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Chant challenge finalists selected

- Get On's search for football chant star shortlists top nine -

The creativity of the nation's football fans was revealed today by football legend John Barnes, as the Get On campaign announced that it has shortlisted the nine top chants entered into its 08/09 season search for a new chant for the nation.

The former England player and 'World in Motion' star was joined on the judging panel by Barnsley FC's poet-in-residence Ian McMillan – and together they whittled down over 300 entries from fans of clubs the length and breadth of the country to select the nine finalists, made up of fans of Cheltenham Town, Fulham United, Tottenham Hotspur, Southampton FC, Southend United, Liverpool FC, Bolton Wanderers and Sunderland AFC.

As a prize for reaching this stage, the nine received their choice of tickets from the Coca-Cola Championship, League One and League Two 09/10 season, courtesy of Coca-Cola. The finalists will now meet the judges in London at the start of the 09/10 season and compete in a Grand Final Chant-off. The overall winner will be crowned Chant Champion 2009, as well as win the opportunity to record their chant in the studio with John and will receive an English football shirt signed by a selection of England players, courtesy of The FA.

John Barnes commented: "Chants are a great way of getting behind your team and can make a real difference to players on the pitch. I was really impressed by the level of skill and imagination that came through in the entries."

Chants highly commended by the judges, but not quite making the final cut, included 'Don't wave at us David Jamo', sung to the tune of Madonna's 'Don't cry for me Argentina', 'I believe in a man of steel/His name is Lucas Neill', to the tune of 'I believe in a thing called love', by The Darkness, and a Wembley Cup opposition taunt to the tune of Duffy's hit 'Warwick Avenue'*.

The competition was launched in February this year to tap into the writing talents of the nation's football fans. Chants are an outlet for the emotion and passion that fans have for the beautiful game – and show how creative with language supporters can be. The competition forms part of the campaign to encourage adults to recognise the ability they

have with words in their day-to-day life and use this to inspire them to improve their English skills and gain a qualification.

A host of football players, organisations and pundits, including Liverpool's Fernando Torres, Manchester United's Ryan Giggs and The Football League Trust, lent their support to the competition, and the entries came flooding in. Liverpool fans proved to be the most dedicated, with the highest number of entries overall.

More information about the competition is available at www.direct.gov.uk/geton

- Ends -

For more information or interviews/images of John Barnes and Ian McMillan please call Joanna Clarke/Hannah Ashby/Phillipa Jose/Katie Shaw on 020 7544 3130 or email firstname.lastname@fishburn-hedges.co.uk.

Notes to editors

About Get On

1. The Learning and Skills Council's "Get On" campaign, which was first launched by the then Department for Education and Skills in 2001, is part of the Government's Skills for Life strategy. The campaign encourages the millions of people in England who experience difficulties with literacy and numeracy skills, or would benefit from 'brushing up' on these skills, to enrol on a free course by calling **0800 66 0800**.

2. Help is at hand with free courses which offer an entirely different experience from school days, focus on helping adults improve their skills so they can deal with practical, everyday situations in life and work. As an added incentive the courses can also lead to a nationally recognised qualification.

3. It is estimated that an individual with good literacy and numeracy could earn £50,000 more over a working life than someone with poorer skills. The increased self-confidence and motivation learners gain from completing a course is of huge personal value and helps them start the process of transforming their lives, both at home and at work.

About Skills for Life

4. The Skills for Life Strategy was launched in 2001 to tackle the legacy of adults with poor literacy, language and numeracy skills within England. The strategy aims to help create a society where adults have the basic skills they need to find and keep work and participate fully in society, through:

- * Boosting demand for learning
- * Ensuring capacity of the learning provider delivery system
- * Improving standards of teaching and learning
- * Increasing learner achievement

5. In 2008 the Government exceeded the target to ensure that 2.25 million adults improved their skills and gained a qualification by 2010 – over two years early. The Government plans to improve the literacy skills of 597,000 adults, and numeracy skills of 390,000 adults, over the next three years. This will be backed by a further £3.9 billion in Government funding between 2007/08 and 2010/11. The Government's long term ambition is for 95 per cent of adults to have functional literacy and numeracy skills, up from 85 per cent and 79 per cent respectively in 2005.

6. The Skills for Life National Needs and Impact Survey of Literacy, Numeracy and IT skills, published in October 2003, estimated that in England, 5.2 million adults aged 16-65 have literacy levels below Level 1 (broadly equivalent in difficulty to an English GCSE at grades D-G), and 6.8 million have numeracy skills below Entry Level 3 (the level expected of 11 year olds). The full survey is available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research>.