

It would be remiss not to start this Chair's Report for the past year, without taking a moment to acknowledge the sad losses we've faced in recent months.

The tragic death in the summer of Justin Edinburgh is something that will take all O's fans a long time, if ever, to fully get over. We as a board agreed before the start of the season that we wanted to make a donation to the Justin Edinburgh 3 Foundation from our general funds, with the amount dependent on what we received in membership fees.

I'm pleased to report that we've received over £1,000 of membership fees so far this season, with an average fee paid online of over £10, higher than what we normally receive. Because of your generosity, we've been able to make a substantial donation to the JE3 foundation as promised - the LOFT board therefore agreed recently that we should round this up to make a donation of £2,000, and we're delighted that Justin's son Charlie is due to be here this evening to receive a cheque for this.

LOFT endured a further loss a few months ago, when our friend and board member Dave Knight passed away. Dave was passionate about the role and influence of supporters in the running of football clubs, and was a huge part of everything we did in the crisis years. His was always a voice of reason and common sense, a valuable commodity at any time but particularly in those dark times.

Dave was part of the early discussions with our friends in the Supporters Club around fan representation, something he cared a lot about. He remained an active member of LOFT's board, even while undertaking treatment for cancer. He will be very much missed by us all, so I'd like to take a moment to ask you all here, or watching online or following proceedings on Twitter, to raise a glass of whatever you have – to Dave.

His last email to us all expressed his satisfaction that the representative fans' group was about to be announced. That group met for the first time in September, and while there are some aspects to iron out – we still haven't got formally signed-off minutes yet – I can say that it was a good and productive meeting with Nigel Travis, Danny Macklin and Martin Ling, plus several club staff, at which various subjects were discussed such as club finances, sponsorship, ticketing and stadium matters. There will be another group meeting later in the season, and as always we encourage members to both apply for the non-permanent places available and to let us know if you have issues you want raised.

Over the past year, while LOFT has continued to represent your interests with the club, we've also been part of a growing call for change in how football clubs are governed by the football authorities. We all know how badly let down Leyton Orient and all O's fans were by the EFL and FA. The list of crisis clubs has continued to grow since then, and Bury's expulsion from the League and their likely bankruptcy stand as a stark example of how completely unfit and improper the system is.

Because we've been there and come out the other side, we now see it as one of LOFT's aims to help make that change happen. We put forward a motion to this summer's AGM of the new unified Football Supporters' Association, calling for their work on a club licensing system to be pushed forward as a priority, so that the EFL no longer marks its own homework. We gained the support of over 30 other trusts and fan groups in backing our motion, which was passed. Since then, the FSA has put its proposals to the FA Board – a first for a supporters' group – while continuing to gather support within the football and political worlds. We stand ready to engage with this process and continue to push for real change to happen.

We've also become something of a 'go to' trust for fans of other clubs in crisis. Just as we drew strength from the support and help from the likes of Portsmouth, Charlton and particularly Blackpool in our dark days, so we are now more than happy to help others where we can. We've helped advise Bury's fans over the past few months, and recently we've been helping a new group at Oldham called Push The Boundary – they face a situation scarily familiar to us, of constant managerial turnover, questionable player signings, huge losses, rumours of interference in team selection and upheaval behind the scenes. They are holding a protest ahead of their match with Orient on 7 December – we will support it all we can, and we urge all O's fans going to that game to show their support for fellow fans facing an uncertain future.

At last year's AGM we said we wanted to spend £2,000 of our general funds on supporting other Trusts or fan groups in crisis, and so far we've spent a quarter of that; we've made donations to Gateshead Soul to aid their efforts in saving Gateshead FC, and the Bolton Wanderers trust to go towards their expenses while Bolton was in administration. We also plan to make a donation to Bury's fans once the situation there becomes clearer.

Without stealing Peter's thunder from his Treasurer's report next, we've used our general funds sensibly in line with what we discussed at last year's AGM. We donated £5,000 to the women's team last season, with further donations up to £3,000 this season, and this is an area we would like to continue to support where we can. We've ringfenced other funds for the areas we discussed this time last year, such as kit costs for local teams – the first of these is Ryan FC U11s (Whites), a local team with players across Waltham Forest (a certain Daniel Happe once played for Ryan FC!), and their manager Dan Gillman is due to be here tonight.

In summary, LOFT continues to play a positive role in the engagement between the club and supporters, representing all our members wherever we can. We will carry on doing all we can to bring about change in football club governance, as the current system is totally broken, while supporting trusts and fan groups in crisis in the same way we were assisted in the dark times. And, we will continue to use your membership fees to support football community projects.

And on that note, I will hand over to Peter for his report on our accounts...