



pressahead



## Sunderland Association Football Club

Sunderland is one of the largest football clubs in the country and is currently flying high under the shrewd stewardship of Chairman Niall Quinn and his team. The club is based at the impressively named Stadium of Light in the heart of the city and draws support from Wearside, County Durham and far beyond. It remains rooted in its community and has strong links with the grass roots of the game.

### Objectives:

Initially SAFC approached Press Ahead with a view to handling copywriting and some media elements of the Take That and Oasis concerts held at the Stadium of Light in summer 2009. Hard on the heels of this, the involvement was extended to see Press Ahead managing the media, communications and public engagement elements as part of the team seeking to secure Sunderland's place as one of the host cities in the FA's bid to hold the World Cup in England in 2018 or 2022.

### Approach:

The Press Ahead team worked closely with key personnel at SAFC to ensure that the approach taken fitted with the client's requirements.

In the first instance this involved interviewing key people involved in the pop concerts- including the promoter- and producing copy for official publications and release to the media. Additionally, a newsletter was prepared and distributed to local householders giving details of arrangements made to ensure they were inconvenienced as little as possible during the events.

For the 2018 bid project, Press Ahead ensured that it was a key part of the organising team- attending regular meetings and inputting beyond its brief of ensuring high levels of awareness of and sign ups to the bid, as well as co-ordinating the collation and production of the final document to be delivered to the FA.

### Results:

The concerts were highly successful with almost 160,000 people attending the three gigs. Arrangements-including crowd control, transport etc- went very smoothly and the status of the Stadium of Light as a venue for major events was strongly enhanced.

The World Cup bid process remains ongoing with a decision expected by the FA on 14<sup>th</sup> December. However, feedback to date has been highly positive and Sunderland is among the front runners in terms of publicity and public support gained.