

Exeter City AFC Supporters Society Ltd

Trust Board Meeting Minutes Part A

Meeting held in Boardroom and on Zoom

Date: Monday 9 September 2024

Trustees present: Nick Hawker, Julen Beer, Debra Noble, Nick Edwards, Pete Ferlie, Clive Harrison, Richard Knight, Jamie Pelmeur.

On Zoom. Doug Gillard, Neil Le Milliere,

Apologies: Will Barrett, Steve Chown,

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.

Trust members present. George Martin, Steve Dart.

Presentation by Joe Gorman, CEO

Joe gave the presentation that he had previously given to all Club staff.

He showed a number of detailed slides which contained useful information for Trust members.

Financial sustainability. Put together before the end of the transfer and giving little information about the Jay Stansfield transfer. (still discussing with EFL)

Match Days. Secondary spends were outlined. Higher at Women's games.

Workbuzz. A consideration of how the Club engaged with the workforce. There is a year on year improvement. Communication and personal development are areas to look at and improve. Also flexible working.

Action Plan and Goals

What next? A consideration of what sustainability means to each of us. What makes us different? How do we embrace change? Joe gave examples of how being creative had improved us. First team analysis trailer; Cliff Hill catering unit; selling England kit at screening of Euros.

Joe was thanked for his presentation and congratulated on his appointment. "a fantastic step forward and hope he can find a good successor as CFO" (SD)

No conflicts of interest were declared

Matters of Accuracy

Trust member present. Corrected surname is George **Martin**. (With apologies)

Approval of minutes from August meeting

Approval of Part A minutes for August, proposed by RK, seconded by NE.

The minutes were approved unanimously with no abstentions.

Matters Arising

Please could membership numbers include Junior Grecians?
Could replies on VeryConnect be speeded up, please?

Streaming. NLM raised some issues regarding Grecian+. NH agreed to speak to CH and to Michael Heath. ***Add to agenda for next meeting.**

Chair's Update (Part A)

Membership as at: 1st September 2024

Membership Summary – 01/09/2024

	Current	Last Week	Difference
Corporate Members	47	46	1
Members in Grace Period	215	262	-47
Members Fully Paid-Up	4204	4154	50
Members Fully Signed-up	3385	3373	12

August, and thus far into September, has been a particularly good period for the Trust!

- At last, we have achieved Real Living Wage Accreditation and are 1 of only three clubs in the EFL making this effort. The other 2 being Grimsby Town and Luton Town.
- We held our first Fans' Forum at the season, and I think one of our best to date.
- Our membership has held up over the summer and pre-season.
- I got to present on the Trust at the Club's 'One Team' meeting; and
- Our Community Fund initiative from last season is showing early signs of doing really well this year.

You will recall that the Real Living Wage initiative was requested by a Trust member and this, together with the City for All Scheme, also requested by a member, should rightly be two of the things we are most proud of.

These things demonstrate that the more successful the Club, the more we can contribute to the community. This again is represented by the ongoing engagement with local charities through the Exeter City Community Fund.

Over the last month we have discussed different initiatives with the Devon Rape Crisis Centre, AlrightMate?, and the FSA's Fans for Diversity.

This can most effectively be done when we have first cared for the Club. During the month we released our Supporter' Annual Report for 2022/23 (the last accounts published), which showed we were the only League 1 club to make a profit! Our accounts for 2023/24 will almost certainly do likewise, and there's every reason to believe 2024/25 will be no different. Supporter ownership not only works but can thrive!

On 1st September Joe Gorman took on the role of Chief Executive Officer at ECFC. This follows a very successful year with Jeremy Tipper at the reins. Joe takes on the role full time. The business has grown and matured considerably since our promotion to League 1 and today we boast an excellent support team at the Cliff Hill Training Ground as well as a skilled and motivated Executive Team that is developing the succession plan that has allowed us to immediately, and confidently, fill the vacancy Jeremy has left.

I'm truly grateful for Jeremy's effort as an unpaid executive. I am sure we will see him frequently at SJP and I know, he will continue to help us where he can.

Meanwhile, I wish Joe the best in his new role. Joe will be at the Trust Board meeting this evening, although a prior engagement elsewhere means that he must join by ZOOM.

This week, I sent out the Trust September newsletter. In it I've tried to explain some of the vagaries of transfer, loans and contracts.

We are now headed into the very important period that covers Trustee elections and of course, our AGM. Notification of the AGM has already gone out via e-mail and post (where we hold no e-mail address for a member). Election details will be sent out very shortly.

The Jay Stansfield transfer from Fulham FC to Birmingham City has, quite naturally, created a lot of interest for many reasons. As always this is covered in non-disclosure notices but I think it's safe to say that eventually, it will be beneficial to the club.

Nick Hawker

Women's Player of the Month Award Sponsorship

The Trust doesn't sponsor such awards as it is keen to avoid favouritism, but, in this case, it could encourage corporate sponsors to become involved.

SJP 360 Sponsorship

Media team keen for this to continue and it is planned for a volunteer to take over. £2,000 is needed.

The Trust agreed unanimously, in an indicative vote, proposed by CH, to provide funding to keep the 360 going, subject to appropriate answers to three questions.

Can we check, through ED, for corporate sponsors?

Exactly how much is needed and can we involve the Women's game?

What are Michal Heath's views?

CEO Job Description and Objectives

All were in favour of the proposed job description.

CCO. An offer has been made but not yet accepted.

AGM and Elections

Notifications have been sent out.

Trust Strategy

Thanks for all the hard work of Trustees. NH will pull the whole thing together over the next few days.

Update from Club Board Sub-Committees.

Supporter Experience Sub Committee

Fan zone canopy now has planning permission and installation should begin in the near future. There have been discussions about tarmac resurfacing.

New tills system is working well but there have been staffing issues which should improve with time and as students return.

Looking at Flexi student 6 game ticket.

Club App. Still waiting, as other clubs are, for final version. Currently looking at mid/late September launch.

Grecian+. Early issues appear to have been resolved. But the whole thing still needs looking at. It is worth mentioning that CH can pass on only the information he has been given. It is hoped that packages will be online at 12pm the day after the match.
Coach travel seems to be running smoothly. JQ and CH are to meet with East Devon Travel.
Latest on Women's football. Going well on the pitch, work to do off it.

Finance and Governance Sub Committee

This sub committee will be looking at the Governance Manual which has not been done for some time. Ways to align the Women's game will be considered.

Community Sub Committee

This new committee has not met yet. It will meet officially in October when it will be looking at the community and charitable aims with Clive Bawden.

NH. The Service Level Agreement says that ECCT will deliver these aims but the Trust has never been able to tell them what they are.

Working Group Updates

Trust Finance & Governance

August 2024

Opening balance		303,632.32
Receipts		
	Subscriptions	20,553.26
	Tournament fees	175.00
	Community Fund transfer	19,524.52
	Donation	60.00
	Total	40,312.78
Payments		
	Community Fund donations	19,800.00
	Payment to club	8,333.00
	Move to Community Fund	4,942.50
	Wages/Tax/Expenses	2,304.00
	WIX	100.08
	Bank charges	50.80
	Fasthosts	6.60
	Total	35,536.98

Deposit account
PayPal

416,446.1
7
293.50

Total

725,147.7
9

The accounts include ins and outs for the charity donations and the tournament fee is for a 5 or 6 a side corporate event.

Notes from minutes.

GC has signed his contract.

We met the solicitors to discuss how the accounts for the Women's game are to be presented.

OTR purchase is ongoing.

It was agreed that JP should remain as a valuable member of the group.

Appointment of new working lead as SC is standing down. The group has agreed that NE would be an appropriate group lead. As there were no other nominations, NE was proposed as Trust Finance and Governance Group Lead.

Proposer JP, seconder PF. Passed unanimously with one abstention (NE)

Trust year end accounts are with the auditor. Early indications are that there will be a surplus of £30,000.

Ownership and Membership Working Group

Notes from minutes

Family Zone Big Bank. Visible delineation is needed to support floor painting. Lessons from first match need addressing.

An area to focus on is increasing the member donation element. Suggested push on social media. Script needed for Comms team for website feature.

Worrying queues at Ticket booth at first match.

Junior Grecians area in Stansfield stand has been removed. How will it be replaced?

November Trust Board meeting clashes with Bristol City (a) PL U23 cup

Places available on Grecian Goal

Recovery Room project needs more promotion.

Plans are ongoing for a museum themed calendar as a Christmas fundraiser

Big thanks to Elaine for all her fundraising efforts.

Corporate membership continues to attract members, most notably this month Panionios in Athens. Andros influence?!

Communications Working group

Has had a long discussion about Trust strategy. Has also been discussing the Women's Player of the Month (see earlier)

Next meeting Monday.

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 at the Wycombe Wanderers game on Tuesday December 3rd.

At the Spurs EFL Trophy game we'll be entertaining the Devon and Exeter League Management Team.

"Alright Mate?" are using some of the money from our community fund on "Just For Men" a worthwhile course for men with issues such as anxiety and low self esteem.

We are hoping to be a Fans for Diversity club, an FSA initiative, focusing on away fans.

Hannah, from previously mentioned play (see last month), "ENG -GER-LAND" is visiting for Mansfield game (although this game is under threat of cancellation because of international commitments)

A Trust Walking Group is being launched. Details to follow. SC to check we are covered by our public liability insurance.

DG. Hospitality at Swindon Town game went well and was enjoyed by our charity partners. Jamie Whysall, from EFL (community) was present. There will be an article in the Stevenage programme.

Any Other Business

DG. Big Quiz is back. Appeal for volunteers.

GM. Thanks to all. "I'm proud to be a supporter of this Club."

Date of next Meeting: Monday 14 October

Future meetings

11 November

9 December