



Bradford City Supporters Board – Meeting Minutes

Date: 15th February 2024

Venue: Valley Parade

Attendees:

Tony Bates (TB) - Chair, Wayne Robinson (WR) – Vice Chair, Adam Baker (AB), David May (DM), Christine Tarren (CT), Steve Gorrington (SG), Ian Taylor (IT), Ryan Sparks (RS) - BCAFC, Marco Townson (MT) – BCAFC.

Apologies for absence: Jonnie Carrington

1. Welcome and Introductions

The chair opened the meeting at 7.00pm, welcomed members present and noted apologies.

2. Review of Minutes/Actions from previous meetings

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 7th December 2023, were circulated prior to this meeting and were accepted as a true and accurate record. Matters arising from the action log were as follows:

- a) Action 10. No further update from the council regarding the extension of post game road closures for safety reasons. Action rolled forward.
- b) Action 52. RS to raise the feedback regarding the choice and quality of food within the kiosks with his opposite number at Tiffin. IT to provide some detail of offerings at other clubs as a basis for comparison
- c) Action 57. WR has circulated a draft of the Supporters Board bulletin, providing a summary of the supporters board work over the past 12 months. Expectation is to publish by end of February.
- d) Action 59. Expectation for new wifi installation to take place before end of the current season.
- e) Action 60. The issue with loyalty points not being updated for membership renewals has been resolved. Action Complete.

3. Recent Fans Forum

The agenda opened with a discussion and some questions relating to the recent forum hosted by BBC Radio Leeds during which Ryan Sparks, Graham Alexander and Stephen Gent answered questions raised by supporters.

a) Thought process behind this taking place on radio rather than face to face

RS wanted to ensure that the forum made best use of the time available and chose to do so on BBC Radio Leeds as he knew that Jamie Raynor would ask the burning questions without filtering them.

There will be another forum after the conclusion of the season, which supporters will be able to attend in person.

b) Wider conversation on how the forum went and any comments/feedback

The attendees from the club answered the questions raised honestly, RS acknowledged that it is not possible to please everyone....he has received feedback both positive and negative following the event. RS has replied to a few very critical emails and extended invitations to those supporters to meet with him at the club to address their specific criticisms. To date, none of those invitations have received a reply.

RS frequently hears mention of the “not accepting mediocrity” quote, and clarified that when he took on the role of CEO he was given an initial remit to ensure that the club stayed in the division and did not go bust. The comment was in the context of a club of the standing of Bradford City being in that position is not good enough...and should never be. RS wants to be clear that the objectives and ambitions for the club are to grow the club sustainably off the pitch with the sole purpose of giving it the best chance of success on the pitch. Some clubs lose millions to provide a competitive playing budget in the lower divisions, Bradford City do so without incurring huge losses.

Some Supporters Board members at this point discussed the view that a lack of visibility and comment from Stefan Rupp causes frustration amongst a section of the fan base. RS acknowledged this and understands that, however, the management team at the club have full responsibility for the running of the club (as in the majority of businesses) and are best placed to communicate with supporters. Stefan owns the club but does not run it day to day and is not based in the UK. RS reassured that supporters would hear the same updates and views from Stefan as they do from him.

Responding to the question whether the club is up for sale. RS confirmed that the owner is not actively trying to sell the club but as has always been the case, they listen and talk to interested parties that approach the club. However, in the majority of cases, these approaches tend not to get beyond the expression of interest stage.

c) Club Charter – agreement for a 2nd fans forum

The club held a fans forum attended by supporters in person after the end of last season and plans to do so again this year.

4. Season Ticket Price Survey

The Supporters Board survey relating to 24/25 season tickets was completed by almost 1,000 supporters. 91% of those completing the survey were existing season ticket holders.

56% of supporters completing the survey preferred for season tickets to remain at the current price for next season, with the remainder believing they should be increased in cost.

RS thanked the Supporters Board for undertaking the survey and providing the full results and additional comments to the club. Ryan informed the meeting that the club values this input and will be taking this feedback into account when finalising the season ticket pricing strategy for next season. The club will shortly be producing a comparison based on various pricing scenarios detailing the revenue generation and costs to run the club over the past few years. This is to aid understanding of how season ticket revenues are spent and to provide some insight into the decision making process when determining the pricing strategy.

5. Supporters Board Bulletin

WR circulated the draft to supporters board members, summarising the work of the board over the past 12 months. Comments and amends by 20th February with a view to publishing the update by the end of February.

6. Updates from club not captured on agenda

RS commented that the club are finalising some very good commercial deals which will be announced in due course. Some relate to online and infrastructure enhancements which will significantly benefit the supporter experience.

7. Questions raised by Supporters

TB Commented that some questions received by supporters this month were around themes that were covered in depth during the BBC Radio Leeds Forum. Some duplicated questions were therefore omitted from the meeting but a link to the recording of the forum will be posted along with the minutes of the meeting.

- a) Discriminatory/racist language at games twice this season. Has this been reported about our fans at home games and if so have the club punished individuals as a result?

Response from Club: Investigations are continuing in association with West Yorkshire Police, initial attempts to identify those responsible have been inconclusive.

- b) Midland Road Kiosks – can staffing levels be increased?

Response from Club: Additional staff in place for the Sutton game, also looking at the possibility to utilise the old bookmakers unit in the Midland Road concourse to provide additional facilities

- c) Midland Road toilets – pieces of wood as toilet seats, lots of taps not working

Response from Club: Wooden toilet seats in place, more robust maintenance wise. An audit has taken place and found some taps not working due to faulty boiler. This will be addressed urgently.

- d) Replacing seating – what are the current plans and timescales?

Response from Club: Plans are still in place to continue to replace seats, however the cost of this is an issue at present with other infrastructure needs at the stadium taking priority

- e) What structure do we consider when signing players? Do we work towards a style of player to fit the club ethos or change approach depending on the current managers preferences?

Response from Club: Recruitment is a detailed and thoroughly planned process. The club has clear profiling for each position and recruitment is geared towards that. Not all recruitment works out, the ideal is recruiting players who perform at a high level and are an asset. The manager is aligned with the recruitment strategy. As an example, Calum Kavanagh has been monitored for the past 18 months, had been watched multiple times by numerous people. Calum fits the physical profile, the playing system and has the right character that the club was looking for. Graham watched Calum and approved his signing.

- f) Investment from Stefan Rupp, contradictory claims in the press over the last year or two with the CEO claiming that no investment from Rupp, but other interviews previously stating investment came during covid time?

Response from Club: There has been no contradiction. Stefan Rupp has supported the club when it has been required through Directors Loans being provided. Directors loans are not a gifted investment.

- g) Does the club feel they have given the current manager the best platform and signings they can, to be successful for the remainder of the season?

Response from Club: Absolutely, 100%. We have recruited in the areas that the manager wanted and kept players that the manager wanted to retain. For instance, Graham wanted to keep Jake Young and we backed the manager when financially there were options to put money before the team. We didn't want to do that. We also added Tyreik and Calum to the squad to address needs we had and let some players move on that were not going to be in and around the team in line with the managers wishes.

- h) Any plans to re-introduce the flexi-card scheme?

Response from Club: No, the flexi-card scheme will not be re-introduced

- i) Getafe pre-season game, whilst the full review outcome won't be published, did the club receive revenue from this trip to consider future trips with a different travel partner?

Response from Club: Yes, there are plans for future pre-season trips, with a different travel partner

- j) Bantams Bar prices for cup games, any plans to discount prices like is done on other tickets for those games

Response from Club: No plans to do that

- k) Valley Parade pitch – given weather damage, is club able to do anything to improve this through the season, and what are the plans for pitch refresh in off-season

Response from Club: The pitch has suffered as a result of playing several games on it immediately following periods of freezing and severely wet conditions. Grass does not grow effectively in December and January so it is difficult to repair the damage. New grass seed is being used that germinates at much lower temperatures which is helping re-growth. The groundstaff team as always are working tirelessly on the pitch.

8. Community Foundation partnership update

WR circulated volunteering opportunities prior to the meeting. Volunteers are required to support the Food Truck initiative on Thursday evenings at City Hub. Food donations are also welcomed to support this initiative, there are 3 food donation bins at; City Hub, 1911 reception and hospitality entrance. The Community Foundation and 2 of its team, Pavan Sembi & Mary Myers, have been nominated for Yorkshire Choice Awards. All votes are appreciated at: <https://www.yorkshirechoiceawards.co.uk/votehere>

In addition, the foundation are keen to build links with LGBTQ+ supporter groups and would welcome contact from people involved in these groups.

Going forward, Ollie from the Bradford City Community Foundation will attend Supporters Board meetings to provide updates on the foundations projects and ways to get involved.

9. Working Group Update

Carried forward to next meeting

10. Any Other Business

- a) Update on new Supporters Board members, WR will be contacting applicants over the next few weeks to discuss potential additions to the board.

The meeting concluded at 8.45pm

The next meeting is to be arranged.