

BLUES TRUST

Minutes of the meeting of the Blues Trust Board held at 7.30pm on Thursday 30 November 2023 via Zoom video conference.

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

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Karim Adab (KA).

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 September 2023 were noted and approved. There were no matters arising.

4. Chair's Report

NC updated the meeting on recent developments. He began by explaining that the club had requested a postponement of the Trust members Zoom meeting with Garry Cook to enable the inaugural Open House meeting with other supporter representatives to happen first. A revised meeting date of 7 December has now been agreed. In discussion there was agreement that it had been right to agree the request. It was also agreed that the delay would afford more time for further preparation to help ensure that the meeting ran smoothly and according to plan.

5. Update From Open House

LM and RS gave an update from the inaugural Open House event held by the club on Monday 27 November, and which they attended as representatives of Blues Trust. Both had been very impressed with an excellent event. The meeting had been open and welcoming, extremely well organised and professional throughout and well received by all present. The attendance level had been good, Garry Cook had presented well and all of the breakout sessions were interesting and informative. RS explained that he had tried to draw a response from Jeremy Dale on the extent to which supporters would be given influence rather than just information, but that no real response was forthcoming

on the question. It was noted that the club is proposing the development of local supporter networks with which it planned to engage, but no details had been revealed. In discussion it was agreed that the Trust should wait and see what specific proposals emerge and also how legislation is developed regarding the question of supporter engagement (in response to the Fan Led Review and subsequent White Paper) before pursuing any further formal contact with the club.

6. Zoom Meeting With Garry Cook

NC introduced this item and reminded everyone that the Trust member meeting with Garry Cook was now taking place in seven days time on 7 December. A general discussion followed by way of preparation for the meeting. The format, timing, questions and individual roles were all considered and agreement was reached on the structure of the meeting. It was agreed: (i) that the Webinar function should be acquired to better facilitate the expected high numbers of members attending; (ii) not to record the meeting; and (iii) to hold a rehearsal on Monday 4 December to finalise detailed arrangements, with all Board members invited to attend.

7. Future Trust Strategy And Priorities

NC introduced this item and reminded everyone of work undertaken previously, including discussions held at the last board meeting in September and with Trust members at the AGM in November, to develop a way forward for the Trust in the light of the ownership changes that had occurred in July. In discussion, there was acknowledgment from all that the club is now in a very different, and much better, place than it had been previously and that this could have implications for the role of the Trust going forward.

It was agreed that the measures being undertaken by the club, including the Open House, Blues Matters and relaunched Official Supporters Club initiatives, were a positive step forward with regard to fan engagement and were to be welcomed. And there was full support for the Trust to collaborate with the club at every opportunity, including actively participating with each initiative if invited to do so.

But there was also consensus that the Trust could, and perhaps should, continue to exist as an independent group. Particularly so if things did not work out as the owners expected, and the Trust needed to revisit its purpose as a backstop in the event of something like administration occurring.

It was agreed that the Trust should amend its vision statement to include the word independent and to review matters again in three to six months when the club's fan engagement initiatives had begun to play out.

In terms of key activities for the year ahead, the following were agreed as priorities to be developed: (i) canvas the views of members on key issues relating to the club more than has been done in the past; (ii) continue to develop the number and range of member benefits, including monthly podcasts, on line forums, actual events and improved information for supporters travelling to away games. RS agreed to examine international membership with a view to identifying where they were located and if more could be done to develop specific benefits for them. It was agreed that ongoing consideration should be given to the development of key activities and members benefits.

8. Officer Portfolio's 2024

NC introduced this item and referred to the draft 2024 Officer Portfolio schedule circulated prior to the meeting. The schedule was noted and discussed. It was agreed that NC would now be the primary link with senior officials at the club. CH confirmed his full acceptance of the change and thanked NC for taking on the role of chair. All present were asked to further consider the schedule after the meeting, and to submit any comments regarding possible changes or additional tasks to RD. NC agreed to follow things up with KA given his absence.

9. Financial Report

PB introduced this item with reference to his written report circulated prior to the meeting. The report was noted.

10. Board Meeting Dates 2024

RD introduced this item with reference to the schedule of dates previously circulated. The schedule was noted and agreed.

11. Any Other Business

(i) LM raised the club's recently announced appeal to support Birmingham Children's Trust provide Christmas presents for every young person under the care or support of the Trust. She asked if Blues Trust should contribute to the appeal? In discussion it was unanimously agreed that the Trust should do so, and a sum of £50 was confirmed for the purpose. PB was asked to arrange for the donation to be made.

12. Date of Next Meeting

- The date of the next meeting was confirmed for Thursday 11 January 2024 (but subsequently changed to Wednesday 10 January 2024) at 7.30pm via Zoom video conference call.

The meeting finished at 9.34pm.