

BLUES TRUST

Minutes of the meeting of the Blues Trust Board held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 27 March 2024 via Zoom video conference.

In attendance: Neil Cottrell (NC) (Chair), Karim Adab (KA), Pete Bull (PB), Richard Docker (RD), Fred Greaves (FG), Cliff Horrocks (CH), Bruce Kyte (BK), Linda Magner (LM) and Richard Stanley (RS) (Board members) and Jez Hemming (JH) (guest).

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and in particular Jez Hemming, Trust member, who had expressed an interest in becoming involved with the Board.

2. Apologies for Absence

None.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 January 2024 were noted and approved. There were no matters arising.

The Agreed Actions list was reviewed. Completion or progress was noted against all items except research on international members. RS confirmed that this would be done going forward. CH confirmed that a meeting had been arranged with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on 10 May to discuss possible use of the facility by the Trust on matchdays.

4. Chair's Report

NC updated the meeting on recent developments. He explained that there had been a lot of recent activity by the club which would be covered later on the agenda, but confirmed that the Trust's membership expertise had been offered to support the OSC network although it was not expected to be taken up.

NC explained that yesterday's announcement about the Football Governance Bill had generated a lot of press interest. In discussion FG asked if the club should be asked for its views on the Bill? It was agreed that if the opportunity presented itself, NC would raise the matter at the

next Open House meeting with the club. KA suggested that the Trust should put itself on the front foot and release a position statement. This was agreed.

5. Football Governance Bill

Discussion continued into the substantive item about the bill. It was agreed that because of work undertaken to date, the Trust should take the opportunity to position itself as an expert in the field. And, as appropriate, offer support to the club to assist its preparations for the expected legislative change. It was agreed that CH should pursue this with ██████████ at the club. It was further agreed that more background work should be undertaken to prepare for the bill becoming law later in the year, and opportunities be taken to promote the expected development. This should include a series of bulletin point articles which could act as “explainers” for fans. The twin track approach of publicising important aspects of the bill and also trying to develop a working relationship with the club around its implications was agreed.

6. Corporate Membership

NC introduced this item which was concerned with the possibility of the Trust introducing a corporate membership category. The matter had been raised as an idea previously.

In discussion it was agreed that it was something that could be done, but the overriding question was “why?” The benefits of doing so were not very tangible. When the matter had been looked at previously the motivation at the time was an aspiration for the Trust to possibly become a supporter hub. That is no longer the case because the club is in a different place now with strengthened fan engagement measures and, in particular, the advent of the Official Supporter Clubs. So the model previously considered was no longer appropriate. It was agreed that the idea should not be pursued at the present time but, rather, held in abeyance pending any change in circumstances at the club.

7. Club Updates

(i) Blues Matters

It was noted that LM (Heritage) and CH (South Asian Engagement) are represented on two of the appointed groups. A core committee has also been established to oversee and coordinate the work of the groups. Only introductory group meetings have been held so far. The work of the groups will also feed into and support the work of the clubs Foundation. In discussion it was agreed that the groups appear to be a sincere

attempt by the club to strength fan engagement despite the element of central control.

(ii) Official Supporter Clubs

It was noted that the OSC's are now being established and there appear to be a lot of rules associated with them. They are proscriptive but also vague at the same time. But it was agreed that they appear to have merit and Blues supporters, including Trust members, should be encouraged to consider joining.

(iii) Open House

The date of the next Open House was noted but invitations to attend had not been sent out yet. NC confirmed that he was expecting to attend as the Trust's representative.

8. Financial Report

PB introduced the report with reference to the paper he had circulated prior to the meeting. The operating surplus (£937.00) and general reserves (£3557.00) figures were noted. There had been no major items since the last meeting.

PB confirmed that as at 25 March the Trust had 392 members and 1036 followers. He explained that the website is operating smoothly although the slowness in performance is still being addressed. In discussion, PB agreed to update the website with a link to the OSC site. It was also agreed to reproduce more Trust business cards with the inclusion of the word "independent".

9. Any Other Business

- (i) Millwall Away - RS confirmed that it had not been a pleasant experience at all for most Blues supporters who had travelled. It was acknowledged that engineering works in the location, plus the occasion of other major events in the capital, had probably contributed to the difficulties encountered. But it was also the case that it had not been well handled by the agencies involved, including the police. A critical factor had been the lack of information. It was agreed that not much could now be done at this stage, although the concerns were noted for future reference;
- (ii) Website Articles - RD expressed concern that the number of responses being made to recent articles published on the Trust website had declined with, increasingly, no responses being received

at all. This was unusual given previous history. In discussion it was agreed to review website technical performance to ensure that there were no glitches that might be making it difficult for people to submit comments. It was also agreed to review the timing of the publication of articles to target key points in the day. JH suggested that articles be published at 7am, 11am, 4pm, 7pm and 11pm to maximise engagement opportunities;

(iii) Podcasts - LM raised the question of podcasts and asked if the Trust should consider doing them? In discussion it was agreed that there was merit in exploring the idea, although it was noted that the arena for podcasts is now becoming quite crowded so careful thought was required to identify the Trust's angle and purpose. It was agreed that the matter be considered by the Media Activities Group when it was formed.

10. Date of Next Meeting

- The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 23 May 2024 at 7.00pm via zoom video conference call.

The meeting finished at 9.09pm.