



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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17 May 2023

Dear Mr Maxwell,

Men's Scottish Cup Final Kick-Off Time

I am writing further to your letter of 11 May, in which you set out the reasons behind the SFA's decision to reschedule the kick-off time for the 2023 Scottish Cup Final to 5.30pm on 3 June.

I was disappointed that your letter failed to set out (as the Committee had requested) what prior discussions you have had with Scottish Government Ministers, with transport service providers and with fan associations to ensure any disruption to individual travel plans caused by the change of kick-off time would be kept to an acceptable minimum. **The Committee would be grateful for a full response to this request.**

The Committee also finds your response that "In relation to public transport issues, we have been assured by the club that this is not the case" to be less than satisfactory. I would ask that, in responding to this letter, you set out **what steps the SFA has taken to compensate travelling fans for the additional travel costs they will have incurred as a direct result of the change of kick-off time.** If no such compensation has been put in place, I would ask that you set out the reasons behind this.

It is regrettable that the announcement of this change was made only one calendar month before the game is scheduled to take place, following confirmation on 26 April that the FA Cup Final would kick off at 3pm that same day and in response to apparent pressure from broadcasters. It is equally regrettable that, instead of the SFA assuming responsibility, the onus for resolving the disruption caused by this decision has apparently been placed on clubs and fans.

Subsequent to your previous letter, I note in particular the open letter from Inverness Caledonian Thistle Supporters Trust (ICTST), which describes the decision as "totally uncaring", states that the implications of the change of kick-off time "remain unresolved" and concludes: "Fans have been betrayed by those supposedly deemed to represent us, the SFA". In responding to this letter, **I would request that you address directly the points raised by the ICTST's open letter and the steps you intend to take to rebuild trust with travelling fans and supporters' groups.**

Given the late stage of this announcement, when a 3pm kick-off time for the Scottish Cup Final had already been fixed some time earlier, the Committee would also wish to understand **what lessons the SFA will draw to ensure such a situation does not arise again and that the Scottish Cup Final's traditional 3pm kick-off time can be safeguarded in future years.**

On behalf of the Committee, I look forward to receiving a detailed response to the points raised in this letter no later than Wednesday, 31 May.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "CHaughey".

Clare Haughey MSP
Convener, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee