

# Hearts to Implement the Living Wage

The Ann Budge era at Hearts may be in its infancy but the owner of Edinburgh's oldest and most successful football club has already made her mark both on and off the field.

Hearts are top of the SPFL Championship, seven points clear of second placed Rangers and are unbeaten in the league thus far this season. Today, Ms Budge announced that Hearts are to implement the living wage at Tynecastle, thereby becoming the first football club in Scotland to make such a commitment.

The living wage is an hourly rate set independently, updated annually and calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK. It is presently £7.65 per hour and is different from the minimum wage which is presently £6.50 per hour for people aged over 21. Hearts will apply the living wage to staff employed on a part-time and contractual basis.

Ms Budge released a statement on the official Hearts website. "We believe it is entirely in keeping with the values we hold dear as a club. Having reviewed the salary structure across all areas of the club, we propose to implement the nationally-approved living wage, across all staff, including part-time and contract workers. We have taken steps to register with the Living Wage Foundation, thereby formalising our commitment. We believe we will be the first football club in Scotland to sign up for this."

The Living Wage Foundation which campaigns for the living wage to be made nationwide, described Hearts decision as "really exciting for Scotland and the UK".

Anne Budge also told the Hearts website the club will adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach to those fans throwing flares not only at Tynecastle but elsewhere. She was particularly alarmed

during Scotland's women's international game played at Tynecastle last Saturday evening.

"On this occasion, these were set off in the main stand – a 100-year-old wooden structure, with over 2,000 supporters, many of them children. The people responsible seem to be totally oblivious to the fact that not only is this illegal, it is extremely dangerous."

Ms Budge also told the Hearts website the club has begun a feasibility study into the possibility of creating a museum within Tynecastle Stadium.

Hearts deserve plenty plaudits for adopting the living wage in particular. After nearly a decade of often embarrassing press releases from the club's previous owner, integrity and decency has at last returned to Tynecastle Stadium.