

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**WE ARE HERE TO SERVE SINGAPORE FOOTBALL**

Let’s focus on our future together, not the past.

SINGAPORE – 17 April 2017: In light of the statements that have been made by various parties, it is the Team Game Changers’ unified and common belief that there must be full transparency and accountability in the way Singapore Football is managed and administered, and that conclusions drawn are based on facts ascertained, rather than through hearsay.

Our team’s focus and plans for Singapore Football have been shared through the release of our Manifesto on 13 April.

At the same time, it is also important that we set the record straight on a few issues, to clear any doubts that the fraternity and the public may have.

**CLARIFICATIONS ON TIONG BAHRU FC**

There are at least 3 different football clubs that bear the “Tiong Bahru” name in Singapore.

- **Tiong Bahru FC** has been in the NFL since 2004, with Bill Ng as the Chairman. Prior to the formation of the S.League in 1996, Tiong Bahru FC played in Singapore’s top tier Premier League. It has always been Bill’s intention to have the club return to play in the top tier domestic league, which is now the S.League.

On several occasions between 2007/2008, Bill verbally requested to Winston Lee to allow Tiong Bahru FC to play in the S.League, given it had reached financial sustainability. It was Bill’s dream to lead a team to play in the S.League. However, Bill’s request was turned down.

Instead, he was asked by Winston Lee to rescue another ailing club – then named Sengkang Punggol (now Hougang United FC).

- **Tiong Bahru United** played in the S.League from 1996 to 1998, before changing its name to Tanjong Pagar United FC thereafter.

- **Tiong Bahru CSC** is a constituency sports club.

**DONATIONS MADE TO THE FAS**

Tiong Bahru FC had, from December 2014 onwards and at the request of Winston Lee to Bill Ng made in person, given donations totaling $500,000 to the FAS by way of various cheque payments.

We would like to reiterate that all of these cheques were made payable to the FAS.

Having donated the funds to the FAS, how these funds were then used is something which only the FAS administrators can explain. When Bill Ng agreed to Winston’s request for a donation, it was strictly on the basis that the money was to be used to benefit Singapore football, especially our local clubs.

Winston and the FAS owe the Singapore Footballing community an explanation over these questions:

1. Did the AFF ask Winston Lee for the funds, or did Winston volunteer the said funds? How many other AFF Member Associations made such donations to the AFF for the AFF Football Management System?
2. What was the reason for FAS to have made the payment of $500k to the AFF? Was it for AFF to develop a system for the FAS to use for the good of Singapore football? Or was it to fund the AFF in its purchase of a system for its own use?
3. The FAS is a Charity with Institution of Public Character (IPC) status. The rules make it very clear that any donations made by external parties must have the Board’s approval. Why was this not done before the money was channeled to an external entity?
4. Charity and IPC guidelines also state very clearly that donors should receive accurate and ethical advice about the intended use of donations. Did Winston and the FAS do so before channeling the donations out of Singapore?
5. How is it that the rest of the former FAS Council, like Lim Kia Tong, S Thavaneson, Bernard Tan and Edwin Tong and more, did not know that such a large donation had been received from Tiong Bahru FC, and that the funds were being channeled to the AFF? This money was donated to the FAS, at the request of the General Secretary, and was then paid to a foreign entity. This also now calls into question the signing limits at the FAS. Who was responsible for sending the funds received from Tiong Bahru FC to the AFF?
6. Winston Lee now claims that TBFC was clear about the AFF Football Management System. On the contrary, even the FAS and AFF cannot satisfactorily answer to the public what the AFF Football Management System is about till today. Is it a hardware system or a software system? We, along with members of the football fraternity eagerly wait an answer.
7. Winston Lee has also been flip flopping in his statements. Early Friday morning, his initial statement made through the FAS claimed that the donations were made through FAS. And now, it is implied that the money was donated directly to AFF from Tiong Bahru FC. Why a small NFL club would want to donate $500k to a regional football association of its own volition and for no apparent reason other than that it was requested by its own governing body the FAS to do so, beggars belief. We categorically state that all such donations were made by Tiong Bahru FC to FAS at the request of Winston Lee. The former President Mr Zainudin Nordin did not approach Mr Bill Ng over the AFF Football Management System at any time.
8. What is the current state of implementation of the AFF Football Management System; who is implementing this system; what is its total cost; how has it benefitted Singapore Football so far?

The recipient of payments is the FAS, and the donor Tiong Bahru FC. Assuming that the eventual beneficiary of the funds was the AFF, it is very unusual that Tiong Bahru FC has never received any acknowledgement of its donation all these years, let alone any written documentation showing its receipt and deployment of these substantial funds.

More fundamentally, it is extremely **disturbing, discourteous and unfathomable** that instead of thanking the donor for its generous support, Winston Lee chooses to, through the FAS, issue public threats of legal action against the donor for merely saying that questions on how the donated funds have been used should be referred to Winston Lee. As a recipient of donations, the right thing for the FAS, which is a charity with IPC status, to do is to be **accountable for and transparent** about the use of the donated monies.

It is also absolutely ludicrous that Mr Lim Kia Tong, as a member of the former Council, is asking for Bill Ng to be open and transparent as a ***donor*** of funds. Mr Lim should first get himself acquainted with the Code of Governance for Charities and IPCs. In any event, Mr Lim had a duty as a Vice-President of the FAS to ensure the effective use of funds for football development in Singapore. The fact that he claims no knowledge of this donation by Tiong Bahru FC to FAS only raises questions as to his leadership qualities and the level of governance exercised in relation to the matter.

As an anchor and passionate volunteer for 14 years in Singapore Football, Bill’s only hope is for Singapore Football to flourish. It is this hope which shapes the Team Game Changers’ Manifesto, as one which is focused on **improving the state of Singapore Football** through various grassroots and other programmes designed to benefit Singapore’s Football community.

**SPONSORSHIP OF LIONSXII**

Bill Ng had in Q4 of 2011, secured a club sponsorship for Hougang United FC in the amount of $200,000. However, at Winston Lee’s verbal request, the funds were diverted to the Lions XII instead, with the approval of the sponsor. Due to the tight timeline that the FAS was facing at the time, the funds were re-classified at the request of Winston Lee from “sponsorship monies” to “donation” so that the need to enter into a sponsorship contract could be avoided.

Team Game Changers is made up of people who only want to serve the needs of the football fraternity and to take Singapore football forward.

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