



MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

Monday 17th August 2020

Present: Michel Thomas (MT) – chair, Nick Brodrick (NB), Ali Bryant (AB), Robin Causley (RC), Rob Dickinson (RD), Rick Williams (RW).

Apologies: Rob Burkitt (RB)

20/46	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2020 The minutes were tabled and approved.</p> <p>There were no matters arising not covered in the agenda for this meeting.</p>	
20/47	<p>Torquay United and football matters</p> <p>(a) Meeting with TUFC representative RW had circulated notes of the Zoom meeting held the previous Thursday with Dominic Mee (DM), TUFC's Media and Supporter Liaison Co-ordinator, attended by MT, NB and himself. The meeting had lasted 2.5 hours and covered much ground.</p> <p>DM opened the meeting by stating that the club's directors were keen to draw a line in the sand and look to all parties working positively together for the benefit of the club. It was a time to look forward and put any past misunderstandings behind us.</p> <p>TUST welcomed this and said it was always its wish to do so and to contribute to the club's growth and success, even if this meant offering constructive criticism on occasions.</p> <p>The continuing impact of the Covid crisis on short term plans for the season starting and other initiatives was noted and accepted by all.</p> <p>Actions agreed as follows; TUST to help the Club by circulating official announcements via its communication with members and social media (and independently via NB's column in the Herald Express where appropriate).</p>	

	<p>The Club would not consider the re-introduction of Matchday Ambassadors whilst restrictions on attendance were in place as numbers in the ground have to be carefully managed. In the longer term this may be reconsidered. It was disappointing that the club were not prepared to consider re-launching the scheme, particularly at a time when it was most needed with fans returning to the ground in strange circumstances. It was agreed that the club should be asked to reconsider this with a supporting case presented.</p> <p>The Club would not be attending any business networking / marketing meetings while present restrictions are in place and would not condone any other organisation attending on its behalf. Since the beginning of restrictions, TUST had attended some of the earlier virtual meetings and would likewise not consider attending any live meetings until these were removed. However, there was recognition that both parties shared the same objective of promoting awareness of the club in the business community and generating support from it. Ways of working together towards this goal and how our roles may complement each other would be considered in due course.</p> <p>TUST and TUCST were keen to re-launch the successful pre-match Fan Zones. Whilst this is not practical in the short term due to Covid restrictions, it is something that the club may consider supporting in due course.</p> <p>TUST explained how together with TUCST it had facilitated Community Hubs, taking the TUFC message to various locations and communities to promote interest in and support for the Club.</p> <p>DM requested further information on TUST's disability help – NB advised DM that he had details of this and explained he had been in dialogue with Jo Harris (TUFC Disability Liaison Officer) about it when lockdown intervened. He would be happy to share this and hold further discussions with the club on how we could help.</p> <p>TUST continue to maintain regular contact with TUCST and the Club was happy that we worked together and acknowledged the support we had given to TUCST with sponsorship and with various kits. Furthermore, to the Torquay United Women's team so that they could complete their fixtures and retain their league status.</p> <p>The Senior Gulls, which is open to all supporters, has made a good start and is co-ordinated by TUCST in alliance with TUST and with support from the club.</p> <p>It was suggested that TUST and TUCST could assist the club with expansion of the newly formed Torquay United Former Players' Association, as they had contact with and knew many past players.</p> <p>The club would be happy to help TUST in facilitating a presentation event in Boots & Laces for the Ian Twitchin Trophy but not until current restrictions are lifted. MT will update the family. DM explained that the club would not consider including the ITT with other end of season awards as it couldn't be seen to support one independent supporters' organisation and not all.</p>	<p>NB</p> <p>NB</p> <p>MT</p>
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TUST fed back some thoughts on the curtailed season tickets. Its experience was that most ST holders were happy to forgo any potential refund for missed games (a position actively encouraged by TUST) but some fans felt that the matter had been poorly communicated. The recent announcement about provisions for rewarding existing ST holders purchasing new STs had been generally welcomed but it was noted that some existing ST holders had not been notified of the proposals or didn't use the website or e-mails. TUST had also been approached by some members and a group of younger season ticket holders who were facing financial hardship and had expressed concern at the way the club had handled the matter of refunds.

In conclusion, all present agreed that it had been a positive, forward-looking meeting although there had been the need to explain some historical disagreements or misunderstandings between the parties to provide context. It was agreed to hold regular meetings in future so that a mutually beneficial dialogue can be maintained and these matters and new ones given appropriate consideration. To this end TUST provided DM with the draft Memorandum of Understanding and Structured Dialogue Agreements that had been agreed with the Club in principle in 2018 as a starting point for formalising the new relationship. The first meeting is provisionally scheduled for early September. It was agreed that NB, as Supporter Liaison Officer, should be the main link in future meetings with the Club to provide continuity with one or two other board members or invited guests attending as appropriate. RW and MT to attend the next meeting.

It was agreed that Andy Walsh at the FSA should be advised of the progress achieved at this meeting.

(b)

The new season

There was some discussion about the latest news on the start of the season. Fixtures are due to be released on 8th September for a start on 3rd October, subject to any changes in the pandemic situation.

Limited attendances will be permitted and the Club had already made arrangements to sell season tickets to existing ST holders. The National League management had subsequently issued guidance advising against the sale of season tickets but this had resulted in confusion and frustration among its member clubs. TUFC's own plans for selling tickets to other supporters had not been publicised at the time of this meeting.

NB drew attention to the new Let Fans In campaign aimed at persuading the government to allow attendance at grassroots matches.

The Chairman urged members to keep abreast of national developments generally through the FSA bulletins and sources such as the Non-League Paper as there were a number of important football related initiatives to remain aware of. He highlighted the success of the recent Jack Leslie Campaign in reaching its target for funding a statue at Home Park in his memory.

RW

20/48	<p>Media NB summarised his recent FanZone columns in the Herald Express. There was praise for the Club's announcement regarding the re-launch of the Youth Development Programme.</p>	
20/49	<p>Marketing & PR</p> <p>(a) Business & networking meetings MT and board members had not been inclined to attend recent virtual meetings of the groups, having joined some in a supportive role earlier in the lockdown period but were keeping in touch with events. However, MT was keen that TUST should be represented at the forthcoming Sport Torbay meeting.</p> <p>(b) Promoting TUST at start of season MT to arrange an informal brainstorming session to consider. The new relationship with the Club may encourage wider interest.</p> <p>(c) Schedule of contacts RW had circulated an updated list of all useful TUST contacts prior to the meeting and had made amendments and additions submitted by members. He reminded the board that this would be a living document with new details added whenever necessary and for members to suggest any such additions.</p>	<p>MT</p> <p>MT</p>
20/50	<p>Torquay United Community Sports Trust (TUCST)</p> <p>MT reported that he, AB & RW had met with Jamie McInnes, manager of TUCST, the previous week for an update.</p> <p>There had been some restructuring of the staff with a couple of redundancies but also a new post created. With some relaxation of the lockdown restrictions, TUCST was very busy running sessions for children of all ages.</p> <p>The TQ1 Club (for juniors) currently had about 40 members and a supply of unused starter packs but the order for additional ones had been cancelled and a refund in respect of these was due to TUST. As these had originally been funded by the Premier League Fans Fund (PLFF), it was agreed that the sum should be used for appropriate community schemes and this would be considered in due course. It was agreed that AB should be the TUST lead on any TQ1 Club matters.</p> <p>It had been suggested during the meeting with JM that, if the Official Supporters Club gets off the ground, it may be appropriate for it to take on the organisation of the TQ1 Club. This led to some discussion about the respective roles of TUST, TUOSC and TUCST and how the organisations could work together to complement each other and benefit the Club. To this end, an informal meeting with Andrew Candy (acting Chair of TUOSC) and JM was proposed. MT to arrange.</p>	<p>MT</p>

	<p>JM had also updated on the plans for the Women's Football Club. It was no longer proposed for TUWFC to come under the umbrella of TUCST and it would continue independently. The club had been successful in building a new squad and would be playing in the same league as last season's results had been expunged. It had plans in place to ensure the necessary finance and it was agreed that TUST would not provide further sponsorship at the present time. RD agreed to act as the main link with TUWFC.</p>	
20/51	<p>Policy for donations</p> <p>TUST has a commitment to allocate up to 50% of its net surplus to community or football related causes. For the current year this stands at approximately £2,700, subject to confirmation of the final accounts.</p> <p>There was a wide-ranging debate about possible uses for these funds from local welfare charities such as those addressing mental health and domestic abuse, to those with a football focus such as disability facilities at Plainmoor or TUCST. It was agreed to give this further consideration in due course so that a recommendation can be made to the AGM.</p>	
20/52	<p>AGM</p> <p>Whilst it was still too soon to make firm plans for the AGM (which must be held before the end of the year), it was suggested that the Club should be asked if its premises could be used, perhaps after a match. NB to raise with DM at the next meeting.</p>	NB
20/53	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>(a) Insurance RW reported that details of the insurance renewal had been received and, following due consideration of the extent of the cover prior to this meeting, it had been decided to renew on the existing basis.</p> <p>(b) Financial authorities RW had circulated a draft Financial Authorities Policy prior to the meeting and it was resolved to adopt this with authority given for expenditure of up to £500 to be approved by any two of the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer.</p>	AB

The date of the next meeting was fixed for Monday 14th September 2020 at 6.30pm. Venue to be decided.

Chairman's signature.....Date