


First Minister on Hearts situation



First Minister Alex Salmond has today responded to a joint letter seeking Scottish Government support to secure a positive future for Heart of Midlothian Football Club.

Edinburgh Central MSP Marco Biagi wrote a joint letter to the First Minister with Margo MacDonald seeking details of what steps the Scottish Government could take to assist Heart of Midlothian during these difficult times. Today's response makes clear that as it has with other football clubs and companies, the Scottish Government is 'happy to help where we can in dealing with HMRC'.

The letter also states that HMRC usually stipulates two requirements before showing flexibility in its arrangements. Firstly that the company is meeting its on-going tax and national insurance obligations and, secondly, that they are pursuing 'open book accounting'.

 Commenting Marco Biagi MSP, whose constituency covers Tynecastle, said:

"These are extremely worrying days for Heart of Midlothian supporters, employees and the many local businesses and their staff whose livelihoods are substantially supported by the crowds the club draws.

"It is in absolutely no one's interest to see the doors close on an institution that is such an integral part of life in Edinburgh. The economic and cultural hole that would be

created in the fabric of Edinburgh would be very damaging.

“I welcome the Scottish Government’s swift offer to do what it can to assist Hearts in their efforts to find a way forward – as they would do for any club in such circumstances – and the additional information that the First Minister has provided is helpful.

“Clearly taxes must always be paid and I would hope that working together a way can be found for the club to meet its obligations to the taxpayer and get through these difficult days.

“For a club which lost players at the Somme in the famous McCrae’s Battalion to be facing destruction in this way is an appalling turn of events. Everything possible must be done to secure a future for Heart of Midlothian football club.”