

Supporters Society

Draft Membership Strategy

2 February 2022

Introduction

As a supporters' trust, the Society is dedicated to achieving the greatest possible supporter and community influence in the running and ownership of Bath City FC. Being able to vote for the club's directors and Society Committee members is an important part of this, but we believe that supporter and community participation can go much further than that.

We believe that all Bath City supporters have the potential to make important contributions to the club through their knowledge, skills, talent, creativity, and passion. By putting supporter democracy at the heart of the club's decisions, we increase our chances of building a successful and sustainable future for Bath City FC.

In that spirit, all of the below is just a starting point to be shared, discussed and delivered with our members.

What we want to achieve

1. Grow the Society's membership, so that more supporters and community members can take part in shaping the Club's future
2. Make membership more meaningful by creating more and better opportunities for members to understand what's happening at the Club, interact with the Club and participate in making decisions and developing new initiatives
3. Involve members themselves in developing and delivering our membership strategy, tapping into members' ideas and drawing on their support

Ultimately, membership should be about quality as much as quantity. To focus our efforts, however, we propose a target of 1000 members – roughly in line with the Club's average attendance. We currently have about 350 members.

How we plan to achieve it

Increased matchday presence

We should 'think big' about increasing the Society's presence and visibility on matchdays. Getting posters, stickers and flyers everywhere is probably a better use of time and resources than occasionally manning a table in a corner of Charlie's. Ideally, people shouldn't be able to walk through a turnstile, buy a pint, leaf through a programme or buy a scarf without being reminded about the Society!

- **Materials:** We have printed 5000 A5 flyers that will be permanently hosted in leaflet holders at the Mo-B-Q stall. We can also hand them out at the ground or leave them around Charlie's, the tea bar etc. We also have two A1 poster boards, a pull-up banner and a number of Society badges for members.
- **Basic Matchday Presence:** We can set up a simple system for a pair of Society volunteers to ensure a basic matchday presence, e.g. arriving early to collect flyers from Mo-B-Q and distribute around the ground, positioning one of the A1 poster boards somewhere in the ground, standing at the exit at the end handing out flyers, collecting unused flyers up and returning them to Mo-B-Q at the end, etc.
- **“Big push” days:** Once or twice a season, we can set up a system of 5-8 Society volunteers to hand out flyers around the ground before, during and after the match, and perhaps have a table in Charlie's. This could be aligned with other one-off promotions and publicised on social media.
- **“Unmanned” Matchday Presence:** There are currently 2 x A1 posters mounted in frames around the ground. We may seek other places to install them (with the club's permission) and get more A1 posters (or posters of other sizes) printed and stuck up.

Advertising with the club

Using the club's own channels (e.g. programmes, match sponsorship, social media, hoardings etc) to promote the Society is a good way to reach supporters and ensure that the more of the money the Society spends promoting membership goes back to the club, improving our reputation among supporters and members.

- **Matchday Programme:** We can follow the Supporters Club's lead and take out a regular page which is half a standard advert for the Society and half info taken from the monthly email newsletter, or light Q+As with Society members (or anything else people might like). We could write up a lot of the content in advance so we wouldn't have to constantly worry about getting stuff in before the print deadlines.
- **Hoardings:** We are already in conversations with the club to place a hoarding near the Family Stand. The design of the hoarding is being worked out. There is the opportunity to buy more hoardings if needed.
- **Sponsorships:** The Society typically sponsors one match a year and puts on a members' draw for those who want to enjoy the matchday hospitality. We should continue to do this, but should also explore a bespoke sponsorship package with the club that focuses more on exposure and less on hospitality, to better serve our recruitment aims.
- **Romans on Demand / Bath City Internet Radio:** We could explore sponsorship opportunities with the club's video and radio volunteers.

20th anniversary of Society / 5th anniversary of community ownership

The Society turned 20 on 21 Dec 2021, while community ownership will be officially five years old in May 2022. We can use the second half of the 2021/22 season to celebrate these two milestones.

Possible ideas:

- Souvenir programme for a specific match
- Bespoke matchday sponsorship (as above).
- "Greatest City goals of the past 20 years" competition in conjunction with Romans on Demand, with a [print made](#) of the winning goal, to be framed and donated to Charlie's with a plaque/sticker from the Society.

Social Media

At present the Society has a Twitter and Facebook account that is maintained by a Society Committee volunteer. There is potential to plan, create and organise more content for these channels, if more volunteer resource is found.

At the same time, the club has a much more thorough and well-followed social media presence across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. It may make more sense to partner with the Club to create and place Society-related content, through sponsorship if necessary, rather than building up the Society's social media channels.

Finally, the Society has a website (www.bathcitysociety.org) that is most geared towards explaining in simple terms with the Society is about on the landing page, while providing detailed information for members on the other pages. This could also be revisited and changed according to member feedback.

Member-to-member recruitment

Personal endorsements, word-of-mouth and good old-fashioned peer pressure could be effective ways of growing our membership. We can explore with members what the best ways of doing this are.

Membership fringe benefits

At the moment there are no membership fringe benefits per se – technically members are entitled to a badge, but we haven't set up a mechanism for people to collect them. We could explore new fringe benefits to attract members.

Membership retention

Once members are recruited, we will make sure that they find the experience of being a member useful and meaningful. At present we do this through:

- Monthly newsletter
- Annual financial update from the club

- AGM and IGM

We can explore with members ways to improve the member experience.

What we need to move forward

- **Budget:** before entertaining new ideas and entering negotiations with the club over advertising and sponsorship, the Society should have a clear seasonal budget to support our membership strategy.
- **Ideas:** the above is only a starting point and there are clearly gaps. Members should be invited to share and develop their own ideas.
- **Messaging:** some work has been done to develop how the Society describes itself and explains why supporters should join, but it hasn't really been tested and could be improved with members' help. (We just need to avoid going down a rabbit hole with this)
- **Time on matchdays:** some Society Committee and Society members will have to occasionally volunteer on matchdays to ensure that flyers, posters, A1 boards etc are put in the right places.
- **Time outside of matchdays:** making this happen will require ongoing liaison with various parts of the club, as well as designers and printers, etc.

Next steps

- Agree a budget (£2000 has been approved).
- Share this strategy with members and invite feedback
- Hold a meeting of interested members
- Approach various parts of the club about collaboration and sponsorship opportunities

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