

Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Monday 11th August 2014 – 7.15pm

Present – Fans' Forum

Tris Stock
Ste Birtwell
John Wareing
Neil Duckworth
Jim Holden
Alan Birkbeck
Annette Birkbeck
Gordon Ormerod
Bharat Parmar

Present from BRFC

Derek Shaw
Lynsey Talbot
Nathan Regan

1. Apologies for absence

Ben Sumner
Mark Hitchen
Terry Crawford
Rob Parker
Jennifer Lewis
Ray Williamson
Greg Coar

2. Matters arising from the Minutes 9th June 2014

a) Financial Fair Play

DS reported that some Football League clubs' positions on Financial Fair Play had moved after changes in ownership and the composition had changed by 25% after promotions and relegations. However, at the last meeting there was no majority for any changes to the regulations, which would therefore come into effect in January 2015, unless there was any last minute change. This would mean that the club would have to comply with the rules and regulations that are in place from that time.

b) Ewood Roadworks

TS asked whether there would be further communications from the club regarding the impending roadworks around Ewood Park. LT replied that some communication had been sent out before the Cardiff game although the works close to the ground had not yet begun. Traffic at the Cardiff game had been OK although it had been busier afterwards.

c) New Kits

DS reported that sales of the new home and away kits were the

best for 6 years. In particular sales of the away strip were 70% up on the previous best, a white kit.

d) Pre-season Match in Portugal

AB expressed disappointment that despite assurances beforehand, a game had been played at the pre-season training camp in Portugal. DS replied that management at Ewood Park had no knowledge that a game would be played and it appeared that it had been a training game arranged at very short notice by the football management.

e) History Wall

DS stated that feedback from fans had been very good for the new history wall and Forum members agreed.

f) Gary Bowyer 's availability for a Future Meeting

DS confirmed that Gary Bowyer had agreed to attend the next Forum meeting on 13th October.

g) 2014/15 Season Ticket Sales

In response to a question from JW about current season ticket sales numbers, DS stated that the numbers were up on the previous season but he did not have any detailed information.

h) Links with Blackburn Business Community

ND asked for an update on recent meetings with local business leaders. DS confirmed that further meetings had taken place and good links were being developed. In particular BRFC had been appointed as ambassadors for the Blackburn Youth Zone.

3. Disabled Supporters Association - Update

TS asked for an update. LT replied that after a lot of discussion the club had disassociated itself from the association earlier in 2014 and subsequently the association's committee had resigned. A survey of members had been circulated and it was planned to call a meeting of current and ex-members of the association, probably in Blues, to see if there is interest in reconstituting the association.

4. Away Fans Ambassador – Nathan Regan

NR outlined his new role, which would be to help away fans, both Rovers fans and fans coming to Ewood. The role was new and still developing and he hoped to be able to help with such areas as travel and accommodation, as well as individual issues. He wanted to make contact with fans through email and social media and he intended to be at most away games.

5. Provision for Partially Sighted Fans

AB stated that he had been approached by a partially sighted fan who needed a helper at games. LT replied that partially sighted fans were treated like any other disabled or able fan and had to buy tickets at normal prices. However, if they could prove their disability the club would provide a carer for games. Programmes could also be provided in braille.

In the past the club had a special area for blind and partially sighted fans with radio links but this had been superseded by the availability of widely available radio broadcasts and fans could now sit anywhere in the ground. The club were also considering buying special headsets for radio broadcasts.

DS encouraged any fan with a particular need to contact the club's Disability Liaison Officer, Christine Peacock, directly on cpeacock@rovers.co.uk.

6. Fan Zone and Video Wall

DS reported that there had been a few difficulties in getting the Fan Zone off the ground but it was now up and running and had been well received at the Cardiff game. The club were having a new large screen built and in the meantime had hired a mobile screen for the next few games. LT asked the Forum and fans in general for any ideas for improvements.

7. 20 Year Celebration

LT stated that the club were planning a series of events to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the club having won the Premier League. There would be some themed games through the season and highlights from the 1994/95 season on the screen at games. The club were approaching the Former Players Association for help with events. AB suggested that a Sportspersons' Dinner would be a popular way to celebrate.

8. Midweek Away Fixtures – Possible Subsidised Travel

TS asked whether the club could provide any help for fans with long distance midweek away travel, Norwich City being a prime example. DS replied that this was difficult given the financial situation at the club and could not assist with subsidised travel at this time.

9. Any Other Business

- a) JH again raised the issue of poor sound quality from the tannoy system in the Family Stand.
- b) JW asked whether it was possible to provide a collection point at the

Darwen End for those that had taken up the programme season ticket deal. LT suggested that Darwen End Reception was a possibility.

12. Date of Next Meetings

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|----------------|-----------------|
| Pre -meet | Main meeting |
| Monday 6/10/14 | Monday 13/10/14 |
| Monday 1/12/14 | Monday 8/12/14 |

Pre-meets are held at Ewood one week before the main meetings. The pre-meet is open to all interested fans to attend, providing they request to do so in advance by contacting John Wareing by email or phone as below.

Members should contact John Wareing at roversfansforum@hotmail.com or 07984 085474 give their apologies if they cannot attend a meeting.

Fans can also contact John regarding the Forum using the contact details above.