

## **AGM Minutes 27 August 2022**

Legends Rooms Prenton Park

### **In attendance from the board**

Ben H, Jess G, Simon C, Gareth R, Ernie H, Robs J & E (with apologies received from board members absent)

### **Members**

Approximately 25 members attended at various stages

BH Introduced the board members attending, and acknowledged the departure of those who had resigned and departed since the last meeting, thanking each and highlighting the length of service and huge efforts they (and their families) had contributed during their terms of office, the Sands, the Randles and Dave Rawlinson.

He acknowledged that the nature of the board and the development of the Fan Park had meant that there had been considerable debate as to the way forward (as was to be expected, and recognised that decisions were subject to a lot of thought) and as such many of the departures reflected the fact that those departing did not agree with the direction being taken but nonetheless we respected their views.

Given the current size of the board and the Fan Park, it was not proposed to seek any replacements, but the positions would be open once the fan park had been completed and had opened.

### **Financial Report - Ernie Hayes (Treasurer)**

EH reminded members that accounts as at November 21 were available for inspection on the Trust web site.

Whilst these accounts reflected an improvement on the previous trading year, this was primarily as a result of the income generated by the 500 Club and Investment Property, as the impact of the Pandemic had meant that the Fan Park had yet to return to the previous levels of contribution.

He confirmed that to date c£44k had already been spent in respect of planning applications and surveys in connection with the new Fan Park.

EH also took the opportunity to highlight the 'Community Benefit Trust' status the Trust enjoys, and the fact that to maintain this (with the resultant Corporation Tax exemption benefits - details of which are contained on the FCA web site), the Trust is required to demonstrate continued community work – i.e. that funds generated are used for the benefit of the community and not just the Football Club. To this end, he highlighted local murals and the food parcels, both of which will continue to feature in the current financial year.

### **Associate Director - Jess Grundy**

JG advised the members of the projects which she has been able to undertake and instigate in the first of her three years as the fan appointed Associate Director on the Football Club Board ( a role which BH continues to be asked to retain by the club, as the recognise and value his input).

To this end the various projects include

Food Parcels - originating at the Riverhill over the pandemic, packing now takes place at the Fan Park. After the initial 500, a further 350 were distributed as part of the 'Superwhite Christmas Appeal' and already this summer already over 100 had been dispatched to the Wirral community, with more to be completed before the end of the school holidays. As ever donations are welcome as is any assistance be that packing or distributing. It is her goal to establish a social supermarket in the new fan Park.

Ground improvements - specifically painting and upgrades in JK stand / Kop.

Community Tickets (Now 'Nate's tickets') process, from crowd funder, to identification of beneficiaries and distribution of tickets.

Completion of previous season ticket brochures.

Participation via the Premier League Supporters Fund, to enable new groups to benefit from a match day experience at Prenton Park.

The boot and Trainer appeal (a member has kindly offered to help refurbish any donations in the vent this is feasible and beneficial).

Attending Senior Manager Team meetings, to provide feedback to various heads of departments within the club, and also met directly with the owners Mark and Nicola to represent the fans and also provide fan feedback.

### **New Fan Park - BH**

An initial recap outlined the funds raised over the period, including the crowdfunder and bond scheme.

BH confirmed that adequate funds were in place, but that delays encountered were fundamentally out of the hands of the Trust, specifically in that having addressed and satisfied all of the pre planning conditions attaching, and responded to the council accordingly, we still await the formal approval - stressing that this was due to the council current (wfh) working practices rather than any failings. Specifically the aspect of dealing with rainwater to avoid potential flooding had now been addressed.

He advised that an architect with specific sector experience for Wetherspoons has been appointed, as has a site project manager (Thextons - of the Wirral).

The expectation is that the site will be cordoned off in September, and construction / installation commence thereafter with a view to fit out in January and formal opening in late Jan (2022!) / early Feb.

### **Queries from the floor**

Could updates be more frequent and made available to all supporters - not merely those who had actually contributed to the funding of the new fan park - this was agreed, albeit it was recognised that Bond Holders would in all likelihood be contacted individually first.

Rewards- members were assured that we retained a list of who was eligible for each reward and as such we would return to them in due course, but anyone who had forgotten what they had 'signed up for' was welcome to contact BH who would be delighted to remind them.

Concerns as to the location and portability of the new fan park, BH was able to confirm that the location would not prevent redevelopment of the main stand and thereby promote relocation to a new site, and if such a move did take place he did not envisage that it would take place before the current lease (10 years) expired. In the event that such a move did

take place, the design would enable the new Fan Park to be relocated to the new ground, we envisage that the funders of such may wish to keep maximise match day income for themselves, and in such a scenario protection exists within the formal agreement to ensure that appropriate compensation would be paid if this did not happen.

Details as to the payment to the club from the new fan park alongside clarification of other income from events and catering were also expanded upon, as was the news that in due course beer brewed in the venue would also be sold in the ground as an additional line to the mainstream suppliers.

### **Ground Move**

BH confirmed that the Trust and TROSC had met with the club, and that whilst there were no objections to the feasibility study for Bidston Moss, if the results were to be viewed objectively, then other comparable studies should also be undertaken for Birkenhead Town Centre as an alternative location or the redevelopment of the main stand at Prenton Park. It was acknowledged that the poll released to supporters for their feedback was basic, but at this stage the information base is too light to undertake a formal review.

Members expressed concern as to the potential result of losing ownership of the ground recognising the experiences of other clubs, and also the impact on the current geographical concentration of our fan base which is centred around the current site rather than the proposed site.

All concerns were noted, acknowledged and will be referred back in due course.

### **Club Update**

Board remains conscious of the shortcomings of the current ticketing system, and continues to highlight at SMTS - a recommendation from the floor that match day turnstiles (cash or contactless) be reintroduced will also be referred

BH reminded those present that the Trust exists to take forward concerns of the members, and whilst we can only seek to persuade, we will continue to do so and are currently focusing on the Bunny Bell Facilities.

With no further queries, BH closed the meeting and thanked those present for attending