

# Petrie Out Campaign denies trying to 'starve' the club



Paul Kane leader of the newly formed Petrie Out campaign has insisted that he has never suggested that fans should refuse to buy season tickets in a bid to force through their demands.

The former Hibs player joined chairman of the Hibernian Supporters' Association, Mike Riley, Kenny McLean jnr, son of the former vice chairman who played a major role in saving the club from Wallace Mercer's takeover bid almost 25 years ago, and respected journalist Simon Pia at a hastily arranged meeting at the Hibernian Supporters Club in Sunnyside yesterday.

The four had met with Rod Petrie, and directors David Forsyth and Bruce Langham at Easter Road on Thursday to demand that the Hibs' Chairman sever his links to the club, something that he has categorically refused to do.

Representatives from numerous Supporters Clubs and groups linked to the club including the Hibernians, Erin Trust, Hibs.net and the Hibeas Bounce packed the hall to listen to the group.

Kenny McLean told how he had asked Rod Petrie to leave the football club but he had refused. He then gave an impassioned speech about his memories of the Hands off Hibs campaign in the early nineties and the rally at Easter Road where the great Joe Baker kissed the turf. McLean also revealed that he has received a phone call from Hibs legend Pat Stanton who was backing the Petrie Out campaign.

He said: "Only one person is starving the club – Rod Petrie has starved us of our heart and now of Premiership football."

Pail Kane then revealed that they were meeting new Chief Executive Leanne Dempster at 11.30am next Saturday and urged all Hibs fans to attend Easter Road to show their support for the campaign.

Kane said: "At no time did any of us in the meeting talk about starving the club of money that is not our agenda. Our group won't deprive the club of money. The individuals can take up that themselves. If someone doesn't want to buy a season ticket, I am not going to tell them to buy one. That's their decision. If they want to go down the route of not buying one and depriving the club of their money, that's up to them."

"All the groups have come together and we're very concerned about the club under Rod's leadership. Next week at 11.30 [Saturday] outside the main stand at Easter Road, the Hibernian supporters, who will ultimately make this decision, will be there.

"I think the pivotal moment of our campaign will be next Saturday. The opportunity for Hibs supporters to get rid of Rod Petrie is now there in their hands. Is that what they want? If they do, then it will happen – it has to happen.

"We hope that the fans will turn out numbers, but please do it in a very dignified manner because it's Hibernian FC we are representing and we don't want anything to lessen our campaign."

"If the numbers turn out that I'm thinking of, it would be very hard for Hibernian to keep Rod in the position.

"Rod Petrie has got to carry the can as he's been on the board for 15 years. And he's the only man in history who has relegated Hibs twice"

"It's not personal with Rod Petrie, it's about him not running the ship right. The club's demise has been caused largely by Rod Petrie. He has now put us down to the Championship, along

with all his other decisions down the years. He is the leader of this club and basically he has to go.

“We went to the meeting yesterday with Rod and asked for his resignation and for him to sever ties with the club, he refused. We have been forced into this because we asked him to go and he said ‘No’. It was cordial enough, there were no problems that way, but he says he wants to stay to see the changes through and we are not accepting that. We don’t want him anywhere near the club. He might think he has got more backing than we have – time will tell. We’ll find out next Saturday.

“There were grown men crying in my pub last Sunday night after the team were relegated. That’s what this club means to people. We now need the spirit of Hands Off Hibs to come back – we need as many to turn up on Saturday as possible. The more there are, the stronger the case we have.

“We might even ask the club to open up a stand, maybe two stands, if enough people turn up. Why would they ignore that? They can’t ignore the supporters. If they do, it’s a perilous road they are going down.”

“Leanne Dempster is very unfortunate to come in and be caught in cross wind. If she can do such a good job, the support will welcome her and give her a chance, but she can do it even better without Rod Petrie being there.

“It would be a very silly business person or chief executive who would see fans outside in their thousands, who bring two-thirds of the club’s money in, and decides to ignore them.

“We will be speaking to Leann next Saturday and that’s why I’m asking for a peaceful rally to show support for our campaign.

“If she sees the numbers I expect will be there, she will have a major decision to make. We are told she will be in complete control, so she should be able to make that decision. This is

a crucial time in Hibs' history and a crucial decision."

Proclaimer and lifelong fan Charlie Reid also attended the meeting and later said: "Petrie has got to carry the can as he's been on the board for 15 years. And he's the only man in history who has relegated Hibs twice, as far as I can see. The supporters have got to maintain unity, what Paul Kane said is vital, they don't want to cause a split in the support, there's a clear objective and I think it's an achievable objective."