

# Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015 – 7.15pm

## Present – Fans' Forum

Tris Stock  
Neil Duckworth  
Jim Holden  
Bharat Parmar  
John Wareing  
Jennifer Lewis  
Alan Birkbeck  
Annette Birkbeck  
Anthony Corry  
Terry Crawford  
Mark Hitchen  
Savio Mathias

## Present from BRFC

Derek Shaw  
Lynsey Talbot  
Alan Myers

### 1. Apologies for absence

Gordon Ormerod  
Ben Sumner  
Ray Williamson  
Ste Birtwell

### 2. Matters Arising from the Minutes 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015

#### a) Ewood Roadworks

The current schedule for completion of the roadworks around Ewood was October 2015. Some concern was expressed about the effects on both travel and fan access to the ground at the start of the season. TS asked the club to publicise the situation for fans before the first game.

#### b) 2015/16 Season Ticket Sales

DS stated that season ticket sales were very slightly up on last season at the "claim your own seat" deadline. A new ticketing system was being installed by Ticketmaster, which would require new readers at turnstiles and new season ticket cards for everyone. There would be a communication to fans very shortly regarding the new system.

DS also noted that home shirt sales had been higher on launch day than the previous season.

#### c) Smoking Areas

TS asked whether the experiment with smoking areas in three stands at the end of last season would continue. DS replied that it would for the Darwen End, Blackburn end Lower and the Riverside stands. There would be no smoking area for the Jack Walker stand. JL asked the club

to ensure that fans moved from the Darwen end for certain games were advised that there would be no smoking area in the Jack Walker stand.

**d) Pre-Season**

AB asked whether it would be possible for fans to have some access to the team on overseas pre-season training tours, even if that was only to watch a training session. DS agreed to consider this.

**e) Flag**

LT stated that the current large flag was too damaged to be of use. AM stated that he would hope to find a way to replace the flag and he would welcome any support from fans.

**f) Premium Lagers**

LT stated that she had enquired about the possibility of offering a premium lager in bars in the ground but had been informed that this would cost about £2,000 for each bar. However, she was pleased to report that Heineken would be available in the Fan Zone from the start of the season

**3. Financial Fair Play/Transfer Policy**

DS stated that there was no change in the situation with the Financial Fair Play regulations. He was expecting that the £43m losses incurred by the club last year would be about halved this year. He was as frustrated as fans with the situation and also with the fact that QPR's appeal had meant that the regulations were not yet able to be applied to them despite their losses.

Were the club to sell two or three players the restrictions could be lifted but the club would not consider sales unless the deals were right and there was absolutely no pressure from the owners to sell. It was still possible for the club to sign new players as long as the overall salary package did not exceed £600,000.

**4. Increasing Attendances within the Asian Community**

ND asked whether there any ways in which the club could get more interest in attendances from within the local Asian community. AM stated that the sensible route would be to continue the work of the Community department.

LT stated the club were one of a number of clubs taking part in a Football League initiative to tackle discrimination in football and with this in mind would be targeting not just the Asian community but also other underrepresented groups including women and members of the LGBT community in order to make football accessible to all.

TS suggested having a presentation on season ticket sales at the November meeting, as much of this data was collected and could be reported on.

LT stated that the Fan Zone stage would be going into Blackburn town centre on 20<sup>th</sup> August to increase engagement with the local community.

## **5. Image of Owners**

ND stated that there was a lot of negativity about the role of the club's owners and that this was to a great extent because of a lack of communication with fans. AM replied that the owners were determined to keep a low profile at the present time but fans should be assured that they were very much behind the club and the town.

After some discussion it was decided that a way forward would be for the Fans Forum to write to the owners to encourage them to communicate more with the fans. It was agreed that TS and JW would draft a letter to be agreed by other Forum members and that AM would ensure that it got to the owners. BP offered to provide a Hindi translation as well.

## **6. 2015/16 "Bubble" Games**

JW asked which if any games in the coming season would be treated as "Bubble" games by the police. DS replied that he expected that the two games with Burnley would be organised as they had been done in recent seasons but that he did not expect this sort of arrangement for any other games. JW asked that fan representatives be involved in the planning meetings for the Burnley games, again as in previous seasons.

DS stated that he expected that season ticket holders in the Darwen End would be asked to move for the games with Burnley, Preston and Leeds and maybe for others depending on circumstances.

## **7. Trading Places business Membership Scheme**

TC queried the arrangements in the new Trading Places business for Rovers Readies tickets. LT agreed to check the scheme and come back at the next meeting.

## **8. Any Other Business**

- a) It was noted that 17<sup>th</sup> August would be the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jack Walker's death and that there was a home game with Cardiff on the following night. It was suggested that a minute's applause would be appropriate.
- b) MH stated that he would have liked the new away shirt to have been

released by now. AM confirmed that the release date was expected to be Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July, but that some pre-publicity would be issued in the next day or so. He also pointed out that all children's shirts would not feature the Dafabet logo.

- c) MH asked about the status of the RFS sponsorship deal. AM confirmed that a three year extension had recently been signed.
- d) LT pointed out that the planned date of the next meeting clashed with a home under 21 game at Ewood. It was agreed to consult about an alternative date.
- e) JW asked whether the Forum could invite Gary Bowyer to attend the next Forum meeting in September.

## 9. Date of Next Meetings

Pre -meet	Main meeting
7/9/15	14/9/15 (will be changed)
2/11/15	9/11/15

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 give their apologies if they cannot attend a meeting.

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

