Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd

Trust Board Meeting Minutes Part A

Meeting held in Boardroom and on Zoom

Date: Monday 14 October 2024

Trustees present: Nick Hawker, Julen Beer, Steve Chown, Nick Edwards, Pete Ferlie, Doug Gillard, Clive Harrison, Richard Knight, Jamie Pelmear**.**

On Zoom Will Barrett. Neil Le Milliere,

Apologies:, Debra Noble

Officers Present: Dean Matthews (Secretary), Pete Cordwell (Minutes Taker), Steve Chudley (Finance Officer),

On Zoom. Ryan Ilott (Membership Secretary),

Apologies: None

Also present. Joe Gorman. CEO. Michael Heath. Head of Marketing and Media

Trust members present. George Martin, Steve Dart, Michael Higgins, Mike Summers

Presentation by Michael Heath, Head of Marketing and Media

Notes from the presentation and the discussion which followed.

CDP live next week

App to be launched in November.

The content on opening page was the subject of some detailed discussion. It was decided that any decision should be part of a wider comms package.

Streaming progress and problems were outlined.

There was a detailed discussion of the badge branding. Exeter City council's new crest was considered. There was general agreement that a more modern logo, alongside the Crest, would be useful for leisurewear. The new Council Crest was considered to be rather masculine and not inclusive. Trust members were in agreement. Michael will consult with the Council .

Michael was thanked for an enlightening and informative presentation.

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No conflicts of interest were declared

Matters of Accuracy

None

Approval of minutes from September 2024 meeting

Approval of Part A minutes for September, proposed by DG, seconded by NE.

The minutes were approved with two abstentions (Trustees absent from last meeting).

Matters Arising

“Could replies on VeryConnect be speeded up, please?” needs to be put into context. Some of SD’s comments were unanswered. JBA gave an explanation. Every effort will be made to respond.

Chair’s Update

Membership as at: 6th October 2024

	Current	Last Month	Difference
Corporate Members	36	47	-11
Members in Grace Period	198	215	-17
Members Fully Paid-Up	4236	4204	32
Members Fully Signed-up to VeryConnect	3434	3385	49

Since the last Trust Board meeting key moments have been:

• Trust presentation to the Board of the Exeter City Community Trust.

• Attended and spoke at a recent Senior Reds meeting as part of the EFL Fan Engagement initiative.

• The Trust entertained the Devon & Exeter Football League management committee at the Premier League Cup game against Spurs u21’s.

• Covered interviews with SKY Sports and the FANHUB.

Hopefully, we are now in the last throws of producing the Trust Strategy document for 2024, ahead of our AGM.

The FSA (Football Supporters’ Association) have completed an audit of our latest policies, with two policies’ remaining – the member disciplinary and a potential whistleblower policy. We’ll continue to review the output through October and hopefully finalise them prior to the Trust AGM in November. It is highly unlikely that any change will be required to our constitution.

I’m very hopeful that the OTR purchase will be completed very soon. We have been waiting on a final signature before we could proceed.

The FSA has advised that the government is reviewing the potential for ACV’s on football grounds to be converted into a ‘right to buy’ and, as such, it seems appropriate to raise the matter again with Exeter City Council. Subject to consent from the Trust Board this application could be made very quickly.

We finally have confirmed costs for the training ground recovery room. These are:

Cost as per quote £53,995 including delivery
Ground works £2,250
Electrical works £750
Contingency to lift into place £1,000 (this would only be if they cannot lift in on delivery)

Total cost £57,995

Question. How soon will the purchase of OTR be completed?

Contract has now been signed. Completion should be only weeks away.

AGM and elections
There will be an election. The Phoenix is booked for AGM. Voting papers should be out by the end of the week.

Trust Strategy
Should be ready by the end of the week. It then could be presented to the AGM.

Update from Club Board Sub Committees

Finance and Governance Sub Committee

Will be meeting tomorrow to review CTA and Governance.

Community Sub Committee

Will be meeting in the next two weeks to discuss charitable aims. JBA met Paul Scully, Chair of EFL Community Group. He was reassuring about our community developments.

Working Group Updates

Trust Finance and Governance Group

September 2024 Accounts

Opening balance		308,418.12
Receipts		
	Subscriptions	18,485.31
	Total	18,485.31
Payments		
	Payment to club	8,333.00
	Wages/Tax/Expenses	2,304.00
	Wimbledon donation	250.00
	Badges	198.00
	Transfer donation to CHTG	121.00
	Membership refunds x4	111.00
	Bank charges	51.90
	Zoom	15.59
	Fasthosts	6.60
	Total	11,391.09
Deposit		417,310.05

account PayPal	317.47
Total	733,139.86

Notes	Membership refunds includes a £15 fee for an overseas payment

Notes from Minutes

Discussed:
Corporation tax
OTR, £320,000.
Auditor comments, which will be fed back to Board
Recovery Room
Loan arrangements which will be discussed again at meeting on Mon 21 October.

Year End Accounts

These should have been ready for approval today, but they were not returned from the auditor until Friday. They need to go to Finance and Governance group two weeks before the AGM.

The auditor misjudged the size of the job and unfortunately will have to raise the fees from £3,700 +vat to £6,000+ vat next year. The auditor wishes to continue next year. (valuable recommendation and constructive comments will be received)

The appointment of auditor for next year and the increase in fees will go to the AGM with the Trust's recommendation for acceptance.

Ownership and Membership Working Group

Junior Grecians. Around 1,000+ largely due to season ticket offer
October 16. Senior Reds in the Trust Suite with Matt Riley and Jimmy Giles
October 23. Supporter Round Table.
October 30. Grecian Groups' Forum
November 18. Women's FC Fans' Forum with Jen and Abbie. Trust Suite
November 18. Big Exeter City Quiz. Centre Spot
November 28. Players to Bramble ward. Seniors' Christmas Event. Calendar signing
Friday 31 January. London Exiles Fans' Forum

Two calendars this year. Second one is raising money for the recovery room

Other membership issues

The Wrexham sellout has heightened awareness of members' priorities. NH confirmed that notification of expiry is given after two weeks.

Membership Card Solution.

Please see Paper NH 11 October 2024.

Summary
Following our discussions, the Trust would like to roll out digital membership cards via an app for individual members. Plastic cards were in use historically and were stopped being used for environmental and cost reasons. However, they were helpful for various aspects of the wider network to help with discounting and understanding who is a member and at what loyalty level.
A digital membership card via native iOS and Android apps which pulls real-time information from the membership platform will ensure member status is easily known with a low cost, environmentally friendly solution.
This live card will pull data from VeryConnect.
Cost will be fixed for the first year. Contract will then continue for four years

Proposal. The Trust should proceed with plans for the digital membership card.
Proposed by RK, seconded PF
Approved unanimously, with no abstentions.

Asset of Community Value.

The Fan Led review proposed that an ACV should include the "right to buy". Although this review was dropped by previous government, the new government is now "softening".

There would be no cost. We therefore need to consider whether to continue with our application.
One advantage would be that pressure would be put on councils if they were ever considering selling.

Proposal from Chair**. The Trust should proceed with the application for an ACV.**
Passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Vote to adopt a new disciplinary policy.

The new policy was still being checked by a Trustee, so it was decided to consider this remotely over the next few days.

Vote to adopt new City of Exeter crest.

In the light of Michael Heath's comments and the discussion which followed, it was decided to postpone this vote.

Communications Working group

The group is putting the finishing touches to the Trust strategy (details in the minutes found in the pack)
Little progress on the Women's Player of the Month.
Hoping for updates from Trustees to be included in the programme (so it is not always NH)

JP is liaising with Trust Secretary regarding the election.
JP also working on Big Quiz.

SD raised the issue of putting a time limit on VeryConnect responses to messages. With regard to one issue, JBA and NH apologised to SD and promised to deal with it by email directly by the next day.

Community Working Group

White Ribbon Day. Devon Rape Crisis
16 days of action against violence against women and raising awareness about preventing gender based violence. White Ribbon Day will be the Wycombe Wanderers game on Tuesday December 3rd. The images are being put together. The Comms team have the details but require the logos etc. SC to follow up with Devon Rape Crisis.

Any Other Business

DG. Big Quiz. Preparation is going well. Two teams are still needed.

Date of next Meeting: Monday 11 November

Future meetings

9 December