

BLUES TRUST

Vision : To be an independent, democratic, 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 Wednesday 28 May 2025 via Zoom video conference.

In attendance: Neil Cottrell (NC) (Chair), Pete Bull (PB), Fred Greaves (FG), Cliff Horrocks (CH) (Vice Chair), Bruce Kyte (BK), and Luke Davies (LD).

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and Introductions

NC welcomed all present to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Karim Adab (KA), Richard Docker (RD), Linda Magner (LM), Richard Stanley (RS)

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 April 2025 were noted and approved.

NC then went through the actions log which was updated accordingly.

There were no further matters arising.

4. Club Engagement

NC explained that the Board meeting was structured around each of the four agreed Trust Priorities for 2025 starting with Club Engagement.

NC went on to explain that he had not heard back from [REDACTED] following sending him a critique of fan engagement between the club and supporters (attachment circulated ahead of the meeting) despite a couple of follow ups.

PB read out LM's concerns on engagement. The meeting debated how best to take this item forward. CH thought that pursuing this item publicly was likely to be counterproductive, which was agreed by the meeting. He also suggested that the FSA had a role to play as a backstop here. NC

highlighted that if (when!) Blues get into the Premier League (PL) then engagement would be governed by PL rules which mandate the set up of an Advisory Board which was likely to shake things up.

It was also pointed out that there had only been one Open House this season when the Club had stated there would be two (and EFL rules mandate two) – although CH thought one might be imminent. There was also some discussion about the OSC survey (sent out by OSCs not the club) in terms of both coverage and content.

The meeting agreed to approach [REDACTED] again offering him either a call with NC or in-person meeting with CH. Additionally NC would set up a chat with the FSA.

5. Football Governance Bill

NC update the meeting on the latest situation on this as given by Ashley Brown of the FSA at last week's FSA League 1 & League 2 network meeting. The Bill is now back in the Commons with few changes from the Lords and has survived some Tory peers attempts to derail it. The Government would ideally like the relevant legislation passed before the summer recess.

The FSA have 5 priority areas where they believe the Bill could be strengthened. Ashley said he was doubtful as to whether the 5 areas would be included in the Bill but the next best thing would be for them to be raised in debate in the House and the points acknowledged by the minister which could then be used as precedent by the Independent Regulator.

Northampton Town Trust have gathered together a group of 20 likeminded Trusts, including Blues Trust, to put forward a motion at the FSA AGM in June on strengthening the Bill as far as clubs' engagement with Trusts. This is loosely covered in the FSA's first priority but the motion seeks to strengthen this commitment. Blues Trust has agreed to second the Bill. RS and BK are representing the Trust at the AGM and NC said that he expected RS, as the card carrier for the Trust, to be called to briefly speak on the motion as seconder. RS, BK and NC will discuss further next week.

Northampton Town Trust are also still trying to get a meeting with MPs – LD has kindly volunteered to attend (depending on date/time).

6. Membership

FG reported on the successful implementation of the membership WhatsApp Group.

The meeting discussed two further aspects of this.

Firstly, in terms of numbers it was agreed to send up some chaser emails to those who had shown an interest and but not joined the group and those who had not responded initially giving them the option to join.

PB wondered whether Followers or lapsed members could use this group, but the meeting concluded that it should be current members only – even though that creates a little bit more admin.

FG volunteered to become lead admin for the group - PB pointed out that FG wasn't on the admin list and this was rectified during the meeting. It was agreed that if there were any controversial posts these should be discussed between at least two of the Admin team and any initial action would then be FG talking with the relevant poster. FG also agreed to take the initiative in terms of posting content to keep the group active.

NC reported that the Evening with Neil Moxley was on track. Numbers were still low so it was agreed to email members again and use WhatsApp and the Website to encourage more registrations. This will be a Members Only Event.

For the meeting itself it is proposed to use the same format as for Colin Tattum – two people on screen – NC and NM - with the others not visible. Questions during the meeting to be submitted via the chat and read out by RD. Live questions from other participants not allowed. NC circulated draft questions and asked for any additions Board Members might have (Thanks to FG for his input on this).

7. Wider Fan Engagement

CH confirmed that £55 had been collected at the Blues Trust Café as charitable donations to support action against knife crime and this had now been presented. The meeting also agreed to make £100 donation to the Trinity Church for the use of its facilities.

The café has become increasingly successful as the year has progressed with several regulars now attending. CH is meeting with Kirk (the pastor at the church) to discuss next year. One challenge could be less Saturday 3pm kick-offs due to increased TV coverage in the Championship so it is possible that the number of games that the café could be open at the Church could be restricted. CH mentioned that volunteers at the café might want the occasional game 'off' and NC encouraged further volunteering at the café.

It was agreed to launch the competition on the Memories of Blues series of articles in July.

The meeting also discussed the possibility of launching a podcast. To do this will probably require significant effort and planning from at least 3 individuals – 2 presenters and a producer. LD indicated that he would have some interest in this – but only at a frequency of once every 6 weeks or so. The meeting agreed to think about this further.

8. Club Updates

Nothing to report

9. Financial Report

PB introduced this item and updated the meeting on the current financial position of the Trust in terms of operating surplus and general reserves. He explained that income from membership is declining as numbers fall. He further explained that the biggest item of expenditure continues to be for the hosting of the website.

BK has looked at a financial package on a free trial and has also access to the current spreadsheets. BK, PB and RS will continue to look at how best to support the Trusts accounting activities.

10. AGM

Confirmed for November 19th. CH raised the idea of whether to have a hybrid meeting. This may be worth investigating if we could find a suitable venue. There was some discussion about moving it to a Saturday ahead of a game but concern was expressed about whether we could reach a quorum.

11. Any Other Business

The Board had a brief discussion under AOB. The items raised were covered in discussions earlier in the meeting and are minuted there.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 7 August 2025 at 7.00pm

The meeting finished at 8.51pm.