

BLUES TRUST

Minutes of the meeting of the Blues Trust Board held at 12 noon on Saturday 20 June 2020 via Skype video conference call.

In attendance: Cliff Horrocks (CH) (Chair), Peter Bull (PB), Neil Cottrell (NC), Margaret Decker (MD), Richard Docker (RD), Bob Pickett (BP), David Roots (DR) and Richard Stanley (RS) (Board Members).

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

- Karim Adab (KA) (Board Member)

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 April 2020 were noted and approved. In terms of matters arising from the minutes, the Chair explained that he was still to produce a Plan B as previously identified in the agreed schedule of projects to be undertaken; RS confirmed that he was still to complete an article (for publication) on BCFC accounts, but was expecting to do so within the next couple of weeks; and it was noted that a project lead was still to be identified to pursue the matter of ground improvements for disabled supporters (note - expressions of interest to be made to the Chair).

4. Chairs Report

CH explained that he had heard back from Colin Tattum at BCFC, Colin's response (saying he would raise issues within the club) has been circulated previously. He added that he had sent a further note recently regarding the Black Lives Matter initiative. CH confirmed that he would keep the situation under review and seek to develop further dialogue with Mr Tattum.

CH added that a new supporters group had recently been formed which was affiliated to the BCFC women's team. CH explained that he had a telephone call scheduled for Monday 20 April 2020 with the person responsible for setting up the group, Craig (?) to explain the role of the Trust and to seek to build a relationship.

CH noted that the recent article by the Trust on Pep Clotet's announced departure appeared to have struck the right tone and received favourable comment.

5. Financial Report

PB introduced his financial report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He explained that there was no change to the overall surplus or the balance sheet from the information sent in advance of the meeting. He confirmed that the year end accounts would be submitted to the Trusts accountants during the week commencing 20 April 2020 for audit purposes.

PB explained that the accounts still include loans provided by CH (£100), RS (£200) and himself (£300) in 2016/17 to the Trust to enable it to acquire shares in Birmingham City Plc. RS confirmed that he was content to write his loan off as a gift to the Trust at some point in the future. CH concurred and explained that he had no intention to seek the return of his loan. However, the matter and size of PB's loan was discussed and upon request the Board unanimously agreed to reimburse PB £200 of the outstanding sum with the remaining £100 left as a loan.

PB reminded the Board of the recent unsuccessful attempt to acquire BCFC shares from a supporter, a transaction which had failed because the supporter did not in fact own the shares as he had thought. PB confirmed that no monies had been lost to the Trust. In discussion, it was agreed that the general principle of the Trust acquiring further shares should be adhered too, and that steps be taken to publicise the fact that the Trust was interested in doing so.

PB explained that the Trust was currently paying £72 pa in charges to Unity Trust Bank, and he sought the views of the Board regarding the exploration of alternative and cheaper banking options. The Board agreed that this should happen and gave PB authority to do so on its behalf.

PB and RD explained that Harry Docker, RD's nephew, had recently expressed an interest in supporting PB in his administration and management of the website and membership data base. Harry is 20 years of age, a committed Bluenose, a Trust member and an IT enthusiast. At the moment his voluntary engagement is being undertaken on a trial basis in close consultation with PB, and he has not been given any permissions to make unsupervised changes to the website or data base. Rather, he is developing an understanding of how they function. If both PB and Harry find the arrangement to be of value, a further update will be submitted to the Board in due course concerning the possibility of more formal involvement.

6. Projects Management

NC introduced his report with reference to the Membership Services Update paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The paper detailed research undertaken to identify the work and services offered by other Trusts and considered what else the Blues Trust might offer to its members in the light of those findings. The paper, which was welcomed by all, stimulated a lengthy discussion about the core purpose of the Blues Trust and the direction that it might wish to take going forward. In essence, it was agreed that the Trust needed to determine if it wanted to extend the range of services it offered to members and the work it undertook within the Blues community....in which case a strong and improved working relationship with BCFC was necessary....or if its purpose was to become and remain an effective pressure group which sought to hold the club to account on behalf of its members and supporters more widely, and to effect change as necessary. The consensus reached was that the primary remit of the Trust is to influence the football club and developing engagement with the club is essential (although challenging). However, further member benefits should not be ruled out. In conclusion it was agreed that further dialogue with BCFC should be pursued to raise the profile of the Trust and build relationships, and CH in his capacity as Chair agreed to take this forward. NC was thanked for his research and report.

7. Other Officer Updates

- (i) Research and Development - RS explained that Covid 19 had created much uncertainty about the financial state of football, including with individual club finances, with many variables now in play. BCFC accounts will give an indication of where the club is currently positioned. RS confirmed that he is scrutinising the accounts and will produce an article for publication on the Trust website soon;
- (ii) Press and PR - in the absence of KA no verbal update was given;
- (iii) Electronic Media - BP explained that he was continuing to undertake research and compile data for published features on the history of the club and its players. He confirmed that a daily quiz was being undertaken on the website which was generating significant interest. He also explained that he was still awaiting feedback from Colin Tattum at BCFC regarding the club's stance on the book publication idea identified previously. CH confirmed that he would speak to BP separately concerning ideas for the book;
- (iv) Membership and Marketing - DR explained that 270 full members remained at financial year end, with 777 followers. Significantly, of those full members the highest priced membership option (5 years for £20) was the

most popular. It was agreed to commence a new membership drive targeted at followers now that the football season had recommenced.

(v) *Without Portfolio* - nothing to report at this point.

8. Any Other Business.

- (i) Statue for Trevor Francis - NC raised the previously discussed matter of a statue for Trevor Francis in commemoration of his professional football debut 50 years ago. He confirmed that the cost was likely to be in the region of £80-£100k. There was continued support for the idea from those present and it was agreed that CH is to contact Colin Tattum at BCFC to advance the matter. It was agreed that Mr Francis should be contacted for his views on the proposal once the football club had confirmed its position;
- (ii) Covid 19 Facemasks - MD reminded the meeting of the initiative being undertaken by the Accessiblues Supporters Club to sell facemasks in BCFC colours. It was agreed that the Trust should offer to support the initiative and sell masks on behalf of Accessiblues. CH agreed to follow up with the supporters club;
- (iii) Carling Cup Celebration Event - CH explained that he had been contacted by a marketing and events organisation to ask if he/Trust members were interested in attending an event to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Carling Cup success. It was agreed to find out if a discount was available for Blues Trust members before writing to them about the event. CH to follow up.

The meeting finished at 13.20.

9. Date of Next Meeting

- Saturday 15 August 2020 at 12.00 noon via Skype video.