



MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

Monday 18th March 2019

- Present:** Robin Causley (RC) – acting Chair, Nick Brodrick (NB), Ali Bryant (AB), Rob Burkitt (RB), Rick Williams (RW).
- In attendance:** Rob Dickinson (prospective co-optee)
- Apologies:** Simon Baker (SB), Matt Carpenter (MC), Jon Gibbes (JG), Michel Thomas (MT).

19/15	<p>Minutes of meeting held on 18th February 2019 The minutes were tabled and approved.</p> <p>Minute 19/11(b) – RW reported that MT had been in discussion with the Twitchin family. They were supportive of his idea of an annual award in Ian’s memory to the player making the most appearances in the season. It was agreed that the idea would be put to Sharon Cox in the first instance and followed up in writing if necessary. Details of how eligibility for the award will be determined would be decided in due course (eg: where more than one player has the same number of appearances). Proposed NB, seconded RB and unanimously agreed.</p> <p>Minute 19/12 – RB reported that obtaining data on the number of readers of forum posts would incur a cost and it was agreed that it is not viable to do so.</p>	RC
19/16	<p>Business Plan / Strategy</p> <p>(a) TUST objectives RW summarised the feedback from the consultation with members on the draft objectives and NB had some additional comments from another member. RW also reported on favourable feedback from Exeter City Supporters Trust and Hereford United Supporters Trust and a few recommendations they had made.</p> <p>It was proposed by AB, seconded by NB and unanimously agreed that the mission statement and objectives should be adopted, subject to a few minor amendments to the wording. RW to complete and also advise on how the full and shortened versions of the objectives should be used.</p> <p>.</p>	RW

	<p>(b) Strategy Team Notes from the Strategy Team meeting held on 6th March had been circulated. RW summarised the meeting, highlighting discussions around membership fees, research in to crowd-funding as a means of raising funds quickly if needed, the experience of HUFC as a phoenix club and the support that the Unified Football Supporters Federation could provide.</p> <p>It was proposed by the ST that the newly agreed objectives should form the framework for working up a strategic plan of action. The board approved this course with an initial draft to be tabled for consideration at the May meeting.</p> <p>(c) Membership /subscription options The Strategy Team had concluded that reduced membership fees might attract new members but that a minimum subscription should be set with a clear option for members to pay more if they wished. A need for other benefits to attract new members was noted, as was the possibility of links to family or junior membership.</p> <p>However, a final decision on fees still hinges on decisions about expenditure plans in due course. RD asked if there were sufficient existing funds to support any future need to rescue the Club. RC explained that reports prepared for TUST by Supporters Direct had indicated the level of funds required to facilitate such a step and this was achievable with the current reserves. RD asked if this money was ring-fenced for this purpose and it was stated that it was.</p>	ST
19/17	<p>TUFC Liaison</p> <p>(a) Communication RC updated on recent efforts to communicate with senior club officials but all had been ignored. Individual discussions had been held by board members with various staff and directors at the Club but Clarke Osborne and George Edwards had declined all requests to engage.</p> <p>MT had tabled a letter from CO dated January 2018 in which he stated;</p> <p>"I and the Club are committed and keen to continually improve this dialogue and develop improved communication and links with all supporters and the businesses and people of Torbay. You have my wholehearted support in this and Geoff (<i>Harrop – General Manager at the time</i>) and his team will, I am sure continue to actively engage with you – and if they don't, I expect you to tell me!</p> <p>Engagement is the key word for the team at Torquay United and they are working hard to improve our processes and communication."</p> <p>However, it was agreed that any further attempt to force a dialogue with the Club at the present time could be portrayed as disruptive at a time when all effort needed to be focused on the promotion challenge. Renewed efforts would be made at the end of the season.</p>	

<p>(b)</p> <p>(c)</p> <p>(d)</p>	<p>Possible joint initiatives RC reported on the position of the Torquay United Community Sports Trust which had recently made some staff redundant. TUCST receives no financial or practical support from the Club. It also faces the possibility of having its grant funding cut by 50% if the Club fails to gain promotion.</p> <p>TUCST was working up a proposal to launch a new scheme for young football fans and it was agreed that TUST should actively support this proposal rather than being directly involved in running a junior section itself. It would consider financial support for such a scheme including the 'loan' of equipment bought by TUST under the Premier League Fans Fund (PLFF) such as the Speed goal and Playstations. In return it would require recognition in publicity as a partner organisation.</p> <p>NB noted that support for this type of initiative aimed at young Gulls could open the door to better relations with the Club.</p> <p>Matchday Ambassadors NB stated that the Ambassadors continued to receive little support from the Club. He had been approached by a former steward who was interested in joining the Ambassadors next season.</p> <p>Away games at Woking and Chippenham Concern was expressed at the way tickets had been sold for the Woking game but it appeared little had been learned by the Club as the recent announcement about the sale of Chippenham tickets indicated. Given the unwillingness of the Club to engage, it was agreed that there was little point in raising objections at this late stage.</p> <p>The lack of priority for season ticket holders was criticised. It was also noted that the Club had missed an opportunity by not offering 'half-season tickets', particularly with the increased interest following the on-field success.</p> <p>It was agreed that permission should be sought from Woking and Chippenham to distribute the TUST brochure at these games.</p>	<p>RW</p>
<p>19/18</p>	<p>Marketing and Business Members</p> <p>AB reported little success in getting anyone to take on the marketing of corporate memberships. She would give this further thought.</p>	
<p>19/19</p>	<p>Communications / media</p> <p>RB reported that the website had been updated with copies of board minutes and details of the corporate members. Activity on Twitter and Facebook continued to be positive.</p>	

<p>19/20</p>	<p>Premier League Fans Fund</p> <p>The latest Fanzone scheduled for the Dartford game had been cancelled due to the poor weather. An expanded event is planned for the Easter Monday game with additional entertainment and activities. Details were being worked up by the steering group but as many volunteers as possible would be required. There are also provisional plans for a promotion celebration event / Yellow Day at the last home game.</p> <p>RC tabled a list of the forthcoming outreach events. The one in Newton Abbot on Easter Saturday is an all-day event and will require more volunteers working on a rota basis.</p>	
<p>19/21</p>	<p>FansBet</p> <p>RC had previously circulated details of an approach from FansBet for TUST to become a partner.</p> <p>It was agreed that the level of fan interest and subsequent financial benefit was likely to be minimal, especially as FansBet didn't take bets on National League South. It was also felt that it would be more appropriate to focus on promoting the Torbay Lottery as this benefits the community in line with our objectives.</p>	

The date of the next meeting was fixed for Monday 15th April 2019 at 6.30pm. Venue to be confirmed.

Chairman's signature.....Date