

Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Monday 10th July 2017 – 7.00pm

Present – Fans' Forum

Tristan Stock
Neil Duckworth
John Wareing
Bharat Parmar
Jim Holden
Savio Mathias
Anthony Corry
Alan Birkbeck
Annette Birkbeck
Terry Crawford
Gordon Ormerod
Steve Birtwell

Present from BRFC

Lynsey Talbot
Mike Cheston

1. Apologies for absence

Jennifer Lewis
Mark Hitchen
Rob Parker
Ray Williamson

2. Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting 15th May 2017

a) Buying Disabled Season Tickets Online

TS asked whether there had been any progress on a system to allow disabled fans to buy their season tickets online. LT replied that it would not be possible for the coming season but she was hopeful that a solution would be found for the 2018/19 season.

3. Management Structure

TS asked whether Paul Senior's role would be filled following his departure. MC replied that this role would not be replaced and that Tony Mowbray would be in charge of football affairs with the assistance of Mark Venus.

JH stated that Tony Mowbray had commented at the AGM that he had found the club's owners to be very good to work with. He has been to India and held several meetings including with Mr & Mrs Desai. MC confirmed that the owners had approved Tony Mowbray's requested budget.

In response to a question from TS, MC stated that the management structure was now back to a very similar one before Paul Senior's arrival,

in that he dealt with finance and operational matters and football matters were dealt with by Tony and his team, with the help of Ian Silvester as required.

4. KPMG & Deloitte Audits

TS asked whether there was any news on the outcome of the recent audits undertaken at the club by KPMG and Deloitte. MC replied that the audits were complete and the findings had been presented to the owners in India by representatives of the two firms, and that he was in attendance at these meetings. He was unable to give any further information as staff had not yet been informed of any potential changes. He confirmed that the audits were for Best Practice rather than financial and had been planned for some time and had not been as a result of relegation. The audits were not associated in any way with any plans for administration.

The two firms had taken very different approaches to the exercise but their recommendations had been very similar. The audits had been just on off-field matters.

MC wished to put on record the hard work that all the staff had put in during the close season to date. Many of them had their busiest time of the year in the close season and had dealt with the extra work caused by both the audit and the Elton John concert admirably. Many of the staff at Ewood were the best he had ever worked with in the football industry.

5. 2017/18 Season Tickets

TS noted that the club had recently announced sales of around 7,500 season tickets to date. MC stated that he was very hopeful of beating the sales figure for 2016/17 and beyond .

TC asked about sales of Club 1875 memberships and any effects there would be on ticket allocations for away games. LT replied that a considerable number of season ticket holders had bought membership, so there would be a need for further restrictions based on away attendance for some games in Division 1.

JW stated that the club had been contacting lapsed season ticket holders and asked if there had been any conclusions yet on this exercise. LT replied that the work was still ongoing.

6. Safe Standing

ND stated that Shrewsbury Town had recently announced plans to trial the introduction of a safe standing area in their stadium and noted that Ewood Park could readily accommodate a trial. LT replied that there would be cost implications involved in any trial and wasn't something the

club were looking to introduce at the present time but would follow other clubs progress in this matter with interest. There had been discussion at EFL level and the club's position was neutral on any plans for safe standing but that they were unlikely to agree to any early trial.

7. Fire Checks on Sporting Stadia

TS asked what the position was with fire safety and ground evacuation plans following the recent Grenfell Tower incident. LT replied that there were extensive ground evacuation plans in place which were regularly tested and they met all current safety standards.

MC added that the EFL had contacted all clubs for information on any issues with cladding. The club had recognised that there were a number of cladding materials used across club owned properties and only an in depth study could reveal whether there any issues. The club were actively pursuing this review and he hoped that this would be completed before the start of the season.

8. Elton John Concert – Future Plans

A number of Forum members had attended the recent Elton John concert at the ground and all agreed that it had been an excellent night. MC stated that the club had some concerns before the date, particularly concerning security following recent terrorist incidents. The concert had been a financial success and they would be actively pursuing other future concerts, especially if they could be accommodated in late May. The event had taken a lot of management time but that this load would be considerably less for future concerts.

LT stated that the club had managed to get the bus lane on Bolton Road suspended for an hour after the concert and that this had been a great success in clearing the car parks. She hoped that this would also be possible for future home matches this season.

9. Car Parking

LT stated that the council owned car parks would not be open for the coming season. As a result the club would be providing one of the car parks for a reduced season ticket price of £150 with others at £200.

In response to a question from JW, LT stated that it would not be possible to pay for car parking season tickets in installments as per last season.

10. September Meeting

TS stated that Forum members had been considering whether to hold a future Forum meeting at Brockhall with Tony Mowbray and Mark Venus in attendance. LT replied that she had not yet approached Tony and in

any event was not sure that there was a suitable room available at Brockhall.

LT stated that there would be a future Supporter Consultation meeting, probably in late September or early October.

11. Any Other Business

- a) JH reported on his recent attendance at the club's AGM. He noted that Tony Mowbray had not yet involved himself with the Academy as his focus at the end of the season had been on avoiding relegation for the first team.
- b) TS asked whether there was any news on the future of Anthony Stokes, but MC was unable to comment.
- c) GO asked what the difference was between RoversPlayer and the new iFollow. MC and LT were not sure but it was believed that there was little or no difference for UK based fans, although overseas fans would now have access to live game coverage.
- d) TC stated that the Memorial Garden was looking rather shabby. LT stated that she was already aware and some cleaning up had been done. The plan would be to keep the area maintained better in future.
- e) SB asked how sales of the new home kit were going. MC replied that sales were OK so far and may well improve later in the week when the away kit is also launched.
- f) MC asked whether Forum members had any ideas for enhancing the new 1875 club. SB suggested more events for fans in Blues Bar. JW agreed to put an item on the agenda for the September meeting.

12. Dates of Next Meetings

Pre -meet	Main meeting
4/9/17	11/9/17
6/11/17	13/11/17

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 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.