# Exeter City AFC Supporters' Society Limited

## Trust Board Meeting – Part A

## Meeting held in Legends' Lounge and on Zoom.

Date: Monday 17th August 2026

**Trustees present:** Tony Badcott, Julen Beer, Pete Ferlie, Debra Noble, Gary Quick.

**On Zoom:** Nick Bryant, Nigel Edwards, Doug Gillard. Debbie Marrable, Neil Le Milliere,

**Apologies:** Greg Newcombe, Matt Phillips

**Officers Present:** Dean Matthews (Secretary), Sarah Ford (Membership Secretary), Keith Mason (Trust Finance Officer) Pete Cordwell (Minutes Taker)

Pete Ferlie and Doug Gillard confirmed their standing declarations of interest. Nigel Edwards reported that he had become a Trustee of the Exeter City Football Club Museum. Although this was not an immediate declaration of interest, he would withdraw from any future discussion or decision relating to the Museum.

### 1. Chair's Update

1.1 Pete Ferlie welcomed those attending in person and online. He reminded everyone that this was a Trust Board meeting and that a Fans' Forum would take place in September, when further questions could be raised.

1.2 Pete reported that he had held a productive discussion with the Independent Football Regulator (IFR) supervisor and that a process and timetable for the 2026 election had been agreed. The AGM had been moved to 12 December because televised football fixtures had made the proposed November dates impractical. Exeter College had been provisionally booked and final confirmation was awaited. The revised election policy, process and timetable would be published, with the election process beginning on 1 September.

1.3 Matt Roach, the Club's incoming Managing Director, had been Pete's guest at the Plymouth match. Matt would begin work on 1 October. Peter believed that his experience and knowledge of both Exeter City Football Club and the Exeter business community made him a very good appointment.

1.4 John Street had confirmed that work was under way to upgrade the internet and audio-visual facilities in the meeting room and the Trust Suite.

1.5 Peter thanked Nick Bryant, Cam Ward and the Communications and Engagement Working Group for their work on the new Trust website. Particular thanks were recorded

to Cam, who had undertaken the work voluntarily and was completing his involvement that week. The website was considered cleaner and fresher, although further refinements were still required. Constructive feedback from members would be welcomed.

1.6 The Trust's policy review groups had begun meeting and their work was progressing.

1.7 The September Fans' Forum and October Trust Board meeting would need to be rearranged because of football fixtures on the planned Monday evenings. Revised dates would be circulated by email and social media.

1.8 Pete considered the new branding around the stadium to be a significant improvement and part of the work to bring the city to the stadium and the stadium to the city. Further work remained to be completed.

1.9 A meeting with the Trust's six charity partners would be arranged to discuss the next steps for the coming season.

1.10 The audit of the Trust's accounts would begin on 1 September. Keith Mason was also investigating whether the Trust could reduce the fees it paid for transactions processed through GoCardless and Stripe. The potential saving could be considerable.

## 2. Approval of minutes

2.1 Neil Le Milliere referred to paragraph 8.5 of the July minutes, which recorded the twentieth anniversary of an Isle of Scilly Supporters' Branch. No one was aware of such a branch or anniversary and the entry was confirmed as an error which should be deleted.

2.2 Alistair Yates sought to raise concerns about the recording of matters in the minutes of recent meetings and the handling of complaints he had submitted. He alleged that he and his family had been treated unfairly and that he had not received appropriate responses.

2.3 The Chair said that the meeting was not the appropriate forum in which to discuss the substance of an individual complaint. If information had been omitted from previous minutes, the specific omission could be considered as a matter of accuracy. He proposed that Alistair receive a response after the meeting.

2.4Alistair continued to express dissatisfaction with the complaints process and requested a fuller response. The Chair asked that the scheduled business of the meeting be allowed to proceed and said the matter would be addressed separately.

### 2.5Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2026.

**Proposer TB, Seconder GQ. Approved with one abstention**

## 3. Matters Arising and Review of the Action Log

3.1 Work on the election arrangements remained in progress. The Trust Policy Working Groups and Strategic Working Group had been established and were continuing their work. Peter thanked Matt Phillips and the Strategic Working Group, together with Phil Burden and Dave Treharne for their work on the policy reviews.

3.2 Keith confirmed that the Trust's new deposit account had been opened and was operating. That action could therefore be closed.

3.3 Nigel Edwards reported that work to reconcile the Trust's rules with the latest Football Supporters' Association template rules had previously been delayed because of staffing issues at the FSA. Neil Le Milliere now had a meeting arranged with Richard Irving of the FSA for 3 September. Richard had indicated that there were significant differences between the latest FSA template and the Trust's existing rules, which retained provisions that had been removed from later templates. Neil would report further after the meeting.

3.4 Nigel said that work concerning the Club–Trust agreement and related loan and share documentation remained in progress. Draft new articles and the proposed loan/share-swap deal were still required before Tozers could complete its advice.

3.5 Information explaining the Trustee role and the revised election process would be included in the forthcoming election material.

3.6 The Trust Board meeting procedure and the new website were now available online. Work to improve the audio-visual facilities was progressing.

3.7 The previously approved £2,000 Trust expenditure had been publicised through the frequently asked questions section of the website.

3.8 Work was continuing with VeryConnect to improve the clarity of wording used in membership communications.

3.9 The Trust remained committed to developing online and in-person Young Fans Forums and encouraging greater involvement from younger supporters.

3.10 The Club had agreed that the Club and Trust Board would work together on the design of the following season's playing kit. Pete hoped to report further at the September meeting.

3.11 An options paper on implementing the AGM resolution concerning a three-month Club reserve would be presented at the September meeting.

3.12 Nigel noted that the final terms of reference for one of the completed actions had not yet been published on the website.

**3.13 Action**

The relevant final terms of reference would be uploaded to the Trust website.

**4. Fan Engagement Plan**

4.1 Tony Badcott reported that the Club had again received a gold award for fan engagement. It was also expected to be announced as holding the top position across the whole EFL in the Fan Engagement Index. He considered this an achievement of which the Club and Trust should be extremely proud.

4.2 In his role relating to supporter engagement, Tony had been working with Richard Knight on three submissions to the EFL. They had also met to consider how the Club and Trust could engage with many more young people across Exeter and East Devon, particularly through schools and Exeter City Community Trust.

4.3Tony said that, irrespective of events on the pitch, the aim remained to give supporters the best possible experience when attending matches and to retain the Club's reputation for doing fan engagement differently.

**5. AGM and Election 2026**

5.1 Pete confirmed that the election timetable, revised policy and process would be published shortly. The notice of the AGM would be issued on 1 September.

5.2 The AGM would take place at Exeter College on 12 December 2026. The deadline for submitting candidate nomination forms would be 19 October.

5.3 The December Trust Board meeting would be brought forward by one week and the January meeting moved back by one week. This would allow time for the IFR to complete the verification process for newly elected Trustees.

5.4 Successful candidates would meet Pete and the IFR supervisor on 14 December to begin the verification process. Pete was discussing whether candidates could see the questions in advance. Candidates would also be required to complete the EFL's relevant fit-and-proper-person process and the necessary DBS documentation. Full details would be included in the election pack.

5.5 It was subsequently clarified that the existing Trust Board would remain able to function and make decisions during the election and verification period. Newly elected Trustees could become involved in Trust Board matters but would not be entitled to vote until IFR verification had been completed. Doug Gillard had agreed to assist with the induction of newly elected Trustees.

**5.6 Action**

The revised election policy, process and complete timetable would be published for members.

**6. Women's Team Update (report in meeting pack and online**

6.1 An update was provided on the Women's team's playing venues. Most of the remaining fixtures would be played at Coach Road, the Devon County FA headquarters. Fixtures which could not be accommodated there because of clashes with community activities would be played at Silver Street, the home of Willand Rovers. Thanks were

recorded to Ben Watson for his assistance. A possible home League Cup first-round fixture would also be played at Silver Street.

6.2 The previous day's result had been disappointing. The opposition had been further advanced in the development of its squad, having retained a strong side and added some of the division's best players. It also benefited from being fully professional, whereas Exeter's team operated on a hybrid basis. It was expected that results would improve as Exeter's new squad developed and settled.

6.3 A positive outcome from the fixture was that adult sizes of the Women's away shirt had sold out. A further supply had been ordered.

6.4 The new Women's team facility had recently been formally opened in the presence of donors, sponsors, contractors, Beau Jackson and members of Hazel Bound's family. The facility had already had a positive effect on the players, management and the wider perception of the Women's team. Thanks were again recorded to all the individuals, supporter groups, projects, sponsors and contractors whose contributions had made it possible.

6.5 Later in the meeting, Sharon reported that a new £5 monthly subscription scheme supporting the Women's team had been introduced at the previous day's match using QR codes. The scheme was expected to be formally publicised during the week.

6.6 Sharon also asked whether organised travel could be provided for supporters wishing to attend Women's away fixtures. A minibus or nine-seat vehicle could provide an initial option if sufficient demand existed to make it financially viable. It was agreed that Sharon would discuss the proposal with Debbie Marrable and Deborah Noble as part of the developing Women's Forum.

**6.7 Action**

Debbie Marrable and Deborah Noble would discuss possible organised travel to Women's away fixtures with Sharon and other interested supporters.

**7. Supporter Engagement Committee Update**

7.1Tony reported on the Supporter Round Table eeting held on 22 July. Kevin Instance had provided updates on safety and Martyn's Law. Catering Manager Dan Wagner had discussed the Grecian Grill, the new catering arrangements and the new pasties, while John Street had provided a general Club update.

7.2 Supporters who had attended considered the meeting useful and welcomed the amount of information provided. It was also noted that the Club had achieved a great deal with substantially fewer financial resources than some other clubs.

## 8. Working Group Updates

***9. Finance and Governance***

9.1 Gary Quick reported that the Trust Finance Group had met on 16 July.

9.2 The Trust's financial year-end had been changed to 30 June to align with the Club's year-end. This would make the provision and reconciliation of financial information easier. The current accounting period would therefore cover 13 months.

9.3 The group continued to monitor the Club's supplier and commercial contracts. Earlier work had shown that some arrangements had not been supported by sufficiently clear contracts and it had not always been evident that the market was tested when agreements expired. Matt Dawes, previously Interim Revenue Manager, had been appointed permanent Revenue Manager. He was reviewing existing contracts and ensuring that new and renewed arrangements were appropriately market-tested.

9.4The group had considered whether all available capital allowances relating to the construction of the Cliff Hill Training Ground had been claimed. Ray Storey had reviewed the position and confirmed that every available claim had been made.

9.5 The Trust's new deposit account with Hampshire Trust Bank was paying interest of 3.91%, compared with approximately 0.5% previously received from Lloyds. A total of £100,000 had been deposited. Keith would keep the rate under review, although the account required three months' notice.

9.6 The Trust would review its choice of auditor after completion of the 2025–26 accounts by the current auditor. Keith had held preliminary conversations with possible alternatives and expected to begin a formal process in mid-September. Initial indications suggested that a saving of approximately £2,000 might be achievable. Any proposed change would require Trust Board approval before being put to the AGM.

9.7 Ray Storey had attended the TFG meeting and presented the latest Club cash-flow information. He had worked to recover several overdue commercial debts. The largest outstanding amount had recently been resolved and progress had been made on other long-standing debts which might otherwise have been written off.

9.8 The current forecast indicated that the Club was unlikely to need to draw upon the private loan facility before it expired at the end of September. However, cash flow was expected to become tighter around November. The possibility of extending the facility was therefore being discussed to retain flexibility. This demonstrated that potential pressure points were now being identified and addressed in advance rather than the Trust receiving an urgent approach when the Club was close to being unable to meet its commitments.

9.9 The TFG had reviewed a number of cost lines and questioned whether contracts had been tested appropriately. First-team coach travel had been examined because of its cost. Quotations had been sought, but there were few local providers able to supply vehicles of the necessary quality. The cost would continue to be monitored.

9.10 The AGM resolution concerning a Club cash reserve had been discussed in detail. A proposal would be brought to the September Trust Board meeting and subsequently explained publicly.

9.11 Keith reported that the draft 2025–26 Trust accounts had been completed and sent to the auditors. They showed a healthy surplus. A small amount of corporation tax would be payable on bank interest, but no other Trust income was subject to corporation tax.

9.12 Keith had also prepared a cash-flow projection for the Trust. Despite the increased monthly lending to the Club, he expected the Trust's bank balance to show a small increase rather than a significant reduction.

9.13 Nigel explained that an extension of the private loan facility would not incur a fee from the provider, although the Club would have to pay the provider's relatively modest legal costs.

9.14 Nigel also reported that the Trust's existing loans to the Club were being re-documented to place them on a firmer and more commercial legal footing. Tozers had prepared drafts and Andrew Rothwell had provided comments. Nigel hoped to bring the final documentation back to the Trust Board by the end of August and have the agreements completed during September.

9.15 The revised loan agreements were intended to strengthen the Trust's protection of members' money. In particular, they would reinforce the requirement for the Club to provide regular management accounts, the previous absence of which had been an early warning sign of the financial difficulties experienced during the preceding year.

9.16 The next TFG meeting will take place on 17 September.

***10. Community***

10.1Doug Gillard reported that the Community Working Group would meet on 20 August. This would be his final meeting as group lead before Debbie Marrable took over. Handover discussions had taken place and written notes had been prepared.

10.2 A new memorandum of understanding governing the relationship between the Trust and Exeter Community Initiatives had been drafted and circulated to Trustees. An electronic vote would take place during the week.

10.3 Draft terms of reference had also been prepared for the relationship between the Trust and its charity partners. Some amendments were required before the document could be submitted to Trustees for approval.

10.4 The proposed joint Young Fans' Forum involving Exeter, Plymouth Argyle and Torquay United had been cancelled after Plymouth attracted only one young participant and Torquay none. The initiative would instead become an online questionnaire intended to establish what younger supporters thought about Supporters' Trusts and how they wished to engage with them.

10.5 Doug and Debbie were preparing a proposal to rename the group the Community and Advocacy Working Group. Debbie would become its lead and would be supported by three coordinators covering community work, charity partners and football. Role descriptions would be completed and the positions advertised before the AGM.

10.6 Debbie and Deborah Noble had met Laura and Charlotte from Exeter City Community Trust to begin developing a Women's Forum. Work would explore how CCT's programmes concerning women's health and wellbeing might be extended to Trust members and the wider female supporter base. Further information would be circulated.

### *11. Communications and Engagement*

11.1 Nick Bryant reported that the Communications and Engagement Working Group had not held a formal meeting since the previous Trust Board meeting, although discussions and work had continued between members.

11.2 He thanked corporate member Toco Digital for its support in creating the new website. Thanks were also recorded to the Communications and Engagement Working Group and Trust members Max Saunders and Martin Lawrence for providing technical expertise. Particular thanks were again expressed to Cam Ward for leading the project.

11.3 Feedback on the website would continue to be considered and further improvements made, but Nick regarded it as a considerable advance on the previous site.

11.4 The latest Trust members' newsletter had been issued. The group recognised that it could be improved further and would continue reviewing how best to engage the wider membership.

11.5 Nick and Pete had also begun working more closely with the Club's communications team. This included attendance at weekly planning meetings and involvement in preparations for the season ahead so that the Club and Trust could support one another more effectively.

### *12. Trust Finance*

12.1 Keith reported a significant increase in subscription income during July, more than £10,000 above the usual monthly figure. Many members paid annually in July, having originally joined shortly before the start of a season.

12.2 The monthly loan payment to the Club had increased to £20,000 as agreed. Despite this, a surplus remained and further money had been transferred into the deposit account. Approximately £10,000 would be retained in the current account as a contingency.

12.3 The total held across the Trust's bank accounts was £165,000. Nigel clarified that this included approximately £38,000 donated to the fire appeal. That sum was restricted for work around the ground after the final insurance claim had been settled and should not be regarded as general Trust funds.

12.4 Membership stood at 5,631. Further corporate memberships were awaiting payment and some existing corporate subscriptions remained outstanding.

12.5 Only 95 members were still paying by standing order, approximately half of whom paid annually. This represented a substantial reduction from the several thousand

standing orders in place a year earlier. Sarah and her team were thanked for achieving the change.

12.6 Approximately 200 people continued to pay below the current minimum subscription. They had received letters and emails and, where time permitted, telephone calls. Any payments continuing below the minimum would be treated as donations rather than qualifying membership subscriptions.

***13. Strategic Working Group***

13.1 Matt Phillips was absent, but Pete reported that work on the strategy was continuing. The September Trust Board meeting would include a dedicated discussion of the Trust Board's views before the strategy was presented at the AGM.

**14. Any Other Business**

14.1 A Trust member questioned whether a Young Fans Forum was the best way to engage younger people. Trustees said they were open to alternative suggestions and wanted younger supporters to identify the methods and times that would work best for them. It was acknowledged that further direct engagement was needed.

14.2 Cameron Ward congratulated Greg Newcombe on the increase in corporate memberships and the renewal of existing corporate members.

14.2 Cameron asked why the wall between the Heritage Lounge and the boardroom had been removed. It was explained that this was a Club commercial decision which created a single hospitality area capable of accommodating approximately 150 people. A booking had already been secured which could not have been accommodated previously.

**14.3 Action**

Cameron would arrange website training for relevant Trustees and volunteers so that they understood how to use the new website's administration system.

14.4 A member attending for the first time said that she found the acronyms, terminology and references to individuals difficult to follow. She suggested that an introductory or induction guide be prepared for ordinary Trust members, explaining the Trust's structure, terminology and appropriate points of contact.

14.5 The same member described being refused entry to hospitality venues at Torquay because she and a friend were wearing Exeter colours. She hoped that the Centre Spot would continue to welcome visiting supporters unless individuals caused trouble. She had previously emailed the Club about her experience but had not received an acknowledgement.

14.6 She was asked to give her contact details to Sarah so that the matter could be followed up. Neil said that visiting supporters' coaches regularly brought supporters to

the Centre Spot and FECRACE before matches because Exeter's facilities were known to be welcoming to both home and away fans.

**14.7 Action**

The member's email and concerns about welcoming visiting supporters would be followed up after she supplied her contact details.

14.9 Peter reported that replies had been sent to a number of questions received from members by email. Further replies would be completed during the next few days.

14.10 In response to a question about Trust support for the Women's team, it was confirmed that £16,000 had been paid during the most recent financial period. That period covered 13 months because the Trust's year-end had been changed to align with the Club's.

14.11 A Trust member asked whether younger members could become involved in preparing the Club reserve proposal. It was confirmed that the proposal would be presented in September and that ideas and alternative approaches would be welcomed. It was noted that holding approximately £1.5 million entirely in cash was not considered practicable, so other ways of meeting the intention of the AGM resolution would need to be considered.

14.12 Concern was expressed that almost a year had passed since the AGM resolution without a proposal being implemented. Trustees acknowledged the delay but said that considerable other work had also been required. A paper would be produced for the September meeting, when a fuller discussion could begin.

14.13Tony offered to act as a point of contact for further discussion with younger supporters and encouraged them to contribute ideas, including ideas relating to engagement with supporters of the Women's team.

**14.14 Action**

Peter Ferlie and Matt Phillips would prepare the Club reserve proposal for the September Trust Board meeting, taking account of suggestions received from younger and other Trust members.

14.15 Nigel relayed a question from Stephen Weston about progress against the 20 recommendations arising from the Trust review. Tony said that Trust member Tim Hopkins had been asked to oversee progress independently so that the Trust Board could be held to account and the recommendations would not be overlooked. Tim had been away for much of August, but Tony intended to contact him during the week for an update.

**14.16 Action**

Tony Badcottwould contact Tim Hopkins for an update on oversight of the Trust review recommendations.

14.17 Spike thanked those Trustees who had engaged with members following the previous meeting.. He said that much of this constructive engagement had taken place away from the camera and therefore was not always apparent to the wider membership. Thanks were also expressed to Deborah for helping to paint the heart display and to Julen for visiting the project from the training ground.

14.18 At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair again proposed that Alistair Yates's concerns be discussed separately. Alistair requested that any discussion take place in the presence of other representatives because of the formal and legal nature of his complaints. It was agreed that some members of the Trust Board would remain after a short break and that Pete would leave the room.

**Meeting closed.**

**Next meeting. 14 September**