

Blues Trust AGM 2021

Chair's Report



It is heartening to start this annual report with better news than the last few years. Fans back in stadiums, the departure of Mr Ren, the appointment of Lee Bowyer and the strong end to last season that continued at the start of this season brings some hope for the future. This hope is augmented by the start of more open communication from the club in the form of statements, together with a recent breakthrough in that the senior management at BCFC have agreed to renew engagement and communication with the Trust.

But we all know that there are still many current and underlying issues that need addressing at our club. The current ground repair and ticketing issues needing urgent resolution with the precarious financial position and clarity of who ultimately owns the club and the ground needing longer term solutions.

Financially the Trust remains a low income, low spend organisation with the activities carried out by Board members and Associates on a voluntary basis. The Blues Trust Board has been further strengthened this year with the addition of new active members and Associates. I record here my appreciation for their work. I am also grateful for contributions from members in the form of articles for publication and ideas put forward over the course of the year, with special mention to Mitchell Bray for his regular 'in off the post' articles.

The most extensive work stream last year was the Trust's contribution to the Government's Fan Led Review of football carried out by Tracy Crouch MP. We researched our members views, presented and discussed our ideas at zoom meetings with Tracy Crouch individually and as part of the Football Supporters Association (FSA) group sessions. We confirmed our presentations in the evidence sessions by producing and submitting a comprehensive report (which you can read on our web site). Tracy Crouch's report is imminent at the time of writing, but we are hopeful that it will signal meaningful change for genuine football supporters given the content of the interim report she published in July.

The last year has seen the following activity:

- Fan Led Review input
- Joint campaign with Tilton Talk re open letter calling for resignation of Dong Ren
- Preparation of Plan B - establishing mechanisms, fan ownership / part fan ownership models and shell company for use in case of administration / insolvency of BCFC
- investigations into club and ground ownership, analysis of accounts and financial matters at BCFC / BSH
- plan X established - possible ownership change research project
- Increased Membership Drive
- Initial members zoom meeting held
- Continued efforts to establish Structured Dialogue with BCFC

- Scrutinising Asset of Community Value standing with Birmingham Council
- Application to Birmingham Council for supporter representation on Safety Advisory Group
- Press releases / TV interviews
- Publication of opinion pieces
- Improvement in social media presence
- Liaison with FSA and other Supporters Trusts
- Liaison with other Blues supports groups
- Support for and liaison with Fans for Diversity
- Web site and membership database administration
- Submitted relevant compliance documentation to our regulator the Financial Service Authority
- Trust Board members functions and responsibilities updated and clarified

Continuing to grow membership is a key for the Trust. We need to reach the mass levels of participation currently enjoyed by some other supporter trusts if we are to give ourselves the very best chance of influencing the club in the interests of supporters. My appeal to all of you is to help us in that task by encouraging fellow Blues supporters you know to consider membership.

Looking forward there is hope that the current management is working hard to resolve the endemic issues at BCFC build up over many years, both on and off the pitch. I am also hopeful that Blues Trust will be able to establish a collaborative working relationship with senior management at BCFC.

Also, for the year ahead, I expect Blues Trust to lead in taking forward / supporting changes in football governance that emerge from the Fan Led review. In particular my challenge for Blues Trust is for us to push forward with opportunities for fan ownership /part ownership that arise from the review.

My sincere thanks to all who have given their services and time to support Blues Trust over the last year. We could not exist without you.

A special mention for Margaret Decker who is standing down this year from many years of service to Blues Trust. The Trust was established in 2012 and Margaret has been involved as a Board member since 2013 holding various positions including chair and secretary. Margaret's contribution and work for the Trust has been above and beyond and has ensured the Trust remained in existence through some difficult times. I am sure I speak for the Board and all members in showing our gratitude for all she has done and wishing her all the best in everything she does in the future.

KRO

Cliff Horrocks
Chair, Blues Trust