

# **Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011 – 7.15pm**

## **Present – Fans' Forum**

Martin Haworth  
Julie Wilkinson  
Gordon Ormerod  
Tristan Stock  
John Billouin  
Andy Neill  
Tom Marsland  
Ben Pirraglia  
Neil Duckworth  
Ray Williamson  
Ian Filbin  
John Wareing  
David Brown  
Glenn Pegden  
Steve Birtwell

## **Present from BRFC**

Tom Finn  
Greg Coar

## **Apologies**

Duncan Gardiner  
Pauline Perkins

- 1. Apologies for absence - accepted**
  
- 2. Matters Arising from the last meeting 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010**

### **a) Ticket Sales Promotion**

GC stated that there had been around 350 sales of half season tickets. This was significantly less than the previous season but had been affected by the fact that half season tickets were no longer available in the Darwen End.

### **c) Phone Apps**

The Android phone app had not yet been launched but was expected shortly.

*Update following the meeting: -*

*There currently aren't sufficient users to the FLi network of websites (78 football club websites) who are accessing from Android phones to warrant a specific application being developed at this time. FLi will continue to monitor the situation and should access to their network increase from that phone platform, then an Android application will be developed.*

**d) Club Mascot**

GC stated that a relaunch of a club mascot was planned so that the new mascot would be available for the Asia Trophy in the summer.

**3. New Ownership**

TF reported that the club's owners had appointed two new directors to the club Board and that it was intended that Mrs Desai and her two brothers were due to attend the home game with Spurs. It was also intended that the local management would visit India in the near future. The owners are focused on growing the club, both on the pitch and in non-football areas. TF hoped that a representative of Venkys would attend a Forum meeting in the near future.

There had been some rumours of big planned increases in season ticket prices but TF stated that these rumours were completely without foundation.

**4. 2011/12 Season Tickets**

GC stated that the club were about to start the process of preparing recommendations on season ticket prices for 2011/12 and asked the Forum for comments. SB said that more of the same would be the main message, beyond cost of living increases, in other words, "keep up the good work". TF noted that a majority of Premier League clubs were showing declines in attendance and Rovers themselves had a 6% reduction. He accepted that it was currently a very difficult market with the economic situation and an increase in pubs showing live matches pending court rulings.

BP asked whether a discount for students would be possible. TF replied that the club had always preferred offering discounts to all young adults from 16 to 21 but he agreed to review the matter again.

JB asked if there was any evidence of fans boycotting home games as a protest against the new owners. GC replied that there was not – the

attendance at the home game with West Ham was noticeably down but that was down to very poor weather on the day.

TM asked whether a full 19 game season ticket for the Darwen End was possible. TF responded that there was not enough overall demand to justify a full season ticket for the Darwen End but he did undertake to consider a one with tickets for the three games when fans were asked to move being included in the price.

GP asked whether a 12 month direct debit scheme with automatic renewal would be considered. JohnW added that an annual automatically renewed direct debit would also be good. TF agreed to consider both options.

MartinH expressed concern at rumours of the Reserve League being abandoned, with the consequent benefit for season ticket holders being lost. He was also concerned about reduced gates at cup games. There followed a discussion about how cup attendances could be increased by, for example, including cup ties in the season ticket. TF said it would be necessary to increase the price of the season ticket to reflect this as cup income was shared. The FA were also concerned at attendances in the FA Cup and so had launched a review which would include consultation with fans.

## **5. 2011/12 Shirt Sponsorship**

ND stated that the three year shirt sponsorship deal with Crown would end at the end of this season and asked what plans were for renewal or replacement. TF replied that Crown had made no commitment to renew and the date for exclusivity had passed. As a result the club was testing the market through a specialist agency and this search was also including possible Indian interest. In response to a further question from ND, TF stated that, whilst he could not rule out the possibility that Venkys might sponsor the shirts themselves, the priority was to maximise revenue from this important source.

## **6. Asia Trophy**

ND asked for any updates in plans for the Asia Trophy this summer. TF stated that Andrew Pincher would be part of a preparatory trip to Hong Kong with the Premier League in late March. As a consequence there were no further details as yet but they would be published as soon as available. JulieW asked whether a stop off in India was likely on the trip. TF stated that Venky's were discussing the possibility of a game in India and also that other match offers in Asia had been received but nothing had yet been confirmed.

## **7. Adults Using Child Tickets**

JohnW raised an issue on behalf of some Darwen End fans that adult fans were using concession tickets to gain entry to games. AN also stated that stewards rarely checked entry tickets. GC undertook to feedback concerns to John Newsham.

## **8. Any Other Business**

- a) Martin H asked for an update on any plans for a memorial to Ronnie Clayton. TF undertook to discuss this with the owners.
- b) MartinH stated that a few fans had not had responses to email requests regarding corporate hospitality offers. GC expressed surprise and undertook to look into this.
- c) JulieW reported that a fan had been unable to find a home Rovers shirt in the town centre shop recently. TM also asked whether Rovers kits were still available in small baby sizes. GC undertook to check.
- d) GO asked whether the club was concerned about the current wage to income ratio given recent signings. TF stated that the club were aware of the new UEFA regulations that would affect clubs playing in Europe from 2014-15 and monitoring closely the impact of these going forward.
- e) IF had been in the Ewood shop when the tills had been down for 20 to 30 minutes, meaning that both shop and ticket sales were impossible. He understood that this was a rare occurrence at Ewood but was more common in the town centre shop. It was noted that cabling to the town centre shop was an ongoing problem and improvements were currently outside the clubs hands as they were tied into the Church St developments.
- f) AN asked whether it was possible for those who sponsored players to receive a signed shirt from their player as part of the package. For a cost of £800 the package currently had poor benefits. GC undertook to investigate.
- g) GP noted that the club were using internet advertising for both merchandise and tickets and asked how the initiative was going. GC replied the response had been very positive, and helped the club to reach a new market.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011, with the pre-meet in the Fernhurst pub on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

Members should contact John Wareing at [roversfansforum@hotmail.com](mailto:roversfansforum@hotmail.com) or on 07984 085474 with any queries about the Forum or to give their apologies if they cannot attend a meeting.

### **2011 Meeting Calendar**

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November