



## **Bradford City Supporters Board – Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**Venue:** MS Teams Meeting

**Attendees:**

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

**Apologies for absence:** Christine Tarren

### **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 26<sup>th</sup> October 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 48. Following a review of the half time draw prizes, a cash prize is to be added to the range of prizes.
- b) Action 51. MT updated the group on the issue raised at the last meeting, whereby there are some inconsistencies amongst what items stewards are allowing to be brought into the ground. Further training is planned for the stewards. Action closed.
- c) Action 52. Concerns raised regarding food quality within the kiosks is to be raised at the next meeting with Tiffin.
- d) Action 55. RS confirmed that the club is happy to have input and ideas from the supporters board regarding 24/25 season tickets. Discussion to take place during January '24.
- e) Action 57. WR to circulate volunteering opportunities in support of the Community Foundation

### **3. Chairs statement on abusive conduct and messages by minority of fans in recent weeks**

TB outlined the supporters board stance on some of the personal abuse directed at various employees of the football club. The supporters board unanimously agreed that raising and voicing concerns with the club is the right of every supporter, however directing personal abuse and threats towards individuals is completely unacceptable.

#### **4. Club communication with fans**

There followed an in depth discussion whereby supporters concerns regarding the perceived lack of communication from the club to supporters during the recent poor form of the team and during the recruitment process for the new first team manager. RS responded to the concerns and themes raised, making the following points:

- There have been several requests for a fans forum during the slump in form, however the clubs approach has not changed. There is a consistent communication plan in place which includes an annual fans forum, monthly newsletter and attendance by RS at every supporters board meeting. In addition, RS informed the meeting that he has not turned down any interviews that have been requested by members of the media.
- RS confirmed that he responds to constructive emails and feedback from supporters but will not respond to abusive and threatening messages.
- Issues are generally raised regarding the ownership and RS position as CEO when results are poor. RS understands that goes with the role, but reassured the meeting that the management team at the club are working tirelessly to improve the football club. Mistakes have been made as in any organisation but intentions are genuine and RS, his team and the owner truly care about the club.
- Took time to find the right managerial candidate, involving others in the process. Kevin McDonald's performance as caretaker player manager gave time to undertake the process thoroughly. RS firmly believes that Graham Alexander is the right man to take the team forward.
- A mid-season interview with the T&A will take place early in the new year

There then followed some feedback from supporters board members that the lack of visibility and comment from the owner makes many supporters nervous and raises concern regarding Stefan Rupp's commitment to and intentions for the club. RS acknowledged these concerns and stated that the owner is fully committed to standing by the club, RS has no doubt about that. RS and his team run the club day to day and are responsible for communicating with supporters. RS speaks to the owner regularly.

RS closed this discussion by acknowledging that he understands supporters are concerned regarding how the season has started, he has felt the same way and has made the decisions he has to try to address it.

#### **5. Update from the club on impact (if any) on matchday revenue following decision to make stadium facilities cashless**

RS confirmed that we are approaching the end of Qtr 1 of year 2 of this initiative and that the figures would be available in early January. This information will be shared with the supporters board at the next meeting. RS confirmed that kiosks revenues are rising.

#### **6. Updates from club not captured on agenda**

No additional updates

#### **7. Questions raised by Supporters**

- a) Supporters Board statement on questions not covered by our terms of reference

The supporters board is committed to representing the views and concerns of supporters and as such will raise all questions covered under the supporters board terms of reference with the club during our monthly meetings. Where the supporters board cannot raise questions not covered under our ToR, for instance (but not limited to)

playing matters, managerial appointments etc. the board will endeavour to direct the supporter to the relevant email address at the club to raise directly. Full details of our Term of Reference, detailing the remit of the supporters board can be found on our website. Abusive comments/statements, will not be responded to.

b) Requests for a fans forum

Response from Club: The annual fans forum will take place as usual, in addition, there will also be a mid-season interview with Ryan Sparks to update on various club matters as there was last season

c) Accessible toilets improvements in main stand. No hot running water, fans without accessible needs using these toilets.

Response from Club: The hot water tanks serving these toilets need to be upgraded to increase capacity. In terms of use, not all disabilities are visible.

d) Getafe game – any plans to publish statement on outcome of review?

Response from Club: No plans to publish a statement, however the club will not be working with the travel company involved in future

e) City points not added for membership renewals for some people

Response from Club: Issue should be resolved by 8<sup>th</sup> December '23 for all who have renewed membership

f) Safe standing update

Response from Club: Not feasible at present due to the cost (six figure sum) to install in home and away sections

g) Official club travel to away games – any plans?

Response from Club: No plans at present

h) Away game ticket pricing – any EFL plans in place to influence matchday ticket prices (Crewe was £27, whereas we charge them £20 for advance tickets)

Response from Club: Clubs must charge the same for home and away fans and it is up to the individual clubs to price their tickets

i) Stadium wifi update

Response from Club: Agreement has been signed with a new provider. Awaiting installation timeframe, hope to complete asap.

j) Membership website – some competitions with closed entry dates are still on the site

Response from Club: Feedback has been given by club and will be addressed

k) Soft drink change in Bantams Bar – change to only diet/sugar free coke

Response from Club: Decisions made in line with Tiffin

l) Hot water in Midland Road stand

Response from Club: Checks will take place at peak times. Likely to be a tank capacity issue, similar to Main Stand

m) Fan egress into town when Midland Road is closed by Police. Supporters with health/mobility issues struggle to walk up hill to Manningham Lane to get into town

Response from Club: Advice is to wait for Midland Road to be re-opened, it is usually only closed off for a short time until away supporters have been dispersed

## **8. Community Foundation partnership update**

WR to circulate volunteering opportunities following meeting with the foundation, prior to a further appeal on social media channels. Volunteers especially required to help with the running of City Hub and Billy's Coop

## **9. Working Group Update**

Carried forward to next meeting

## **10. Any Other Business**

- a) JC raised the issue of lack of lighting in the new bike storage area, making it difficult to see when dark. RS stated that the club would evaluate motion sensor lighting in the area
- b) Decision to move Doncaster game to the Friday night – why? RS explained that the decision was made by the home club in consultation with the local authority and Police. City have little influence in the decision, being the away side.
- c) RS shared with the meeting, that Marco Townson is staying in his role at City – which is great news for the club as Marco is a key member of the management team

The meeting concluded at 8.15pm

**The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February at 7.00pm at Valley Parade**