



Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd

Trust Board Meeting 6 July 2020 Minutes Part A

Meeting held at: On Zoom

Date: 6 July 2020

Trustees present: Neil Le Milliere, Pete Martin, Jon Beer, Will Barrett, Clive Harrison, Mark Cordell, Elaine Davis, Richard Knight, Doug Gillard, Yas Western

Officers present: Steve Chudley (finance officer), Simon Larkins (minute taker), Phil Burden (secretary)

Guests present: John Street (Exeter City Council/Returning Officer for Trust elections)

Apologies: Pete Holding

Approval of previous minutes

The previous minutes were proposed by Elaine Davis and seconded by Doug Gillard. Nine voted in favour, with none against and no abstentions.

Matters arising

Pete Martin raised that the minutes of the last meeting contained no reference to the Communications Group, despite him circulating the minutes from their meeting to the Trust Board prior to the meeting and inviting questions from Trust Board members. The minutes will be amended.

Election runner/elections voting

Trustee Will Barrett, went through the process that has been undertaken to test the electronic voting system through election runner. In a paper he circulated to Trustees before the meeting he stated that they had tested the system through four trials all of which had received positive feedback and overcome any potential hurdles which were identified as possible problems. He said based on 3,500 voters an electronic election would cost less than £255.76 on election runner and the proposal for the Trust Board 2020 election would be to use a hybrid system where those members with email addresses would vote electronically and those without would vote via the old fashioned postal system.

The returning officer for Trust elections John Street, who had been part of the team trialling the electronic voting system, added that the process was very sleek and secure and therefore he was fully behind the recommendation to have a hybrid system for the 2020 Trust elections.

A vote was taken on whether to use election runner for the Trust elections for 2020, with postal votes still in place for those without email addresses. The proposal was approved with 10 for and one abstention.

A vote had already been taken, with nine in favour, for contacting those people without email addresses at a cost of £650, with regards to trying to get an email address for them for the any upcoming election. The chair started that this contacting of members without a registered email address would be a one-off and wouldn't be a process that they would do repeatedly.

A thank you was placed on record to Will (Barrett) for his hard work in terms of testing the electronic voting system.

2020 AGM and Election Dates

The chair started that, as per the rules, the following Trust Board members had to stand down and seek re-election if they wished to.

Doug Gillard
Nick Hawker
Pete Martin

However, the rules state that at least four Trustees must stand down, and seek re-election if they wish, and therefore the chair asked if there were any other volunteers.

It was agreed that Phil Burden would send out an email asking for a volunteer, with a deadline attached, and if no volunteer/volunteers were forthcoming then chair Nick Hawker would go through the process of working out who was next in line to stand down and this would then be drawn by lot if there was more than one person on an equal footing.

The following proposed dates had been circulated to Trustees ahead of the meeting with regards to the 2020 AGM and Election.

Notice of AGM & Details of Election 12/09/2020
Deadline for requesting a candidate pack (Midnight) 03/10/2020
Deadline for submitting a nomination form (Midnight) 24/10/2020
Deadline for sending out candidate info and ballot papers (Midnight) 31/10/2020
Deadline for Members Resolutions and/or Agenda Items 31/10/2020
Deadline for requesting candidate questions for hustings 07/11/2020
AGM Agenda & Meeting Pack Despatched with Proxy Details 07/11/2020
Hustings 14/11/2020
Deadline for receipt of ballot papers 21/11/2020
Deadline for receiving proxy papers 27/11/2020
AGM 28/11/2020

Trustee Mark Cordell mentioned that if the hustings were held on the proposed date, then they would be irrelevant as they are a week before the deadline for the receipt of ballot papers and after the electronic email voting process had been opened. He said the hustings needed to be a lot closer to the start of the election process.

Phil Burden said that following discussion with John (Street) that the hustings would be the opening event of the election process, and that the voting wouldn't be opened until after the hustings had been held, and that the current dates didn't reflect that change.

Trust chair and job description

Following an email sent out by Nick Hawker with regards to the appraisal of the Trust chair, secretary Phil Burden following discussions with Trustee Mark Cordell, had looked at the job description of the Trust chair and realised that it wasn't up-to-date or very well written for its current purpose.

Phil Burden said he was going to try and rewrite the Trust Chair's job description, so it was more up-to-date.

For the appraisal of the Trust chair, Phil Burden and Mark Cordell were going to send out a pro-forma appraisal to Trust Board members to assess to the Trust Chair performance and they wanted them to fill it out openly and honestly.

They reminded the Trust Board members that all the information they put in the form would be seen by both Mark Cordell and Phil Burden but would be confidential beyond that point. The information would be collated, both in terms of scores given for certain aspects of the job and additional comments, and then be presented both to the chair Nick Hawker and the Trust Board.

Trust review

Prior to the meeting, Mike Finn confirmed that he has received consent from all of the people quoted in the Trust review for it to be released.

The Chair asked Trustees when they would like the report to be released bearing in mind that they would have to have plans in place to meet all the recommendations in the report in good time.

It was agreed that the Trust Review should be released to members on Monday, July 27, via social media and then through the newsletter on the proceeding Thursday.

At that point it was agreed that the Trust must have a series of answer to the question: What are you going to do about the recommendations? Trustees assured the chair that they would have those answers.

Trust Board Group Updates

Prior to the group updates, the chair reminded all group leads that they must get written reports in for the group updates prior to the Trust Board meeting as it made it easier if Trustees had read the paper before and were just dealing with a Q&A at the meeting.

Will Barrett confirmed he had been asked to write the minutes for the FGG in future and had agreed to do so.

OWNERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP GROUP

Cycle for City

Mark Cordell gave an update on the Cycle for City scheme. He said 100 badges had been ordered and he was waiting to set up a page to promote the scheme on the Trust website by adapting the STARS page to a Cycle for City one. Elaine Davis mentioned that Route 2 Bikes were a commercial sponsor of the Trust and perhaps it was a good idea to invite them in as a partner. Mark agreed this would be a good idea but as the scheme was still at a pilot stage, he wanted to make sure it was going to be a success before pulling in any other partners/businesses.

Thanks, was placed on record to Mark for taking over the Go Fund me page for Wembley donations. This was not a Trust initiative, but the club had asked for the Trust to manage it. Mark confirmed that donations had reached over £4,000.

Corporate members

The Trust is sending a letter offering support 'to those that support us' to corporate members in terms of a payment holiday if needed. Majority of corporate members are renewing. A copy of the Salford City programme and a 2020 Trust badge was being sent to all corporate members to thank them for their continued support and in lieu of the usual corporate event that they have at this time. Elaine Davis also informed the meeting that a new corporate member – CSG Logistics – had been added. He approached the Trust and gave the Trust £200 instead of the usual £150.

COMMUNITY GROUP

Jack Leslie campaign

The Jack Leslie campaign, which is raising funds for a statue to honour a Plymouth Argyle footballer who was denied an England cap in 1925 just because he was black has received national and international coverage recently and has raised £47,000 towards the £100,000 target. ECST is supporting this campaign, and the Community Group has spoken to the other Devon Supporters' Trust about the possibility of supporting the campaign as one, to show unity between the three football clubs on this issue.

Exeter Community Initiatives

The money has been donated to the ECST charity partner Exeter Community Initiatives and Trustee Will Barrett has had a meeting with Adam Atkins, marketing and engagements manager at ECI, regarding the project and publication. Will said that once the Trust had the dates for the start of the new season a few plans were going to be put in place for a launch, including a photo at St James Park and a story on the club and Trust website regarding the partnership. There was also going to be a page on the new Trust website that will go into the background of the project and this would also have a two-minute film to go alongside it. Will added that ECI were currently applying for funding for a post Covid-19 project so the Trust has, in principal, agreed to partner them on that as well.

Devon Against Racism sports conference

Trustee Yasmin Western said that there was a Devon Against Racism Sports Conference held in October last year that Simon Kitchen, of the One Game One Community Group was involved in. It was all about football and tackling racism in football and she said if we could get there next year, or show our support for it, it would be beneficial from a club point of view. Doug Gillard agreed with this and also said it would be beneficial when we do attend these things to make more of a statement from it in terms of a communications point, so it gets the message out there further but looks good from a Trust perspective as well. This in turn might have a more positive impact on membership by encouraging people to join the Trust for non-footballing reasons as well.

COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Trustee Pete Martin reported that the Communications Group have got a meeting this coming Wednesday – July 8 – where Will Barrett had been invited along to talk about the design of the new Exeter City Supporters' Trust website and how close it is to fruition.

Julen Beer, Jon Beer and Yasmin Western are also working on a Trust-orientated podcast that will be between 20 and 30 minutes per episode. A pilot episode is in the stages of being produced and will be ready for the meeting on Wednesday.

Communication group member Kayleigh Jade West is also putting plans in place for a promotion video for Trust Membership and the Trust Board Elections. She has told the communications group that she has plenty of skills in video editing and shooting and the group were looking forward to seeing what she will produce.

HISTORY GROUP

The Museum Board are due to meet next month. Will Barrett told the Trust Board that he is looking to install a new exhibition in the away end and would be working with Richard Knight to use the exhibit to try and achieve some of the club's engagement goals as well.

The Stadium Tours were looking at starting an outside one for the new season and Will said they had been in touch with them and told them that he would help facilitate that where possible. Chair Nick Hawker also added that the Stadium Tours group had been in touch with him about the Trust helping with a cost of a sign to promote the Stadium Tours – with something along the lines of 'Tour Starts Here'.

Mark Cordell said he knew someone who is a friend of the Trust who does sign printing and he could contact them to get a price for that. Nick agreed this was a good idea.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Colchester United semi-final printed edition of programme

Simon Larkins told the Trust Board meeting that he had contacted the person on eBay, who had acquired a pdf of the programme and was charging people £7.99 per printed copy, to ask him how he had got hold of the pdf. He also asked who at the club had given him permission to use it, as he had claimed in his advertisement, but he had not replied.

In terms of the cost of printing the programme for sale, he informed the Trust Board that printing 250 copies had cost the club £816. This cost could not be offset by the adverts in the programme as they are sold on a basis of 23 home matches – the cup matches and play-off games as seen as extra. There is some value in the fact that the club can go to those advertisers who didn't get the final five home games of the 2019/20 season due to Covid-19 and inform them that they had an advert in a extra play-off semi-final programme, but a decision had been taken early on in the process of producing a programme for the semi-final to do a digital 'only' programme rather than a printed programme as it was less risky in terms of costs. However, the club had come under pressure from a number of individuals, including some connected with the Trust, to produce a printed programme and after the victory over Colchester United a decision was taken to produce 250 printed copies. This had come at a cost of £816 for the print run – a cost £3.20 per programme. They are being sold at £5 but when you take into consideration postage and packaging that leaves each programme making 30p profit if we are able to sell all 250. If the club only manage to sell 100 of the 250 programmes, the club will lose £466. Simon added that when club is having to make tough decisions because of the coronavirus crisis it didn't make sense to produce a product that was highly likely to lose the club money.

Trustee Neil Le Milliere said he understood the points that had been made but as a supporter-owned community club, Exeter City had a duty not only to look after its members and supporters but also to those customers who had collected copies of the programmes for

all its league games and needed a printed copy of the Colchester United match to complete their collection.

He also noted that when EFL took away the requirement to produce a printed programme for all home games, the club had adopted the stance that it would continue to produce one regardless.

Having taken on both points of view, it was agreed that for one-off games that fell outside of the normal 23 home league matches, the profitability of the programme would be worked out by Simon Larkins. If it was predicted that the club would make a loss by producing a printed version of the programme, the costs would then be brought to the Trust Board in advance and, as owners of the club, they would make a decision on whether it could underwrite the cost of the printing to look after the members.

Flag team

Richard Knight placed on record his thanks to the team of volunteers, two of them Trust Board Members in Neil Le Milliere and Jon Beer, for putting up the flags at Wembley Stadium for our play-off final with Northampton Town.

Cut-outs

Phil Burden asked what was happening with the cardboard cut-outs. Simon Larkins informed the meeting that the cardboard cut-outs were currently in the Centre Spot but as advertised they needed to be signed before then being put in alphabetical order so fans could come in and collect their one. He confirmed that if the first game of the new season was behind closed doors the cut-outs would be put back up in the Stagecoach Adam Stansfield Stand, but the club would need plenty of cable ties and probably some volunteers to come in and help to achieve this.

Terrace/Supporters Trust merchandise

Yasmin informed the meeting that she had contacted the Terrace in terms of Trust merchandise but said she would send out an email in regards to this as she was conscious of the time the current TB meeting had gone on for.