**Bath City FC Supporters Society**

**2023 Annual General Meeting**

**7.00pm on Thursday 22nd June 2023**

**At Twerton Park and via Zoom**

**minutes**

**Present**: 24 members (in person and online)

1. **Society Chair’s report**

Pete McCormack, Chair of the Supporters Society, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Pete thanked all Society members for their continued support which enables the Society to help both the men’s and the women’s team and increasingly in the future the Bath City Foundation. He reported that the Society’s membership had increased to over 450 due to a membership campaign in collaboration with the Club. He reported that despite the current elections to the Society Committee it is still short of people and asked that anyone interested in being co-opted should get in touch with the Society. He noted that it’s been a difficult year for the Club and that the Society wants to support the Club Board more effectively in future. It will look at ways of doing this and will produce a paper and ask members for their views on how we can move forward.

Pete noted that five members of the Society Committee were standing down at this AGM. He thanked Jon Blain, Paul Brotherton, Oliver Holtaway, Ken Loach and Marc Thomas for their many contributions over the years. He also thanked Nick and the Club Board for their hard work over the last year.

Pete suggested that questions and discussion be combined with those following the Club Chair’s report.

1. **Update from the Club Chair**

Nick Blofeld agreed that it had been a challenging year and that it’s been a team effort by a range of people who are all volunteers for the Club. The Club Board is also losing experienced people and is looking for new people to get involved in the Club. Those with commercial or sales and marketing experience are particularly needed. Volunteers don’t necessarily need to become directors but anyone with a few hours a week to contribute is welcome to contact the Club. Nick stressed that the injury to Alex Fletcher had a deep impact on everyone at the Club and was an emotional and exhausting time for many. The best news of the whole season was to see Alex recovering.

NB reported that the redevelopment is now four years behind schedule because of the failure of the first planning application. He maintained that the redevelopment plan was the right thing to do at the time as there was no other choice. The Club now has a new redevelopment partner that has local knowledge and experience with a proven track record in the field. Nick said that there should be clarity about the financials of the new scheme in the next couple of days and noted that the new redevelopment will be smaller than the previous proposal. It will probably involve re-skinning the grandstand rather than building a new one. He said that installing artificial turf will be fundamental to the financial sustainability of the Club. He stressed that there needs to be a proper balance between the Club’s ambitions to do well on the pitch and financial sustainability. He thanked everyone involved in the Club for their hard work keeping the Club going.

In answer to question about the extension of the Men’s team manager’s contract, Nick said that this was decided by the Club Board and was felt to be the best, rational decision to keep the Club stable and going in the right direction. He recognised that the team was in a mid-table position and referred to the financial situation and the impact of Alex Fletcher’s injury.

The position of Greenacre and the sale of its property on the High Street was raised. NB reported that the Club has been talking to the Administrators and potential partners for some time but was not able to go into detail at this stage. The situation is complicated and there are confidentialities involved but Nick said that different options for the site are being explored.

The Club’s financial position was raised. Paul Williams said that although income had been higher than forecast over the last season, the level of expenditure was much higher than expected, particularly due to higher energy costs. Player loan costs were also higher than normal due to injuries. Donations to the Club helped to bridge the gap. It was confirmed that a budget has been set for 2023/24.

In response to a question about the FA’s review of player contracts, particularly the arrangements when players are injured long-term, PW said that the result is that a number of options are now available. He stressed that Bath City will continue to honour player contracts in the case of injury, as the Club has always done in the past.

The 3g pitch was raised in relation to how prepared is the Club to cater for large numbers of users coming to Twerton Park. NB replied that better changing facilities and a café are built into the plan and funding options for these are being explored.

In discussion NB also highlighted the achievement in increasing attendances at Twerton Park and the success of the women’s team, which had achieved promotion after only one season.

There were questions about commercial revenue and NB stated that this was at a record high due to the work of Carole Banwell and of volunteers. There was record participation in the shirt sponsorship draw and a renewed focus on larger revenue streams. He re-iterated that more help is always welcome.

Andy Laker from Bath City Youth highlighted the cooperation between BCY and the Club generally, including participation with flag-bearers, mascots, and encouraging people to attend Bath City games. The season ticket offer had brought more young people to games and he hoped that these initiatives can be continued into the coming season. NB appreciated these efforts and hoped that they would grow in future.

1. **Society Treasurer’s report**

Al Lord reported that the 2022 Supporters Society accounts had been finalised and handed out copies at the meeting. The accounts will also be made available to members after the AGM.

He reported that income during the year was just over £9k, about half of which was from the 100 Club, and invited people to join the 100 Club if not already a member. Donations from members over and above the subscription fee were also very helpful sources of funding. Expenditure during the year was approximately £7k, which includes prizes for the 100 Club, a £1k sponsorship to the Club, a £1k donation to the Alex Fletcher fund and just under £1k to provide equipment and kit for the women’s team.

AL reported that the Society currently has about £10k in the bank account.

1. **Re-appointment of auditors**

The AGM then considered a motion to re-appoint Charlton-Baker as auditors. They provide support with the Supporters Society accounts and with the submission of the Society’s annual return to the Financial Conduct Authority. This was agreed by a show of hands.

1. **Club Board and Society Committee election results**

Paul Brotherton reported the results on behalf of Oliver Holtaway, Election Officer, starting with elections to the Club Board. There had been no nominations for the Commercial Director and one nomination for Supporter Liaison Officer. The electorate for the SLO includes both the Supporters Society and the Supporters Club and 191 people voted out of 548 eligible (35%). The result was:

Supporter Liaison Officer on the Club Board (one place for three years):

James Carlin Yes 176 (elected)

 No 4

There were five nominations for the six places available on the Supporters Society Committee. The turnout of Supporters Society members was 174 out of 468 (37%). The results were:

Supporters Society Committee (up to six places for two years each):

Christopher Flanagan Yes 136 (elected)

 No 15

Sally Harris Yes 152 (elected)

 No 6

Stuart Page Yes 123 (elected)

 No 24

Dave Phillips Yes 158 (elected)

 No 6

Heather Thomas Yes 144 (elected)

 No 7

PB congratulated all those elected and welcomed new members to the Club Board and Society Committee.

1. **Debate on motions received**

PM reported that two motions had been received for debate and that the Committee had decided that voting should take place on the night rather than online afterwards. This means that all those voting would be present to hear the discussion for and against each motion. He also explained that the two motions had been discussed at the last Society IGM but that the Committee had agreed that they could be discussed again because of changes in the environment concerning gambling and football.

Motion One:

*“The Society should ensure that, where possible, Bath City FC has no direct association with or contract with, any external gambling companies, other than lotteries, and does not promote gambling companies, other than lotteries, in any of the Club’s official output”.*

Proposer: Alan Finney

Seconder: Martin Powell.

Alan reported that the Premier League had said in April that shirt front sponsorship by

gambling companies would be banned from the end of the 2025/26 season. There is increased concern across the country and in the media about the problem effects of gambling and the way in which gambling companies have attempted to normalise gambling. More examples of problem gambling are being highlighted.

He raised the prospect of Bath City being on a good cup run and gambling companies offering sponsorship to seize that opportunity. He felt that turning down such an offer would be good for the reputation of the Club. The

In discussion there was support for the idea of banning gambling companies but a question about whether this would be acceptable as a last resort if the money was needed for the survival of the Club. It was pointed out that the words ‘where possible’ gave some flexibility if that situation occurred. In response to a question, AF stressed that the motion was only concerned with the Club itself and didn’t relate to gambling’s links with the League in general. Shane Morgan reminded the meeting that there are some League requirements that the Club has to follow. Again, the words ‘where possible’ give this flexibility. Martin Powell highlighted that as a community club Bath City has a wider responsibility to the community. In answer to a question about process, Christopher Flanagan and Alan Finney said that the motion was addressed to the Supporters Society and that as such it was not in itself binding on the Club.

In a show of hands there were 18 votes for the motion and none against.

Motion Two:

*“The Society should ensure that, where possible, Bath City FC should avoid the display of logos of any external gambling companies, other than lotteries, within any interviews officially posted on YouTube”.*

Proposer: Alan Finney

Seconder: Martin Powell.

AF noted that background displays for interviews seem to vary between clubs and that the motion was again concerned with situations where the Club itself has control over any logos that appear. It did not cover displays that are made obligatory by the League. PW pointed out that clubs can be fined if they don’t follow League requirements. Again the words ‘where possible’ cover such situations.

In a show of hands again there were 18 votes for the motion and none against.

1. **Any other business**

James Carlin wanted to thank the Club for the free ticket initiative which had enabled the Foundation to go to local schools, take part in assemblies and give free match tickets which had resulted in hundreds of schoolchildren attending Twerton Park. He hoped that this would continue into next season.

PM reported that Ken Loach, who couldn’t attend, had asked him to read a message to the meeting. Ken is standing down from the Committee and wrote that “the Society and its Committee are the guardians of the Club. We are in part a community owned Club and the Society has the majority shareholder vote. When we sold community shares there was a commitment that those who bought them would take major decisions affecting the Club’s future. It’s down to us and it’s our responsibility. It only works if we’re actively involved and we can only be effective if we know what’s happening and, when necessary, we meet to take decisions. It must be a democracy. Please ask your Committee members for information and tell them your views”.

Regarding redevelopment “It’s difficult but unavoidable. We’ll only have one chance at redevelopment and the future of the Club hinges on it. In my view the Club and community will succeed or fail together. If the redevelopment brings local people to Twerton Park and provides facilities and services that improve daily life we’ll all progress together. We also need a design that brings status and pride to the Club and people of Twerton. Therefore, it seems to me that we have to work jointly on any future plan or application then we will really be a hub for community activities. That was our original commitment and with that support Bath City can achieve financial security and thrive as a football club”.

PM reiterated the importance of Society members getting in touch with the Committee to give their views, while taking into account the fact that some discussions need to be confidential particularly to do with the business activities of the Club.

1. **Close of meeting**

PM thanked everyone for attending both in person and online and closed the meeting.