



## **Report on the Bath City FC Board Meeting 26 February 2018**

### **Present**

Directors: Nick Blofeld, Paul Williams, Jon Bickley, Martin Powell, David James, Shane Morgan, Sally Harris, John Reynolds, Andrew Pierce

Financial Adviser: Chris Coles

Observers: Bob Chester, Carole Banwell

Also attended for item 1: Michael Clayton (chair, Bath City Supporters Society), Ed Tann (chair, Bath City Youth FC) via phone link.

### **Previous Board Meeting Minutes were reviewed and agreed.**

All Action Points were also reviewed and updated. These included:

- It was felt that committed/active members are still needed for the Community Working Group. Sally/Carole to meet, recommend and recruit good candidates.
- Bath City Youth FC Service Level Agreement with the club still to be completed. Paul to progress with Ed Tann (BCYFC chair) in the coming month.
- Health & Safety Policy – Shane is doing the matchday operations version, John and a consultant the company version.
- Foundation – the Service Level Agreement with the club has been signed, two years of funding from the National League has been agreed, and good progress has been made on recruiting new trustees.

### **1. 3G Pitch**

Chris circulated the 3G Feasibility Study in advance of the Board meeting and then outlined the process of the information gathering, which was comprehensive. It has involved visits to other grounds and meeting the management teams of clubs who have moved to artificial surfaces, plus other purely leisure oriented 3G providers, desk research, meeting with artificial pitch suppliers, the Council (BANES) and Bath University. All source data is freely available to anyone who wants to read it via Carole at the club.

3G provokes quite emotive reactions within the football community, everyone seems to have an opinion, either positive or negative. It is important to note that technology is moving on rapidly, and there is a huge variety in the quality of pitches available, from the very basic, “hard” pitches (with no cushioning beneath the surface), often used by leisure centres to rent out for high volume use cheaply, right up to the top quality international standard pitches, such as FIFA Quality Pro (FQP). If we progressed the project at BCFC, we would be planning a FQP pitch. BCFC would not be looking at the “volume” end of the market, but very much the

quality end, and look to rent it out for an additional c25 hours per week, on top of using it for our own needs (ie total use c35-40 hours pw).

As a community asset it would be a very positive move, enabling the pitch to sometimes be used for community/charitable purposes, either free or for a reduced rental fee. The new Foundation Chair is also supportive of the move.

Currently we are only planning to use the pitch for football, not for other sports. The biggest risk currently is that the English Football League doesn't yet allow artificial pitches, so it would need to be removed were we to get promoted to that level in advance of any potential change (Sutton are likely to challenge this if they get promoted). Grass can always be relaid if the EFL regulations don't change but the board is mindful of additional costs.

There is a rigorous annual testing process to keep the FQP standard. Margate has such a pitch, which is a good comparison.

Any push for an artificial pitch at Twerton needs to be managed carefully and clearly, due to the variety of pitches which perform very differently. The international standard, FQP, is what we would need, which would not stifle our ambition, because it can be removed if necessary, so won't hold back promotion, and would also help develop the type of passing football that Jerry Gill is trying to develop for the long term.

Ed Tann commented that he thought it broadened the appeal and focus of the club by bringing more than just the 1<sup>st</sup> Team to play and train at Twerton Park – eg the Academy, BC Youth, and probably the Foundation/community use. Ed also thinks that BC Youth might drastically increase its membership with such a great home facility.

Funding is a key issue and focus, were the project to progress, and owning our ground is a real benefit in helping raise those funds. There are specialists who could help source the funding, and councils are generally very supportive.

There was a discussion about the process needed to take the project forward if the Board recommended that route. It was believed that a Board recommendation should be made to the Society; the Society would then present and discuss with its members.

Andrew spoke in favour of the change because of the financial need to do so, and because the decision could also be reversed, if necessary, later. He also suggested we need to attempt to secure formal commitments from partner organisations to give security of long term bookings.

A vote was then taken and the Board voted unanimously, with one abstention, to recommend to the Society that we progressed the project to convert to a FQP pitch at Twerton.

The project can be run separately to the re-development project, but if the former happens, it would make sense to do the conversion at the same time, for cost effectiveness. To be able to do so, ideally we would want to advise the council of the decision in the pre-planning process, which is due around mid-April. Therefore, we need the Society to start the discussion and present the information to stakeholders over the next few weeks. It was agreed the paper could be circulated more widely now.

## **2. Redevelopment Update**

There was a brief update on the Redevelopment meeting that preceded the Board, including circulating the line drawings of the likely location of the different elements in the plan, eg accommodation, grandstand, public realm and community areas.

The next public consultation will be the week from Weds 11th April, to include a home game (14 April). Work on the project is expected to start Aug 2019, and it was agreed we should not take any event bookings beyond May 2019 (due to potential pre works needed).

Frank Whittle Partnership are now attending the Project Team meetings as our representatives. They will lead on the detailed design for the grandstand.

Paul provided an update on the options to move (ie the clubs that could host BCFC if we did decide it made sense to move away). He is going to talk to the Project Managers to work up more details. John has also provided some outline costings for temporary facilities to stay.

### **3. Budget 2018/19**

Paul Williams and Jon Bickley presented a budget for 2018/19 that saw operating losses come below £100k, staying within the funding structure the club has pending the next stage of the redevelopment process.

On revenues, it recognised gradual improvements in football, merchandise and commercial revenue, while also showing the changing structure of revenues at Charlie's and Randall's with the new arrangements. No assumptions were made on repetition of player budget donations.

Regarding costs, there was a discussion around adjusting operating costs to reflect the changed structure. As the arrangements are in their infancy, no firm action was committed to. On the pitch, we presented a playing budget maintaining the current level, excluding donations.

These figures are subject to further discussion by the board.

### **4. Any Other Business**

- i) The National League loan issue has been resolved. As the loan to the Club was agreed just before the new criteria were introduced it isn't relevant, but any new loan would have to comply with the new stringent criteria.
- ii) Andrew highlighted that a mower has broken down, and we will need to replace it (but not yet). Jon flagged that League grants may be available for this. We may also need to spend a bit more than budgeted on top dressing.

### **5. Date of next meeting**

Monday 9 April