

Nov 2014 AGM

Chairman's Report

Following on the last AGM in which it was revealed we have been awarded ACV status for ST. Andrews, we would just like to update you on where we are and what we have been up to. Interestingly enough the ACV in itself seems to have been a very worthwhile exercise. Everything that is anything seems to have been sold off to fund the ongoing operation of the club or our parent organisation, but the ground has not been mentioned. November also seen the announcement that BIHL posted losses of £10mil for the year to the end of June 2013; more covering that will be discussed later. Figures reveal Peter Pannu pocketed almost £1mil per year from BIHL and we welcome the fact that his consultancy agreement has now ended.

We also spent some time in the early part of the year gauging the fans appetite for share ownership. We were staggered by the positive response, receiving over 500 responses totalling a pledge of almost £500K. This in itself seems pretty insignificant when you think about the amount of money that is synonymous with football these days, but as a gauge of opinion into relatively untapped quarters, was impressive. This information will be vital if and when we get the chance to bid for full or part ownership of the club, but more so when we engage with a potential new owner, we have data to negotiate some kind of fan involvement.

This led us onto our DELAY-NO-MORE campaign. The campaign which officially started during the Derby home game with the unveiling of the DELAY-NO-MORE banner was a collaborative, non-violent campaign designed to reflect the mood and feelings of supporters on the terraces at St. Andrew's. It was also a way for supporters to get involved and help bring about positive change to BCFC. DELAY-NO-MORE was carefully chosen as it did have a double meaning in Cantonese, which I'm not going to translate here, hence the banner was subsequently censored once the point was made. It certainly galvanised the supporters. We know for certain it ruffled many feathers in Hong Kong.

During this period of time BIHL announced to HKSE Board changes, which included Carson Yeung stepping down from all board positions associated with BCFC. BIHL resumes trading on the HKSE, whilst at the same time they managed to cut their losses marginally to £4.8mil for the half year to the end of 2013. Then in March of course Carson Yeung was found guilty of 5 counts of money laundering by a court in HK and subsequently sentenced to 6 years in prison. Following the conviction we requested assistance from Football League to look into our ownership structure in more depth, in particular the 'Shadow Director' element. It took them just 1 hour to decide there was no case to answer.

As the end of the season quickly approached, sadly the sale never. This was despite several reports that it was still a high priority for the owners; at least 4 concrete offers were reportedly made for the

club during this time, however nothing ever materialised. It has become very apparent the sale is no longer on the agenda. Having been reported by us recently following the meeting with Panos, that investment is now the main thrust for BIHL, is this just to keep their HKSE listing we ask?

On a positive note those that were fortunate enough to be at Bolton last May will be at least buoyed by the memory of yet another truly great day out for BCFC, the right result was courtesy of a last minute goal, but the level of support given was truly tremendous, this was recognised formally by our opponents.

This season started with a little more optimism, gone were the squad of loan signings, which led to a very successful preseason, 5 games, 4 wins and only the 1 goal conceded. However that quickly eroded and were definitely brought back down to earth as normal service resumed and we could only manage a mere 1 more home win. We were also again fortunate enough to attend the annual supporter summit held at the very prestigious Wembley Stadium. We used this opportunity to direct questions directly to Peter Hannon from the Football League in regards to the Shadow Director issue of Carson Yeung, his responses given were very generic.

During this time it has become apparent that BIHL seem to be in complete disarray, they are reported to be losing £1mil per month, and they informed the HKSE of a 20% rise in net loss in the year to 30 June 2014. They have announced a delay in finalising EGM paperwork, which culminated in the proposed funding falling through. All this resulted in BIHL posting losses for the year ended 30th June 2014 of £12.5mil. This as well as the embarrassing home defeat to Bournemouth was enough, we simply had to take action.

So where do BIHL go from here? Yes the removal of Lee Clarke and the swift replacement with Gary Rowett and his team has been very positive, but it seems they are heading for collapse. No funding, poor infrastructure and a complete lack of leadership and direction is an obvious recipe for disaster, not a great prospect for our club, so what can we do? Following the open meeting we decided the following:

- Locally, the Trust, along with all supporters who wish to get involved, will seek to highlight the Club's current plight through the local media and by lobbying local MP's, Birmingham City Council and its councillors for their support and intervention.
- Nationally, the Football League will be targeted and urged to put increasing pressure on the BIHL, and national Westminster MP's will also be contacted with a view to highlighting both BCFC's current plight and wider football governance issues in Parliament.
- Internationally, more work is needed to highlight the Club's issues in Hong Kong. We will work with all supporters who are willing to help in devising a blueprint for increased pressure on the BIHL hierarchy, ensuring they are held accountable for the issues faced 6,000 miles away in Birmingham.