

## **FANS GROUP, THISTLE FOR EVER, MAKES IMMEDIATE OFFER TO BUY MAJORITY OF PARTICK THISTLE SHARES BACKED BY COLIN WEIR**

Partick Thistle fans group Thistle For Ever (TFE) has today made an offer to buy out the Glasgow club's majority shareholding to make it a supporters' owned club, after securing multimillion pound backing to do so. This will enable a Community Investment Company, or similar vehicle, to be set up and allow Thistle to be run for the benefit of the community.

Colin Weir, who previously invested significantly in Thistle and its Academy, will fund TFE's proposal to buy the shares in full. Mr Weir's support comes without conditions and he will play no part in the running of Partick Thistle after the community takeover is complete.

In addition, Mr Weir will fund TFE's plan to purchase the assets held by Firhill Developments, the south terrace area and the Main Stand, thus putting the whole club and its assets in to fans' hands for the first time ever.

Mr Weir will also resume his funding of the Thistle Weir Youth Academy if TFE's offer is accepted. He withdrew his backing amid the uncertainty of a potential takeover by a foreign consortium.

The fans' group, which was set up earlier this month after reports of a takeover of the club by the owners of Barnsley FC, has already received hundreds of pledges of financial support from Thistle fans, money which will be used as directed by fans to enhance the club. TFE has also been positively received in many quarters, including support from a cross party group of MSPs.

Jags fan Paul Goodwin, who is also a Director of the Scottish Football Supporters Association, has spearheaded Thistle For Ever.

Mr Goodwin said:

"Change is in the air at Firhill, on and off the park, and this opportunity for Partick Thistle to become community owned will secure a sustainable and certain future for the club.

"With our fully-funded offer, we have ensured that the current Board has an option, that is in the best interests of the club, one that ensures the future of Partick Thistle here at Firhill for decades to come. It must be considered as a viable alternative to handing over control of our club to people with no affinity and no understanding of Partick Thistle.

"The majority shareholder group does not have to wait to secure a sale of their shares - TFE, with this substantial financial support, can allow existing shareholders to get a return for their investment now. They will also achieve their aim of selling to a group who have the best interests of Thistle at heart. It will be run as a sustainable football club, debt free and in the hands of those who cherish it more than anyone else – the supporters.

"Colin Weir is a long time Thistle fan, who wants nothing but the best for the club. His incredibly generous support allows us to put this offer on the table now while continuing to raise funds from

fans for the longer term. We have a meeting with him later this week, at his invitation, and we will thank him personally for supporting our ambitions for this club.

“TfE now asks that this proposal is conveyed to the majority shareholders group and Firhill Developments by Chairman David Beattie for a prompt response.”

TfE has given the Board broad details of a five-year plan to get Thistle back into the top half of the Premiership. It will work with the two supporters’ groups, The PTFC Trust and Jags Trust to work together in this move designed to give control to supporters.

ENDS

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- Community ownership is a different concept from a fan-run club. The former, which is what we are proposing, means that the normal club structure sits under a fans board. The latter sets the objectives for the directors on the club board, which sets the strategy and monitors the day-to-day activity of the club, in the way the current board does.
- Thistle For Ever (TFE), was launched by a by a group of supporters with the sole aim of securing a majority shareholding for Partick Thistle fans to enable it to become a fans-owned club.
- Fans Board  
This would be voted for by every member and represents the views of the ordinary supporters, who choose who to represent their interests. Its main task is to govern, as well as growing the fans organisation and to be the conduit for two-way dialogue between the fans and the club board.
- The Club Board  
This is the small group of individuals who are suitably qualified to run the day-to-day operations of a full-time professional football club. In the case at Motherwell, and indeed Hearts, all the Club Board Members become members of the fans’ organisation showing a united approach to owning and running the club. At Motherwell, for example, this has grown to a position where most of the staff including the players have become members in the Well Society and a have a very direct influence on how the club is governed.
- Community ownership allows the club to develop deeper and more long-term strategic partnerships with the local community and businesses making it easier to align agendas with public or private strategic partners and seek additional finances.