

Candidate Questions

Question	Candidate Answer
<p>“This is set to be a largely all-male board for the first time in a long time. With the fantastic growth of the City Women’s team, how are you going to continue and expand on our commitment to Women’s football and ensure Exeter City will still be leaders off the pitch when tackling sexism and other forms of discrimination at St James Park and on social media? And with reports of discrimination at the Bristol Rovers home game, what further policies would you put in place to ensure girls feel safe and welcome at SJP?”</p>	<p>As a Big Bank season ticket holder, the Bristol Rovers game made me feel incredibly sad. I do feel that the atmosphere over the last few years has been better than ever, however the chanting in question was considered outdated and pathetic twenty years ago let alone today. I feel that the swift statement from The Trust that this behaviour will not be tolerated was obviously the correct response and would fully support more stringent measures should this become a recurring issue.</p> <p>I would hope that girls, and in fact anyone, do indeed feel safe at home games. As you rightly say, we are leaders in promoting equality and standing against all forms of discrimination. As long as outdated and hateful attitudes persist, I would hope The Trust will continue to do all it can to promote inclusivity for all. Not just with the various matchdays dedicated to the excellent causes it already supports, but also leading by example as the best community club in the Football League. Also, you would hope over time that by sticking to these principles more diverse candidates will step forward to you the board, although unfortunately obviously not this year.</p> <p>With regards to the Women’s teams, I believe there is a huge potential of growth right</p>

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	<p>through from the first team to the numbers of young girls training with the Community Trust. As everyone knows, women's football is riding a wave of publicity at the moment on the back of the national team's success in the summer. It seems that already since the formation of the WSL the traditional money clubs in the men's game have begun to take a stranglehold on the women's game as well. (I suppose with the rapid surge in investment this was always likely to happen). However, if you look only as far as the Championship level you will find clubs such as Lewes and London City punching well above the weight of other more traditional clubs and being able to achieve this by seemingly doing no more than being run in the right way and investing what they can into what they have. To me this matches the attitudes of our club, and it feels like there is no reason why this cannot be City as well if things keep moving in the right direction as they have been doing for our Women's teams. I understand that The Trust do invest a sum of money into the Women's teams annually and would hope that as The Trust continues to grow so does this investment.</p>
<p>"Whilst accepting that such an event would almost certainly mean a vote of the membership, if, at some point, a certified viable and substantial offer came forward to invest in the club, from an individual, or a group,</p>	<p>For me this all about intentions. For instance, if someone came in with proven significant capital and a declaration of taking us to the</p>

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<p>what would be your personal position, should the said investor wish to gain majority control of the club as a prerequisite of such investment.”</p>	<p>Championship, I’m sure this would cause frenzied excitement all round, but how would they go about achieving this goal? Would that mean the often-seen approach of throwing as much money as possible at the first team whilst scaling back the academy and community outreach programs that are our foundation? How would the jobs of people behind the scenes be affected? Could we sustain higher football at SJP as it is? So, then you have further questions regarding relocation, stretching current capacity, seats in the Bank etc. Granted this last one is something that may have to be addressed at some point in the future anyway but still. On the other hand, maybe a backer would look at a top to bottom approach, wanting to improve the Academy up to a category A, invest in the Women’s side, sustain Championship football and invest in a new viable stadium, who could argue against that?</p> <p>The way I can think to answer your question is by saying I wouldn’t be entirely against an investor takeover provided I felt they truly had the best interests of the club at heart and would uphold the values that The Trust have laid down over the years whilst also conceding there should always be a place for supporters to have their own say in how their football club is run to some extent.</p> <p>However cautionary tales at the likes of</p>

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	<p>Oldham, Bury, Yeovil and Torquay to name but a few tells me that we are in a good place as it stands right now.</p>
<p>“Given the Trust’s stated aim “to make the match-day experience at Exeter City FC a premier experience, unrivalled by our competitors” and recent improvements to the fan experience in both the Adam Stansfield Stand undercroft and Selco Stand Hospitality area would you support the need for improving the fan experience in both the Park Building and external Fan Zone eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve ventilation / reduce overcrowding in the Famous Exeter City Real Ale and Cider Emporium Bar / provide a sales point direct into the Fanzone; • provide cover to and somewhere to put drinks on in the Fan Zone; • provide better facilities for those providing entertainment in the Fan Zone ? <p>If not, why not ?”</p>	<p>I do on the whole agree with and support the points you have made. I would probably say that, as always, the devil is in the detail with type of things.</p> <p>I frequent the Centre Spot bar before games myself and can confirm it does get a little stuffy and overcrowded from time to time.</p> <p>I like your idea of expanding the FECRACE to outside somehow, perhaps sharing space with the Red Square bar if logistics allowed? I do wonder if issues may have been noted already and some of it comes down to not actually owning the building and therefore being limited with what can be done with the space.</p> <p>As for ventilation I am sure some proper air con wouldn’t go amiss but I suspect would depend on funds.</p> <p>I have often thought myself that same sort of solid canopy cover in Red Square and extra seating for matchdays would be quite good, especially on rainy days when surely income is being lost. Again, though this may be a space issue as this is the main throughfare for that side of the stadium, also might be a health and safety thing too.</p> <p>As an aside I spent several years in Germany where the matchday experience on the whole</p>

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	<p>is excellent and would say that ours is very good too.</p> <p>As I say there may be good reasons why the issues you have raised haven't been addressed already but this is something that does interest me as well.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many Trust meetings have you attended in the last 12 months? • Do you have any family or financial ties to Exeter City AFC or any other potential conflicts of interest? 	<p>I have observed over half of Trust meetings held this year via Zoom. This is due to my wife currently serving as the Membership secretary.</p> <p>She and I take great responsibility in the fact that she is privy to certain information that is covered by an NDA. I have no access to her emails or private interactions regarding the club. We do not discuss anything for which any normal Trust member would have the same information. We have been strict on this right from the start purely because, as a fan first and foremost, I would not wish to damage the integrity of The Trust and the club as a whole.</p>
<p>"What action do you intend to take to finally sort the Stagecoach bar serving issues? There is always an unacceptable wait to be served, especially at half time. If you leave at the half time whistle you are unlikely to be served before the second half starts. The club is clearly losing revenue as many people simply give up waiting. One solution maybe to start serving before the half time whistle, i.e. anticipate the demand?"</p>	<p>Any instance where the club is missing out on revenue is worrying. I am unsure as to the laws myself but perhaps the reason for not serving before half time is due to the guidelines regarding no alcohol in sight of the pitch during the game?</p> <p>If this is the case then I believe a trial run in lifting the ban is being floated over the next year or so, if true this may solve much of the problem by itself.</p>

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	<p>If this is not the case, then I would imagine the Stadium Manager would have a reasonable explanation.</p> <p>However, any fan feeling they have been let down by customer service at the club does have my sympathies.</p>
<p>In the last year what 3 key things have you done actively support the Trust?</p>	<p>Perhaps, if I may I would like to answer this question in a way in which all Trust members might also be able to.</p> <p>Most importantly, just by being a member you are ensuring the future of our football club and have given yourself the opportunity to make an impact in how it is run.</p> <p>By donating, when possible, to Trust fund raising initiatives, such as Kit Out the Cliff, you are ensuring we are doing what we can to make our club as strong as it can be.</p> <p>Finally, using your vote. By voting you are voicing an opinion as to how you wish for The Trust to be run as is your right as an owner of our football club.</p>

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