure all fans feel welcome at Champion Hill, this has led to nationwide acclaim and press coverage. There is no doubt that this approach has had an impact on the growth of crowds at our club, meaning that the impact of your decisions are felt by more people than even before.

My reason for writing today is the situation about Enfield Town and the play-offs. We expect you have already heard from senior officials of the clubs involved.

However, as always, it is up to us fans to pick up the scraps of this situation.

Today should be a day of great celebration for the four teams in the play-offs; the culmination of four great seasons. However, instead, we are all left with a bitter taste in our mouths.

There is absolutely no justification for the FA and Ryman league bureaucracy to crawl at such a slow pace that this decision has taken since January to go through its due process. This has resulted in fans left waiting and wondering when they'll be able to see their beloved teams in action again.

In the case of our supporters, many had taken time out of work, cancelled appointments and booked hotels, trains and coach tickets. This is money that has senselessly been wasted as the Ryman League and FA have somehow been allowed to make this decision just two days before the game was scheduled to be played.

We urge you to create a fund to allow fans to apply for compensation for any hotels or travel that have been booked between the time of the game being confirmed on Monday 30 April, and then postponed less than 24 hours later.

Many fans and players have chosen not to go on holiday over the bank holiday because of the final, choosing instead to wait a week or two safe in the knowledge that the season would be over. Now they are left in a situation where they could conceivably miss the playoffs.

These real-world concerns may seem secondary to you, but our members - along with countless other Dulwich Hamlet supporters - are hurt and out of pocket due to the outmoded and cumbersome decision making processes of the FA and the Ryman League.

Our ambition is to grow the game at grassroots level, as witnessed by our average home attendance soaring over the 1,000 mark. However, the FA and Ryman League continue to act in a manner that does not befit the respect that hardworking clubs and fans deserve. The fumbling of these issues has sadly damaged the reputation of the Ryman League and its clubs.

We can only hope that you at least have the good grace to accept that this process has been an unbridled disaster and put in place a reform process that ensures these issues will be resolved with more urgency in the future.

We look forward to your reply on compensating fans, and at the very least a public apology.

Yours sincerely

James Masini
Acting Chairman
DHST