

# Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum

## Ewood Park, Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018 – 7.00pm

### Present – Fans' Forum

Tris Stock  
Neil Duckworth

John Wareing  
Bharat Parmar  
Jim Holden  
Savio Mathias  
Mark Hitchen  
Terry Crawford  
Annette Birkbeck  
Anthony Corry  
Jennifer Lewis  
Alan Birkbeck  
Gordon Ormerod

### Present from BRFC

Steve Waggott  
Mike Cheston

Lynsey Talbot

## 1. Apologies for absence

Ray Williamson

TS started the meeting by recording congratulations to the club for the promotion for the First team, the winning of the League for the under 23s, League and Cup wins for the Ladies winning EFL Family Club of the Year and North west Community Club of the Year.

## 2. Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### • Team Photo

LT stated that it had not been possible to make copies of the team photo available in the club shop because of the lateness in the season and minimum order quantities.

### • Car Parking

JH asked whether there would be season tickets available for car park F next season. SW replied that he was due to meet Blackburn with Darwen Council to discuss options to create more parking for the larger crowds expected.

### • Big Screen Replays

SW stated that many fans had asked for the facility to show match goal replays and that he would be meeting Neil Yardley and

CreaTV to discuss whether a more enhanced package could be agreed.

### **3. Budgets for 2018-19**

TS asked for an update on the recent meeting with the club's owners in India. SW replied that there had been some positive talks and that a statement would be issued on both playing and non-playing matters in the next few days.

### **4. Supporter Consultation Meeting**

TS asked if a date had been fixed for the next Supporters Consultation Meeting. LT stated that a meeting had to be held before 30<sup>th</sup> June. It had originally been planned to hold the meeting in late April but the club had decided that the management team needed to concentrate on the push for promotion and also that it would be useful to have the meeting after the post season meeting with the owners.

### **5. Oxford United Game**

SW stated that the attendance at the Oxford United game had been excellent. All those who attended were now on the club's database and would receive season ticket details. He also stated that the club hoped to do a similar promotion very early in the 2018/19 season. The actual game for the promotion would depend on the fixture list.

In response to a question about the pitch invasions, SW stated that the EFL had decided to take no action, as similar invasions had happened at many other clubs at the end of the season. He did put on record that flares were becoming a big issue and clubs may well face fines in future for similar incidents.

### **6. 2018/18 Season Tickets**

Whilst not being willing to make public current sales figures SW stated that the club had sold 600 2018/19 season tickets on the first day of sale and that current sales were at 25% of the club's stretch target for final sales. Encouragingly 12% of current sales were from new supporters and 8% for returning fans.

The club would be replacing the now outdated SkiData system in time for the new season and as a result everyone would receive new ST cards. The club had one more season to run with the contract with Ticketmaster. A new package for the 1875 club was currently under discussion.

ND asked about the closure of the Darwen End to home fans and what plans were in place for relocating those affected. SW replied that the

Darwen End had been freed up to accommodate larger away fan attendances in the Championship and avoid the regular moving of home fans. He had a meeting planned with some of the fans involved and he hoped to reach a satisfactory solution for a relocated area. Matchday ticket prices would be announced in mid June, just before the Early Bird season ticket deadline.

JL stated that she had received complaints about the club claiming that season ticket prices had been frozen, when that was not applicable to anyone who bought during last season's early Bird offer. SW stated that the club had never claimed that prices were frozen – they had stated that tickets had been held at standard prices.

JL raised an issue that whilst Senior season tickets could be upgraded to an adult ticket if the holder could not attend a game, this could not be done with a disabled season ticket. SW expressed surprise and agreed to look into the matter.

## **7. Club Kits & Store Clothing**

In response to a question from TS, SW stated that the current contract with Umbro had another two years to run. The club were currently running a beauty contest for new shirt sponsors, all of which were betting companies. He expected the new home kit to be on sale by the end of June, training kits to be issued before then and away kits in mid July.

GO asked whether other sponsorship opportunities on shirts and shorts were being investigated. SW replied that the club were in talks with a number of companies.

MH stated that a number of years ago the Forum had had some input into the design of kits. SW was responsive to doing this again in the future and TS suggested that the Supporter Consultation Meetings might be an appropriate place for this.

## **8. Pre-Season Plans**

TS noted that a number of pre-season friendlies had been announced but it was not clear whether there would be an overseas trip as well. SW confirmed that the squad would be going to Austria from 24<sup>th</sup> June to 1<sup>st</sup> July but this would be a training camp and no games were planned.

Games against Hibernian, Port Vale, Lincoln and Accrington Stanley had been announced and there would be another two games announced in the following week.

## **9. Matchday Programme**

AB asked whether the quality of the matchday programme could be

improved. He brought along a number of examples of programmes from other League 1 clubs which were all bigger and had more content.

SW replied that sales for matchday programmes were in long term decline, mainly as a result of most of the information being available for free online. He recognised, however, that there were a significant number of people who collected programmes.

Currently each EFL club was obliged to produce a programme but there would be a discussion at the upcoming EFL meeting about whether to remove that requirement.

SW stated that the club were considering a membership scheme for programmes. He suggested that a separate meeting be arranged after the EFL meeting to discuss what should be done.

## **10. Recycling**

TS asked what recycling takes place at the club, given the amount of waste that must be produced at home matches. He wondered whether the club had considered offering multi-use glasses on a deposit basis as was done in many European countries.

LT replied that the club has a comprehensive recycling programme. Around 150 tons of waste was either reused, recycled or recovered each year and nothing was sent to landfill. SW commented that the recycling operation at Ewood was the best he had seen at any of the clubs he had worked at.

## **11. Any Other Business**

- GO asked whether iFollow would offer full match coverage of Rovers games now that the club was back in the Championship, as it had before relegation. SW undertook to check arrangements.
- In response to a question from GO, SW stated that the club was installing goal line technology at Ewood. This was a requirement for Championship clubs and would cost the club £83,000.
- JL stated that she had received complaints from some disabled fans about fans standing at away games and blocking the view of those that could not stand. SW replied that any fan who had difficulty with this needs to raise a complaint with the club, who could then take up the matter with the club involved.
- AB stated that areas around the ground were looking quite shabby with full bin bags and a lot of weeds. SW stated that there might be a backlog in maintenance as the ground staff were involved with relaying all 11 club pitches at Brockhall and Ewood.

## **12. Dates of Next Meetings**

Pre -meet	Main meeting
2/7/18	9/7/18
3/9/18	10/9/18
5/1/18	12/11/18

Pre-meets are held 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](mailto:roversfansforum@hotmail.com) or 07984 085474 to give their apologies if they cannot attend a meeting.

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