



*We Own Our Football Club*

## **Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd**

### **Trust Board Meeting Minutes Part A**

#### **Meeting held in the Trust Suite and on Zoom**

**Date: 15 August 2022**

**Trustees present:** Nick Hawker, Will Barrett, Julen Beer, Mark Cordell, Elaine Davis, Nick Edwards, Pete Ferlie, Clive Harrison, Richard Knight, Neil Le Milliere, Kayleigh Jade West

**Apologies:** Doug Gillard

**Officers present:** Steve Chudley (Finance Officer), Phil Burden (Secretary), Pete Cordwell (Minutes Taker) Celia Lowman (Membership Secretary)

**Apologies.** None

**Member present:** Alistair Yates

#### **Part B Summary**

Under Part B of the Trust Board meeting, the Trust Board:

1. Discussed confidentiality issues regarding archived part B minutes.
2. Heard about efforts being made to make watering pitches at training ground environmentally friendly
3. Received information about the new finance system

#### **Approval of minutes from Meeting**

Approval of Part A minutes proposed by Will Barrett, seconded by Richard Knight

Approved. Three abstentions (absentees from July meeting)

Correction. Chair's update page 12. Membership. line 3, second paragraph "inactive platform" should read "interactive platform"!

#### **Matters Arising**

Issues with Cross Country trains still ongoing.

St. James Community Trust have been given DG's contact details

Veryconnect. CCT to use in connection with JG's. Trust will receive money from Club and then transfer money to CCT.

CTA. Members will be informed of changes.

Volunteers for Director of Day agreed and names passed to NLM

EFL debate. NH will contact them to provide a link to this.

Trust Office. Didn't appear to be used by players' families. Agreed to wait to see if needed when weather deteriorates.

### Big Step Campaign

Report from JB.

Had spoken to James Bridge, the organiser. Would like a "big splash" announcement like FGR, rather than a token gesture. Tranmere have concentrated on education and as a result ten people have come forward to ask for help. FGR have a hoarding.

Big Step wants, "gambling to be tolerated, not promoted." They said, "in order to have responsible gambling, we need to have responsible gambling companies."

At Luton, FGR and Tranmere, Big Step are connected to top people at club, eg. Dale Vince and Mark Palios.

JB. Next step is to contact the clubs involved. It was agreed to invite James Bridge to next meeting. (6 to 6.30 time slot)

October 15 is "Safer Gambling Week". We'll promote it at Oxford match.

Alex Pope has done some work with Academy on this issue. NH will follow up this with Aaron.

### **Update of Part A matters from Chair.**

1<sup>st</sup> September is a joint board meeting.

A supporter style brochure by Mark Middleton of the University of Northumbria is to be produced. Keith Mason will work on the analysis with Mark. It should be ready for the AGM and will be based on what supporters would like to see.

The Club accounts will now be handled as a medium size company, not small. This will mean more disclosures.

Membership Drive. This is on the agenda for the Club Board

Charitable Aims. NH impressed with Trustees' returns which fit well together. Will be merged into a single report.

## **Working Group Updates**

### Finance and Governance Group

Meeting on 3 October will aim to incorporate changes from EFL. Andrew Rothwell will be invited.

The person requesting information about legacies has died. His widow has been contacted. It has been decided to make people aware of their options and then direct them to a solicitor. We'll look for a solicitor who will then take all the compliance risk.

We are now paying tax bill quarterly, not monthly, which affects how finances look for this month. Badges made a profit. Still working on year end accounts which are with auditor and accountant.

### Ownership and Membership Group

Paper circulated. Trust Board Paper – One Club Meeting III – 4 Aug.docx

Discussed the idea of a 'member club'.

JH thinking that if people were going to join the Trust they would have done so by now. Something new is needed and it should come through the club. "Member Club" is not the right terminology.

Agreed that it's all about engagement with supporters. Newsletters, Fans' Forums etc.

More polls are important as it is noticeable that membership numbers increase after a poll.

Player engagement policy important. Players in schools can make a lasting impression on youngsters.

Kit out the Cliff shows that people will donate for a specific project.

NH. Numbers are not declining. We are just getting better at keeping records.

NH and CL have met with St. Mirren. The software they use offers a very interactive way to engage with supporters. Bespoke software is being written to help us with the transition to this.

NH. We need to consider reinstating our previous policy of one year minimum subscription at certain times as it was obvious that some people joined to gain priority status for tickets to matches during promotion push and then cancelled their subscription. A real effort is needed to increase membership between now and Christmas.

Certain demographic groups should be targeted. Age group 15 to 30 could be attracted by QR codes.

AY. Related personal experiences of ticketing experiences of a couple of members. He also felt Fans' Forums could be improved. He was invited to offer suggestions as to improvements by email. Such suggestions would be welcomed. He pointed out that victory in next round of Carabao Cup would offer opportunities to increase membership.

There has been an offer from John Lewis to help membership drive. Exclusive members' events such as fashion shows could be organised.

The issue of reaching VAT threshold arose again. The possibility of Trust members paying the Club which would then transfer money to the Trust would need further discussion. SC is speaking to JH about this.

### Community Working Group

Richard and Karen Jarvis, El Paso Grecians have been over for two matches. Their season tickets have been donated to ECI, who give to different clients each week. Richard and Karen met with Steve Chown from ECI and Club reps. Steve spoke movingly about some of the difficulties people had simply entering the ground and how much confidence they had gained from attending a game with these tickets. A photo montage of each matchday attendance has been produced.

Disabled Supporters Association have had a first meeting, after reorganisation. PB is helping to run the meetings.

Level Playing field event is end of February (possibly Cambridge game) and this year it is hoped the focus will be on unseen disabilities. PF offered help with issues of dementia and autism.

AY gave account of a new supporter who was very anxious outside the ground. Ambassadors had been very effective in helping the person. The work of the ambassadors in these situations was highly praised.

A quiet space for supporters with autism was discussed. It was suggested that the Grecian Centre was quiet during the game. It might be possible to make this more accessible. Could look at access from Big Bank (vouchers?)

### Communication and Engagement Group

Main feature will be build up to AGM on 12<sup>th</sup> November. PB has been discussing the use of big screen for this. NH will ask MT for a brief input.

Will be meeting before the end of the month.

### **Any Other Business**

Letter about swearing at home matches. The meeting agreed with all sentiments expressed in the letter. How could we move to what has recently been witnessed at women's games? Further discussion and actions needed.

PF. Congratulated all concerned on how great the stadium looks

ED. Kit Out The Cliff. 70 badges left. Profit of £695. £39,100 raised so far. Big splash needed when we reach £40,000. Next focus is trolleys and trays for the kitchen. £1,000 needed. Unfortunately, the recycled cups project is on hold as bits of metals have been found in the plastic. There is a £500 donation for KOTC from the ticket donation button. Profits for Exeter Big Quiz are going to KOTC.

NLM. There is an excellent article on Big Issue website/social media about supporter owned clubs. It's well worth a look.

Upstairs bar. Following complaints, NH put the matter straight with some facts.

Very few people have paid the full subscription. There have been a considerable number of concessions.

In the past the capacity has been over that which is recommended.

People are being charged for what is considered an added benefit.

It has been agreed that there should be no interference with people next door in hospitality.

We are only under capacity because few of the players' comps are being used there.

AY. There have been positive comments from fans.

Has received duplicate orders from club shop. Is this common? Suggested lists for KOTC. Recommends beach towels for Club shop (quote obtained). Some of the Club's social media posts have not been getting through eg. Big Issue article.

**Date of next meeting:**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September. Joint meeting with Club Board.