



We Own Our Football Club

Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd

Trust Board Meeting Minutes Part A

Meeting held via Zoom

Date: 10 May 2021

Trustees present: Nick Hawker, Will Barrett, Jon Beer, Mark Cordell, Elaine Davis, Doug Gillard, Clive Harrison, Pete Holding, Richard Knight, Neil Le Milliere, Kayleigh-Jade West, Yasmin Western.

Apologies: None

Officers present: Steve Chudley (Finance Officer), Alice Cooke (Press and Media Officer), Pete Cordwell (Minutes Taker) Celia Lowman (Membership Secretary)

Apologies; Phil Burden (Secretary),

Part B Summary

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

1. Were presented with a feasibility study as to where a new stadium might be sited as part of the Local Plan. NB. A stadium move was not discussed.
2. Received feedback from the four Trust appointed directors from the last Club Board meeting.
3. Heard reports from
 - a) Supporter Experience Committee
They are forming a "Return of Fans" group which will formulate and execute our strategies for the reopening of St James Park.
 - b) Trust Finance Group

Approval of minutes from Meeting 8th March 2021 and Meeting 15 April 2012 (Season Ticket prices)

Approval of Part A minutes March 2021 and minutes 15 April proposed by Kayleigh-Jade West, seconded by Neil Le Milliere

Approved unanimously

Matters Arising

No article about ball retrievers yet. Could be done retrospectively as an end of season thank you.

Club shop finished

Online discount not sorted yet. Take login details from Spextrix to Shopify.

Still talking through Sue McQueenie about links with Tourist Board

Update of Part A matters from Chair.

Important couple of weeks since the European Super league proposals,

Government Fan Led Review

The last couple of weeks, since the European Super League proposals have been 'interesting', as various voices expressed a sudden enthusiasm for supporter representation at football clubs, and indeed supporter ownership.

As Trustees are aware, I have written to Tracey Crouch MP and advised her that we held our fan led review 20 years ago! Ms Crouch has replied saying she has every intention of consulting with us. We'll wait and see!

I do have a concern, and we must at least take the time to consider that any changes to legislation regarding football club owners would apply to ourselves, we are football club owners!!! Therefore, we must be mindful that any such change does not disadvantage us.

I met with Trevor Birch, CEO at EFL and John Nagles, Head of Policy EFL to put our case for supporter owned clubs. We considered how to achieve success when rich owners can bankroll clubs. EFL extremely complimentary saying we are a success. To me, we're not competing on level terms.

Fair Game

Over the past few months AFC Wimbledon have led a movement called Fair Game. This is supported by, but not endorsed as far as I can tell, by the FSA. Newport County have already agreed to partner with them, and I have collaborated in terms of arranging a meeting with the EFL, which all three clubs attended. I have no objection to supporting the group but essentially, I just don't have the time. In addition, the club board are reluctant to be actively involved though I should stress, this is purely down to the time commitment involved.

Comments from Meeting

Sound proposal, but needs someone to drive it.

If you're in something like this, you have to be at the front of it.

Action. Politely decline the invitation

Disappointing that we were not included in a recent documentary about supporter owned clubs.

But we have had lots of recent, positive coverage in national media

Membership

I'll admit to being disappointed that we were unable to take advantage of the positive news surrounding supporter ownership and indeed, the Fans Engagement Index. There appears to be evidence that our membership has grown during this period, but we really should have been able to make better advantage of it. I have included a paper and proposal for Trustees to consider which, in essence, the club would have to initiate on our behalf, and I look forward to your thoughts. (Summary under AOB.)

Membership has increased over the last two weeks.

Non-Executive Directors and Chief Commercial Officer

In the past week Peter Holding and I have been interviewing for 2 new non-executive directors; one with commercial and hospitality skills, and the other to Chair the Audit, Risk and Compliance committee.

We have been impressed with the quality of the candidates, all of whom were extremely positive about supporter owned clubs.

Once the appointments have been made, we will publish the new details pertaining to the make-up of the club board.

In addition, Clive Harrison and Elaine Davis have been interviewing candidates for the role of Chief Commercial Officer.

These posts, once appointed, will be published along with the new board structure.

Internal Auditor

As you will be aware the club has recently advertised for the role of Volunteer Internal Auditor, from within the Trust membership. The standard of applications was impressive, and three appointments have been made to form a small team. Full details will be posted shortly, once the successful candidates have been introduced to the club.

Club Board

The club board have expressed a desire to create branding that demonstrates the clubs' pride in being fan owned. I will meet with Sue McQueenie and Scott Palfrey, together with Will, to discuss how this might be driven forward, but also how we communicate this to a much wider audience than just existing members. This is a very recent development so hopefully, there will be more to add next month! "We are proud to be supporter owned!"

We should remember that we have a majority of 4 to 3 on the club board. We own the Club and we control it. It's therefore imperative that the Trust Representatives on the Club Board are accountable and we have started looking at the appraisal process.

Media Day. "One of our Own"

Raised money for ECCT and ECI

It was stunning. Powerful statement of what we are about. Well done to everyone who organised this. Corporate sponsorship has raised £950. A member (Alistair Yates) donated £50 at the meeting to make it up to £1,000.

Mobile Phone

I am aware that the mobile telephone used by Celia, membership secretary, to carry out Trust membership business has become old and unreliable. I propose that the Trust purchase a new handset (we have a very 'cheap' SIM only contract.)

Proposal

The Trust authorises the purchase of a replacement mobile 'phone to the value of £200?

Approved unanimously

Training & Development:

As you are aware, we are currently developing an appraisal mechanism for Trustees elected to the Club Board and a more robust induction process for newly elected Trustees. I have also suggested that all Trustees undergo formal board training that we would undertake as part of a strategy away day. I have included a proposal from a local training company, and I would therefore propose that their proposal is accepted by ourselves, at a cost of: £2,280.

Their plan can, of course, be modified and the add-ons are subject to further requirement and agreement.

Proposal

The Trust authorises the payment of £2,280 for Board Training.

Approved unanimously.

Travel and accommodation costs would be paid.

No objections.

Any Other Part A business

Short statement about April meeting cancellation has still to go on website.

Membership Proposal.

Chair outlined his membership proposal. (Page 19 in 20210510 – TB meeting Pack)

Would like views on whether it would be a good idea to propose to membership that the £100,000 that we currently donate should be used specifically for the Academy.

That would then be a good vehicle to drive further membership. It is always a popular fund raising focus. We could offer benefits of membership free for three months. This would have to be driven by the club. We could then sell the trust to these new members through a big comms push. They would have to agree to club contacting them. Proposal would be put to members first.

Views from the meeting

Might affect members seeking a payment holiday through hardship.

More grants if the money goes from the Club to the Academy rather than from Trust to Academy?
Tax planning.

Should there be more investigation into where the money goes and how it is spent, rather than just giving a sum of money?

The proposal does include the Trust having a representative on the Academy Technical Board.
Would increase transparency.

Academy Technical Board agenda does not include spending strategy. Set agenda items are a requirement of the EFL.

What are the alternatives for using this money?

Should club consider wealth management and revenue generation (property)

Proposal

The Trust agrees to pursue the feasibility of using our £100,000 donation for the Academy, to stimulate a fresh membership drive.

Approved unanimously.

Working Group Updates

Finance Group

Minutes Page 17 in 20210510 – TB Meeting Pack

Governance approved. Needs to go Companies House. To go now onto Trust website.

Ownership and Membership Group

Minutes page 23 in 2021050 – TB Meeting Pack

Grecian Group Forum next week.

Director of Day. Over season 60 winners. Excellent feedback

Corporate members have missed out on two events (Covid) Instead they've received a mug.
Excellent feedback about this especially on social media.

Latest membership numbers (from Spektrix) 3173 + 324 Junior Grecians, with 40 Corporate Members. To be checked on Spextrix.

Community Working Group

Cycle for City going well. Questionnaire compiled

Spextrix can be used for sign up

Organisers of bike week will be asked for permission to use their videos

Emailing Suaad about Respect 2021, which we think is taking place later in the year.

South West Supporters' Trust group is meeting shortly.

Need to make sure Cycle for City and Bike Week don't clash

Communication and Engagement Group

Minutes Page 29 in 20210510 – TB Meeting Pack

The CTA is now on its own page in the Trust Docs section of the website.

Over the summer we're going to flag various things on website

"One of our Own Cup" was a fantastic day. Well done to all comms team. Great to see Trust and CCT working together so well.

Push this week to encourage people to buy tickets to the game.

Working on a Marketing Campaign. Cross working group meetings have been taking place over the last month featuring "Own the Moment" plan. This will be delivered throughout the summer.

Plan is for two marketing campaigns a season

Also working on "My City, My Shirt" campaign.

The comms review will take place in June to put together our plan for the 2021/22 season.

Specific areas that we will be looking at are:

- Comms team recruitment:
- Core comms (social media and website)
- Direct comms and engagement:
- Branding:
- Trust awareness:
- Fundraising:
- Marketing:
- Podcast and short-form video content:
- External Press:
- Partnerships and promotion:

Another thing to note (re analytics) is that website traffic has quadrupled in the past year, but we are of course looking to build on that next season.

We'll be using a totaliser to boost sales for "One of Our own"

We've produced thank you videos for this.

Any Other Business

Request for Trust Board Approval to underwrite a Covid Memorial Plaque.

We would ask supporters for the names of relatives or loved ones who have died in the pandemic and are City supporters. There would then be a large plaque in the Memorial Garden.

Estimated cost £200. Approved unanimously.

Documents for appraisal should be available next month.

Request for a birthday card for one of our founder members who suffered a broken leg on his birthday. Elaine will organise.

A mailing list of all Trust Board meetings to be organised.

Suggestion that end of season presentations should take place at a later date with supporters present. Can be organised after Grecian Groups' meeting.

Volunteer Week organised by NVO 1-7 June will be virtual this year and they hope folk will concentrate on saying Thank you. The plan is to work with HR who want an input with volunteers to reflect their Safe Recruitment principles. Our media volunteers can help. Can produce thank you

videos. There is also a "Covid" Thank You 4 July. So depending on hospitality opening May 17 we might try and do something face to face around 4 July.

Last survey 2018 is to be repeated, hopefully in September 2021. David Clough has agreed to lead with contact already sent to ask University Business School, RGB (Sponsors) and Seenin Design (donated manuals survey forms to give them first opportunity to hopefully support again.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 9th June 2021