

Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Tuesday 15th April 2014 – 7.15pm

Present – Fans' Forum

Ste Birtwell
Neil Duckworth
John Wareing
Ben Sumner
Jim Holden
Alan Birkbeck
Annette Birkbeck
Rob Parker
Terry Crawford
Gordon Ormerod
Jennifer Lewis
Ray Williamson
Tris Stock

Present from BRFC

Derek Shaw
Greg Coar
Alan Myers

Apologies for absence

Simon Barnes
Mark Hitchen

1. **Andy Neil**

Since the last meeting Andy Neil had decided to resign from the Forum. SB put on record his thanks to Andy for his service as a member of the Forum for the last 6 years and his more recent service as Chair of the Forum.

2. **Matters arising from the Minutes 10th February 2014**

a) **Fan Zone**

GC stated that it had now been decided that the launch would be at the start of next season

b) **Free Birthday tickets**

In response to complaints that some members had not received the offer of a free match ticket in the month of their birthday, GC agreed to check and report back.

b) **Burnley Game**

GO reported issues with fans at the front of the Jack Walker Lower Stand standing throughout the Burnley game, forcing all those behind them to stand as well.

3. Alan Myers – Director of Communications

AM introduced himself to the Forum as the newly appointed Director of Communications. He wanted to record his thanks to fans for their welcome to him to the club. He was keen to engage in an open process and emphasised that no question was off limits.

GO asked what his remit was at the club. AM replied that he would initially be looking to engage with the fans and develop communications both internally and externally at the club.

He was very impressed with how loyal the fans had been given what had happened at the club over the last few years, and in particular with away support. He recognised however, that many fans have stopped attending games and that that was an area he and the club needed to work on, along with improving the match day atmosphere. He has been talking to Blackburn with Darwen Council about reintegrating the club within the town. He was in contact with the owners on a regular basis and he genuinely believes that the club's owners want the best for the club.

4. Financial Fair Play

DS stated that Financial Fair Play rules were in place but could still be amended. There had been a meeting in London on 10th April and he expected that the final rules would be voted on before the end of May. He suspected that there would be changes to the current rules but that there was no majority for significant change.

5. Season Tickets 2014/15

GC stated that there was no final agreement on pricing for 2014/15 as it was not yet clear in which division the team would be playing. JW asked about the truth in recent rumours that some areas of the ground may be closed for next season. There was discussion about the practicality of any closures and recognition of the probable resistance of existing season ticket holders in affected areas. GC said that ideas for change would always be considered and in fact had been every year in close seasons. The primary motivation for any changes would be to consolidate the support to improve atmosphere in the ground and not to save money.

JL asked whether it would be possible to stage the payments for parking to make it more affordable for fans. GC replied that he would make

enquiries and report back.

6. Disabled Supporters' Group

JL asked for clarification of the situation with the Disabled Supporters' Club. DS replied that the committee of the club had stood down at a recent meeting. It was not true that the club had disbanded the club. It was planned to re-launch the club during the Summer and the club wanted to see a thriving Disabled Supporters Club in the future.

7. Queen's Visit to Blackburn

In response to a question DS confirmed that the Queen would be attending Blackburn Cathedral on 17th April for the Maundy service and that there would be a Civic Reception at Ewood Park afterwards. He was expecting the club's owners to attend the service and the Reception.

8. BRFC Action Group

AM was concerned about the current split in fans groups, but emphasised that he would always be willing to speak to any group of supporters. The club would welcome representation from the Action Group on the Fans Forum. JW replied that the Action Group had been invited to send representatives to sit on the Forum before and they had declined. He agreed that a further invite would be issued.

9. 2014/15 Pre-Season

AlanB asked whether there was any clarity on plans for the 2014/15 pre-season. DS replied that a couple of smaller games had been agreed but the main plan depended on which league the club would be playing in next season. He hoped that there would be a home friendly before the start of the season. An overseas training camp is being considered.

10. Fans Forum Vacancies

Following the resignation of three members over the last few months it was agreed that the Forum needed to advertise for new members. JW asked whether it would be possible to have an advert in a future match programme and on the big screen. It was agreed that this would be done at the Wigan game.

11. Any Other Business

a) Wigan Tickets

BS asked why there was a delay in issuing ticket prices for the home

game with Wigan. GC replied that there was a debate about whether to have a ticket promotion to maximise the crowd size and that this depended on whether there would still be something to play for. A decision would therefore be made after the Easter games.

b) Ewood Park Roadworks

RW highlighted that roadworks were due to start at Ewood outside the ground in May and would be there for next season, which could cause traffic problems at future games until completion.

c) Day Out

AlanB and AnnetteB wanted to record their thanks for the day out that AM and the club had set up for them at the home game with Ipswich.

12. Date of Next Meetings

Pre -meet	Main meeting
Monday 2/6/14	Monday 9/6/14
Monday 4/8/14	Monday 11/8/14
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.

