Bath City FC Board Meeting

Monday 22nd August at 1930

Hybrid

**Attendees:** Nick Blofeld, Jon Bickley (Chaired as in the room), Cheryl Bradley, Peter Headington, Shane Morgan, Andrew Pierce, John Reynolds, Marc Thomas, Paul Williams

**Observers**: Carole Banwell, Chris Coles

**Apologies:** Jane Jones

Mandy Gardner joined for item 1

Jerry Gill joined for items 1 & 2

1. **Foundation Update**

Mandy outlined the wide range of successful projects the Foundation is currently involved in, including:

\* Welcoming Emily Stevens from the beginning of August as the Women’s Football coordinator, following funding from the Medlock Foundation over two years. Emily is hitting the ground running with two girls’ sessions this week.

\* Premier League Primary Stars project with 3 schools finished in July and the Foundation is waiting to hear about funding for next year, when it’s hoped the project can continue with 4 or 5 schools.

\* Film premier at the Egg was a great success, with Diana and Russell working on that. News re GWR funding for another one to be hosted by Ken is expected in September.

\* Support from Quartet is enabling the publication of the Foundation’s first Impact Report. It’s hoped this will also be of use for the Club’s redevelopment project. A draft will be available in September for that use with the final report being issued at the end of October/early November after design work by Bath Spa students.

\* Mandy has the local Health Report which she can share.

\* Over 80 children were reached with holiday activities. The Foundation linked with the Bath Area Play Project and were able, through part funding, to offer sessions for free. The numbers and feedback were exceptional and will be included in the Impact Report. The joint approach worked very well with the Foundation covering the sporty content and BAP the arty side. It’s expected future numbers will grow.

\* Paid sessions were also run, hosted at The Glasshouse (owned by the Bath Rec Trust) – a whole day was £10 in advance, or £15 on the door. Numbers were relatively low but this was a new project.

\* Funding is a mixed picture. An application has been submitted to the National League Trust for a Health & Wellbeing role. This will enable working with health partners and B&NES to provide weight loss & fitness activities and advice for adults.

\* An application has also been submitted to run the National Citizenship Service this year (government initiative which provides two weeks of activities for 16-17 year olds including social engagement).

\*The Foundation’s fundraising will now be managed by Angus Martin, a funding consultant who was previously regional manager for the League Trust so knows that world very well. He is also working with other clubs. The Foundation will link with the Club whenever a partner is needed.

\* St Martins Garden School has offered the Foundation office space from October when the school’s funding Trust moves into the Sure Start Centre there. This will give the Foundation access to the school pitches, children’s toilets and so on in the evenings and holidays which will be much cheaper than Odd Down. While the Foundation’s main office will still be at Twerton Park, they’ll have this space to move to if necessary during the redevelopment.

\* The local FA has granted money for work with refugees, providing out of hours coaching and 1-2-1 work.

It was commented that the Foundation has come a huge distance in the past 4-5 years and is on a very positive trajectory. The number of children being reached is particularly impressive. The Board is keen to help promote the Foundation’s success stories any time the Foundation would like and agrees the work will help the redevelopment project.

Mandy left the meeting.

1. **Football Update**
2. **Men’s Update:**

Jerry gave a very positive report of the season to date. The team is gelling well and has demonstrated initiative, commitment, spirit, ability and grit. Although it is early days still, his sense is this is the strongest team we’ve had for several years, with trust being strong between staff and players. The team takes on board what is being said by the staff then take it forward between themselves on the pitch.

The improvements discussed at the end of last season were implemented and are working well. Pre-season was well-planned and the players are aiming to maintain the target of being in the top 5. Ryan is proving to be a good fit on the staff and exerts a calming and professional influence.

With the bigger squad, effort is being made to ensure those not playing are still very much part of the team. Although there have been a couple of tentative enquiries, we’re not looking to put any players out to loan to ensure we have cover when injuries start to creep in.

Jerry thanked the Board for funding the overnight stay for the Eastbourne match, which was played in 34-degree heat. The ability to travel together without stress, prep the day before and to have a team evening meal set the day up well. Also thanks to players, who contributed financially. This can’t be repeated for all away matches but will try to do again at some point as it made a big difference.

Jerry is very happy with the squad and only has one player he would like to get in if that becomes possible.

It’s expected the next couple of games will be tough.

And it was very nice to overhear at the bar someone from the away team at the last match say “What a professional Club”.

1. **Women’s Update**

A report and update following yesterday’s match circulated prior to meeting. All is going well with 2 great games. After only 6 training sessions in advance of the first match, the team beat an established team, coming back from behind and producing the winning goal from a set piece. Yesterday’s friendly at Twerton Park resulted in a symbolic win, again coming back from 4-1 down.

There were 109 attendees which makes it worth getting catering in. Ticket pricing has been agreed. No other teams charge but this is a different level of facility. We do need a mechanism for determining who’s part of the squad for free entry per the men’s matches. It is probably worthwhile doing some comms with away teams so they are aware of the ticket prices.

1. **Pitch**

The Rec Ground Trust is getting to grips with the pitch during the driest of summers. Jerry confirmed staff and team are very pleased with it and they have let the groundsman know.

We should be in a better position to decide whether the installation of an artificial pitch can be done in advance of the redevelopment or at the same time in a couple of months.

With men’s, women’s, and youth fixtures this season, we may need to have contingency if we can’t fit them all in (23 men’s matches, 9 women’s + youth + cup matches for all).

**AGREED:** Club policy is that if there is a conflict between women’s and youth fixtures, priority will be given to the women’s team with the possible exception for the Youth Cup which has to be played in a stadium.

**ACTION:** Andrew to convene meeting with Paul and Jane to look at fixture lists for all teams and consider contingency plans.

Jerry Gill left the meeting.

**3. Redevelopment**

There is little to report at this stage as we’re still waiting for a partner update. We had expected some numbers from them for us to review and move on.

**ACTION:** Nick to chase up this week as we don’t want to lose more time on this.

At a recent “Masterplan” meeting which included a wide range of stakeholders including BANES, Curo, local politicians etc it was clear there is some money available for initial thinking/plan around Twerton High Street. We fed back that the longer timescales on this won’t work for the Club due to our debt situation and legal obligations as a private company.

1. **Commercial Team Update**

A report was circulated in advance of the meeting. Overall, we have good progress from a solid team. We are 14% ahead of last year and are over-target on hoardings with more to come. The same revenue is being generated from less ads.

Concerns: We have no sponsor for the Community Day in September so could have to raise smaller amounts from various sources over the next month. **AGREED**: this could be pushed back to a later match, possibly in December. Match and ball sponsorships are the next priorities, revenue is down on last year so far, with a number of gaps currently. The Commercial Director will be meeting with more of the long-term sponsors on match days.

Positives: Your Eco, who have players in the Women’s team, will be sponsoring the Popular Side and is going to help us with our carbon footprint for the Men’s team through carbon offset via their charity. TR Hayes is delivering a lot of black & white chairs to update both lounges. Carpets have been ordered and dates need to be nailed down as banquette seating needs to be removed.

Derek Hayes passed away last week and the Club would like to acknowledge his support.

**ACTION:** Nick to write formal letter and to be added to the Board Update for the next home game programme.

Three or four representatives from the Club will be attending a Novia summer party in September.

David James will be joining the next Commercial team meeting to discuss simplification & modernisation of everything we do. There will be a report back at the next Board meeting. David’s longer-term role is still to be discussed and finalised.

1. **Finance Update**

A report was circulated in advance of the meeting. We have some shirt stock left in the shop, with a new order placed for 70+ shirts to replace sold stock. More may be added after looking at online orders as we are completely out of some home shirts, with back orders already. We’re still expecting two invoices for July.

Payments going out are about the same as forecast and it’s pleasing that quite a few customers have paid by return so cashflow looks promising. Our gates have also been good so far, with the 3rd highest crowd in the league for the first game, though it is harder to forecast cashflow on gate receipts.

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

Our capacity is now 4,000.

The new Alcohol Licence is displayed in the bar.

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

Reports were circulated in advance of the meeting.

Season ticket sales continue to trickle in and are the highest ever at this stage. Attendances to date are down on last year but higher than pre-pandemic numbers.

Bath City Youth are far more engaged with Andy Laker now our point of contact. 130 free season tickets have been made available to the youth members, with sales to parents resulting too. The next few games will give a better sense of how this is working, we may do eg a “Bring your dad for a fiver”. It’s good to see them running round the stands in their strips, buying ice creams etc. Andy is very responsive and sends reminder emails out during the week.

The Volunteer BBQ needs a larger group to work on ideas and implementation.

**ACTION:** Supporters Society to drive that (MT)

Alcohol sales in the ground are good, after analysis of two matches, it should bring in an additional £23-£25k this year. There is some displaced spend from Charlie’s to the ground but most has been incremental spend. Local business Monitair has kindly donated recyclable “glasses” with a deposit system. Per head spend is 40% higher than last season, from £2.60 to £3.70. For efficiency, cost and logistical issues, sales are being kept to bottles/cans only rather than pumps and more traditional female drinks may be added. Drinks are sold throughout the match until the end of play.

With respect to local drinks promotions/advertising would need to be discussed with St Austell. St Austell’s prices seem good and margins have improved.

There has been no negative feedback, bar the use of single use plastic cups, which has been resolved as above.

We may need to look at the mix of drinks once winter comes. The big loser has been the pre-order app, with numbers halving. Everything has been done without more staff, having been run by Carole, Donna and two volunteers and seems to add to the sense of fun in the ground. Payment is by card only which means we can tell exactly where sales are being made, which helps with re-ordering.

We may need to look at a more substantial base for the cabinet/shed.

**ACTION:** Andrew/John – look at resolving cabinet/shed issue.

There is an issue with the electricity supply in that if we want to run the fridges, we also have to have the lights on.

**ACTION:** Shane to talk to Arks & Sparks re an isolation switch.

Bath City Youth: Ed received the Memorandum of Understanding and wants to meet. It has been suggested each attend the other’s meetings from time to time. John Reynolds volunteered to do this on our behalf.

We updated Ed on 3G. He had thought the bill for the tournament was for the whole re-seeding for the season. He has provided a list of alternative contacts we can engage with going forward. There is a much goodwill towards the Club with more people from BCY being involved. Their Women’s team folded very suddenly, which took us by surprise.

The Community Group will be worked on again once the Women’s team is up & running fully.

1. **Society & Supporter Updates**
2. **Society:** the wording on the tenure for Committee Members/Directors has been adjusted slightly to allow for a maximum of 12 years in total, over as much time as wanted (ie gaps don’t count). The Succession Planning Working Group has met.
3. **Supporters Update**

Alcohol sales are having an effect on the tea bar with food having to be thrown away.

Jane is to be invited to the next Supporters Club meeting to discuss working together on the Women’s team.

There has been feedback about recent social media comments.

**ACTION:** PW to pick up the matter.

1. **Actions from Last Board & Board Minutes**

Not completed or covered elsewhere:

**ACTION:** formal announcement re pitch, profile the new grounds man in the programme/website including picture. Andrew to give facts to Jon.

**ACTION:** following feedback from a new Board member, the Society to ensure new Directors are given all the relevant policies.

RECORD KEEPING: a central resource of signed off/approved documents, eg for redevelopment, is needed. We have Google drive but need something more dynamic.

**ACTION:** Carole/Jon ask Rob at NetZen for a recommendation on the best way to do that.

**ACTION:** review club structure – Jon, Carole & Jane – on-going

**ACTION:** MoU with BCY – they’re sending it back

**ACTION:** Andrew & Carol to talk re single payment system - ongoing.

Minutes of the last meeting were accepted: Proposed: Andrew Pierce, seconded Paul Williams

1. **AOB**

Feedback is that our U18 tickets are over-priced. There is also scope to develop a Student Season Ticket

**ACTION:** Cheryl, Andrew, Jon to take forward

1. **Date of next meeting 26th Sept**