



“Oh and the hypocrisy. A Board ridiculously branding itself as liberal ‘disruptors’ chasing a socialist utopia, under the guidance of what is essentially a socialist constitution, instead jumping head first into a corporate investment to sell parts of the club off to bail out their financial mess. You couldn’t write it.”

**FKA Knickers To ‘Em**

**FKA Ten Worthing Bombers**

**FKA fan-owned club**

**FKA Twigs (*ed. Please check this*)**

**Issue 20**

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## THE COMEDY CONTINUES AT LEWES FOOTBALL CLUB...



# CAPTAIN TOM'S DAUGHTER IN SHOCK LEWES BID

By our charity correspondent, *Phil Pockets*.

In an unexpected move announced yesterday, Hannah Ingram-Moore, daughter of the late Captain Sir Tom Moore, has made a bid for a controlling stake of Lewes Community Football Club.

"I know a thing or two about using funds for a purpose far removed from its original intentions" she said, breaking down in tears on TalkTV. Piers Morgan looked on, cheeks quivering. "By purchasing a controlling stake in a supposedly community-

run football club, I feel I am doing right by the money my family made from his book".

The bid, allegedly totaling close to £800,000, was met with cautious approval in some quarters.

A spokesperson for the current Board welcomed

the offer and said "It's the only way this club can keep investing in what really matters, such as a jacuzzi for The Rook Inn and luxury spa treatments in the First Aid Hut".



Across three discs of non-stop power ballads, disco classics and hard rocking, **FREDDIE MERCURY 13** and **QUEEN** serve up all the pomp and bravado you could ever want in this Lewes FC special edition of the greatest greatest hits album of all time. Never mind that the deal didn't go through – the hits are too good to cancel!

## Bottom of the Table Girls

Oh you gonna take me to the game tonight  
Oh do you think that we'll be shite  
Oh you gonna cry when we lose again  
Bottom of the table girls but you still make our  
rocking world go round

## Under Pressure

Under pressure  
That burns Equality FC down  
Splits a club in two  
Puts the board under heat.

And many more...

## You can trust us!

The Great and the Good give their verdict on the Mercury 13 vote



Let's make Lewes Great Again!



We apologise for the delay in funding the women's team

**This is our first fanzine for six years. It has always been an occasional publication, averaging just over one a year, but we have been going for 17 years. While we would like to say it's good to be back, the reasons for our return are less cheering, as the club faces difficult times.**

**The writers of this fanzine were on and helped set up the original Supporters Trust that preceded the current official fan ownership model, seemingly going through the process of demolition. We believe in strong fan ownership and that if the terms of our constitution are rigorously observed the club would be a strong community club.**

**The fanzine has existed as a defender of that constitution and the right of the town of Lewes to have a properly run community club. We have consistently warned against how the Board at Lewes FC have erred from the principles within our constitution to suit their own incompatible agenda.**

**Enjoy the game today and the current teams because they have to be paid for and we no longer have the money. The fanzine has been mocked and derided but we predicted we would end up here and our 'negative viewpoint' is unerringly proving to be correct.**

# THE RIGHTS OF FANS

**LEWES FC. ENJOY WHILE  
FINANCIAL STOCKS LAST!**

We are at a tipping point. The failed Mercury13 bid has shown us three things. Firstly, two thirds of the members voting on the proposal are happy to compromise the purity of our fan owned model for a fistful of dollars. This essentially questions whether the widespread fan base of Lewes FC are actually bothered about fan ownership. Especially as it seems the club leadership is not. This is not a criticism of those supporters, just a fact. Secondly, the fan owned model precludes any serious investment in the club (well let's face it any suitors to the Lewes FC Women) as serious investors will want proper ownership to protect their investment. This is important. Just weeks after the collapse of the Mercury 13 proposal US businesswoman Michele Kang acquired rivals of a similar stature to the Lewes FC Women, the Lionesses, and is projected to invest large sums of money. Our leadership would die for that sort of investment. Michele would want autonomy. Thirdly, we are in the financial quagmire. This according to the 2022-23 Board of Directors.



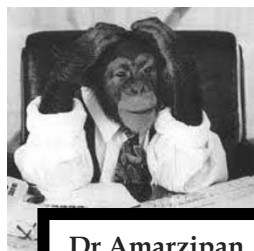
*Introducing our resident analyst, Dr Amarzipan. The super psychiatric simian is here to cut through the bluster and give his star rating to the latest goings on at Lewes FC!*

The days of generosity from Ed Ramsden, the main advocate and funder of the Lewes FC Women, are signalled to end. Ed has generously and significantly covered the costs of both the men and women's teams for the last couple of years. This comes at a time when the Lewes FC Women are facing two terminal challenges. Other teams with established funds, gravitas and large club infrastructures in the Championship are chasing the golden goose and are investing more and more money annually so that we cannot aim to compete with them, chasing us to the brink of relegation. The new arrangements of the WSL and Championship licences will effectively preclude the Lewes FC Women ever getting into the WSL. You can see why Mercury13 lost interest weeks before the licence announcement. We are a bust flush. We are being left behind. We have significantly less draw and kudos to potential investors than a year ago and this is a terminal decline.

Things have spun out of control chasing false dreams. Read later in the fanzine how the brilliant recommendations of the Tracy Crouch report, let's put this diplomatically, are at 'odds' with the pathway the

Lewes FC leadership have been following in recent years. Nobody on the Board has applied the brakes but have got sucked into a vacuum of vanity and 'big club complex' and followed a dream that will, and always was, going to end in disappointment. Elsewhere in the fanzine we will be questioning whether we should actually continue with the fan owned model. Most members aren't bothered it would appear, especially as we lay very poor claim to being a decent fan owned club anyway, with the core aims of our constitution sidelined in pursuit of precarious glory. Why bother? Really, why even bother?

The 2022/23 Board, and the few before, in the opinion of the fanzine, have behaved in a breathtaking cavalier manner towards safeguarding the integrity and finances of Lewes FC, trying to create a platform for investors that they have not considered attractive enough to invest in. Bigging us up to be a game changing club and the ridiculous claim of 'disruptors' when in fact we are just a badly run non-league club - clueless, rudderless and crucially... bankrolled.



**Dr Amarzipan,  
TROF analyst.**

*'Do I read the room correctly. 2022/3 board (\*) 2023/4 board (\*\*\*\*)?' Why the five stars Dr Amarzipan, they have only just begun? 'By fortuitously not being the 2022/3 board.'*

Coming in at the high level we have in the women's game was only ever going to be short term, before other larger clubs pushed us out. The leadership at Lewes FC exist in a bubble where they think bigging us up makes us big. In reality, women's WSL football at club level is as popular as Conference football, unless games are played at the main stadiums and our Championship has the same draw of Conference North and South. The fact is that whilst women's international football is gaining mass interest, national football is not.

Just like rugby union, a massive international game but little interest at national club level. Can you name a team in rugby union's second tier? The Board have failed to read the room.

It was originally suggested from the offset of Equality FC that if the funding had not appeared within three years, it would be pulled. This was a sensible way forward taking a punt to see if sponsors and investors would be interested in. But as usual the leadership overestimated the potential interest and after three years the board should have just said we tried but the interest was not sustainable.

We have a new elected Board, some with good experience and manifestos. Sadly, some in their election addresses were continuing the party line of business as usual and working in tandem with existing directors who also seem oblivious to the possibility of the

ruination of Lewes FC. The future is bleak, and I would advise you to enjoy the current bankrolled squads.

Below I will picture a worst-case scenario. Obviously other positive things can come along but do not write this off.

The countdown to financial disaster goes thus. A very rough approximation of our income is thus.

Turnover: £1,500,000.

Donations from benefactors: £600,000.

Sponsorship, FA money and TV money: £500,000.

Membership, gate attendances and concessions: £500,000.

2024/5. As far as I am aware funding is in place for the rest of the 2023/4 season, but next season the benefactors who have funded around £600,000 per annum, have said they will withdraw their financial support. There may be a change of heart, but you do not run a business hoping for a change of heart.

2023/4 or 2024/5. If the women are not relegated this season, they will be next season as there will be no budget available. We will then almost certainly lose our sponsors, for a season or two they may be contracted to continue sponsorship, but long term they are here because of the women and Lewes FC being a relatively high-profile club. They will go as the stock of the Lewes FC Women rapidly diminishes. Another £500k gone.

2024/5. Assume we can bank on receiving the £500k from attendance, membership and catering? Think again and half that because if you think when meltdown brings supporters and members are going to hang around out of the goodness of their heart? It isn't going to happen, as we saw last time the club hit the skids, and they will be found missing in action. Attendances, membership and therefore catering income will haemorrhage.

We could rapidly go from a £1.5million income to £500k and that is being generous. When we joined the Championship, and the fanzine predicted the enormous costs involved we were ridiculed. But in time we have been proved absolutely right and the club leadership is out of touch with our finances. These are broadly sketched figures and excuses may be provided, but they may well prove in the right ballpark.

The Board have two choices, bury their head in the sand or realise the party is over and we need to significantly change direction. Great that a new working group has been set up to try and source local business support. But this is 14 years too late and merely scrapes the surface of the mess we are in. Having been ignored for all those years why would they want to come in and bail out a club that has seen them as surplus to requirements? And how do you sell it? We are



**Dr Amarzipan,  
TROF analyst.**

*'This is a fine mixture of amateur maths and scare tactics, right up there with the best (\*\*\*\*)'*

desperately trying to get major sponsorship deals to keep the show on the road, but we will grant you permission to help out. You can't swing it both ways. The Board have tried to get significant funding for the Lewes FC Women for six years and failed miserably and now the project is reaching its denouement we are even less attractive a prospect than before so all change please for a common-sense approach. Eschewing the local community and businesses is a long-term blight on the club and will take enormous endeavour to turn around.

The biggest challenge for the Board is not just the reaching out to change but to change the perception local people and businesses have of Lewes FC, and indeed change the perception of many fans that the club is toxic and in it for reasons other than being a community football club for the town of Lewes. Too many former Board members over the years have told me they realise the club has lost the town. The 2023/4 Board need to begin to turn that around. They will not do that and begin a common-sense approach to if they are still crossing their fingers a knight on his charger will appear and make it all alright. This approach never works in business. Dithering is a turn off.

The first thing they must do is to create a pathway to end the elitist running of the club. The 'working group' is a great way to bring really interested and smart people into participating in idea formation as a stepping stone for getting these sorts of people involved. A Board member on each group can feed the ideas and the strength of feeling into the Boardroom and really create a true and proper bridge between a previously out of touch succession of Boards, thus giving the fans a proper voice in forming the club's direction. The appalling turnouts to elect Board members is not a proper democratic solution to fan ownership. Reaching out and really getting fans and members involved is proper fan ownership and trust me when fans feel they are not simply fed the party line, but are actually creating the party line the strength and participation at the club will improve dramatically.

But if the normal half arsed condescension and lip service to community ownership continues, people who can help out will not. There is no paid role in the club bureaucracy that couldn't and shouldn't be carried out by volunteers instead but unless the Board are serious about real significant change by their very nature the people who can help are not stupid and their involvement will be watching Lewes FC and not helping

run Lewes FC. Working groups on sponsorship, membership growth, fund raising, community links, diversity and inclusion, match day experience, catering etc will help the club become a true leader in community ownership rather than a club entrenched in the misguided hyperbole spouted in the ridiculous 'club strategy.'

We need actions to build a community club not beautifully presented pointless nonsense that is papering over the cracks of our slide into penury. If the Board chooses to do business as usual because they love the relative high profile of the club, we were there last time the funding went and most of the fan base simply walked. We became a basket case. Will the Board want to hang around? Some will. But the Board have a moral responsibility to make sure that when the fun stops and realism kicks in, the club is in a fit state. Simply hoping something comes along is not an option but is seemingly the preferred one? I will say in mitigation, most of the Board are recently elected and they have inherited a right old pickle, one of which I believe is a bridge too far for a group of people volunteering whilst also holding down real jobs.

It is time to grow up. For too long the club has been run with the luxury of somebody picking up the shortfall with absolutely no credible plan B. There is a short period still for Lewes FC to plan for the rocky road ahead. But I see the garbage in the weekly email and I see absolutely nothing akin to the necessary concern needed to plan for a crisis or raising the alarm. But don't worry we are having a vegan day!

The last time the club hit the skids 15 years ago the men's budget dropped from £400,000 per annum to £60,000 in two years. This is the reality of running a football club with the gay abandon we do at Lewes so expect the same soon.

*The one annoying thing about Mercury 13 being pulled is we were about to go to press so had to pull the copy – apologies if anything it outdated!*



**Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.**

*'We fear change because we cannot anticipate the outcome which can be as difficult as overcoming a fear of failure'. Dr Amarzipan for hire: £300 per session. Enquire to fanzine. Guaranteed \*\*\*\*\* service*



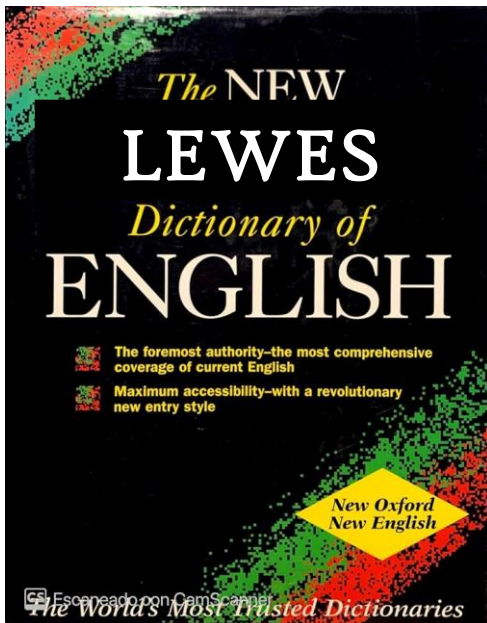
**Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.**

*'Have to say the bootleg gristle burger bought on the sly in the bogs at half time was great (\*\*\*\*\*)'*



**Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.**

*'Who can forget Ibbo keeping us in Conference South on a budget of 60k, 5 times less than the current one. How does it go? "He works for free, he works for free, give Ibbo an OBE". Lyrics: Ollie Wilson (\*\*\*\*\*)*



Equality FC. 2017-2024. A now defunct word.  
 Community. Not a local socially based local unit.  
 Democracy. Authoritarian.  
 Fan-owned. Until put up for sale  
 Election. Something you are forced to do by your democratic owners.  
 Partnership. Takeover  
 Self-sustained. Bank rolled  
 Debt-free. Sustained by large scale donations  
 Principle. An antiquated obstacle.  
 Governance. Crossing one's fingers and hoping for the best.  
 Due diligence. Waiting to see if we get relegated.  
 Investment. Come to the aid of.  
 AGM. An annual meeting that may or may not happen.

So.  
 Farewell then.  
 Lewes FC Community Club.  
 Parading your nobility on Radio 4.  
 Until mega bucks come knocking at the door.  
 CJ Thribb  
 (17.5% points in favour)

Another Fan Owned Club Bites The Dust



And another club gone, and another club gone  
 Another fan-owned club bites the dust  
 Hey, selling 51% of the women too-de-loo  
 Another fan owned club bites the dust

**You Can Trust Us**

It's all in the messages...



**Kevin Keehan**  
**World's Worst Columnist**



At a time of high tension in the Middle East I paid a visit myself to Wisbech and found no reason for concern. In light of recent events, I would have to disagree with JK Rowling and consider myself a Trans ally – I have always been a fan of the leg-room on the Trans Pennine Express.

I notice the world has moved on from Ebola. I don't know why – he is still a fantastic striker on his day (*you've done that joke nine times, you're fired – Ed.*) I note that Harry Ramsden made his long awaited move from Spurs to Bayern Munich and I wish the fledgling restaurant business all the best.

I see that Madonna has been pencilled in for Glastonbury next year, although quite why 200,000 people want to look at an old painting for two hours is beyond me. Donald Trump is in trouble for inflating his assets but I have avoided such courtroom drama because my pump is broken.

Once again, the effects of El Nino are being felt all over the Northern hemisphere, particularly in the San Siro where he has scored yet another hat trick in the Milan derby.



Equality FC has been the one good thing the Lewes FC Board have got their act together to do. It is an outstanding thing. Or was. It is to be dropped. One of the reasons we stopped doing the fanzine was because we were so supportive of the principles behind it. Therefore, it seemed churlish to continue to criticise a club highlighting such an important issue. Now the club have decided to drop it, we are back. Normal service resumes.

It was introduced by Charlie Dobres and Eddie Ramsden who agreed to fund it for three years. To me it is and was a marketing gimmick that morphed into something of outstanding consequence.

The death of Equality FC was caused by the aforementioned and the rest of the Board of Director's blind ambition sounding a death knell through the very heart of something so meaningful.

The club are trying to rebrand as Equity FC – a seismic change for the worse.

Equality FC campaigned to tackle the disparity between the

FA Cup prize money afforded to men and women. Once the campaign was watered down a little, the FA acceded and dramatically reduced the chasm between the competitions. Lewes FC were the cheerleaders of this campaign and can rightly take some credit for this landmark change.

But something ugly was happening behind the scenes. It was intimidated by the leadership at Lewes FC when Equality FC was introduced that directors Dobres and Ramsden would fund any shortfall to fund Equality FC for three years and that if sponsorship and other income streams did not cover the costs within three years, there was every chance the project would be pulled.

After three years the project had essentially put Lewes FC, the Lewes FC Women and Equality FC on the map but the funding never emerged. Just relentless 'in discussions with interested parties'. Money invested in women's football was essentially sweeping Lewes away. A pragmatic Board would have taken the view to say we tried and succeeded in punching above our weight, putting the club on the radar of national and international football and helping raise the profile of the game. What a success story. It should have been scaled down at that point.

But the funding continued and we got swamped. Last year Ed Ramsden balanced the books with a £600k donation. Rather than withdraw triumphantly and drop to tier 3 and 4 of the women's pyramid, where costs are dramatically lower as the licence arrangements are more relaxed, we pushed on aimlessly. We continued on a totally unsustainable and vainglorious path to now teeter on the brink of financial calamity.

It is at this point an act of cultural vandalism was embarked

on by the Board of Directors - to cover the huge deficits, they agreed to a desperate investment opportunity. Mercury 13 wanted in and the board acquiesced. We were told Mercury13 aligned with our ethics, yet also telling us Equality FC was to be swept aside as part of the deal. Amazing. Make no mistake here, the alternative was to do what they should have done three years ago and make the cuts necessary to make the club self-sustaining while they could.

So we have thrown it all away. The one thing that Lewes FC is admired for has simply gone. The right to go to the FA and demand parity of prize money because it is part of our club integrity has gone. The right to market ourselves in the future as swashbuckling 'game changers' has gone. Lewes FC were invited into the Women's Championship when it was set up, prioritised by the FA over huge league clubs, because of Equality FC. All those proud advertising boards around the Pan that said we are trailblazers can go.

Look at what the league clubs are investing around and below us... our foray into the Women's Championship is a stay of execution. Then, along with our principles and values, the Women's team will join Equality FC in the annals of history.

The Crouch Report is scathing of clubs doing what we are doing. It is acknowledged as the greatest ever in-depth report into football club governance and if you think I am biased in my analysis above, Tracey Crouch will not.

*Read more: 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Reality' on the back page.*

# DEATH OF THE COMMUNITY CLUB

For nearly 15 years Lewes FC have never really fitted into the community club mould. Too many directors from the outset simply followed a non-conformist independent directive. The rules of community ownership are enshrined in our constitution and have been neglected. Prior to the launch of Equality FC many directors fought to establish the principles of a community club for Lewes, but since Equality FC the quality of director has declined dramatically as has any adherence to the principles of our constitution of community ownership. Indeed, so low has the bar sunk that we have seen the arrogance of characters at the helm of our club claiming we are a community club representing the international community and not Lewes. This is because the Board have run the club into such financial difficulties that they have had to rebrand to try and associate with the international community, rather than the Lewes community, as it is seen as a better option to raise finances through a membership drive which has dramatically failed.

This explains why two thirds of voting members during the Mercury13 debacle voted to begin the process to break up the principles of fan and community ownership in exchange for outside finance for three years. Frankly why hold onto and cherish something that is not fit for purpose? I get that. Community ownership at Lewes FC has failed and sunk to the depth of lip service and a mere branding commodity vehicle to attract do-gooding investors.

In brief, here are the main objectives of our constitution:

4.1 Enhancing the social, cultural and economic value of the Club to its Communities and by acting as a responsible custodian of the club for future generations;  
4.2 Upholding the mutual



## Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.

*'Can I just say here Chris about some club presentation from the leadership? I have noticed the often over-bloated language getting in the way of straight messaging and communication. Why say 'A technocratic elite are getting their karmic comeuppance' (\*) when all you need to say is the 'board have screwed up' (\*\*\*\*\*)*



## Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.

*'If readers have just read this and wondered what happened to the FADS chain of stores, they closed in 2019. FADS: \*\*'*

ownership of the Club operating democratically, fairly and transparently; 4.3 Ensuring the Club operates with financial responsibility enabling the Club to be run for the long term interest of the Community; 4.4 Providing sporting facilities and opportunities regardless of age, income, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, religious or moral belief; and 4.5 Playing at the highest level possible, but always operating in a financially responsible and prudent manner.

We currently tick one box out of 5: 4.4, which is the easiest as we already have a football club and facilities. 4.5? The Board got confused - 'playing at the highest level possible' was a reason to bring in Mercury 13, but it's 100% clear it must be in a 'financially responsible manner'. Attempting to flog part of the club off and contradicting 4.3 ('operated with financial responsibility') is not by anyone's definition sticking to the scripture.

Through Bonfire and the associated societies, Lewes is a town with volunteering and participation going through its DNA and a perfect fit for a community club. Sadly, too many people have got involved with the club and used it as a personal vehicle for personal agendas and run it contrary to our constitution. Who sanctions these? Where is the working group of Board and members that reaches out to the supporters to decide who and what we support? Nowhere, because the leadership of Lewes FC has been creating a brand, and brands need consistency of objectives. To rebrand as liberal trailblazers and ha ha 'disruptors' means you have to follow a specific pathway of associations. Vegan day is a good example of how out of touch the club are - championing minor issues that 98% of supporters are not interested in.

Launching Equality FC as your prima facie 'brand' and dropping it as soon as Mercury 13 come waving a wand, launching the meaningless Equity FC as a foil instead and then presumably realigning back to Equality FC, is just a dictionary definition of desperate, clueless and unprincipled.

But to what end? The leadership must learn lessons, and there are still people who have not learnt on the 2023/4 Board, that to create a thriving successful community club you need to operate like one commensurate with our constitution. And it is a hard thing to do, but our town at least provides a brilliant



foundation to do it with. Such is the paucity of love for the community model not even 2% of the owners attend the online meetings and two thirds voted for the Mercury 13 investment. So, what is the point? To me community ownership has been a fraud.

These seem to be our options moving forward:

1) Oblivion, the current preferred model  
2) Rolling up our sleeves and the new 2023/4 Board turning us into a proper community club which will be difficult is as it appears some members of the Board prefer the oblivion option.



**Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.**

*I noted in the Club Strategy you sent over, the club hoped to get a simply unambitious 50 people to attend the online Town Hall meetings, out of 2500 members, and only get 40. I assumed it was a typo and the target was 500. What a breathtaking failure of community ownership don't you think Chris?*

3) While we are a well-known entity in women's football, large gates and a fab stadium, simply sell the club to a private investor on the condition of huge investment as well as fan representation and community engagement.

There is a simple case study here. You do not have to look far. The previous owner with private money took Lewes FC to the heady heights of the National Conference and left a legacy of the fantastic stadium we have now. Oh, and set up the Lewes Ladies, as it was then. Do you prefer the current model to good old capitalism?

So, what to do? As I have said elsewhere the Board need to stop chasing dreams and try to reinvigorate the principle of community ownership. They need a huge campaign to detoxify the mess we have drifted into and signal changes to draw in the talent that Lewes oozes.

Look, the members of the previous Boards were smart people with their own skill sets. But read their CVs and is there anything in any of them that suggests they know how or have any experience of running a football club with a turnover of £1.5 million and 50 or 60 staff? Not just the current Board but many previous directors since we have been fan owned. Would they get a look in if they applied to manage a normal 'entertainment' business? They'd be laughed out of the room.

To me we have to face up to the fact that maybe fan ownership does not work. The Board have to accept total responsibility for their decisions, but if nobody has challenged them and fought them, the fans and membership could do better. Chris and I have been the lone voice out of 2,500 members who have constantly challenged the club for 18 years. Who helped us? Nobody. A smattering of dissent over the years has achieved nothing. My fear is the encouraging uproar of dissent over Mercury 13 has already faded and we are back to firefighting. The Board need to show leadership but do they have it? Why are they not warning members about the mess we are in. We have been in a financial hole for years but we were only told this to get us on board for potential Mercury 13 investment. We are not children!

My hope is that the new post-election Board take their responsibility to maintain the ethos of our fantastic constitution to heart and follow rigidly the guidelines within, rather than do just exactly whatever they want to do and continue to pick the parts that suit their own agenda whilst picking the club apart. Before it's too late.

The Board, having repeatedly painted a rosy and healthy club – even so far as to repeatedly saying how healthy our finances were – changed tact with the Mercury13 proposal and it was made perfectly clear we are in huge financial problems. Yet I see so little being done to meet these

challenges from the leadership and the members. Is the glass of endeavour simply empty?

I will be candid here. Previous Boards have laid down a challenge to a large section of fans and members. It has been 'a hybrid of private and fan ownership' or 'no way'. The section of members supporting the ideology of fan ownership need to raise their game from keyboard warriors to a tangible force to challenge the leadership and force a change of direction and proper community ownership model at Lewes FC. The future is bleak. Two-thirds of voting owners have preferred a fistful of dollars to pure fan ownership and unless the remaining third kick up a racket, just forget about the whole thing. I have researched various fan owned clubs and some work really well, but the ones, like Lewes FC, where the membership are seemingly unbothered, they do not.

At the end of the season or thereabouts the Board will sit down to discuss funding the club for next season, 2024/5. If, as we suggest elsewhere in the fanzine, many of those previous income streams we have previously enjoyed are gone, reality will kick in and the club will steadily decline. Too little has been done to address the huge challenges



**Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.**

*'Benefactors should not be used as a financial security blanket at a community club, they should help until it is set up properly and make it function soundly within its own means not be a private/fan owned partnership which breeds inefficiency and bad practices'*

and we will decline into where we were ten years ago trying to make ends meet, but now without the benefactors to balance the books. The benefactors are currently due to end benefacting at the end of this season. Possible bankruptcy or realigning in the county league looms large, so would it not just be sensible to put the club up for sale whilst we can still call the shots? Selling a club in terminal decline is a case of taking what you are given. Doing it now might mean we are able to choose a more suitable bedfellow.

# LEWES FC WOMEN FAREWELL TOUR



Catch them while you can on an emotional farewell tour. Find selected tour dates below.

Sun 4<sup>th</sup> Feb – **Charlton**

Sun 18<sup>th</sup> Feb – **Sunderland**

Sun 24<sup>th</sup> Mar – **Birmingham**

Sun 31<sup>st</sup> Mar – **Southampton**

Limited tickets still available!

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## LET'S KEEP IT REAL FC

*By Francesca*

“One Owner, One Share, One Vote” from the Club’s website. Sounds like the stuff democratic dreams are made of. The Club rules also talk about the Club conducting business for the benefit of the community served by the Club and not for the profit of its owners. These are all powerful words and makes a fan truly believe they are a part of an inclusive, welcoming footballing community.

Many of the words and rhetoric on the Lewes FC website and in the rules, suggest that the world of Lewes FC embodies a type of football socialism, fan owners sharing the ownership and oversight of the infrastructure and teams that they are investing in. If you’re someone who believes in community spirit and power of the people, this is a wonderful sense of idealism and something good to be a part of.

Most fans who turn up week in and week out to watch Lewes FC, men or womens’ teams, are people enjoying the football and having a day out. They are individuals or families who enjoy the atmosphere and being part of a community. They are people coming to watch a match, buy a pint and some cheesy chips using hard earned cash – for some spending money at The Pan it is a conscious financial decision sacrificing something else in return. But it all seems worth it for a good day out and being part of that community.

What doesn’t sit right in this world of football socialism for everyday folk, is when club

representatives tout themselves at what can only be called ‘elitist’ events, fancy award ceremonies, trips abroad including the women’s world cup and more recently entertaining multi-millionaire (possibly even billionaire) investors. Seeking and welcoming sponsors who offer high end luxury items out of reach for most average folk.

Some of these ‘elite events’ may have been self-funded, but the advertisement and association of them in conjunction with the wonderful community brand of Lewes FC is ingratiating and unnecessary.

This is not jealousy speaking, this is a personal reflection that in this day and age, when the average family is struggling financially, but may still want to be a part of the Lewes FC community, they don’t need to have their Club being surrounded by designer clothes, luxury health supplements, expensive travels and glittering star studded events.

The Club should be more grounded and inclusive than this – after all the Club Rules and all the spiel on the website talk about bringing people together, and existing for the community, not about creating barriers and making people feel that they are on the outside looking in on the elite world of football. There is enough of that in Premier league football, WAGs and all. Let’s keep football at Lewes FC Real.

# Druv to distraction

HOW THE FANS LOST  
THEIR VOICE AND HOW  
TO GET IT BACK

“

We wunt be druv” is the **unofficial county motto** of Sussex. It is a Sussex dialect phrase which asserts that people from the English county of Sussex have minds of

their own, and cannot be forced against their will or told what to do. It is a motto, through the traditions of Bonfire, that resonates with Lewes.

But it is a spirit peculiarly lacking at Lewes FC until the Mercury13 debacle.

Even before the Community Club, the Lewes Fanzine has been the main source of criticism of the Lewes FC Board. Most of the time it has felt like we are the only opposing voice.

With the fanzine maybe 10% of the club loved it, 10% hated and 80% didn't really care. What has become clear through the recent upheaval at Lewes is that many of the people who despised our attacks on the Board are now doing it themselves and have finally seen the light. Not everyone, but a hell of a lot. But will this be the last spasms of a dying corpse or a belated adrenalin injection – can the spirit of Lewes town be turned into a force for change? It has to be a turning point.

In recent discussions with the Football Supporters Association, which has 500,000 members and oversees community clubs, it was suggested to me that one of the reasons we have ended up in this mess is the lack of fight from the Lewes FC membership. I partially agree but I would also blame the FSA and recent Boards of Directors, as they have never reached out for meaningful fan engagement.

But why have people just timidly accepted the party line? As we have drifted into financial meltdown for the last few years why have supporters and members accepted the sugar coated mindless garbage of branding and everything being hunky dory when simply putting two and two together suggested to the contrary?

I believe the recent working groups over the voting process during Mercury 13 was the first time in 15 years some supporters were officially engaged in club strategy. The FSA have merely sat back and let the Board take us to the brink of disaster, wagging their fingers at the members, when they were always in a position to push further fan engagement.

Maybe I am being harsh on them. I have not seen the protected dialogue, but they have never suggested to me they have been critical of the club's approach. In all honesty the gist of discussions between the FSA and myself put a heavy onus on Lewes supporters' apathy.

However, we are where we are and crying over spilt milk is pointless. The FSA have a point. The members need to step up.

A fan group must emerge from this. It must be a broad church. A tent for 10% on both sides and the 80%. That means radical people such as myself who will want to be involved must accede to a common cause.

Respecting but holding the board to account.

Respecting and adhering to the contract of our constitution.

Demanding more accountability and transparency.

Requesting PROPER fan representation on the board.

With the club almost certain to go into financial meltdown in the near future, we must begin to build a network of club friendly people and businesses to form the next Supporters Trust. We need to build a platform of people in case the worst comes to the worst and explore new revenue streams, devise a fund-raising strategy and community inclusion.

Essentially the Board have attempted to cede some control of the club and it is important to be on guard for the further erosion of our values and principles.

We are supposed to be a democratic club. Directors are voted in on appalling turnouts and certainly do not have the mandate to just shake the club from pillar to post looking for erratic solutions to their financial mismanagement. A group needs to form and not take no for an answer.

Nobody is saying the Board do not have the rights to call the shots but they must now recognise the club has changed and they are no longer trusted to run the show properly.

I have been encouraged to hear the Spend and Save scheme is to be resuscitated partly by volunteers. An excellent scheme which bonds the club to its community has been neglected as we have become too big for our boots. However, already the disappointment around the Mercury 13 debacle is beginning to evaporate. I know some stuff is going on – a recent announcement of a new working group is welcome – but we need more than one. If the club want to harness the passion shown when confronted with M13 it needs to open new pathways for supporters. The spirit of Sussex and Bonfire is in short supply. If supporters don't grasp the nettle, our community club may just evaporate too.

## You Can Trust Us

I did not have  
financial relations  
with Lewes FC



# AWAY DAY SPECIAL

*What makes an away day special? What changes as you get older and (perhaps) wiser? In a two-part article, first we revisit the classic trip to Lowestoft with Chris Mason over a decade ago. Then Chris Harris ponders whether it's worth it anymore, musing about a trip to Whitehawk.*

## LOWESTOFT 3

## LEWES 1

20<sup>th</sup> August 2011  
*from Issue 7*

The new Foo Fighters album, *Wasted Light* – which is by the way fantastic – contains a song called ‘Miss The Misery’, an apt title for our merry jaunt to the Norfolk Broads to witness

Lewes kick off the season against Lowestoft, where we left pointless, penniless and loveless.

At Lewes station for the 8.20 train, the signs were ominous. Due to a significant communication breakdown from the 10WB team, our full army of fans (six) weren't present, meaning that I and Harris had to shell out the full £61 train fare. Now don't get me wrong, I am not averse to paying my dues for a service. I am well known for not turning my nose up at the disgusting price of a drink at Starbucks,

when the only sane reaction upon seeing a coffee costing upwards of three quid is to run, screaming, in the opposite direction. But £61? Seriously? To watch Lewes? Miss The Misery indeed.

After such an auspicious start, the journey to Victoria was a dry one, as the numerous cans of alcoholic beverages swinging from our carrier bags remained undrunk. The same can be said while we sauntered across London to Liverpool Street due to Boris Johnson's booze ban on the Tube – a short-sighted move when the only way to forget the grim nature of the London Underground is to shant like the clappers.

Seagulls raised an extremely good point. The club like to make much of the fact that we are a local club for local players, even when for the majority of last season, Tim O'Shea threw this policy to the wind. It must be said that Steve King also seems to pick the majority of his team from within the M25. However, as Mr. King can do no wrong,

Seagulls suggested that the reason for King's long-distance playing stars was due to the club's brilliant advertising, so most of our fans are from London anyway.

Waiting for a Circle Line service, we heard an amusing customer announcement that forced us to consult the famous Underground map extremely closely: “The Circle Line, District Line, Jubilee Line and Metropolitan Line are all not running today. Other than that we are running a good service”. Yes, a good service. Apart from the fact half the lines are closed and the remaining trains are busy enough to make a tin of sardines appear a roomy alternative to ferociously hot carriages brimming with sweaty strangers. The train from Liverpool Street was little better.

Upon seeing the company running the Norwich service was National Express, my spirits sank (and led to a brief chant of The Divine Comedy's song of the same name). A piss up in a brothel, an orgy



at a warehouse, a riot at JD Sports: you name it, National Express couldn't organise it. Just walking past two carriages of first class accommodation made me wish to instigate class war, especially when the section for us commoners was heaving, while snotty-nosed rich bastards on their way to the big city to con the taxpayer out of yet more money were living in the lap of luxury.

It was here that the drinking begun and not before time. A parade of youngsters wearing Wellington Boots got off at Chelmsford, leading Harris to ask whether, in the ever-changing world of youth fashion, this was the new trend. We quickly realised that they were actually heading for the V Festival and Gok Wan is unlikely to be urging his make-over participants to don a pair of wellies to hit the heights of sophisticated fashion.

We passed the new Olympics stadium and argued about the legacy of the Games. I argued that it was one of the greatest sporting events of all time, while Seagulls and Harris said they would solely watch the 100 metres final and give up on the rest. Billions of pounds, a completely new

infrastructure, brand new stadiums... and all for a pistol shot followed by ten seconds of running. It's made even worse when you consider you can get that for free in London's East End most Saturday nights.

Two hours later we arrived in Norwich to find we had a spare half an hour. We headed out of the station to find a decent public house and instantly set upon a pub called The Complete Angler – Harris in his already pissed state thought the sign read "The Complete Lager", which as he said, was no bad thing either.

Inside we were in for a double delight as England were still batting at The Oval, pummelling India into the ground, scoring for fun with the carefree abandon of a teenager in Magaluf, while Arsenal were self-imploding against Liverpool, much to the amusement of everyone watching. The train to Lowestoft was unremarkable aside from Seagull's son Billy, fastly approaching fourteen, calling everyone and everything gay on as many occasions as possible, as is the way with youngsters these days.

We arrived in good time and settled in a quaint little pub five

## You Can Trust Us

Piffle, wiffle, waffle...



minutes from the station. In there we started chatting to a couple of Lowestoft fans who seemed to be under the impression that they had a decent team and would be there or thereabouts at the end of the season. From there we walked a further five minutes up the road and entered what was obviously the council estate end of Lowestoft (which to be honest, seemed like most of it).

Just before the ground we entered what could politely be described a 'dive' – the kind of place where your feet stick to the floor, you daren't tell the barman if he gives you the wrong change and where you feel that escaping with all limbs in full working order is a significant victory.

Lewes lost 3-1, but no-one cared.

We left a couple of minutes early in order to catch the iron horse back to Ipswich, where me and Harris were lectured by a rather stern-looking ticket conductor that we had a 4 for 2

train offer but we only had two people using that ticket. She said we could get fined and forced to pay a standard fare for the remainder of our journey, apparently

unsatisfied with the meagre £61 we had already shelled out to watch Lewes score a single goal with a boot that wasn't even our own (Own Goal could be one of Steve King's shrewder signings).

On boarding the train from Ipswich we suddenly had a number of Lewes fans clubbed together. Cynical Dave offered the quote of the weekend as I approached the tea hatch, replying to the attendant's inquiry of "What can I get you love?" with "A new f\*\*\*ing personality please". While I paid £2 for a tea and put the flag up in the gangway, little did I know that for Harris, Cupid was aiming an arrow his way.

After vacating my seat, a woman and child had jumped in to fill the gap. Twenty minutes later, Harris and the lovely Vanessa Barlow (who sounds like an interfering character from a soap opera) were exchanging names and promises of Facebook match-ups. Such a turn of events led the punch-drunk Harris to brag all the way home that he had "pulled", which stretches the truth to breaking point and beyond.

Love can blossom in strange places and they don't come much stranger than the 18:44 to Liverpool Street.



# THE DECLINE OF THE AWAY DAY

By Chris Harris



**For most people an away game is the simple process of traveling to follow a football club you love wherever they go or maybe just following them occasionally when it suits. Lots of brilliant fans follow Lewes FC everywhere. For a minority of others however Lewes FC are a conduit, an excuse even, for a big piss up! I am the latter. In this article I will describe an attempt to move from the latter to the former. Can I become normal and go to an away game and stay sober and watch football? It gets complicated.**

During my first ten years following Lewes, even home attendance was rare as I was a season ticket holder at Crystal Palace. I generally drove up and these were sober affairs. But then at the ripe old age of 35 in 2002 I jettisoned the ritual of driving to Selhurst to watch the Palace get beaten, to stroll to the Pan with my mate Big Dave Tanner, paying £6, drinking loads of beer

with pre and after beers at the Kings Head.

Football had moved from an obsession with the Palace to a drinking session at the Pan. For seven or eight years these home games were interspersed with a few away games a season with the King's Head regulars. Simple affairs where we'd simply get dragged from the pub to a relatively close rival venue and get dropped off outside the pub again after the game. I remember one particular game when the club owner Martin came in to see Den, one of our cronies who did contract work for him, gave him an envelope stuffed with cash and we set off up the M23 with the players wages. 'They'll play better when they get this'. The group we went with dissipated as the Head became a gastro pub, a sin it has never recovered from, and Dave started following his local club, Burgess Hill.

At this time, we started the fanzine and a new drinking set of buddies emerged at the back of the Philcox. The away games became more extreme drinking experiences as the participants were much younger. After a few

years people drifted away. Chris FM and I stoically kept the flag flying for another couple years. But by now totally hacked off with the stupid running and direction of the club, Chris finding other interests and myself moving to Eastbourne, away days ended.

There was one last hurrah, a trip to watch us play Dorking at the Dripping Pan. It seemed a good idea catching up with some friends I had not seen for thirty-five years. Meeting in the Lansdown we quaffed like we did in our late teens as the strong continental lagers went effortlessly down. In high spirits, as we defied the aging process, we shipped off to the Pan. As the game went on the drinking slowed and the banter dried up as middle age drinking limitation kicked in and by the end of the game our 2.45 resolve to do an all-dayer ended up with fond goodbyes at Lewes station at a disappointing 5.15.

My friend Paul cracked his head open in the toilets and I caught the train to Eastbourne, fell asleep on it, did not get off and the train headed back up to

London. Waking up I got off at Haywards Heath somewhat pissed still and discombobulated, got on the wrong train and got off at Dorking having dozed off again. I eventually got home at 11.30pm instead of 6!

Now, finally being in my fifties, the self-preservation factor kicked in and the realisation it was actually not fun to get like that anymore. It's stupid and dangerous, especially near trains, and that was my last big session. Away days became going over to Burgess Hill to meet Big Dave for a few beers. By now, as I was in a serious relationship and Dave a part time carer, I would be safely on the train home by 5.15.

So I am twenty years on from the start of away day beer hedonism and I contact Dave to go over and watch a game. 'I'll be on the hot chocolates.' He joked. But he wasn't. He'd given up drinking. It was a defining moment, when the penny dropped, I surprisingly didn't try and make my excuses. I thought 'Great, I don't need to drink!'

Out of nowhere I realised I'd sooner not drink. No faffing around with long drinking rituals and trains, just hopping in the motor in the drive for the 20 minute journey to watch the Hillians. How things had changed.

I remember 20 years previously Dave and I went to Redbridge and got ourselves slaughtered and the manager Steve King coming up to us at the end of the game and said, 'What did you think of that lads?' 'Yeah, fab Stevie', we lied. We'd just sat at the bar the whole game. I know some of you reading this will think well that's just mental going all the way out there and

not watching the game. Maybe you're right but it was what we did and we really enjoyed ourselves, which is just part of drinking culture I guess.

Not long afterwards on my first trip to Lowestoft (the second is written up elsewhere in the article) we also missed the entire game in the bar before jump starting the minibus and getting lost in Ipswich!

But this is now 2022, David and I are standing on the decking of woe at Burgess Hill. This isn't an historic place in the town where Mr Woe was famously decked but the decking outside the clubhouse where older folks congregate and the general theme of banter is one of self-pity and woe based around the decline of the body and general advancing years, aka 'Woe is me'.

We both agreed it was weird and that it went very well. Driving home I almost felt a palpable sense of relief. This is the new me, I thought to myself. I'm going to start going ground hopping and discover lots of non-league grounds. Happy to go on my own to fill a Saturday afternoon.

So a few weeks later I went down to demystify Whitehawk FC. Had I found a new way of repurposing enjoying away day football for latter middle age?

### Whitehawk v A Team in White

A friend had repeatedly suggested we go down to check out Whitehawk who are something of an enigma, coming from nowhere to the upper echelons of the Conference South and back down again. Now seemingly on the up again we thought we

would check it out.

Being over a certain age the reality of Google Maps meant I ended up at some football

pitches nowhere near the Whitehawk stadium. After much faffing I eventually found the stadium where there was no parking. Being in the middle of nowhere this meant going back to a built up area and now, running very late, jogging to the stadium. It wasn't half easier on the away day mayhem trips where the only thing I had to negotiate was lifting the glass or tin to my mouth.

'It is half price if you are an OAP' a gentleman on the turnstile quips. I am 57 and pretty fit so this was the first time in my life I was termed an OAP. I spent most of the game considering this new revelation and my mortality.

I met up with my buddy. Whitehawk famously has two large seated stands made of scaffolding behind each goal which are often ridiculed but are actually perfectly fit for purpose and comfortable. We sat under the quirky disco ball with the usual smattering of bored children and even more disinterested parents. I would normally be very slaughtered by now but actually just enjoyed talking to my friend and the gentle art of people watching.

To be honest I didn't find the football riveting. Two teams a division below Lewes were scraping it out but it was nice taking in the new surroundings. It is a nice ground. Unlike Lewes drinks and toilets are readily accessible.

My conversion to sober away day travel was confirmed as we sat at half time drinking a very nice cup of black tea.

On my request we'd moved right to the edge of the stand to get away from the annoying children. This is clearly going to be a customary thing of away day travel. Alcohol tends to cut out what is going on around you, a heightened awareness through sobriety means tolerance to other people's behaviour takes a dive. Yes of course I became shamefully aware of how bloody annoying over the years our

## You Can Trust Us

I know how to take things over and make them a success!



behaviour would have been to sober match goers, although I hasten to add we were always well behaved if maybe a little jolly.

For the second-half the stand filled with the Whitehawk Ultras. I have to say they were a very impressive bunch. I've never seen such a group of dedicated drinkers at a non-league game ever. They packed out the stand and made an enormous racket, shaking their keys in the air every time there was a corner.

Whitehawk won and we filed out. Being sober I didn't feel the need to whisper something

insulting under my breath to the grinning reaper steward and we walked across the scrubland back to the car, said our good-byes and I drove back to Lewes. I enjoyed my trip to Whitehawk but not enough to take up non-league ground hopping. I haven't gone to another away game since and have none planned.

I think if I was retired I'd maybe enjoy the experience more but I simply have far too many other priorities. Projects that were previously always jettisoned at the prospect of a massive away day drinking session now hold sway. I could still cut it if there were some away day

reunions, but equally I think I will probably make my excuses.

Maybe I need to consider whether I actually just do not enjoy non-league football unless I am pissed. Analyse that!

But at the end of the day it's not that important is it? It was just something we did a few times a season and at the time was great fun. But time marches on and you grow up little by little. And your body declines a little. But hey I'm not an OAP yet!

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## ***Look lively, penny pinchers! The tightest chap in the land is back with more tips to save you a trip to the bar! Stay tuned to see how Standaround Dave gets away with it again!***

As a fully paid-up miser (well, I haven't submitted my membership fees this year) I am always looking for a new way to avoid buying a round. It is one of those things about modern life. Some people like SuDoKu, some prefer a DVD box set. I prefer thinking of new and elaborate ways of skipping a visit to the bar.

My latest ruse involves a little bit of planning, a soupcon of cunning and a light splash of daring. First of all, a trip to budget supermarket Aldi is required. I must stock up on the various beverages my drinking buddies prefer, not forgetting the 30p off token I found in a binned copy of The Daily Express last Thursday.

Suitably weighed down with a bagful of dirt-cheap booze, I hit the town. As I enter the pub, I tell people I have been collecting tins for a charity, explaining the

### **STANDAROUND DAVE**



### **HE CAN'T STAND A ROUND!**

heavy load in my bag, which I drag wearily round with me in a dutiful manner.

What is vital here is ensuring you are as far away from the bar as possible, preferably pointing everyone in the direction of the beer garden, away from prying eyes. As the Russian Roulette of round-buying achingly edges round to me, I quickly say "Hold on a minute chaps, I must pop my tinnies round to the local food bank. They are so desperate this time of year". I find a wistful look here helps.

But as I begin to leave I mention to everyone I will buy a drink on the way back and take the usual orders. This usually receives approval and occasionally a small cheer. With my bag of goodies in tow, I march towards the bar and take a quick hairpin bend into an alcove where the cutlery is kept.

Here I grab the required number of empties from the nearest table, and surreptitiously pour each drink from my bag until the round is complete, always keeping a look out for the barmaid shooting quizzical looks. I take the drinks out two-by-two, insisting I don't need any help carrying the rest. And what should have cost £30 comes to 77p. Not only that but you may even get a sympathy pint for feeding the poor! Trebles all round. Doubles if it's my round.



# The Three Rs: **REUSE, RECYCLE, RETURN**

Eloise Cheary



## We are the Hypocrites

No return to boom  
and bust my  
friends  
Or we'll keep los-  
ing money to the  
end  
Board said we  
must be winners  
And spent lots of  
money.  
Totally clueless,  
really stupid,  
Now we're nearly  
bust again.

*“Setting an  
example and  
aiming to be  
better should  
be a core aim  
of the club”*

It is a well known fact that many plastic items wilfully making their way to a recycling plant, don't ever actually end up being recycled. Those that do, may be going through a recycling process which uses significant energy and resources to recycle the plastic. This is why there has been a substantial push at numerous mass 'fan' events to move away from 'throwaway' plastic glasses, to reusable plastic cups.

One doesn't have to be a tree hugger or a massive eco warrior to feel guilty about the black bags and rubbish bins full of plastic waste at the end of a football match, music festival, fete or bonfire celebration. When UK football fans were asked about their thoughts on switching to reusable or returnable cups at Premier League match, a whopping 84% were in support.

As a community owned football club, Lewes FC should be at the forefront of adopting a reusable or returnable cup scheme for match days. There is no point being a community club, committed to community objectives and community impact, having a community vegetable patch and a £40,000 electric vehicle, if at a basic level the club contributes thousands of plastic cups to landfill every month. Setting an example and aiming to be better than that should be a core aim of the club when it comes to environmental sustainability in the community.

For some time now, the club and Only With Love (OWL) have been lobbied to move away from throwaway plastic cups, and move to reusable or returnable cups. Having cheap to buy, or low deposit scheme cups with Lewes FC branding would be a wonderful way to set the example and say loud and proud in the community, that Lewes FC doesn't do rubbish. Only With Love are benefitting as the chosen catering partner at The Pan, they should be spearheading this type of campaign with the club – they should be moving away from pouring canned drinks into a plastic cup creating double the waste with just one purchase! Lewes FC has access to some good marketeers; the club could really win with this type of initiative.

Excuses were plentiful from the club and OWL as to why they couldn't embrace a reusable or returnable cup scheme. But thankfully, just as the club were awakening to the Bonfire celebrations in the town, Lewes Town Council in collaboration with Green United, a student-led group from Lewes schools, announced a scheme they are pushing with local pubs and bonfire societies. Buy a reusable cup for £1 and use it across town at participating pubs! This scheme is launching over Bonfire weekend and will save some of the 7 tonnes of waste which usually piles up after Bonfire night.

With a little nudge, the club reached out to the organisers of this scheme and agreed to support it at The Pan at the women's match on 3 November. Woohoo! A small mention in club emails preceding the match will hopefully mean that some fans will use this reusable cup scheme. Let's hope more marketing and fanfare will follow and that this type of scheme will be fully embraced by the club.

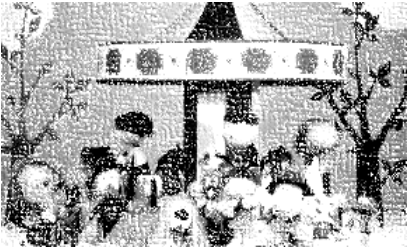
Less 'throwaway' cups after a home match will mean less litter to collect after the game, less eventual landfill, an extra cup in the cupboard at home, and a small feeling of satisfaction for contributing to a community that cares about the environment we live in.

The club's response has to date been at best benign and we urge them in partnerships with OWL to not gently creep into changing a dirty habit but to be bold. It verges on hypocritical to have a £40,000 staff eco car parked in the car park next to bins overflowing with unnecessary plastic waste on windy days blowing into the Convent Field.

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*PS: Since writing this article, we were delighted to see the club buy into reusable glasses with bonfire societies in time for 5<sup>th</sup> November. Alas, we are disappointed to see that the half-hearted promotion of this has completely stopped – even in the weekly email promoting sustainability and Vegan Day! We hope everyone enjoyed their ethical plant burger whilst drinking from the unsustainable and unethical plastic cup.*

# THE MAGIC ROUNABOUT



*Another visit to everyone's favourite childhood memory, as Dougal and Florence deal with the vicious Dick Dastardly.*

It had been a poor year in the Magic Garden. Yes, even fictitious children's programme have to make money. Florence had overseen the building of the new women's roundabout, a very expensive one, and membership of the Magic Garden was up. Customers on the magic roundabouts was at the highest level ever.

'So why are we losing so much money?' said Florence, to the gathering characters of the Magic Garden. Dougal shuffled guiltily on his four feet and went red. Dougal had a penchant for the candy floss at the Sweet Shop and had been stealing portions of candy floss at night as initial greed turned to addiction. Dougal wondered if he was to blame.

Mr Rusty gingerly raised an arm as Ermintrude chewed beside him on a mouthful of daisies. 'Pardon me for saying so ma'am, but the new women's ride costs so much more money to run than the normal roundabout. The costs just keep on rising all the time and we can't keep up with established rival fairgrounds'.

Dylan, bleary eyed and slightly discombobulated by the mushrooms at the back of the field he'd been experimenting with, came forward strumming his guitar. 'Well if you ask me, we're getting the wrong types of customers'.

'What do you mean?' asked Florence.

'Sorry to say it Florence but you've got the advertising campaign wrong'. Florence never thought it could be her fault and blushed accordingly. 'You've been putting up posters and dropping flyers in far off counties but nobody from there will come all this way and spend money. But you've done no advertising locally so none of the locals are spending money'.

Dougal was sweating profusely. Still blaming himself, he privately promised never to steal candy floss again.

Mr McHenry looked on. It all looked a bit fraught to him and besides he had to meet the guests for the Old Ride Huts. Best leave them to it, Mr McHenry thought, diplomatically.

Brian was a well-meaning snail. All of the characters loved him but found him a bit annoying.

'May I be so bold as to say,' said Brian, 'but this is down to the bank manager.' Caught unawares, stony silence enveloped the chums as Brian seemed about to say something serious. This was a first.

'Go on' Florence said, encouragingly.

'The Bank of Benefactors in the village may have been generous in helping us expand, but ultimately our growth has been unsustainable. They have been extraordinarily irresponsible'. Exhausted by his sudden attack of truth he curled up into his shell.

Ermintrude dropped the daisies from her mouth and cleared her throat.

'Far from it be for me a mere cow to wax lyrical on such matters,' said Ermintrude, 'but has nobody not noticed how inefficient the Magic Garden is when the customers are here. The food and drink outlets always have long queues and it takes ages for the children to get to use the toilets. We must be losing lots of potential income surely? People are not coming back'.

Florence took real offence at being spoken down to by a cow and was about to question the Ermintrude's audacity when Zebedee piped up.

'Seems obvious to me,' puffed Zebedee. 'We've grown too fast'. The characters all nodded in agreement. Zebedee may be

silly, but he was also quite wise. 'We've not costed the general rise in costs of the new hi-tech women's ride and simply ignored and lost sight of the things that have really mattered to us. We have just got carried away.'

Blindsided by a roll of common sense that was not commensurate with his character, Zebedee added, 'Oh



and by the way things have not been helped by Dougal stealing all the candy floss!’

It was too much for Dougal,. Humiliated, all he could do was bark sorry and run away. But as he ran another dog ran after him and attacked him. It was Muttley. Mr McHenry had booked the guests in. He was unaware that the guests were Dick Dastardly and Muttley from the Wacky Race Track. They were looking for ways to expand their portfolio of pleasure locations and were keen to invest in the Magic Garden. Although they were not very nice and Muttley seemed out of control, Florence knew their investment was crucial.

Later that night in his kennel Dougal had said his prayers and promised God he would not steal candy floss anymore. Florence and Zebedee tapped on the roof and Dougal shyly crawled out of his kennel. ‘Zebedee has something to say to you Dougal’ whispered Florence.

‘I’m sorry Dougal, I got overwhelmed by saying something clever so had to say something silly and it just came out about your stealing’, sighed Zebedee.

‘You should always ask for things Dougal,’ said Florence, ‘stealing is something for bad dogs’.

‘I’m sorry’ cried Dougal. ‘I’ve been comfort eating candy floss and I can see the worry on everyone’s face. Are we going to close? Am I going to have to go to Raystede?’

‘No, Dick Dastardly and Muttley are saving us. They have said they will do lots of wonderful things.

A hundred yards away a faint snigger could be heard from the Old Ride Huts.

‘Lots of wonderful things’ said Dick Dastardly to Muttley, wheezing with laughter. ‘What planet were they born on?’

TO BE CONTINUED



## A LETTER to LONDON

Mother, once again, I send salutations your way. It is I, Lysander, your darling son. The basket into which you placed your eggs so tenderly. I can only apologise profusely for not being in touch for so long. It’s a sorry tale involving Tarquin’s cat, Jazz Pancake. The little rascal did not take kindly to his change of diet as we economised following Great Aunt Liz’s six weeks as PM. The regular caviar and foie gras has had to be downgraded to something called Vitakat from the local Lidl (a sort of Harrods for poor people) and the diminished little thing hadn’t eaten for weeks.

I know you are struggling with the cost of living crisis too. Eusebia tells me your handyman Carruthers has been talking about making his meat go much further. I sympathise — a cordon bleu roast of a rather woebegone goose was the centrepiece of Horace’s Sunday soiree. I have rarely seen a sorer sight. A trained veterinarian may have bought it back to life.

I presume you were also hoping to write and tell me the latest happening from the capital but as in our Islington childhood, I take your distancing as a portent of a

familial affection. I received your Christmas card and placed it atop the mock Tudor firewood grate.

Here in Lewes, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Tarquin and I debuted an Axel Arigato padded parka at the Lewes women’s match against Sunderland a few weeks back. We certainly turned some heads and one rather boozed up yokel said I was a “tosser”, an obvious homage to my sensational waldorf salads.

Only a few weeks back we were lounging about in Heaven in a Percolator when I received a phone call from an unknown number. At first, I thought it might be from my therapist, but I think contacting me might break the terms of the restraining order she took out. I flipped my Nokia D7 and mumbled a “Hello”.

“Lysander, it’s your Uncle Murphy” a cheerful voice intoned. “I’m sorry” I said, noting I did not have a relative called Murphy, or indeed an Uncle. You put paid to that of course mother, although the cause of that fire was never proven. It turned out this chap was from an investment group called Murphy 13. “We want to take a controlling stake in the Lewes women’s team and you

## Equality FC Rhapsody



Mama, the board just killed a plan

Put a gun against it’s head,  
pulled the trigger, now Equality FC’s dead

Mama, it was just 6 years old  
But now they’ve gone and  
thrown it all away

are the man to help seal the deal”. Of course, firstly I pointed out his gendered language and reminded him to use the politically correct term — DFL.

Nevertheless, I was intrigued. Murphy explained to me that there was likely going to be some resistance from the hoi palloi about this potential business deal and that I was to become an agent provocateur, a phrase which sent shivers down my spine as I remembered Valentine’s night 2006 and the film night you hosted with Tom Conti. I shall update you about what happened soon, mama. I must tend to Tarquin, as he has just watched an episode of Antipodean boat-based dating programme Below Deck and appears close to internal combustion. A cool tea towel and a Xanax may soothe his ire.

Love, now and always,  
Lysander xxx

# MIRANDA KEMP'S



**One of the key founders of the 'No' campaign discusses what football means to her.**

My first memory of football is, post-Sunday lunch, lying on my dad's lap, while he watched The Big Match at 3pm. He smelled of beer and tobacco, having had a few pre-lunch pints at the Eagle and Child, his local. His pipe would be down by the side of the sofa, along with a pile of loose change, silently but regularly raided by us, the younger of his five kids, when he dropped off which he inevitably did. That sofa remained propped up on a book for years, where he'd leapt up when England equalised against Poland in the 1973 World Cup qualifier, came down and wrecked the casters. Mum was not pleased but also not that bothered either, such were my parents and our family. Like Proust's madeleines, it was the smell of him, his warmth, along with the groans of frustration and yells of triumph that rooted themselves in me. To this day, that combination says 'love' and 'maleness' to me.

My dad (Alan Kemp (1923-2012) was born in a house that literally backed onto Upton Park, the old West Ham ground, and so he was a lifelong Hammers fan. Until they were evacuated by Ilford County High School to Ipswich in 1939, he and his younger brother spent their Saturdays scaling the walls of the ground to watch matches.

I tagged along with my dad to watch my brothers play football and never had any urge to join in, a combination, no doubt, of two things – 1) it was a boy's thing back then and 2) I had no interest in playing team sports and never have. My dad would never have dreamt of stopping me playing if I'd wanted to. He was a natural feminist and once actually said to me that he thought women were 'better at being humans than men'. He may have been right. He was also a lifelong socialist and would've

loved the whole Equality FC and fan-owned thing.

Dad never minded that I became a Tottenham fan in the early 80s, when I met my best friend who was – and is - a Spurs fan. My then-boyfriend, who was also Spurs, was so anxious and wound up that he couldn't watch the 1987 FA Cup final against Coventry City (we lost) and instead walked about north London until it was all over.

Men are traditionally 'not great at emotions' - and football is the one place where they can shout, swear, laugh, cry, be together and express themselves. By the early 90s, I was friends with Nick Hornby, who was writing Fever Pitch at that point, a defining moment for many when it comes to understanding why men love football so much. The first time I borrowed Nick's then-girlfriend's season ticket and went to see Arsenal with him (undercover), there was an old lady, season ticket holder, swearing herself hoarse at the players. The unbridled passion, tribalism and banter was thrilling. There aren't many public spaces where this stuff is allowed anymore and I'm all for it in a football stadium.

My dad was also very proud of my brother's daughter (now 25) who was a brilliant football player until she gave up at around 13 when the FA told her she was no longer allowed to play in mixed teams. Funnily enough, she cited the lack of on-pitch aggression of women players (at that time) as one of the reasons she gave up. Generally, I am not a big fan of aggressive behaviour, but I admit to finding it exciting in the controlled confines of the terraces. I know the consensus is that all that stuff – the shouting, the aggression, the swearing – are exactly what some women hate about men's football matches. For me, it's where men can be at their most male – and I don't want to see that disappear. It is the sheer glorious differences between men and women, on full display when men watch football, that I love.

This isn't a dissertation for a gender studies degree and so I haven't done the relevant research but there is something in men's response to men's football that, as a (heterosexual) woman, I can't deny, I am wildly drawn to. I am sure a therapist would have a field day. I am just about self-aware enough to understand why I was drawn to my now-fiancé, when it turned out that he was a beer-drinking Spurs (and Rooks) fan. Along with being generally gorgeous, he smells like love and maleness to me and that makes me feel right at home.

# Another Fine Mess. The Great Mercury 13 Debacle.

It takes a scary kind of ineptitude to run a small community club into the enormous financial peril Lewes FC is in. Rather than cut costs to a sustainable level, the Board of 2022/3 decided to try and sell a majority stake in the Lewes FC Women to Mercury13. Thereby intending to: 1) smash our privilege of 100% fan ownership, 2) destroying the one thing all fans and members are proud of, Equality FC, 3) doing it with such wrecking ball etiquette you manage to split a community football club in two, and 4) dump on nearly ALL of the core values of our Fan Owned Constitution. The bid fell through, but the intent of the previous Board was to sell out before the bizarre screeching U-turn. This was a failed rescue mission to save the club from what some of us have consistently warned against and highlighted - the systemic mismanagement of Lewes FC.

Systemic mismanagement means the recurrent or frequent mismanagement of a resource that is known or accepted within an organization, or that is built into an organisation's structure, policies or practices.

This in a nutshell describes the enormous overspending on budgets when the Board have been perfectly aware it is unaffordable, and recklessly relied on the financial support of benefactors that is now seemingly being withdrawn, working under the illogical assumption everybody in the sponsorship world were desperate to be associated

with the wonderful alternative Lewes FC monster they had created. The 2022/3 Board are not the only culprits. Many directors over the last few years have allowed this to spiral out of control and are just as guilty of basic irresponsibility and a disdain for the principles of sound management. Dangerously embedded within the culture of leadership at Lewes FC is an almost de facto narcissism by believing we are so much better and attractive to everyone than we actually are. Believing your own press never ends well. The fact is that after six years of using fan



## Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.

*'I am interested to see that like a good book has a villain the fanzine has a villain too, or indeed a group of supervillains. The Board.'* (Ed - this is customary practice within fanzines Dr A, they are the unwitting jesters and fuel.) *'But I don't think underhand comparisons to fuel such as fool is appropriate'*

ownership, Equality FC and our 'values' to attract sponsors etc to ensure financial sustainability, and failing to do so, the leadership carry on regardless, seemingly incapable of mastering the necessity of turning the ship before it hits the land.

Mismanagement had left the club with apparently no choice but to hop into the sack with Mercury 13. Of course, there are and were plenty of alternatives to the bleak picture the Board painted during their hilarious one-sided online presentation of complete and utter bollocks at the start of the takeover process. The Board's position was painting a doom and gloom picture, almost desperation, if we didn't take up the Mercury13 offer, and three months later and apparently with no change to the 'dire' finances, hey presto the offer was unnecessary. Go figure that one! The Lewes FC board go down as magicians who can pull a real rabbit out of a hat.

We were told, at the start, that Mercury13 aligned with our values which many of us called out as rubbish from the outset and after 3 months of ridiculous upheaval at the club the board suddenly agreed with us. You couldn't make it up.

A large chunk of supporters opposed selling 51% of the Lewes FC Women to people we knew nothing about. This would end the precious (?) pure fan ownership model at Lewes FC. Jettisoning Equality FC undoubtedly the major significant legacy of community ownership. Absolutely no guarantee whatsoever to back up the spurious claims of a trickle-down effect of extra funds for the men's squad, amongst many other things. Nothing stacked up.

Let us remember right until the deal was jettisoned the Board vociferously supported the Mercury 13 deal whilst clearly Mercury 13 were getting the jitters; at no point did the Board share any detail of the progress; by securing a 'yes' vote I think many owners felt that the takeover was a done deal. However, I seemingly knew it was over before the board did.

I started a Twitter (X) betting book



spoof after the owner's vote, on the chances of it falling through, but a personal techno meltdown, customary with middle aged people, saw a bit of lampooning prematurely ended! My hunch came from when the TV

## Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.

*'Will there be a new series of Cold Feet soon?'*

interviews were carried out before the vote, and Mercury 13 refused to comment, citing due diligence... Some would have expected some sort of positive commentary from them or did they already have cold feet and the process was already over?

And what a debacle it all was.

The Board were not expecting the backlash to the proposed investment. They assumed a normally placid membership who have been so conformist and compliant for so long, always would be. Most of the 2022/3 Board did not live in Lewes (I think Trevor always has) and have little or no history with the town or club and therefore did not know the whopping back-bone Lewes has. So out of touch are the Board that they assumed breaking up Lewes' fan owned club would simply be accepted. But a vast chunk of the club, mainly local and long-term supporters vociferously opposed the deal and went, for us, pretty ballistic as the club split into a YES and NO camps. The Board proposal essentially killed off the fan harmony



#### Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.

*'I'm reminded of 'Hold Onto Your Friends' a great song (\*\*\*\*\*) by Morrissey before he became a twat (\*). The line 'a bond of trust has been abused' before the chorus 'hold onto your friends' alludes to being straight with people to maintain a sound relationship and this why the leadership/membership dynamic at Lewes FC is so strained'*

that has been prevalent for so long. At a community club, that is a sacred bond broken. Clever stuff!

Until I see proof to the contrary, the Board had no initial intention of holding a vote and were treading water on whether to have one or not for some time. The backlash was huge from fans and members, from both the YES and NO camp disappointed a vote was not included in the early club mutterings about the investment. The Board originally decided not to write off or commit to a vote and by the time some of us had finished with the Football Supporters Association, our governance supervisor, they were letting it be known to their half a million members Lewes FC should call a vote. To be fair, with hindsight it had earlier been decided by the Board that a vote would proceed at the time of the FSA intervention. But by now they had crossed a line in the eyes of many fans and members of credulity regarding the vote.

The vote was comedy gold democracy. In a nutshell. The Board campaigned for 8 weeks for the YES vote, telling us that to not vote YES would mean catastrophic financial doom and gloom (before handily suddenly it was not). At no point did the Board put in any effort into presenting what the ramifications the NO vote might mean

for the club, a fait accompli, and how the club might have to be run in the future, an alternative plan B. But I guess why would you if you have planned plan A to succeed? To not offer an alternative strategy on such a momentous issue was outrageous. Instead, after 6 weeks of offering their vision, they condescended to allow fans to offer a NO vote alternative. The NO group had no access to crucial financial data, relying on ten-month-old accounts and no access to the fullest details of the proposed acquisition. A small group of NO supporters met and kicked off a NO campaign and had only 2 weeks, compared to the 8 of the Board, to prepare a message. A NO manifesto was written by 2 ex-Board members. Eight former directors also released a separate statement condemning the proposed acquisition. The NO campaign was able to prepare a semblance of a message – nothing like what could have been prepared if another 6 weeks had been given. This was disgusting and whoever oversaw this shambles and banana republic democracy should hang their head in shame.

The club's amateur presentation of the deal was an unmitigated disgrace too, important meetings not set-up properly, information not consistently put on club social media. Do you ever read the weekly email? I don't. I look to the website, fans forum and social media for information, in this case when there was any, it was erratic. One major part of the process was announced on a small Lewes Town forum and LinkedIn and no proper social club media and normal outlets. Insufficient time was given to owners to feedback and parts of the process were rushed. Critical details of how it would all work in practice were not included. How can you get it so wrong?

Of course, YES won 68% to 32%. At this level, a membership will always err on the side of Board recommendations. A good margin? Definitely not, when you see just how unfair the campaign timelines were. Fighting the club PR machine, many like me abstaining, others disinterested and the club having a 50 or 60 block vote of paid staff voting in favour. On a turnout of about 1,000, 320 NO 680 YES. I'd say in reality it was much closer.

In the end it mattered not a jot with the announcement a few weeks later after the vote that read along the lines that a mutual cessation of the deal had been agreed.

*"Through our discussions, we found that whilst we shared a common belief in the future growth prospects of women's football, the structure needed to make this specific opportunity work would be too disruptive to other values that we hold dear.*



#### Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.

*'Boomtown Rats Banana Republic was a top 3 hit in the UK but intriguingly only got to 18 in Belgium'*

After a mutual diligence process, the parties have agreed that the club's foundational principles diverge considerably from Mercury/13's operating priorities, which makes a partnership challenging at this time."

I'm confused here. The club's foundational principles self-sustainability, transparency, financial prudence, pure fan ownership and accountability were all totally ignored by the Board when pushing for the deal, and they signalled clear as day they were happy to drop them for money. Only one was respected by the Board, to play at the highest level possible and even then you could not do that without ignoring the major core aims which is to do that within your own financial resources. The fact is the Board signed up for a deal knowing full well our foundational principles were to be compromised it was in black and white when they announced the rough details of the proposal.

So, the club gets ripped apart and enormous time and resources have been wasted because the fundamental principles of the deal were not ironed out and agreed before we embarked on this mess. This is just ridiculous and does not stack up. Nobody with an iota of common sense would surely not iron out all of the principles and main financial agreements before presenting the deal for approval. The



**Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.**

*'Come on Chris we're getting sick of the repetition, we get the gist'*

new Board need to action an enquiry into what has gone on here.

At the end of the day maybe it will come out in the wash. It may well just be the case that the fierce opposition and a period of reflection on how stupid the deal was made the Board come to their senses. Mercury 13, why would they withdraw? Well loads of good reasons. Let's face it, they thought they were taking over a consistent mid-table team in the Championship, but we had tanked to the bottom during the whole 'consultation' process. They would have realised the task in hand was not so exciting, signing up for a relegation scrap rather than their misdirected belief of Super League glory. Realising a large chunk of the club simply did not want them and maybe a good look at the accounts during the due diligence process meant too many red flags were being waved. Probably more importantly, the rejigging of the overall structure at the top of women's football pretty much precluded the Lewes FC Women from ever getting into the WSL, certainly with the limited funding Mercury13 were offering which a year ago would maybe have left them with a shout to achieve their aims, but with the new changes? Not a hope.

This is the crux of this article though. Did the NO campaign that opposed the deal lose the battle, the vote, but win the war? It seems to me that if it is the case the Board pulled out because our values did not align, but they felt at the start of the campaign they did; then two months of remorseless criticism and numerous members highlighting the hypocrisy of the deal, it would seem churlish to assume the Board were not swayed by the forceful opposition. It may be the case that a small group who only had those two weeks to make the case did so with such effectiveness the Board bottled it. Certainly had it gone through, the club would be a divided and angry club so maybe the board felt it best to leave well alone.

My own view is Mercury 13 were instrumental in pulling the deal, but Lewes FC Board had maybe weighed it up and were wavering too. I am exercising my right of a point of view here and speculating and not stating a fact or challenging the truth. Bottom line is, and until I see evidence to contrary, I believe financial security for three years and some real professionals involved in running the club outweighed the negatives of misaligned values, and my own view is Mercury 13 were the ones to pull the deal. But that the Lewes FC leadership were probably not that aggrieved as it presented so many contradictions and problems too. Importantly too, Lewes FC have said all along there were other financing options that we do not know about and although these were dismissed at the time of pushing the Mercury 13 deal to owners, maybe those not so good options were beginning to be considered less controversial and better options than Mercury 13.

Either way, huge energy, time and finances were invested in this deal, and it was seemingly just ended by both sides over issues that should have been dealt with during preliminary talks. Mercury13 are minted and can afford to run up costs, we are not and there has to come a point when the Board get to grips with the club finances and start running it like a proper business. You simply have no moral authority to have such a high-profile spectacle of the Mercury13 deal fall through without a thorough explanation.

It was an industrial cock-up from the start and the new Board if they are serious about running this club properly at last, need to investigate what went on and let the 2500 club owners know what happened. Isn't that what fan ownership is about?



**Dr Amarzipan, TROF analyst.**

*'Well I for one and I'm sure other readers are sure glad Mercury 13 have buzzed off even just so we don't have to read any-more rants about it'*

# CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN REALITY

There is no greater damnation of the governance of Lewes FC than the Tracey Crouch Fan Led Review. Whether you are left wing or right wing this was a review that gained massive support from all political parties such as the thoroughness and the merits of it's conclusions.

The fact it reads like a poor class report and ticking off for the way Lewes FC has been run for the last few years is a savage indictment of our board of directors.

It is galling how so many points of poor governance in the report are relevant to the actions of the Lewes FC Board of Directors' mishandling of the affairs of Lewes FC, their negligence of proper governance and accountability.

People close to the club are all aware of the plethora of excuses and the occasional, well very rare, mea culpa- 'we know we make mistakes.' But the Crouch Review sums up the poor governance here far more than the odd 'mistake.' More a catalogue of failure. What the club cannot argue against is the absolute clarity and authority of the Crouch Review, the most in depth look at poor governance in British football ever. The conclusions and relevance to Lewes are not a menu of conjecture and discussion, it is black and white clear cut. What the Board have done amounts to irresponsibility and appalling mismanagement.

Approved by the Lewes FC Board of Directors has been a huge private investment in chasing glory for the Lewes FC Women. Our tiny club was bankrolled last season by £600,000. Nearly 50% of its turnover. The Board have now run out of funding and indicated a further step to ensure the finances continue to run out of control, such is the huge demand for money to run the Lewes FC Women to keep them competitive. The club has been ripped to pieces over the failed Mercury 13 takeover and the plan to invest £1,000,000 a season in the women's squad and £700,000 elsewhere at the

## We Will Sell You

Lewes FC Women, you're a woman, make a big noise  
Playing in the Pan, gonna be a big woman someday  
You got mud on your face, that tackle was a disgrace  
Kicking your ball all over the place, with the board singin'  
We will, we will sell you  
We will, we will sell you

cluded that English football's fragility is the result of three main factors-  
1) Misaligned incentives to 'chase success'. Yes, that is investing vast sums of money you do not have chasing success. We have done that textbook. Tick. In

grossly overspending and then breaking up the club to allow Mercury 13 to fund the spending binge. Note to the uninitiated. This always ends in tears.

2) The report stated 'Club corporate structures that lack governance'. Yes that is us, a Board sanctioning this unsustainable investment, approving private endowment fund contributions in contravention of the stated core aim of our constitution to become self-sustained. Then seeking further funding from outside investors in exchange for selling a majority stake in our women's team. Once owned by us, now gone forever in everything but name. As a community club attempting to carry this out without consulting supporters and explaining costs is disgraceful.

3) Not taking 'sufficient account of supporters failing to scrutinise decision making' When did the supporters and 2500 owners say it was okay to put the club in financial peril? Why did the Board even procrastinate over a vote on the proposed investment? Members should always be a given a vote should on anything so

club to align with Championship regulations and strengthen the women's set up. The plan failed through but the board agreed in principle to the ridiculous unsustainable and potentially catastrophic effects of the plan.

Crouch Review-  
The Review con-

So.

Farewell then.

Equality FC.

You meant something.  
And now you don't.

CJ Thrubb  
(17½ investment opportunities)

fundamental to change of the club ownership structure. When Mercury13 were first announced it should have come with news that of course a vote would be held on the proposal. The Board dilly dallied before the Football Supporters Association and fan pressure forced one. The breathtaking arrogance to not seek prior consensus from the club OWNERS, by a group of 9 amateurs on the Board was a disgrace.

The Board plan of the Mercury 13 investment would have seen our 100% fan owned Lewes FC Women no longer solely owned by us, the members, but majority owned with Mercury 13. The Crouch report is urging clubs to become fan owned, we seem to be the only club in Britain determined to break our fan ownership model and become the sort of club we should all be moving away from.

The galling thing is all the current changes have occurred since the release of the Crouch Report. It represents a Board going rogue, totally out of synch with methods of recommended safe football club governance. Oh and the hypocrisy. A board ridiculously branding itself as liberal 'disruptors' chasing a socialist utopia, under the guidance of what is essentially a socialist constitution, instead jumping head first into a corporate investment to sell parts of the club off to bail out their financial mess. I mean you couldn't write it.

When top level people write reports of such common sense, this is not an off the cuff report, it is a deeply researched report into how to improve the running of football clubs, embraced by the football family as brilliant, spat out by the board of Lewes FC who seemingly no better.

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**We hope you have enjoyed the return of the fanzine. If you haven't, we are not really in the business of caring.**



