Report on the Bath City FC Board Meeting

Mon 4 October 2021 at 1900

Hybrid

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

**Observers**: Chris Coles, Carole Banwell, Jerry Gill (for item 1)

1. **Football Update**

Goalkeeper Matthews has returned to his club due to ankle ligament injury which happened there. Clarke is ready to play v Clevedon. Wilkinson has come back from initial loan and is now at Street until the end of the season. Mahoney from QPR on loan. Dan Ball is doing fine at Swindon Supermarine. Toray’s fine and will start Wed. Wood played very well on Saturday after his return but is off to Norway for 3 games.

We’ve had round pegs in square holes and changing that has shown through. Watching Banbury to prep for next round. We need more consistency in the League, but are not panicking, and confident we can get results if we can play a balanced team. It was a tough game at the weekend and the league is tight so loss/wins make a big difference to placing at the moment.

Crowds have been brilliant – stuck with us during tough games too and everyone really helping on the 2000BC. Frome “fans” were louder than us, is there more we can do to enhance our atmosphere? It’s not something which can be forced. Student day might help. There are lots of youngsters coming along now, so we’re building the basis of a more vocal crowd!

Discussion on Supporters’ coach – how can we take one every week? Season tickets for the supporters’ coach, to enable consistent price throughout the season, has been tried before: it was admin heavy and only 6/7 were sold but that was a while ago. The other option is to find sponsor. 25/26 passengers just about cover costs. The Supporters Club usually subsidises but prefers to raise funds for the Club. It’s not a problem for FA Cup matches – the main problem is Essex/Kent matches which aren’t well attended (4 clubs in each) and it is likely this is a time rather than cost issue.

**ACTION**: Matt & Stuart to look at magnetic signage for away coaches and whether we could bring in a sponsor?

Pitch survived its first test. We had a demo for a new PA system a few weeks ago and the sound quality was great. Need to find funding as no budget for it.

**AGREED**: if we have funding, go for it – if not, try to find a sponsor (Bob already exploring).

1. **Redevelopment**

A note was circulated prior to the meeting on the latest call with Greenacre, which went as well as hoped. We updated them on our current discussions with other parties and relations remain good and mutually supportive.

We have a rescheduled meeting (Tues 12th) with a consulting firm to see to what extent they can help. They’ve found 3 of the potential partners so far. The object is to seek their input into how we can run a selection process of the 4+ potential partners and establish the criteria for assessing credentials.

We had a good meeting with another - “anchor” - Bath institution on how they might engage with the project and Twerton. They are looking to decentralise, and also looking for offsite meeting space and are keen on outreach programmes.

There was also a meeting today with St Johns Foundation (SJF), who currently support projects around the city on top of their almshouses etc. Overall, they were positive, liked the concept and would like to stay involved.

There was a discussion on exploring an independent Development Trust, via the Redevelopment Working Group (RDWG). It was agreed that a Development Trust is on the table for all potential partners and should be covered in the selection process and not discussed separately.

BANES consultation on the local plan update is closing on 8th Oct. This ties in with our public messaging on the redevelopment, our last comment was that we were working with McLaren.

**AGREED**: to put out holding statement that we are taking on board feedback published, that the redevelopment is still a key priority and that we are talking to range of potential partners.

1. **Finance**

The figures circulated in advance of the meeting will be updated with the takings from the last match (eg the bar, good gate receipts, prize money). Forecast will be updated by the end of the week. We still have good cash resources.

Accountants audited in September. The feedback so far is that it’s all straightforward and the figures for last year will probably be finalised.

The last company AGM was Jan 2020. We need to have another before the end of this year to have accounts passed.

**ACTION**: Paul to come up with a date.

In response to a question, there is no standard way of charging/invoicing sponsors but it is useful to have cash before the end of the tax year.

The management accounts are being sent to the Society’s Treasurer.

1. **Key Ops/SAG Points to Note/Action**

We’ve asked BANES to put in writing the criteria for on-going reports. We have had verbal agreement for 3-yearly full EICR report with an annual walk around by an electrician.

We’re down to just over half capacity in the grandstand because the SGSA inspector gave us a 0.6 factor on security and physical condition. He has given us an increase on standing. The height of some of the grandstand steps are a contributing issue. We should look at putting in additional steps and ask for re-visit to increase capacity again (we ran out of grandstand tickets at the last match).

**ACTION**: SM to ask SGSA about additional steps making a difference to capacity (just a riser, not tread).

**ACTION**: SM to share the SGSA info with JR.

We’re waiting for the referee’s report to come through on the Frome match & flares. The FA could ask what we did to avoid the situation and they may write back to give warning/fine. We have no cctv within the stadium, as is usual for clubs at our level. SM asked for pictures to be taken of relevant parts of crowd. We had no intel from the police that there would be any issues. Searching fans works if people turn up early, but there was a big rush at 2.45pm this match. SM is happy with number of stewards (4) and that situation wasn’t going to get out of hand.

**ACTION**: SM circulate report when it comes through.

There was some confusion efficiently filling the ground due to a lack of signage to help those who haven’t been here before. A map in the ground would also be useful and we can remove the “Home Supporters Only” sign.

Inside the ground, the queue for MoBeQue was very long at the last match. There is the option to open 2nd one, which is only worthwhile when attendance is over 1,000, but the numbers were larger than expected and hadn’t arranged it this time. People went outside the ground though, so the outside vendors were very happy.

**ACTION**: Jon B, AP, Carole – review food offering in ground, Carole has already spoken to Chai Walla about student day.

The Supporters Club tea bar ran out – it is open again and taking card payments.

735 tickets were bought online, some of whom will have opted into our mailing list.

1. **2000 BC, Commercial, Community WG Updates**

**2000BC**: report was circulated in advance. Both Freshers Fairs were very good with lots of sign-ups and volunteers. We are spending more on social media now we don’t have bus ads and street banners.

**Community Day**: £5,592 raised so far, which is the highest to date. Curo, Novia and Better Billing donating. The CEO of Novia and eight of his team coming along. It will be good to have directors there.

**The Commercial team** is gelling well and everyone is delighted with the progress, adding incremental value to all Bob’s work. We are 10% behind 2019/2020 and they expect to reduce that to 5% behind. Their next meeting will be looking to see what community partnership packages there are. There have been good discussions with other potential sponsors.

**The Community Director** has met with Commercial team to keep them up to speed with work on that front.

Women’s team – a discussion paper was circulated prior to the meeting and Joy summarised her paper. Most clubs who’ve done it and done it well had a 3-5 year timescale. A couple of sponsors are already interested and small grant funding is available for start-up costs. Assuming no ticket revenue in initial stage. We would need to find someone to champion it: this could be the Foundation’s Girls Officer, a volunteer or invest in our own.

We could look for a potential partner, for example Bath College who did have a girls academy for two years and the college league allows 8-a-side matches, or work with the Foundation as this keeps it in-house and gives us control of our own destiny. The Foundation are supportive of shared resource with them. The Club did have a women’s team in the past but it went to Larkhall. As a community club, having a women’s team should be a given and if we have a team, they will play at Twerton Park.

Billericay/Dulwich in our league have women’s teams and other information gathered on existing teams has been fed into the report.

The Commercial team would need further details of budget before going back to sponsors.

**AGREED**: Move forward with the Foundation, while exploring what’s happening in other clubs/corporate sponsorship. Come back to the Board when we have more on P&L.

Alleged racist incident at the Maidstone match - a reminder that this behaviour won’t be tolerated will be going out in comms.

1. **Society & Supporter Update**

The Supporters Club is all going well.

The Supporters Society now has a compendium of policies and meetings on their website which had been tidied up and are continuing work on this. They are looking forward to the joint board meeting on 21st October, which will be a Zoom with Nick chairing.

The member survey will be re-run in summer 2022 as this will be five years from the first one and will tie in with strategy work.

**ACTION**: CF to take back question on whether the survey could be done sooner to establish philosophy.

The draft strategy document is being worked on and will be circulated soon.

1. **Actions from Last Board, Previous Board Meeting Minutes**

Correction: correct the date on page 1

The following actions to be carried forward:

**ACTION**: Nick – restrictive covenants on the ground tbc?

**ACTION**: Jon and Paul to review financial impact and recommend changes ref living wage.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted: proposer Jon Bickley, seconded John Reynolds

1. **AOB**

**AGREED:** in principle want to update the décor of the John Reynolds lounge.

**ACTION**: Matt come up with some options/engage with Forget-Me-Not.

1. **Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 1 November