

# BLUES TRUST

Minutes of the meeting of the Blues Trust Board held at 7.00pm on Thursday 14 April 2022 via Zoom video conference.

In attendance: Cliff Horrocks (CH) (Chair), Pete Bull (PB), Neil Cottrell (NC), Richard Docker (RD), Paul Kelsall (PK), Bruce Kyte (BK), Linda Magner (LM), and Richard Stanley (RSt).

## Agenda Items

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

Karim Adab (KA), Liam Hindley (LH), Frank Oxley (FO), Rob Simpson (RSi) and David Squires (DS).

### 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 March 2022 were noted and approved. There were no matters arising. The action list update was also noted and board members were asked to ensure agreed actions were not lost. The three-month activity plan was noted, but it was agreed to consider it in more detail later in the meeting.

### 4. Chairs Report

CH explained that he had recently exchanged correspondence with ██████████, the contents of which had been circulated previously to board colleagues. CH expressed concern at the growth of anti Lee Bowyer sentiment that was appearing on social media, and questioned what was happening and why? In general discussion, it was agreed that Lee Bowyer was working under very difficult circumstances and needed time and support to succeed.

### 5. Financial Report

PB introduced his report with reference to the financial update paper circulated prior to the meeting. He confirmed that the operating surplus and reserves are currently in a very healthy state and continuing to grow, with no major items of expenditure envisaged at the present time. PB explained that attempts to review the management of the membership system had stalled because Love Admin have still not responded to requests for additional information.

## 6. Fan Led Review

CH introduced this item with an update on recent progress. The email campaign appears to have gone well, with significant member engagement. Responses from MP's contacted had, to date, been reasonably positive and supportive. CH had approached BCFC about a joint letter but there had been no response so far. CH had made contact with some other Trust's about their approach to joint submissions, but there appears to have been very limited engagement elsewhere too. CH confirmed that he was also still awaiting a response from the club regarding the further steps that had been discussed at the last meeting with the Senior Management Team. Following recent discussion with the FSA, CH explained that it is expected that the Government's response to the FLR will be made known shortly, particularly with the Queen's Speech scheduled for 10 May. Although it is expected to be generally positive, it is possible that the timescale for implementation might be pushed back. It was agreed that the Trust should be prepared for various outcomes and ready to respond quickly once the way forward is known.

## 7. Seat Ticket Prices

LM introduced this item and explained that it was clear that a number of supporters were still unhappy with the lack of response from the club regarding the stand closure issues at the start of the season, and particularly the compensation proposed when lesser value seats were offered as alternatives. In discussion it was agreed that the club does not offer an acceptable level of customer experience and compares poorly with other clubs of a similar stature. It was agreed that a survey of Trust members should be undertaken during the close season to establish their views on general satisfaction levels with club administration and overall supporter experience, with a view to presenting evidence to the club in due course. LM/PB/RD to prepare and execute the survey.

## 8. Corporate Branding

RD introduced this item by reminding board colleagues of a previous commitment to review the Trust's brand. This work had stalled recently but the close season presented an opportunity to revisit the task. In general discussion it was agreed that there is a need to review the Trust's purpose and offer to supporters of the club, to modernise its image and to increase efforts to raise it's profile. The scale of the review was acknowledged but it was agreed that it was an important and worthwhile task if the Trust was to develop going forward. RD to lead the exercise with engagement by all board members.

## 9. Other Officer Updates

(i) Research and Technical - RSt updated the meeting on recent progress to tie loose ends with regard to BFRLtd. It had been established that the company will need to produce statutory accounts even though it is dormant. David Dixie will do the first set of accounts. A proposal to increase the Trust's share capital in the company to £200 was unanimously approved by all present;

(ii) Press - in the absence of KA no report was given;

(iii) Projects Management - NC drew attention to the three-month activity plan. The plan was discussed and updated. Specific actions agreed were: (i) RSi to confirm identification, so far, of any high value net worth influential supporters; (ii) RD to update list of dates for website articles by board members;

(iv) Membership - LM confirmed that she was currently engaged in chasing lapsed members. She had arranged a social gathering for board members, with a lunch event to be held in Birmingham on Saturday 11 June (board members to meet their own costs). Arrangements for the 10th Anniversary celebration still needed to be finalised and it was agreed that LM/CH/RD should discuss separately away from the meeting. She explained that she was trying to secure agreement from the club for the inclusion of an article in the match day programme for the Millwall fixture. The proposed article would recognise the support given by Millwall supporters in response to the Arthur campaign. RSt to assist. Finally, LM explained that the FSA was seeking information from supporters concerning their experience of away matches. It was agreed that the matter could be addressed in the member survey agreed earlier in the meeting;

(v) Fan Unity - PK explained that the meeting held recently with representatives of other Blues supporter groups had gone well, with much positive feedback. It had been a good start which now needs to be developed. In discussion it was agreed that the Trust needs to be more active, particularly on match days, if momentum with other groups is to be built. PK to follow up;

(vi) Influential Supporters Programme - in the absence of RSi no report was given;

(vii) Marketing and PR - RD explained that there had been no recent activity undertaken by the Marketing Group but that the corporate branding review would be developed as a priority during the close season;

(viii) IT and Website - PB explained that things are currently running smoothly on the website and the Blues Trust Forum site on Facebook is continuing to attract new participants;

(ix) Without Portfolio - nothing to report.

#### 10. Any Other Business

(i). Supporter Forum - CH confirmed that the Trust had been invited to attend the club's next supporter forum on 19 May. It was subsequently agreed that PK would attend with him, and board members were asked to let CH have any questions for the meeting so that these could be submitted, as requested by the club, in advance of the meeting itself;

(ii). Player of the Year - CH confirmed that the Trust had been invited by the club to nominate a POTY, with the presentation of an award to follow (subsequently agreed for the club's awards presentation night on 8 May). It was agreed that Trust members should be asked to make the decision through a ballot. NC and PB to action;

(ii). PB Absence - PB explained that he would be abroad for approximately three weeks in late April/early May which might impact on his ability to undertake Trust activities. However, he confirmed that he would still endeavour to post articles on the website subject to the availability of Wi-Fi.

#### 9. Date of Next Meeting

- The date of the next meeting was confirmed for Thursday 26 May 2022 at 7.00pm via Zoom video conference.

The meeting finished at 9.22pm.