

SPIRIT OF SHANKLY

NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023



SOS focus on our patron Karen Gill

"It's an honour and a privilege to be SOS patron"

Karen, granddaughter of Bill Shankly, now lives in Anfield after many years in Greece and is a mum of two. She has been involved in our union more or less since our inception and here she pays tribute to SOS and explains why we are needed more than ever.

Asked what she thinks her grandad would think of SOS, Karen says: "He'd hate the fact it was necessary, but unfortunately that's the truth. SOS is needed now more than ever. As the years go by, you see how things don't change very quickly, if at all. And that's why it's so important to ensure that supporters' voices are heard. Any vehicle that gives a voice to fans is definitely something my grandad would support.

Karen continues: "I will always support SOS. I've been involved almost from the beginning and



I've seen how it's grown, how dedicated people are and how the committee is in constant contact, flagging up issues.

"I see SOS as a lighthouse, as something people can refer to; it is

SOS focus on our patron Karen Gill (continued)...



there to remind people what football is really about and the huge role supporters play in it. That came from my grandad. In using his name, Spirit of Shankly reminds people of how important the fans are.

"I like all of the SOS campaigns, the ones that stand out though are the response to what fans experienced in Paris. SOS was instrumental in holding people to account for what happened to our fans that night.

"Another is the Twenty's Plenty campaign for reduced away tickets, the support of the 77-minute walkout and the interest that garnered, and speaking up for equal rights for the LGBT community.

"My engagement has nothing to do with the match. My grandad gave his life for the club and my life has been affected by that 100%. It was always the supporters who gave him support, even after he resigned, and when he died, people gave my family so much support.

"When I was first approached by SOS you explained why you had formed and asked if it was OK to use my grandad's name. It has been an honour and a privilege to be SOS patron from day one."

HO! HO! HO!

Our annual Christmas dinner followed by entertainment takes place on Thursday 21st December, starting at 12noon at The Church pub, Oakfield Road Anfield L4 0UF.

We would like to thank *Red All Over The Land* fanzine for their generous donation from their recent Kevin Keegan event to help support this event. **You can book your place at the SOS Christmas dinner by calling Kev O'Rourke on 07791 286764.**

Man City chaos

We are aware that some supporters had issues and experienced delays getting into the ground for the away match to Manchester City on Saturday 25 November, particularly those in Tier 3.

We have already fed these issues back to the club, but please do continue to send in your feedback and details of any problems you encountered on the day, so that we can also pass these on.

Real Truth Legacy Project update: education session held at Anfield

On 23 November pupils from more than 30 Merseyside schools gathered at Anfield to take part in Real Truth Legacy Project education sessions about the Hillsborough disaster, cover-up and long fight for truth and justice.

Held in conjunction with the LFC Foundation, this was a proud day for Ian Byrne MP, a member of our management committee and MP for Liverpool West Derby, who is leading this campaign to get Hillsborough onto the school curriculum.

Ian said: "It was moving and profound, and I'd like to give huge thanks to all involved on a special day."



Hillsborough Law is essential

The government has this week rejected the Hillsborough Law reforms advocated by the former bishop of Liverpool James Jones in his report **But this is something we will continue to support and campaign for.**

You can read our statement below [and on our website here:](#)

Today's announcement from the government, 6 December 2023, in which it has rejected the Hillsborough Law reforms, is contemptible. This campaign has never been just about Liverpool supporters, victims of the Hillsborough disaster or their families and survivors, but a process to prevent police cover-ups in the future.

*Having a Hillsborough Law was pivotal to the report by the former bishop of Liverpool James Jones published in 2017 and commissioned by the government. Entitled *The Patronising Disposition of Unaccountable Power*, it was aimed at ensuring the pain and suffering of the Hillsborough families would not be repeated.*

If only. The government's six-year delay in responding shows it has failed to listen to the concerns of those families along with calls from campaigners and has served only to highlight the condescension of those in power.

In place of a Hillsborough Law, ministers have signed a Hillsborough Charter, which gives a commitment to transparency following a public tragedy. But words without legislation will do nothing to build trust in those authorities, including the police, who failed Hillsborough families and survivors so completely for so long. It allows no surety of compliance or enforcement and stops short of addressing all issues required by law. No openness, no duty of candour of those public bodies and officials involved.

Neither does such a charter do anything to redress the financial imbalance between the state and public authorities versus those on the receiving end of injustice. A Hillsborough Law would have ensured legal funding for bereaved families and victims, equivalent to the publicly funded legal teams of the police and other bodies.

Again, the Hillsborough families and survivors have been denied justice, as have all those who have suffered from delay, obstruction and cover-up by the state, police and other public bodies. Today's report will not ensure justice is not delayed or denied to anyone else.

Home Secretary James Cleverly and Justice Secretary Alex Chalk apologised for the government's delay in responding. Apologies are not enough. Action is needed. A Hillsborough Law is needed. Only then will there be a lasting legacy, where those responsible for tragedies, disasters, cover-ups and unlawful deaths are held accountable.

Supporters unite

SOS management committee members Joe Blott and Roy Bentham met Manchester City foodbank volunteers before the match last month to drop off a £100 donation.



Food pantry

There have been lots of visits to the Pantry over recent weeks, including reps from Amnesty International and LFC Under-18s Louis Enahoro-Marcus and Emmoual Airoboma.

The NHS also paid a visit to give advice and take blood pressure measurements.