

Members Handbook

Definitions

“Trust” means Exeter City AFC Supporters’ Society Limited

“Club” means Exeter City Football Club

“FSA” means Football Supporters’ Association

“FCA” means Financial Conduct Authority

Introduction

The **Trust** was incorporated in 2003 as a vehicle for supporters of the Club to come together democratically and represent the interests of the Clubs supporters and benefit the community which the club serves.

The Society’s objects are to benefit the community by:

1. to ensure that the Club is properly governed and takes proper account of the interests of its supporters and of the community, and that professional football continues in Exeter with the appropriate facilities;
2. to ensure that the Trust has its views taken into account by the Club and that it holds the appropriate places on the Club’s Board and Sub Boards;
3. to operate democratically, fairly, sustainably, transparently and with financial responsibility and encouraging the Club to do the same;
4. to be a positive, inclusive, and representative organisation, open and accessible to all supporters of the Club regardless of their age, income, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality or religious or moral belief(s) and without discrimination of any kind;
5. to encourage and promote the principle of supporter representation in football clubs and democratic ownership of them; and
6. to communicate appropriately with Members.

Structure

What is a Supporters Trust and who is in charge?

A Supporters’ Trust is a democratic, not-for-profit organisation of supporters, committed to strengthening the voice for supporters in the decision-making process at a club, and strengthening the links between the club and the community it serves.

Supporters' Trusts are constituted as Community Benefit Societies, a form of Co-operative that operate under a one-member one-vote principle and are governed by a strict set of rules.



CBS' are registered with the Financial Conduct Authority and as such has a number of legislative requirements to fulfil such as holding an Annual General Meeting and submitting annual accounts.

The members own all assets and liabilities collectively, and any profit made is either kept as reserves or reinvested to meet the societies objects.

The Trust Board are elected by members and any (over 16) members of the Trust have the opportunity to stand for election to the Trust board.

Members requirements

How ordinary members can work to achieve the Trusts goals

There are lots of ways that ordinary Trust members can help the Trust achieve their goals.

Specialist projects which the Trust undertakes will require large sub-committees to oversee the progress and input relevant skills and regular members meetings will allow ordinary members to bring a whole host of ideas and skills to the table.



Engagement is the main way ordinary members can help. Increasing Trust numbers strengthens the credibility and effectiveness of the Trust.



The Trust is all inclusive. Social media and digital communications will play a big role, so it won't matter where you live or whether you attend the meetings. Being a member, for example, in the USA who can't attend any meetings will give you the same voice and voting rights as a local member who can attend all the meetings.

If you have any questions or concerns you want to raise at an upcoming meeting this can be done via the website.

Meetings & Motions

Regularity of meetings, types of meeting and how to raise a motion

The Trust Board will normally meet monthly. Meetings are divided into 2 sections – Part A can include members whilst Part B will be confidential, and matters discussed in Part B may only be those that necessitate such confidentiality. Minutes will be taken from both meetings and Part A minutes of items discussed and decisions made will be available to member via the Trust website.

Members meetings will normally be held monthly with appropriate notice given prior to meetings allowing members to submit motions they wish to be raised.

Motions to be formally raised at a members meeting must be seconded by a member and submitted to the Trust Secretary 2 before the meeting in order for the motion to be added to the agenda.



The Trust will hold an Annual General Meeting where members will be asked to vote upon a number of motions including the acceptance of the previous year's accounts.

All Trust events and meetings will be announced on our website along with notifications sent by email to members and through our social media channels.

Elections

How to stand for election to the Trust Board

Each year members will have the opportunity to stand for election to the Trust board.

Board members serve a set term of 3 years.

Prior to the elections the Trust board will advise members of how many board seats are up for election and invite nominations.

If there are more nominations than the number of available seats a formal election will take place.

Candidates will be asked to provide a candidate's statement laying out their strengths and what skills they could contribute to the Trust board and members will be invited to vote for the candidates whom they would like to fill the available seats.



Roles & Responsibilities

The board is a group of people elected by the Trust members and co-opted onto the board to carry out strategic management of the society.

Board members have a legal duty to act in good faith and in the pursuit of the best interests of the society.

Some of the Trust Board roles carry unique responsibilities as detailed below.

Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for the efficient administration of the society, particularly regarding ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and for ensuring the board's decisions are implemented. They need to remind the board of the rules to protect members interests.



It is recommended practice that the Secretary be appointed rather than elected to the board.

Treasurer

The Treasurer deals with all aspects of finance and funding, although some aspects of the work may be delegated to a bookkeeper or finance sub-committee.



The treasurer will have a general financial oversight, advising the board on all aspects of finance.

Chairperson

The Chairperson is an important role, providing leadership to the board for the overall governance and strategic direction of the society.

The Chairperson may also be the external face of the society liaising with partners and stakeholders.



Rules

What are the rules and where to find them?

The Trust will have a registered set of rules or constitution which lays out how the society should operate.

These rules are registered with the FCA and any changes to them have to be agreed at a general meeting with the FCA informed and accepting of any alterations before they can be enacted.

All members are bound by these rules.

The full rules can be found on our website (www.weownexetercityfc.co.uk).

Policies

What are the policies of the Trust and where to find them?

Where it's the Trust rules that tell you what to do, it's the Trust policies that tell you how to do it!

The Trust have adopted a number of policies which are guidance on how to hold an AGM, how to hold Board meetings, how to run elections, disciplinary policies for Board members and ordinary members, social media use guidance and an inclusion and diversity policy.

These policies do not need to be registered with the FCA, merely adopted at general meetings.

You can find a list of the policies and the policies in full on the Trust website (www.weownexetercityfc.co.uk).

Complaints Procedure

If a member has a complaint to raise in the first instance, they should put the complaint in writing to the Trust Secretary for consideration by the Board.

If it gets to a point where the complaint cannot be resolved, and the dispute needs to be escalated there is a provision within the society rules as detailed below.

This action should only be used as a last option when all other avenues for resolution have been exhausted.



Every unresolved dispute which arises out of these Rules between the Society and:

- a member; or
- any person aggrieved who has ceased to be a member within the six months prior to the date of the dispute; or
- any person claiming through such member or person aggrieved; or
- any person bringing a claim under the Rules of the Society; or
- an officer of the Society

Is to be submitted to an arbitrator agreed by the parties or nominated by the Chief Executive (or equivalent) of the FSA. The arbitrator's decision will be binding and conclusive on all parties.

Any person bringing a dispute must deposit with the Society the sum of £100 or such other reasonable sum as the Trust Board shall decide. The arbitrator will decide how the costs of the arbitration will be paid and what should be done with the deposit.

Get in Touch

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| Website: | weownexetercityfc.co.uk |
| Twitter: | @ECFCST |
| Facebook: | https://www.facebook.com/ECFCST/ |
| Chair Person: | nick.hawker1392@gmail.co.uk |
| General: | enquiries@weownexetercityfc.co.uk |
| Membership Secretary: | Ryan Innot (trust.membership@ecfc.co.uk) |
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| Press Enquiries: | Julen Beer (julen.beer@ecfcst.org.uk) |

Working Groups:

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Community – steve.chown@ecfcst.org.uk

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Table of Revisions

| Change | By Whom | Date |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| Creation | Nick Hawker | 21/07/2024 |
| Section "Complaints Procedure" alter £500 to £100. | Nick Hawker | 29/07/2024 |
| Added TWITTER and FACEBOOK details, plus corrections to e-mail extensions. | Nick Hawker | 12/08/2024 |
| Approved by Trust Board | | 12/08/2024 |
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