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

**22 February 2021**(Video/Conference call)

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

**Observers**: Bob Chester, Chris Coles, Carole Banwell, Jerry Gill (first item only)

1. **League & Football Update**

i. Jerry outlined his plans for working with players on individual development now that the season has been declared null & void. Next season‘s contracts are being looked at, with less certainty than usual on budget. We have been approached for loans of two players. Discussions on loan agreements are ongoing. If these go ahead, Jerry would like to talk directly to supporters at some point to explain how the moves fit with our business model and ethos as well as giving the players concerned the opportunity to continue playing football this season.

**ACTION**: Nick/Jon/Jerry to handle PR if/when anything agreed on player loans.

We need storage box at SGS training ground.

One of our supporters has prostate cancer. Jerry is organising messages from the team for him and Paul is looking into the bike ride the supporter’s son is doing.

It was agreed it would be useful to have updates from Jerry at the beginning of all Board meetings.

Jerry left the meeting.

ii. The “Winter Survival” application has been sent in, with supplementary questions submitted. More questions were asked Friday evening, with no further news yet. Figures being re-done on the potential grant application, with deadline 1 March for decision by 12 March. There is no definite indication yet on whether grants will be given but it would be useful to have help with e.g. NI/pension and non-football operating costs for the rest of the season. If things are desperate, we can speak to the National League but we are not in dire need.

We have been asked if we still require a personal hearing on the first charge against the Club for not playing matches and haven’t heard on the second charge. Clarification on whether we are still going to be charged is required.

There was an email from the League on Saturday re-iterating that any loans have to be notified to the League within 7 days.

Season ticket holders to be offered 3 options: roll over to next season, donate or repay.

We are financially fine if we claim furlough for players until April and will wait to see if there is any further assistance from the Government in the forthcoming Budget. We have the existing loan to drawdown if necessary but getting through the summer depends on commercial income.

We will be putting out the usual feelers for pre-season friendlies with bigger clubs, but it is still early days. Pre-season may be a bit longer but is also dependent on player recruitment and what is allowed by national and local Government. We also don’t know when the season will start. At the moment, allowed capacity is 10,000 or 25% of seating for larger stadiums, 50% or 2,000 for smaller stadiums.

iii. PITCH - There is a meeting scheduled to produce a plan, looking to bring work forward so we may be able to play charity matches in summer. The resulting report will be circulated. We have received an offer of potential financial and practical help from the Rec. Grd. Trust.

1. **SAG Actions & Update – Shane/Paul/Nick**

Shane spoke to report sent in advance of the meeting. The electrical survey has been completed, with the report due in the next week. From this we will see what work must be done and what is advisory.

The structural survey is being started tomorrow. We don’t know what to expect as this hasn’t been done before. We also don’t know how long the survey will take or when the report will be available. Once done, it will inform the work required to gain our Safety Certificate.

We now have to calculate ground capacity as B&NES no longer has the staff capacity. We’re looking to Bath Rugby for assistance. Shane has asked for clarity on this from B&NES as it’s not a part of the Safety Officer training course.

1. **Local Plan Feedback & Re-development**

We have received lots of information but no feedback on financial data. The latest figures seemed to show a cash benefit to the Club, with no mention of a new grandstand but with the loss of most of the car park, Charlies and Randalls and with student accommodation right next to the grandstand. The document is in the public domain and raises certain of questions.

**ACTION**: Nick to follow up.

There will be a separate review session once Nick has feedback.

1. **Commercial Strategy Update**

Matt spoke to the document circulated before the meeting, which was originally created a few months ago. It is a commercial business-business strategy to work within.

The strategy comprises 4 strands:

Connection – using & building up our network of contacts

Consumer-centric – giving people/companies benefits they value/want

Profile – keep the Club profile up & try to grow it further

Partnerships – find companies to work with for the long-term & beyond just

transactional relationships

Connections - one area being worked on is LinkedIn. So far we have 500 active followers, who have come to us. It is a useful tool to get our message across and attract new contacts.

**ACTION**: Please can people follow the page and like posts.

We are also looking to encourage fans to provide additional contacts, e.g. free access to games for active leads. Matt, Bob and Jon will be working on how to put something together for fans on that front.

Re Consumer – we will be looking to work with Bath Uni to re-do the supporter survey undertaken several years ago to identify who our customers are and what goods and services would be of use to them.

Re Profile – maintaining Carole’s & Bob’s involvement in networks across the city, with the possibility of building our own business network to tie in with the Shirt Draw, bearing in mind the legal requirements of the lottery draw. There are plenty of business networks around but many of them don’t have a good reputation. Due diligence to be undertaken. Monthly membership might be more attractive than the Shirt Draw lump sums.

Re Partnership – building on our existing partnerships, e.g. with Youth and Foundation, appealing to businesses’ CSR & advertising/marketing together. The practicalities of including the Youth kit and Foundation Monday training sessions in the Shirt Draw are being explored. Our partnerships with StatsBomb and Bristol City Women also open more opportunities for growth. A Young Romans Club to bring more young people and families to the Club would be straightforward to set up, with opportunity for student volunteers to be involved in that as a discrete project.

With regard to next season, Bob is already working on the Shirt Draw and talking to existing commercial partners about what’s happened with the season. The packs have been circulated, with the wording on Youth kit intentionally vague pending clear agreement with BCY. The price has been kept the same due to the economy. The scheduled date is 15 June. Everyone who was in the last draw will have 20 matchday tickets to make up for not having season tickets this year. There won’t be a platinum group this year.

**ACTION:** Nick, Jon & Bob to confirm wording over Bath City Youth.

The Lottery is going well with Goldline. We have had two £250 winners in three weeks, there will be an article about it in the newsletter. A business section on the website is needed to promote offers from commercial partners to supporter us better.

Both lounges may have to be used for Match & Ball hospitality in the COVID environment and a second toilet could be needed.

**ACTION**: Bob to investigate cost of new toilet.

1. **Society & Supporter Update**

Matt is going to the Committee meeting on Thursday to talk the Society Cttee through

the commercial strategy to get them up to speed and engaged with it.

The Memorandum of Understanding will also be discussed at the next Committee meeting. There will be calls for candidates for the AGM in summer.

**ACTION**: Nick/Jon to revisit the BID business plan and agree a small joint working group to update it with the Soc Cttee (Paul B).

There is a Quiz Night on Friday. There was positive feedback from the Q&A session with Jerry. It was suggested these should be held quarterly at least. Nick noted that the success was due to the way in which Emma and Cheryl worked together on the event.

Cheryl circulated a report in advance of the meeting. Liaison with supporters is obviously restricted during lockdown.

**ACTION**: Carole to work with Paul Brotherton on overall Club roles doc., matching up Board, volunteers and Society Committee personnel – updating the previous document.

**ACTION**: Emma will share committee roles/tasks.

1. **Actions from Meeting 25 January**

* Promoting ex-players is something the Supporters’ Club could pick up.
* Wera Hobhouse MP got an email back from the Minister in a few days.

**ACTION**: Nick/Chris to arrange a thank you to Wera on behalf of the Club.

* £11k pitch funding grant applications lined up.
* 15/16 quality responses to the Local Plan were submitted.
* MoU is being worked through – appointment of Directors with the right skills to add

value is the only point still tbc.

* It is unlikely the Council will be able to help with funding any development as they have a £20m COVID related hole in the budget. It is important to keep ward councillors in the loop/engaged about developments.

**ACTION**: Joy & Carole to have initial talk with Tim Ball about response to the Local Plan consultations, with view to further meeting on the redevelopment when we have more details.

Minutes of the meeting 25 January were accepted. Proposed: Andrew Pierce Seconded: Cheryl Bradley

1. **Actions from Meetings 1, 2 and 10 February**

Survey with supporters not done.

Minutes of the meeting 1 February were accepted. Proposed: Jon Bickley, Seconded: Emma Sparks

Minutes of the meeting 2 February were accepted. Proposed: Jon Bickley, Seconded:

Andrew Pierce

Minutes of the meeting 10 Feb were accepted. Proposed: John Reynolds, Seconded:

Shane Morgan

1. **Foundation – Liaison Update and Recent Activities Summary**

Following a number of discussions within the Club and between the Club and Helen

Donovan to update how the two organisations connect and communicate better, Carole

has agreed to be liaison between the Club and Foundation. She will attend Trustees

meetings and be able to channel news and updates to the Foundation to try to ensure

maximum engagement and connection between the two organisations, and will also be

able to have a good handle on Foundation activities for onward communication both

internally and externally.

Joy, Helen and Carole are in the process of setting out details of the strategy and

alignment of the two organisations, including a helpful, brief summary of the different

focuses of each to aid understanding and external comms. They will circulate when

complete. It should also be noted that Helen is trying to clarify whether this

arrangement is acceptable to the National League Trust ref certain funding agreements

(ie no BCFC Dir as a Trustee).

Carole then provided a brief update on recent Foundation activities. They have

appointed four new Trustees: Rob Mullen (Bath resident, Thameslink Rail), Kate Abbey

(Bath Festivals), Dr Wendy Falk (Community Health + Matthew’s wife) and Matt Rusling

(to replace Andy Pitchford as University of Bath link).

The Foundation has been delivering 56% of its projects and once schools go back will be

up to around 80%. Their main focus during lockdown has been food poverty with food

box delivery for families at local schools as well as mental health support through their

partnership with Bath Mind. There has also been some in-school support for key

workers’ children.

By virtue of the connection with Bath Mind the Foundation also participated last week

in a zoom one-to-one with Andros Townsend formerly of England and Crystal Palace.

Townsend described his back story and past mental health difficulties in a really

insightful session organised by Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust.

The event was attended by other groups from Swindon, Bristol and Weston-super-Mare

and demonstrates the reach achieved by the Foundation through links such as this.

Helen has been in post for three years and so needed to be reappointed as Chair, which

she was, following a vote by the Trustees. Nick remarked on the enormous progress

made by the Foundation under Helen’s leadership.

1. **AOB**

* Jon B: discussed a proposed charity fundraising campaign for the Foundation. It’s not

posible to see how much has been raised already in general fundraising from what

we’ve put in emails.

* Chris: noted new conversations with organisations that may wish to be part of

redevelopment projects – will update any progress.

* Matt: noted our floodlights may not be sufficient for WPL TV for Bristol City.

**ACTION:** Matt, Andrew, Paul to explore where to start on this complicated issue, with

a view to a more formal meeting towards end of March.

Date of next meeting - 29 March 2021