

Annex C Correspondence Between Scottish Government and Rangers FC

From: > [Redacted] (Active Scotland) <[\[Redacted\]@gov.scot](#)>

Sent: 27 April 2021 15:02

To: Stewart Robertson <StewartRobertson@rangers.co.uk> **Subject:** RE: Rangers Trophy presentation - 15 May 2021

Stewart

A response to your email is attached following consultation with colleagues, including clinicians. I'll call you shortly.

Thanks

[Redacted]

Dear Stewart

Further to our discussion last week about Rangers receiving the SPFL Premiership trophy on Saturday, 15 May, I am now able to offer a formal response to your proposals following consideration by colleagues, including clinicians.

We recognise the potential for supporters to gather to mark this occasion, and welcome work undertaken by Rangers over recent weeks to emphasise the stay at home message through club channels and direct engagement with supporters' groups. We would expect further intensive engagement ahead of 15 May, and any other higher risk fixtures for the remainder of this season.

While we are making encouraging progress in suppressing the virus, we cannot jeopardise this with mass gatherings in breach of COVID regulations and public health advice.

As you know, we are cautiously relaxing the restrictions which have been helping to keep people safe.

From Monday, 17 May – the next significant relaxation of restrictions in Scotland – limited numbers of supporters will be allowed to attend football matches in areas with level 2, 1 or 0 restrictions. We expect the whole of Scotland to go into level 2 on that date.

Unfortunately, no supporters will be permitted to attend any fixtures before that date. I realise that is disappointing in relation to your proposals for 15 May.

You highlight the attendance of supporters at the UEFA European Championship matches in June. Those games will take place after the date on which supporters are permitted. The Scottish Government is working with a small number of organisers of internationally significant flagship events – including UEFA EURO 2020 – to explore the feasibility of those taking place this summer, subject to epidemiological conditions.

Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ www.gov.scot



Attendance of up to 12,000 spectators at the UEFA European Championship matches was agreed following many months of intensive partnership working with the Local Organising Committee, including detailed consideration of operational plans by national clinicians and will be subject to ongoing engagement in the run-up to the tournament. The revised levels framework does, however, allow limited number of spectators to attend events in stadia from Monday, 17 May, and therefore the additional events you highlight to parade the trophy for four days could be permitted subject to the views of Glasgow City Council and Police Scotland and compliance with all the necessary guidance.

Attendance caps are in place, with the option of applying to local government or the Scottish Government for attendances – with two metre physical distancing – above the cap.

We are finalising updated guidance for events – with associated physical distance guidance – which outlines the process, and expect to publish this very shortly. I would suggest you and colleagues consider this guidance when it is available, and the Scottish Government would, of course, be pleased to assist you as required.

Early engagement with Glasgow City Council and Police Scotland on your proposals will also be important.

I hope this is helpful and I would be happy to discuss any aspect of this with you.

Best wishes

[Redacted]

From: Stewart Robertson <StewartRobertson@rangers.co.uk>
Sent: 21 April 2021 15:58
To: [Redacted](Active Scotland) [Redacted@gov.scot]
Subject: Rangers Trophy presentation - 15 May 2021

Hi [Redacted]

Further to our recent conversations I'd be grateful if you could explore the possibility of us allowing some supporters into the stadium when we play Aberdeen on Saturday the 15th of May.

As you know we are keen to ensure that we minimise the risk of crowds gathering outside the stadium or in other areas of Glasgow and Scotland on the day. We believe that we can have a better chance to achieve this if we were to be allowed to have fans in Ibrox Stadium to attend not only the match on the 15th of May but also on the days following the match when we could have players at the stadium to parade the trophy within the stadium.

We believe that if we were to be allowed to have 10,000 season ticket holders attending the match on the 15th of May and also for the following 4 days this would allow us to send a very positive and strong message to our supporters that only those with access on the particular day should be in the vicinity of the stadium.

We discussed the fact that the restrictions will be further relaxed on Monday the 17th of May and hopefully with the close proximity of the 15th to this date, a concession may be reached which would allow all of the relevant authorities ie The Scottish Government, Police Scotland, The SPFL and also the Club itself to know that we have provided a solution to mitigate the risk of crowds gathering outside the stadium which we understand from early intelligence there may be a risk of happening. With the numbers of people contracting Covid significantly decreasing and the number of people who have been vaccinated growing, and the fact that the supporters will be outside, by the 15th of May the risk will have decreased even further.

This request should be viewed as the Club trying to provide a collaborative and positive solution and to avoid the situation we had in early March which resulted in much acrimony, and frankly several false statements being made to the media. We feel that this proposal offers a common sense, pragmatic way to minimise the number of people who will come out to celebrate the trophy presentation on the 15th of May.

I would be happy to discuss this with senior clinicians from the Scottish Government if you think that would be helpful.

I look forward to your response

Many thanks
Stewart



STEWART ROBERTSON
MANAGING DIRECTOR
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

T: 0141 580 8531 / E: StewartRobertson@rangers.co.uk

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"Think Before You Print"

From: > [Redacted] (Active Scotland) <[\[Redacted\]@gov.scot](#)>
Sent: 10 May 2021 14:30
To: Stewart Robertson <StewartRobertson@rangers.co.uk> **Subject:** Meeting with Cab Sec Justice
Copy: Robin Howe <RobinHowe@rangers.co.uk>
Stewart

As per my phone message, Mr Yousaf is seeking another discussion with you, Police Scotland and Glasgow City Council in advance of Saturday. Would 11.15am tomorrow suit?

Thanks

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** zzzCabinet Secretary for Justice
Sent: 10 May 2021 17:24
To: Stewart Robertson; Robin Howe; David Graham
Subject: FW: 11:15 HOLD meeting with Rangers FC, PS & GCC
When: 11 May 2021 11:15-12:00 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.
Where: MS Teams

Stewart

As discussed – you may already have this...

David

-----Original Appointment-----

From: Cabinet Secretary for Justice <CabSecJustice@gov.scot>
Sent: 10 May 2021 16:12
To: Cabinet Secretary for Justice; Hicks C (Clare); [Redacted] (Active Scotland); Yousaf H (Humza), MSP
Subject: 11:15 HOLD meeting with Rangers FC, PS & GCC
When: 11 May 2021 11:15-12:00 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.
Where: MS Teams

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

Redacted

Or call in (audio only)

Redacted

From [Redacted] [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 13 May 2021 11:47
To: Stewart Robertson <StewartRobertson@rangers.co.uk>
Cc: David Graham <DavidGraham@rangers.co.uk>; Robin Howe <RobinHowe@rangers.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Meeting notes

Thanks, Stewart – I'll circulate. Not sure we necessarily need to formally approve – but let me come back if we have any major comments.

[Redacted]

From: Stewart Robertson <StewartRobertson@rangers.co.uk>
Sent: 13 May 2021 11:40
To: [Redacted])
Cc: David Graham <DavidGraham@rangers.co.uk>; Robin Howe <RobinHowe@rangers.co.uk>
Subject: FW: Meeting notes

Hi [Redacted]

Please find attached a minute of Tuesday's meeting. I would be grateful if you could disseminate these to the other attendees of the meeting.

It would be ideal if we could have a fully agreed/approved minute ahead of the weekend

Best Regards
Stewart



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From: David Graham <DavidGraham@rangers.co.uk>
Sent: 13 May 2021 11:36
To: Stewart Robertson <StewartRobertson@rangers.co.uk>
Subject: Meeting notes

Stewart,

Please see minutes below. Could you please forward to [Redacted] so that we can confirm agreement upon recollection of the meeting as outlined below?

Meeting between Rangers FC, GCC, Scottish Government, Police Scotland

11-5-21

11:30am

Present:

M Millar, [Redacted], mark Sutherland, W Kerr, J Stewart, R Howe, J Harden, Denise Hamilton, R Cameron, D Graham, S Robertson, H Yousaf, S Aitken, A Sinclair

HY- Welcomed everyone to the call. FM will confirm 17/5as easement of restrictions. Concern re fans groups and reports of planned parade/celebrations.

Keen to impress upon a few things:

- Ask for strong messaging from RFC, including the manager and senior players, publicly with aligned messaging with all public agencies. "Want fans to stay at home"
- Private engagement with fans groups with RFC staff/players

HY acknowledged previous good work of RFC and fans groups/blogs re engagement and joint messaging

SR-

Thanked HY for organising todays meeting.

Mentioned that RFC had presented alternative arrangements two weeks ago which would have required a dispensation, but which may have helped to assist with taking fans off the streets by letting a limited number of fans into the ground on the 15th of May and the subsequent 4 days, but this was rejected.

We must be aware restrictions are now different to early March. We can't say "stay at home" as that's not the legal position any longer. Look at other gatherings that have been held in the city eg last night in George Square-different dynamic now as legislation is different.

Agree re providing strong messaging, but within context of current restrictions.

Ask that RFC aren't "thrown under the bus again as happened in early March eg John Swinney/deputy chief constable". RFC felt sore about how they were treated as those comments didn't reflect the actions taken by the Club which actually initiated conversations regarding this issue with Scottish Govt, PoliceScotland and the SPFL in February and again two weeks ago re fans being permitted access to Ibrox on the 15th.

We want to work together and are making changes in the build up to this game, but can't be subject to public criticism like before.

New restrictions make our messaging slightly more difficult

HY-valid point re difference in emphasis regarding the current restrictions. So it's not "stay at home". You could go to a back garden and have a couple of cans, absolutely right.

But RFC could ask fans not to be part of mass gatherings and to obey the restrictions

Re George Square last night, I was asked to attend but FM and I rejected the offer. The Palestinian cause is close to my heart as I have a Palestinian wife.

People will treat football differently to protest or demonstration

We should agree a Comms strategy offline. My messaging will be "very pleased RFC will communicate a strong message so there won't be a repeat of last time"

Ask players to do everything to stop fans gathering

RH-

RFC have changed several things. Spoken to E Croft:

Bring players in via bus, so there will be an early start. Need police to control Edmiston Drive. Control this area.

Focal point at both gates. RFC will put screens up at each gate as requested by the police.

Meeting on Thursday with police/walk round ahead of the match.

Comms meeting with police and RFC at 3pm today (11/5). Tenet of message acknowledges change of rules

Stadium security has been enhanced to prevent MUFC issue in old Trafford

Celebrations at the end, RFC players will come off pitch for 20 mins, then they will return to be presented with the trophy. All done within 45 mins. Hold players in stadium alongside directors and back room staff (all entitled to be there under JRG restrictions).

Dealing with police re AFC safety too

Confident of meeting with UBs. They are all ultras group with social and political identity. We do have a relationship with them. Reiterate health issues etc too. DCC may want to deal with "illegal march" ie what is policing plan? So we can warn UBs. We can set up meeting with police to handle this march as it's not unusual for this to take place. Offer is there to assist.

We will be totally flexible to assist police and GCC to deliver a safe event.

HY-very helpful. Thank you. Ask police for intelligence report

DCC W Kerr-

1- challenging set of circumstances. Need to be pragmatic and realistic. Good relationships and partnerships. Need to stand shoulder to shoulder with aligned messaging. Reflect on lessons on the past

2- Ask RFC to reiterate messaging. Recognise different environment so we can't compel people to stay at home. What are future promises for fans? Is there a future based on a realistic promise as an incentive?

Encouraged by relationship with fans groups

3- emphasise support for policing on the day. Commentary in social media and MSM hasn't reflected pragmatic restrictions on police. We have a whole range of rights based approaches but we won't take steps which will lead to scores of people being injured. We will try to police sensibly and practically.

MS- intelligence report

PS need to be pragmatic.

We are trying to reduce a mass gathering to smallest number.

Expecting between 5-15,000 supporters around Ibrox. Then a procession to George Square.

We will have to facilitate mass gathering as we have done with UOB, pro Palestine rally last night. Football is a way of life to many people.

Procession has been more challenging. We have said publicly that we won't facilitate the procession but if come Saturday, if a large crowd are going to walk, we will facilitate. No horse or batons.

We are now in a different place with travel restrictions, so Rangers Supporters Clubs can travel legally, and we are engaging with fans groups across the West of Scotland.

Conversation with silver command, robust stewarding plan being requested from RFC on Edmiston Drive.

Dedicated football officers have linked in with UBs to work together to target and discuss prevention/retracting statement.

On 15th of May 500 officers will be involved in this operation. We will have sizeable presence at Ibrox and George Sq. Events in March were spontaneous due to results on the day. Had to react and scale policing operation up. More visible presence this time.

Pragmatic, common sense approach. If we get many thousands who gather/March then we will facilitate to reduce risks

HY- understand challenges. Robust presence will provide a deterrent to reduce numbers.

This meeting has been positive to have an aligned Comms strategy

Proposed that an initial joint statement be released on Wednesday 12 May.

DG-

Point re tomorrow nights game v Livingston and that RFC would prefer to issue something on Thursday 13 May, after the game.

Desire to keep focus on the matchday tomorrow

HY-

Acknowledges game tomorrow night

If we can replicate messaging round OF game in March that would be helpful

SA-

GCC stand ready to coordinate with all on this call around messaging

Her Inbox is filling up with concern and alarm at UBs statement and the prospect of a march on Saturday.

We shouldn't be distracted by other gatherings that have taken place in the city. They are irrelevant. Two wrongs don't make a right.

We don't have a "stay at home order" but a strong emphasis to staying at home would be preferable. "Meet with 6 friends from 6 households context"

Difference this time where the policing response can be more pre planned. Opportunity for Comms around nature or policing response and nature of that response.

Whatever policing response take place is to minimise public risk. There was a vacuum the last time, which needs to be filled this time.

Rationale for policing response to be explained and amplified would be helpful

We can look into future use of public space for a celebratory event,

Emphasise people are upset and angry in advance of the impact of reputation of the City

HY-

Agree on RFC point on Thursday but others may go on Wednesday

Recognise policing challenges

JH-

Interested in restrictions but perception that virus isn't done. The virus is still very much in our midst.

Community transmission of the virus

Example of Moray when virus can get out of control should be borne in mind ie increased social interaction

HY- virus hasn't gone away

SR-

Thank you for the constructive engagement

We have put a lot of actions into play prior to Saturday

We will be strong in our messaging

Recognise virus hasn't gone away

Conscious people do have ability to go outside now.

We can't have a repeat of last time where the Club was unfairly treated. We have worked collaboratively since February and the public comments weren't helpful.

Acknowledge good work of the police

We will speak with UBS

Conscious that travel restrictions have lifted too

If the police are closing Edmiston Drive that will reduce scope for crowds gathering outside the stadium.

Appreciate how busy everyone is and thank you again for organising the meeting

HY-

Number of discussions to be held off line regarding Comms.

SR keep in touch directly as you have my number

Congratulations on what is a historic moment for the club. You should take great pride

Meeting ended at 12:16pm



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Sent: 13 May 2021 13:46
To: Stewart Robertson <StewartRobertson@rangers.co.uk>
Cc: David Graham <DavidGraham@rangers.co.uk>; Robin Howe <RobinHowe@rangers.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Meeting notes

Stewart

We're content, subject to the highlighted comments below.

Thanks

[Redacted]

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