**Report on the Bath City FC Board Meeting**

**21 December 2020**(Video/Conference call)

**Present**: Nick Blofeld (Chair), Jon Bickley, Cheryl Bradley, Matt Falk, Shane Morgan, Andrew Pierce, John Reynolds, Joy Saunders, Paul Williams

**Observers**: Bob Chester, Chris Coles

**Apologies**: Pete McCormack, Emma Sparks, Carole Banwell

1. **Redevelopment**

There was a catch-up call with Greenacre’s CEO.

They are close to agreeing a deal with a reasonably large, privately owned construction company to take the project forward. They have a track record of successfully working in the city.

We will need to work with both parties around the Development Agreement, the agreement with Greenacre runs for another year or so.

There is a way to go yet, but this is an encouraging Plan B.

We are in touch with planning consultancy to understand their views/thoughts.

The Council are undertaking a partial Local Plan Review which includes a review of Twerton Park policy.

1. **Safety Advisory Group**

Shane circulated his report prior to the meeting.

What we had thought was going to be a COVID inspection for the return of fans, turned out to be a full safety stadium review which resulted in requests for information which hadn’t been asked for in the past 10 years.

We have replied diplomatically, and Nick spoke to their Chair about getting some supporters in if we isolate certain parts of the ground. Next step is for us to submit a proposal.

We are working our way through the safety report and what they want us to do:

Action on fire extinguishers was due anyway and has now been done.

Family stand & door have been done.

Accolade are coming in to do barrier testing and handrails over the next couple of days and may need to come back next year. This work was last done in 2017 and the cost has not increased significantly.

Emergency lighting & electrical testing has been arranged. We don’t know what will come back on that report as much of our electrics are very old. Confirmation of League requirement for 3 yearly rather than annual inspections forwarded to SAG.

Fire testing 11th Jan.

Structural Maintenance Certificate covering internal structures, roofs, pylons and anything else with a physical structure. This has not been asked for before. If the Council doesn’t allow us to isolate parts of the ground, it may be that we can’t get everyone back in until end Jan/Feb. We need to bear in mind the question of what to do if it rains and people want to move under cover. Very important that we can use the Popular side for that eventuality, even if this means reduced numbers. Work was already underway on one of the pylons but was stopped due to COVID.

With regard to funding the work – at the moment we will still get funding for December but don’t know if that’s going to continue into January. We have received £15k to make stands ready for getting fans back in.

We should be able to resubmit our proposal for allowing fans back in within 24 hours of the required surveys being completed as the figures are already to hand.

There was some discussion if an annual Health & Safety review is needed with professional support to cover the Club and support Shane on future issues around the ground and its upkeep, to avoid relying purely on Shane’s time/knowledge.

**Designated Sports Ground**

The League said we didn't need to be a designated stadium. The SGSA is encouraging us to remain designated. There doesn’t appear to be any advantage to us in being so and we are the only Club at our level which is. Without the designation, it would be up to us to keep on top of safety aspects. Lower leagues can work out how many fans they can allow in on social distancing rules. If they want more, they have to ask their local authority. Being a Designated Ground means we have SAG coming in, and all the conversations would have only been around COVID if we weren’t.

Supporters are generally dissatisfied with the Council decision not to allow them back in at this point. They are, on the whole, supportive of the Club except where we weren’t able to give adequate notice of changes. We do need to make sure we are safe and covered if anything happens in the grounds due to the issues raised by Council. Fortunately, we are in a better position to afford to do the work. If we do get the funding and we do get the crowds back, it will have been well worth it.

1. **Finance**

Paul spoke of his report, circulated prior to the meeting.

We’ve received £21k from the FA today with a further amount promised before Christmas. With regard to the £11m available through Sports England, there is currently no clear guidance on when or how that will be paid. Though we expect it to run through January to the end of the season. The League and FA are trying to persuade DCMS that it should be grants, rather than 20% grants 80% loans. We would not expect to take up a loan and if it is, anticipate calling an end to the season, as we think Clubs below us would also do.

1. **Football update**

We have had two positive match results recently and played well. The Exeter player has been recalled. Bristol Rovers & Cheltenham loans expire in January. We have the Bristol City loanees till end of the season.

It has been difficult to arrange training during Christmas & COVID. We have managed to get Clevedon Town 3G for a couple of nights this week but everywhere else seems to be closing.

We have a busy period of games coming up. One player has tested positive for COVID. Joe Raynes had to put the medical boot back on and will need another scan after 4 weeks.

We have had two full reports on the pitch from Bristol City Women, at a cost to them of £1k each. The 2nd report is less than complimentary and contains a number of recommendations they want carrying out by 9th Jan, which can’t be done. The report has been sent to the Bath Rugby groundsman asking for his recommendations. What we do now will be partially reliant on what we’re going to do long term. The drainage issue in the top corner is a big problem which has got worse over the years, particularly this year with the rain we’ve had. When very wet, the pitch gives way under people. There is a short-term solution, with a longer-term solution possible at the end of the season, particularly if Bristol Woman are going to carry on. We may be able to get funding, possibly made easier by the connection to a women’s team.

In theory at least, we have 8 games in 27 days in January. Andrew needs more volunteers for Jan – will need all the help he can get. Jon to put out a call for volunteers.

Bristol City Women are a separate entity to Bristol City with a smaller budget. However, there is probably value to both sides in having a partnership on advertising & sponsorship. Matt to pick up in the New Year with Bristol City Women’s General Manager.

1. **Actions from previous meeting**

Carole has come back part-time.

No-one volunteered for the trustee role. Nick, Joy & Chris to discuss.

Jon to follow up with BCW on streaming.

Carole spoke to Stone King’s property specialist and is waiting to hear back once he has spoken to their comms company.

Minutes of the last meeting accepted. Proposed: John Reynolds, Seconded: Andrew Pierce

1. **Supporters/Society**

Neither Emma or Pete were able to join the meeting today.

Cheryl was congratulated on her election as SLO and welcomed to the Board. The relevant paperwork has been sent to the League.

Cheryl offered to work with the Society to arrange more Zoom sessions with Jerry for members.

1. **Working Groups**
2. Commercial

Bob circulated a report in advance. He is pleased with how the lottery changes have gone. On the Shirt Draw, hospitality packages from last year haven’t been honoured yet. Free season tickets were. The draw for next season needs to be done around the end of May. The terms will depend on market research and how we do. There is a lot of goodwill at the moment. We have to be careful not to go too early on this while the situation is so changeable. Planning is likely to start after the New Year, with a proposal likely available for discussion at the February Board meeting.

1. Community

Joy circulated a report in advance. She is looking forward to working with Cheryl to re-engage with supporters on the community side.

1. Streaming

Jon circulated a report in advance. Streaming is now consistent with no quality issues.

Jon/Bob to look at adding streaming to the programme sponsorship package. Notice will be

needed to ensure graphics are ready. Jon to see whether it’s possible to put promos/ads on the streaming.

1. **AOB**

John Reynolds gave special thanks to Paul, Bob, Andrew, Shane, Nick & Chris for all their hard work in keeping the Club going.

**Date of Next Meeting**: 25th January 2021