

## **Chair's report to 2016 AGM of Blues Trust**

This has been another difficult year for the board of Blues Trust. We had five people on the board following last year's AGM and lost two of them during the year. Emma Hodgson resigned at the end of May as her family and work commitments made it impossible for her to devote much time to the trust. Mark Sutton passed away in August after being ill for some time. He contributed to our work by keeping track of the shareholdings in Birmingham International Holdings Limited. We miss his input, encouragement and friendship.

The three remaining members of the board have not been able to do all that we said needed doing at last year's AGM. We did make a bit more use of social media and re-established a Facebook page. We also co-operated with another Blues supporters' group, Blues 4 All, and published two posts about them on our website before they had managed to set up their own Blues 4 All Facebook page on the web.

The wider movement of football supporters that we are involved with, Supporters Direct and the Football Supporters Federation, were part of the Government's Expert Working Group on Supporter Ownership and Engagement. The English Football League has accepted this group's recommendation that clubs should have a structured dialogue with their fans. From this season, clubs will be required to hold at least two meetings/fans forums with a representative group of supporters at which senior club management are present. Our club has said that it will comply with this requirement and that senior management will be at the supporters' forum on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Blues Trust board members have struggled this past year: we need help and a fresh perspective. So I am encouraged by the two members who are standing for election to the board for the first time. Phil Beardmore and Cliff Horrocks are both well qualified to make a contribution.

This is our first AGM since the end of the ownership crisis that led to the formation of the trust. The trust still has a role as it was never intended to be a single-issue protest group, concentrating on forcing Carson out. From the start, the trust's aim was to promote a constructive relationship between the club and its supporters. If we have owners who are willing to consult supporters, then we will work with them for the good of the club. But we will remain independent so that we will always be free to challenge decisions made by the owners and hold them accountable.

Margaret Decker