



Meeting Minutes

Launch Meeting – 7th April 2012

Venue: Royal George Hotel & Bar

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Venue: Transport House, Broad Street, Birmingham @ 11am

The Blues Trust Launch Meeting was held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 7th at Transport House, Broad Street, with about 45 people attending.

The meeting was chaired by Robert Hughes, the acting chair of the group that set up the trust.

The first speaker was Margaret Decker, acting secretary, who said that the idea of forming a supporters' trust originated during the summer of 2011 when it seemed as though everything was going wrong. The club was relegated, the manager left and there were serious financial problems. Supporters Direct had advised the group that a co-operative model was the most appropriate form of organisation and had helped them to register as an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS). This means that Blues Trust is regulated by the Financial Services Authority and has to produce annual accounts. It is based on the principle of one member, one vote and the group want to arrange an election for board members and an AGM as soon as possible. However they need to have a reasonable number of members before they have an election so the immediate priority is to sign up members. She said that they need some members who can help with the work that needs to be done but they also need those who are unable to offer practical help because numbers are important. The greater the number of members, the greater the chance that our voice will be heard.

James Mathie, Development Manager of Supporters Direct, said that the group that set up Blues Trust is not just a small group of individuals acting by themselves. It has the support and backing of Supporters Direct, who have assisted supporters groups in the U.K. and Europe. He said that, in some ways, supporters' trusts for teams in the Championship have the hardest task of all because there was a tendency more towards gambling than to sustainability in the way that many Championship clubs are run. However there were supporters' trusts at clubs such as Cardiff, Leicester, Derby and Crystal Palace, the team Birmingham were playing that day.

Paul Collins, A.K.A. Gabbie Cabbie, led a comments and questions session. David Farrell was the first to speak and said that he had initially been sceptical about the group but had been to one of their meetings and decided to join them. He urged people to join.

Question: How many people do we need to hold election for board?

Answer: About 500.

Comment: Blues Trust has advertised on social networking sites but that won't reach fans that don't have access to these.

Answer: We agree that this is something we need to work on.

Question: Will members who live abroad get a vote?

Answer: Yes.

Comment: It would help to get ex-players and media personalities involved in promoting the trust.

Answer: At present this is not likely. The club seem to be a bit wary of us and probably don't understand us yet. Ex-players who want to maintain good relationships with the club may feel there would be a conflict of interest if they supported us.

Comment: It may be hard to get members because there isn't a tangible threat to the club at present; it is easier to get people to join where a club is in administration. However it is great to be organised before a crisis arises.

Trond Fuhre, chairman of the Norwegian Supporterunionen for Britisk Fotball, said that it would be good to have a place near the ground where supporters could meet before games.

Question: Does Supporters Direct campaign for safe standing at football grounds?

Answer: The Football Supporters' Federation is the organisation that backs the right of fans to watch football from a safe standing area if they so wish.

Robert Hughes asked the meeting to give a mandate to the steering group to continue preparing for an election and AGM: all present were in favour of this. He concluded by inviting members to the next meeting, at 7 pm on Tuesday May 1st at the Royal George.