



English football and supporting organisation, Kick It Out, reported a 12% rise in in LGBT+ incidents in the 18/19 season. This is off the back of a 9% increase the season before!

There are now at least 50 football clubs with an LGBT supporter's group. Proud Rovers being number 50!

Proud Rovers look positively to the future and aspires to assist in the eradication of homophobia from football.

The mission is to create a culture of inclusion in football and foster the development of a more accepting atmosphere within the club and community as a whole.

The first thing I did, after founding Proud Rovers just before this season, was to go to Call It Out 2019, an agenda for action on LGBT-phobia in football run by Pride in Football. I learnt a lot from it and will be putting any ideas from that into practice.

Proud Rovers has a fairly successful twitter account and recently a Facebook group, an Instagram account and also a website! You don't have to be LGBT+ to join in, you just have to be an ally - supporting the LGBT+ community. Proud Rovers is here to help our members feel comfortable to coming to games, as many LGBT+ people have never been to a game for fear of discrimination. Blackburn Rovers is a great club due to how diverse and inclusive it is, and people need to see this for themselves!

Current Members:

- Hannah Parys (Founder, Chair)
- Christopher Lofthouse (Club and Trustee Engagement Officer)
- Luke Cannon (Member Engagement Officer)
- Conal Land (Member Experience Officer)

- Lee Spary (Social Media Officer)
- TBC (LGBT+ Business Officer)

Current Proud Rovers goals:

- Proud Rovers would support at home and away games whenever possible
- Arrange unofficial meet ups (members only for security at this stage)
- Continued interactions with the BRFC parties main social media accounts
- Going to the bi-annual supporter meetings.

The goal is to be as popular and as involved with the Club and Trust as the Disabled Supporters Club.

Pride In Football toolbox:

<http://prideinfootball.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Fan-Toolkit-June-revised-print.pdf>

Proud Rovers Proposal

The following pages are a broad brush of how all parties can support and work together engaging the LGBT+ communities and supporting BRFC and BRFCCT

Our goal is to build links between the football club (men's and ladies) and the Community Trust, using the appeal of football and aim at strengthening confidence for fans in attending matches, promoting diversity and inclusion, and providing a welcoming environment for fans.

Improve awareness

- Through Rovers' channels, marketing, literature including match day programmes, match day TV, signage
- Proud Rovers help promote diverse and inclusive football through our channels
- BRFC, BRLFC & BRCT help promote Proud Rovers

Encourage social integration, cohesion and community safety (mostly club orientated)

- Meaningful opportunities to allow the LGBT+ fans to mix officially
- A better understanding of the LGBT+ community
- Intervention activities to reduce discrimination
- Empower allies. Allies are more than welcome, but sometimes they aren't aware of the fact they're allies. (Proud Rovers to lead on this via social media)

Working together – short, medium, and long-term goals

- Press appearances – Lancs telegraph, TalkSport, BBC Lancs, etc
- Make a banner with the Proud Rovers logo and providing space to put it up on the ground
- Proud Rovers meeting with other LGBT supporter groups (Away matches, or Away supporters).
- Proud Rovers meeting with other allied Rovers groups
- Work together during national campaigns, such a Rainbow Laces and Football V Homophobia month. E.g. social media posts, fan participation, corner flags, warm up t-shirts, match day fundraising, raffles, press releases, etc. Proud Rovers helping support and get involved the Community Trust, being part of the national campaign every year
- Promotion of the group on social media channels and match day TV adverts
- Promote the group in match programmes
- Meet ups at the Fan Zone - anyone welcome, not just members (but hopefully they'd sign up anyway) as it would be more secure with support of the club/trust
- Notices/signage about policies on discrimination/hate confirming the clubs' stance on LGBT-Phobia and Inclusion

- During Football v Homophobia month (February) & Rainbow Laces (Nov/Dec) invite LGBT+ fans, allies and LGBT+ organisations from the community to a match day experience. Include in programmes, write a piece for the programme and/or on the pitch announcement. Produce a video to mark the occasion
- Support for Local Pride events (with Rover the Dog?)
- Club provision of branded and/or signed merchandise for fundraising (sales of things such as mugs and scarves, and raffles/competitions)
- Players across all areas as LGBT+ role models & allies
- Work with all Proud Rovers, and all BRFC parties to ensure LGBT+ inclusivity is moving in the right direction
- Hold an annual LGBT+ evening event to educate and celebrate, showcase work by the local community and the club, host a debate to discuss tackling homophobia through football involving LGBT+ fan groups, local organisations, education providers, local grassroots football clubs/team, fans, allies, national LGBT+ organisations
- Encourage national equality football charities and organisations to support. E.g. Football v Homophobia, Pride in Football, Fans for Diversity, Lancaster LGBT, etc
- **Proud Rovers to find a patron** - like Stephen Fry is for Norwich. **Graham Liver**.
- Partnership with local communities with the help of the Community Trust. Partnership with a local LGBT charity.

Funding and Support

- Source any help where possible from BRFC parties
- **Get in touch with Anwar from Fans for Diversity (banner/flag) (meeting had – materials requested: banner (home), banner (away), t-shirts, scarves, pin badges, flag. Receiving t-shirts, pin badges and flag). Support also offered for meeting with the club.**
- **Get in touch with Steph from Pride in Football for any support needed (meeting had – support offered for meeting with the club)**

Members:

- **Create a committee with interested members through Proud Rovers' future growth. Will need help with Proud Rovers goals, plus I am in Sheffield, so local committee members would be required. Roles - Socials, members, club and trust, etc.**
- **Monthly Newsletter**, meet ups (virtual and F2F), etc
- **Membership package – t-shirt and badge (in progress)**

Monitoring

- Monitor the progress of the partnerships and its impact.

Social/ communications:

Facebook group: Proud Rovers

Twitter: @ProudRovers

Instagram: ProudRovers

Membership – chosen MS forms, good data capture. Free this season and next.

Website: www.proudrovers.org

Email: ProudRovers@outlook.com

Hannah Parys

Proud Rovers Founder