

BLUES TRUST

Vision : To be an independent, representative and influential voice for all supporters of Birmingham City Football Club.

Minutes of the meeting of the Blues Trust Board held at 7.00pm on Thursday 25 July 2024 via Zoom video conference.

In attendance: Neil Cottrell (NC) (Chair), Pete Bull (PB), Richard Docker (RD), Fred Greaves (FG), Jez Hemming (part) (JH), Cliff Horrocks (part) (CH) and Bruce Kyte (BK).

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Karim Adab (KA), Linda Magner (LM) and Richard Stanley (RS).

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 May 2024 were noted and approved. With regard to the sale or donation of old club shirts, FG confirmed that he will talk to CH outside the meeting. There were no other matters arising.

4. Chair's Report

NC updated the meeting on recent activity. He explained that the expected meeting with Jeremy Dale had not yet taken place because there had been no contact back from him. In discussion it was agreed that this is a cause for concern. John Clarke had also failed to respond to a query NC had raised with him on behalf of ██████████ and his plea for assistance with a bag drop-off point at home matches. The lack of contact from the club was very disappointing. It was agreed to keep things under review and to keep trying for dialogue. NC confirmed that he had made contact with ██████████, a supporter injured during the final home game of last season against Norwich City, and had offered to provide assistance, if possible, with his concerns about stewarding at the time. ██████████ had indicated that he wanted to pursue the matter himself.

NC made reference to the recent zoom meeting for members with Colin Tattum and all agreed it had been a real success. It was further agreed

to arrange another “Evening with....” with someone else. [REDACTED] and Michael Wiseman were suggested for consideration. NC agreed to follow up [REDACTED] in the first instance in consultation with CH.

NC confirmed that he had attended the FSA AGM on Saturday past, and had enjoyed what he considered to be an excellent event. He had attended some very interesting workshops with themes that included: (i) the increasing influence of “Americanisation” within the game; (ii) the raised pricing of matches; (iii) the contentious issue of domestic competitive games being played abroad; and (iv) the need for greater independent fan engagement. NC explained that the FSA will continue to campaign strongly against inflated ticket prices, overseas matches and the lack of independent fan engagement.

5. Fan Engagement

NC explained that following the FSA meeting on Saturday, he had written to them about the developing situation at Blues where there had been progress, but where engagement is effectively controlled with no elements of independent scrutiny and no democratisation. CH shared NC’s concern that the Trust was no longer in the loop of what is happening. NC is still awaiting a response from the FSA but will hold further discussions with representatives at the organisation.

6. FSA Copyright Advice

RD reminded everyone of the recent advice received from the FSA about the use of unauthorised images to support articles on organisational websites. It was agreed in discussion that the matter must be taken seriously and care must always be taken about what the Trust publishes. PB confirmed that he is always mindful of this issue and takes precautions to ensure that unauthorised images are not used. PB reminded everyone of a past agreement with the club to use its images when appropriate. It was agreed that PB would contact the club again (via Dale Moon) to seek reaffirmation of the agreement. It was also noted that the Creative Commons Library could be a good source of images.

7. AGM 2024

RD informed the meeting that it was being proposed to revise the date of the AGM this year because he and NC now found themselves unavailable on the date originally planned, namely 3 October 2024. A revised date of Wednesday 20 November was agreed. RD explained that advance notification of the meeting would now be sent to members on Wednesday 25 September (eight weeks prior to the meeting). RD also

confirmed that PB, FG, JH and CH were required to retire at the meeting although all were eligible to stand again for appointment to the Board.

8. Club Updates

CH noted that the South Asian Blues Matters group was not getting much of a reaction from the club in response to its recommendations. The date of the next open house was not yet known. The continuing development and activities of the OSC's were noted and discussed.

9. Financial Report

PB introduced the report with reference to the paper he had circulated prior to the meeting. The operating surplus and general reserves figures were noted. There had been no major items of expenditure since the last meeting.

PB explained that the year end accounts are now with the accountant for agreement.

PB confirmed that membership is holding steady, with 388 full members and 1041 followers currently. But it is not increasing, and it was agreed in discussion that more needs to be done to grow membership, including the consideration of incentives. All to note with a view to actions.

With regard to the website, PB confirmed that things were running smoothly. He proposed that the contact details for each of the OSC's be included on the website, and this was agreed. PB to write to club for information. JH proposed that the Trust should start to comment more routinely on the FB pages of other Blues supporter groups. This was agreed as an effective method of raising profile, and the MAG was asked to consider the matter in more detail at its next meeting.

10. Any Other Business

- (i) Connect Church. CH updated the meeting on building development progress, and confirmed that it was looking good for use by the Trust at the opening match against Reading. It was agreed that a drop in session be held on a trial basis and that LM reach out to opposition Trust's to invite their members to visit. It was also agreed that some money might need to be spent on a banner or an A board for use outside the church to encourage supporters to drop in. This was agreed subject to involvement from PB as Treasurer;

11. Date of Next Meeting

- The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 26 September 2024 at 7.00pm via zoom video conference call.

The meeting finished at 8.55pm.