



MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

Monday 20th July 2020

Present: Michel Thomas (MT) – chair, Ali Bryant (AB), Rob Burkitt (RB), Robin Causley (RC), Rob Dickinson (RD), Rick Williams (RW).
Nick Brodrick (NB) from item 20/40

20/37	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2020 The minutes were tabled and approved.</p> <p>There were no matters arising not covered in the agenda for this meeting.</p>	
20/38	<p>Football matters</p> <p>There was general discussion about the current football scene nationally, the latest news for TUFC and the prospects for the start of the new season. Different messages were noted regarding the potential National League start date of mid-September and the Prime Minister’s recent announcement about sports stadiums re-opening in October. The potential benefit of Matchday Ambassadors in assisting with any return of spectators was noted and it was agreed to offer this support to the Club.</p> <p>RD observed that there would be a significant number of fans who may not be able to return to live football with likely restrictions in place or would not feel comfortable doing so. He wondered if the Club could consider live video streaming of matches for a fee as some other clubs were proposing.</p> <p>MT tabled copies of the Football Supporters Association (FSA) / Non-League Paper’s recent survey of attitudes towards the restart of football. Key points include 77% indicating they would plan to return for the first game of the season with only 1% saying that they were unlikely to return to football at all (bearing in mind this was a poll of NLP readers who are likely to be keen fans rather than casual attendees).</p> <p>82% of respondents agreed that football at this level should only return with fans in the stadiums while 38% did not agree that banning away fans was a price worth paying. Only 30% said they would feel more comfortable if facemasks had to be worn.</p>	

	<p>88% said they trusted their club to ensure the safety of fans and 69% indicated that they would be willing for ticket prices to increase modestly to make up for any drop in capacity or additional costs of safety measures.</p> <p>72% of respondents stated that they felt being a football fan was part of their identity and 70% said they wanted to financially support their clubs.</p>	
20/39	<p>Marketing & PR</p> <p>(a) Business networking Physical meetings were yet to resume but attendance would be arranged when they do.</p> <p>(b) Ian Twitchin Trophy MT reported that the Twitchin family had indicated that it would prefer a separate, informal event to present the Trophy to this year's winner, Kyle Cameron. An approach would be made via Dominic Mee to see if Boots & Laces could host the event. He would also be asked to inform Kyle, Gary Johnson and last year's winner, Liam Davis of the award.</p> <p>(c) Promoting TUST RW suggested that the start of the new season could present an opportunity to promote TUST, particularly in the current environment when much interest in the return to Plainmoor is expected. It would also be an opportunity for TUST to promote the Club to the wider business network and community at large. MT proposed to arrange a separate brainstorming meeting to consider this.</p> <p>(d) Schedule of contacts RW advised that he had been compiling a definitive version of TUST contacts list and would circulate the draft for members' comments and additions shortly. <i>NB joined the meeting at this point</i></p>	<p>MT</p> <p>MT</p> <p>RW</p>
20/40	<p>Devon Supporters Trust Group</p> <p>NB reported on the recent Zoom meeting of DSTG representatives which all involved had agreed to be successful.</p> <p>One outcome of the meeting had been the proposal to jointly support the Jack Leslie Campaign, raising funds for a statue to honour the Plymouth Argyle player allegedly denied an England cap in 1925 because he was black. The proposal for TUST to contribute £100 to match donations by the Exeter City and Argyle trusts, having already been approved by a majority of the board via e-mail, was ratified.</p> <p>A press release announcing this donation by DSTG under the banner 'Devon United' had received wide coverage in local media and via the official ECFC and PAFC websites but no mention on TUFC's site or in the Torbay Weekly.</p>	

<p>20/41</p> <p>(a)</p> <p>(b)</p>	<p>Media</p> <p>Herald Express / season tickets NB had successfully continued his wide ranging weekly Fanzone column in the Herald Express. There had still been no response from the Club regarding the early termination of season tickets.</p> <p>NB had conducted a survey of all National League club's response to this matter and received 19 replies. Over 50% of clubs had offered refunds for cancelled games. Five more had offered some kind of discount for next season's tickets in lieu of refunds. Of those offering refunds, most had invited fans to 'donate' their money to the club or incentives for season ticket purchases and most said that few fans had opted to take the full cash refund.</p> <p>Torbay Weekly / Player of the Season awards The board congratulated Ben Whitfield and Ben Wynter on their awards for Player of the Season and Young Player respectively.</p> <p>MT advised that he had contacted the Torbay Weekly, which ran the poll, raising the question of the possible exclusion of many fans from being able to vote if they didn't read the paper or have on-line access. He had received a reply acknowledging this but stating, quite reasonably, that it was the best option available to the Club in the present circumstances.</p>	
<p>20/42</p>	<p>Relationship with the Club</p> <p>MT had held a conversation with Dominic Mee, the Club's Media and Supporter Liaison Co-ordinator. As yet he had received no response to the issues raised with the directors on TUST's behalf.</p> <p>It was agreed to write formally to DM outlining all the positive contributions that TUST had made over the past year or so and how it could contribute going forward, including the Matchday Ambassadors referred to in minute 20/37. A meeting with DM to discuss this would be requested.</p> <p>A long list of items for inclusion in the letter was discussed.</p>	<p>MT</p>
<p>20/43</p>	<p>Torquay United Community Sports Trust / TUWFC</p> <p>TUCST was gradually restarting its various activities following lockdown.</p> <p>The Women's team had been successfully recruiting squad members and preparing for the new season. There has been no further approach from them for financial support at this time.</p>	
<p>20/44</p>	<p>Treasurer's report</p> <p>AB provided a summary of the first draft of accounts for the year ending 30th June indicating a surplus of £5,446.91. Membership stood at 375.</p>	

	In accordance with current policy, 50% of the surplus may be used to support relevant community initiatives. It was agreed to defer consideration of how these funds might be allocated until the next meeting. RC noted the financial difficulties facing Rowcroft, TUST's chosen charity for this year, and asked that this be considered at the same time.	
20/45	Any other business	
(a)	<p>Retro shirts MT advised that he had met with the owner of a company offering to produce retro shirts in any design required with a percentage of sales revenue going to a club cause or chosen charity at the trust's discretion (see minute 20/29(b)). The owner had been visiting the area from abroad and requested the opportunity to meet with MT.</p> <p>A sample shirt from Hull City was tabled and the quality was agreed to be good. The company claim to be able to produce any retro design, even one-offs, with any desired logos (eg: club, trust or charity).</p> <p>It was agreed that the opportunity should be raised with TUFC in the first instance as TUST did not wish to undermine sales of the Club's own merchandise but saw this as a complementary offer. If the Club are not interested the board will consider whether it is something TUST should market itself.</p>	MT
(b)	<p>AGM MT noted that the AGM would be held in the Autumn and asked members to give thought to this ahead of the next meeting.</p>	All

The date of the next meeting was provisionally fixed for Monday 17th August 2020 at 6.30pm. Venue to be decided.

Chairman's signature.....Date