**Chairman’s Report to AGM 18th November 2021**

This report covers the 12 months to the end of June 2021, but I will also refer to events that have been happening since then. The saying goes that a week’s a long time in politics, well you could say the same in football. Two PL managers sacked and new ones appointed, all within a week or so. It makes you realise how lucky we are with Gareth Ainsworth, still here after 10 years, but he can’t be here tonight as he’s in Wycombe at the switching on of the Xmas lights.

This year was the first full year when the ownership of the Club has been in the hands of the Couhigs. It coincided with Covid and supporters not being able to attend games

It was our first year in the Championship and none of us were able to go to games or to visit some of those great iconic stadiums, such as Middlesborough, Nottingham Forest and Preston.

I think we all believe if we’d had some key players available to us at the start of last season and the odd decent ref, we’d have avoided relegation. It is also a fact that if the EFL had punished Derby for their financial mismanagement last season, which is when it should have taken place, then Derby would have been relegated instead of ourselves. We believe that this has cost the Club up to £20m in lost revenue and the Club remain in discussions with the administrators of Derby concerning this issue.

The key task for the Trust in the last year has been developing a strong working relationship with the Couhigs. As you know Pete spends some weeks here at a time and Rob visits every month, although that was not possible during lockdown. There are a number of ways we work with the Couhigs. Firstly, there is a Club board meeting each month and Trevor and Tony attend this meeting as Club directors. I have a follow up session with them both after this meeting so I can brief Trust directors on important issues. I also meet with Rob Couhig when he is here and with Pete as needed. As a result of the open A agenda Trust board meetings each month we can advise members of key Club issues and take on board members concerns and feed them back to the Club board and the Couhigs.

I believe that this set up is working well and plan to continue it as we go forward.

Since I became Chair of the Trust, we have had three objectives:

Make the Trust more transparent and be the Voice of the fans in the Club

Raise funds so that we can support the 25% quarter ownership

Widen our reach into the Community and increase our membership

I hope that the open Trust meetings, the Trust directors at the table in the Caledonian on match days and our follow up of your concerns, queries and complaints with the Club, plus the feedback you get from me twice a month in my Trust updates, have been achieving the first one.

Secondly we have been raising funds in many ways and you will see from Martyn’s figures that we raised over £50k in the year ending June 2021. The reason we are fundraising is so that we can build up funds in case we have to pay our share of any new capital that is raised by the Club in the future. We have been very successful in fundraising and many members have fed back to us that they enjoy the auctions, the QBC draw and merchandise that we sell. So, we are continuing with all of these activities this year and where Covid allows we’ll add in events such as a Sporting dinner or a Trust night.

Widening our reach into the Community is important for a number of reasons. There are disadvantaged people in High Wycombe who love the Club and I strongly believe we can help them enjoy the Club and their visits to the stadium. We have set up the DSA and now run coach trips to make it more possible for disabled supporters to go to away games in a coach that suits their needs. In fact, we are running one to Sheffield Wednesday on the 27th of this month, so if anyone would like to join us, see Peter Lerner after the meeting. We have also set up the All-Quarters project in conjunction with the Club and WWSET, aiming to reach out and work with the disabled, women, LBTG, ethnic communities and supporters. We want them to feel included and part of the Wycombe family. Again, if this is of interest to you please talk to Peter afterwards.

There are two other things that I want to mention. Wycombe Wanderers Womens football is going from strength to strength. We have three women’s teams, first team, reserves and Under18s, all with their own manager and coach. We have a management team, which I chair and an ambassador for the women’s teams, who is Emily Isaac, whose role is to promote them everywhere she can. You’ll see mentions of their fixtures on the big screen at all home games, videos of one featured game each week on the Club and Trust websites and an update which Emily writes before each home game. We need your support for the Womens teams both physically at our matches and financially as all our funds are generated by our supporters.

The other one is Volunteers. John Derben, with his wife Sandie, who sadly passed away earlier this year, were the bedrock of our volunteers for years. John has now stepped down from these activities during this last year. We have since updated the Volunteer register and currently have over 50 people on the list with a wide variety of skills, who we can call on as required. Both our weekday and matchday volunteers do a superb job and save the Club £000s of pounds each year. We’ve recently added a new task to the Volunteers, that of cleaning the stadium after home games. This enables Neil Peter’s stadium teams to focus on other tasks on a Monday morning after a game, instead of having to start with rubbish pick up. So, on behalf of the Trust board, I want to formally thank all our volunteers for everything they do and suggest that you thank them too in the traditional way. If anyone would like to learn more and join the team, then please get in touch with Georgina Heritage on georgina@4everblues.com and she’ll take it from there.

So, to summarise what the Trust has achieved over the last year or so. It has become more financially secure and has generated a fund currently standing at over £150,000 and rising as current subscriptions come in. This is vitally important as we may need that in order to retain our 25% share in the Club in the event of new fundraising being required. We have set up the DSA, which has resulted in better engagement and facilities for our disabled members. We have set up the All-Quarters project and are working on projects linked to mental health. We have strengthened the Womens section of the Club and have developed good relationships with the new owners.

At this point I’d like to thank a number of people and recognise what they have done for the Trust and the Club.

* Gareth Ainsworth and his management team, we couldn’t have got where we are without them.
* The Trust board – they like many others, are all volunteers and put in many hours work on your behalf – and thank you also to their partners for putting up with it too.
* You the members – your support both financially, your work as volunteers and your backing for what we have been trying to do has been superb.
* And last but not least, Tina Davis, who takes the minutes every month and gets them issued usually the next day, so you can see them on the website within a couple of days of the meetings.

So, what next?

Well, we’re in a great place in the League, fourth and a couple of points behind Wigan and Plymouth. There’s every chance that we will make it back to the Championship at the end of the season and I know that is the aim of the owners, Gareth and the team

Our three objectives for the next 12 months are:

1. Do whatever we can to help the Football Club get promoted to the Championship
2. Retain the Trust’s 25% share in the Club and raise whatever funds we need to, in order to achieve that aim. So, if you haven’t paid your subs, please do it now. Also do your bit in bringing in new members to the Trust.
3. Be your voice and influence with the Club, so that the Club takes notice of your views wherever possible. To widen our reach and involvement into the Community and increasing our membership, especially our young membership, by taking the Trust and the Club into new areas.

Thank you for your support and I look forward to continuing to lead the Trust in its work to support our amazing football club.