

**Our mi MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PART OF THE TRUST BOARD MEETING HELD ON 25 March 2021 at 7pm via Zoom.**

Present: Nigel Kingston (NK) (Chair)

Peter Lerner (PL) Trustee of WWSET and Community Liaison

Trevor Stroud (TS) Trust nominated member of the Football Club Board

Martyn Broughton (MB) Trust Treasurer, FALL Director

Tony Hector (TH) Trust nominated member of the Football Club Board, Legal Secretary

Alan Cecil (AC) FALL Director, Website, Twitter and Facebook supporter interaction

David Roberton (DR) Trustee of WWSET and running of WWFC Ladies Team

Bob Massie (BM) Communications, Website, Fundraising and Commercial

Lisa Bowker (LB) Trust Volunteers Liaison

John Jewell (JJ) Fundraising Lead

Chris Harvey (CH)

Russell Jones (RJ) Membership Secretary

**37 attendees,** 12 Directors and 25Trust Members who joined the Zoom meeting as spectators.

NK welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**WWFC Commercial Officer Neil Peters**. NK welcomed NP to the meeting. The idea is to give Trust members the opportunity of hearing about the commercial side of the Football Club and to ask questions at the end.

NK has a few questions: It has been a challenging year on the pitch so far and perhaps also quite challenging off the pitch. NP: clearly challenging for a number of reasons and most obvious one of not knowing when it is all going to end. Never knowing when the fans will be allowed back and if so, how many. Had many plans made that have not come to fruition. Rules change and so things planned never happen. Planned for multiple versions of season with limited staff. Trying to keep revenue coming in and keep happy. Trying to guess what is coming from the Government. Outcome overall has gone well. NK felt that with many government changes, then all the planning had gone out the window. Now that the Club has completed most of the season ticket holders refund exercise, could NP give an update. Got 120 people left to call of those that have requested refund or partial refund. By close of play Monday will have completed the exercise. High number of people able and wishing to waive their season ticket money. Around 60% (which is not exact) have waived. Small team involved and worked late and hard to keep this going. Rob Couhig has always stated that if someone requires a refund they are entitled to have one and this promise has been kept. NK has had feedback from trust members which has been positive and people happy with how it has gone. NK asked about sponsorship and advertising contacts. NP said all good and healthy mainly regarding kit and training wear which had to be done early. Dreams are still front of shirt sponsor. Cherry Red have moved to Training and Travel Wear. Managed to confirm Origin as back of shirt sponsor. The companies are committed to this and feel that they are spending worthwhile money representing the team. Ongoing conversations with new potential sponsors. Newer areas for sponsorship i.e. Training Ground, etc. Dugouts and Tunnel are under discussion. Presonus, Lords and Whites will continue to sponsor the stands and Origin will probably continue to sponsor the Family Stand. Guarantee of 12 of the 13 boxes renewed.

NK asked about the difference between Championship and League One sponsorship. Couple of deals signed recently where league is not relevant to value of the Contract. WWFC is a local club and hope to have fans back to full capacity next season. Less TV coverage and therefore revenue if we are in L1. Won’t gain as much sponsorship, but will have better sponsorship for League One than 2 years ago.

NK asked about fans next year – will they be just as excited and will as many renew season tickets?

NP said fans may have missed opportunity to see team in Championship – but if lockdown ends and people able to get together in groups then this will bring people back to watch their team. If lockdown finishes before the start of the season then people will want to socialise to make them feel that things are getting back to normal.

Saddest thing of this season is that the players have not been able to take their fans to the Championship away grounds this year. As a fan you can’t wait to go into one of the new grounds that you have never been to. Commitment from the players that if we go back down we will bounce straight back into the Championship as soon as possible. Being able to go to the away grounds without fans has been heart-breaking and everyone feels this from the players, to coaching staff and management.

Question: What income does the club get from iFollow. NP: Differs week to week. This year has been strange as more controlled by EFL as more people are using it. We used to get financial reports before but this year there are more free passes given out. Financial model changed slightly – volume clearly up. Good income stream on a normal season but not huge. As fan base grows you would hope that the fans would attend the stadium rather than use iFollow. Hard one to report on this year as it is an anomaly. NK will follow up and report back.

Question: When do expect to reopen Club Shop. NP: Can’t put an exact date on it because to open the Club Shop fully, we’d need a dedicated member of staff and at present we don’t have that. Will it be fully stocked – kit is largely coming to end of the season – new kit will be coming in. Shop is not fully kitted out at present. Reviewing final order tomorrow with O’Neill’s regarding items for stock. When shop has been open and online, things like dog leads and collars have sold really well. Sold replica WWFC footballs and Club Ties. We will have new WWFC beach towel for the summer. Lots of stock that is not kit has been available online and the online shop has done really well. Club shop may only be open 2 afternoons during the week from mid-June, but we will keep you updated on this. Now it has moved in the larger part where the Club reception was. Has new pay systems in and transactions done via iPads. Easy to click and go with card payments.

Question: AC saw that Hospital Radio Glamorgan had an Akinfenwa signed shirt donated by Wycombe Wanderers. Will they donate a shirt to the Trust as well? BM felt that Joe Jacobson has arranged this rather than via the Club as it is for a sick child near his area. AC is asking as the Auctions for signed shirts have proved successful. NP said gets 20 – 25 emails every month asking for signed shirts for charity and school as donations, so we have to limit what we do. NP said he would be happy to discuss any request from the Trust for a shirt for an auction.

Question: NP has achieved a lot during this year although fans have not been able to see what you have done. What is the one thing that you would like to do commercially which you have not yet set about trying to do. What would you like to achieve/challenge commercially? NP: when I joined wanted to make sure that contracts renewed in time and make stadium look better. Right now, toilets being retiled, many stadium renovations completed, etc. Regular supporters walking back in will be able to see a noticeable difference. NP wants Adams Park to have the ability to have music festivals in summer, be sold out 5 days a week with large corporate companies for meetings and conferences. Family functions i.e. Wedding Anniversaries, large birthday parties. Done a lot of work in the stadium to enable this side to grow in the future.

NP looks forward to the day when hard flooring going down on pitch and can put on huge concerts. A way of bringing people to the ground. The vaccination programme has now made more people aware of Adams Park. Lovely location and not near residential homes so should not annoy any neighbours. Not to be necessarily linked to the football team but the Club will benefit from the use of the facilities.

Question ex RJ – new ticketing system better than before. In mixed families of adult age, it’s a real benefit, but as a parent of a 6-year-old and 9-year-old why do they need their own email addresses. How can families use the parental email? Every account has to have a separate email address and can then link to the main one. NP is under the impression that we are not asking 6-year-olds to have their own email address. RJ has called the Ticket office who have advised this is the case. NP will look into this as it does not seem right that 6-year-olds are expected to have an email address. Secondly please send direct to NP any issues regarding ticketing system. Surprised that the new Ticket Company would expect this.

NK thanked NP for coming along to the meeting and he too is looking forward to seeing everyone at Adams Park plus concerts and other events being held at AP.

NP said exciting end to season and very exciting season 2021/22 ahead.

**Items outstanding from last Meeting.**

NK said that all dealt with at the time or will be picked up while going through the meeting.

Minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously agreed and NK signed them on behalf of the Trust Board.

**Agenda**:

**Trust Fundraising Report: Circulated to Board and on Trust Website.**

**WWSET Report**: **Circulated to Board and on Trust Website.**

**WWFC Ladies & Under 18 Teams**: **Circulated to Board and on Trust Website.** DR updated that the Under 18 season will continue and first game is on 3rdt April away to Kidlington and season will finish on 31st May.

**Trust Finance Summary.** **Circulated to Board and on Trust Website.**  MB said the Valentine’s Day Raffle brought in £2200 with costs of £269. Small purchase of Square Card Reader for £22. Use for collecting payments ourselves rather than using the Club facilities. Up and running now. £118k in bank. Generated £3500 this month.

**Community Update**: **Circulated to the Board and on the Trust Website**. PL had the following 4 items to tell the members of the Trust.

1. Initiative to pay attention to Mental Health of supporters. During Covid people have been missing football and the companionship that comes with this. The Trust has joined Terrace Talk (Football Supporters Association initiative) and have set up a working group to advance ideas about working with vulnerable supporters and making their trip to the stadium more enjoyable. Looked at what other clubs are doing. Sunderland does a fantastic job with people who are vulnerable. High suicide rate among young men in their area. Sunderland Hub have a quiet place in the Stadium for them go to for support.
2. Disabled Supporters – we recognise the need to do more for those supporters. We have formed a group of interested people who have a variety of disabilities plus their carers/assistants. Now going to form Disabled Supporters Association. We have joined Level Playing Field, the charity which assists disabled supporters. A wheelchair ride/walk round AP to see where there are problems will take place on April 9th with Steve Copp, the Safety/Disabled Access Officer.
3. Working Group from SET are setting up an EDI group, (Equality, Diversion and Inclusion), which PL is part of and he has also been asked to join the Football Club EDI Group.
4. Working with colleagues in SET to obtain a Premier League Fans Club Grant of £20k to help set up these groups. If grant application successful then we can get on and set up these groups with WWSET and the Trust.

NK says thank you for all the efforts that PL is putting into this. If anyone wants to be involved please email Peter Lerner at peterjlerner@gmail.com

**Club Update**: TH and TS. Lots going on but key thing is planning for next season. Plans for both Championship and League One at present. Work is continuing on Stadium. Wi-Fi running in offices and Control Room and Hospitality area of Frank Adams stand. Every part of the stadium will have Wi-Fi by the beginning of next season. Survey done of stadium externally and also this year done internal survey. CH is working on plan to pull this together. Discussions on how to improve the Training Ground are in hand, but major investment is needed. An update will be provided at the April meeting.

We remain on top of financial side and timely information given to the Trust.

Funding from EPL, Government, Big Picture Project, etc. Reports on major clubs looking at changing the way the Champions League works. This does not directly impact on us immediately, but it will down the line in terms of how they deal with finances that flow down the pyramid. Major Clubs are currently looking at how and whether it will be possible to stream more of their matches. If this goes ahead it will inevitably have an impact on core financial package that the EPL have from Broadcasters, which will impact on monies that trickle down to the clubs.

iFollow; "Latest information available shows WWFC sales average 528 per home game (CARE: this does not include Season Ticket Holders who get the games free as the iFollow team cannot currently monitor the numbers logging in) and 844 per away game. Income Home, £5227, Away £8444, before deduction of VAT.”

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**: LB said that small band of volunteers at the ground 2 days a week repainting corridors and boxes. AC asked if there is scope for more volunteers? Due to social distancing, there is a limit on numbers currently. LB will advise when this changes.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM TRUST MEMBERSHIP**

Question: Is work being done to PA system. TS advised yes as this is being rolled into the Wi-Fi Project and will be completed before next season.

Question: Have the Club considered lowering the new dugouts. The play at one end is now obscured by the dugouts. TS said will raise as part of the Buildings Group reviewing the Stadium. TS will come back to the next Trust meeting with an update.

Meeting finished at 7.55 pm.