

Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Monday 23rd May 2011 – 7.15pm

Present – Fans' Forum

Martin Haworth
Julie Wilkinson
Gordon Ormerod
Tristan Stock
John Billouin
Tom Marsland
Ben Pirraglia
Neil Duckworth
John Wareing
Steve Birtwell
Andy Robinson
Ben Sumner
Duncan Gardiner
Glen Pegden
Ray Williamson

Present from BRFC

Tom Finn
Greg Coar
Gillian Kinloch

Guest

Phil Johnson

Apologies

John Wareing
Pauline Perkins
Andy Neill

1. Apologies for absence - accepted

Prior to agenda item #2 MH asked for two additional notices to be put on record :-

- i) On behalf of the forum Martin thanked the club for subsidising tickets and providing food vouchers for the Wolverhampton Wanderers game. It was acknowledged that there had been some operational issues surrounding use of the vouchers at Molineux but these were attributed to the stadium caterers.
- ii) David Brown had resigned from the forum due to work commitments. The forum wished to put on record its appreciation to David for his contribution to the Forum.

2. Community Trust

Dr Phil Johnson (a former member of the Fans Forum) from Blackburn College reported the findings of a research project undertaken to evaluate the anti social behaviour (ASB) diversionary activities provided by Blackburn Rovers Community Trust in Blackburn with Darwen. The evaluation period concluded in January 2011. Below is a précis of the report :-

In January 2009 the Community Trust instigated a range of activities in seven locations which were deemed to be ASB 'hot spots'. The activities included football coaching, access to computers and advisory workshops.

Recorded ASB figures from a three month period before the scheme began (August to October 2009) were compared to the same three month period in 2010 (ie a period when the scheme was fully established).

The benefits of the Community Trust's work were demonstrated in the finding that across the seven areas there had been an average reduction of ASB incidents of 20.7%. This could be translated to a financial saving for the Borough due to the cost of administering ASBO's (estimated at £2500 per ASBO).

Other benefits noted from the scheme included increased physical activity and socialisation for the participants. Additionally Community Trust partnerships with the Police and Army provided an opportunity to forge relationships between communities and the authorities.

Gillian Kinloch then gave an overview of the diverse activities provided by the Community Trust, ranging from arranging Tea Dances for senior citizens, to providing free Wi-Fi services to aid job seekers from the travelling community. She emphasised that the work of the Trust is nationally recognised as a benchmark in the field. Further information relating to the services provided by the Community Trust is available via the re-launched website www.brfctrust.co.uk.

3. Matters Arising from the last meeting 1st February 2011

a) Club Mascot

GC stated that a new mascot had been chosen and would be revealed prior to the Asia Trophy tournament in Hong Kong.

b) Supporters Trust

TS and SB stated that they had attended the public meeting organised to facilitate the creation of a Blackburn Rovers

Supporters Trust. They reported that the evening had been a positive experience with several speakers addressing the audience including a member of the Newcastle United Supporters trust and a representative from the Supporters Direct organisation. A vote had been taken at the meeting with the result being that a Supporters trust should indeed be formed.

4. Appointment of Deputy Chief Executive

TF confirmed that Paul Hunt would take up the position of Deputy Chief Executive within the next few weeks. TF confirmed that Paul would be responsible for all off field operations and hoped his appointment would lead to improved communications between the owners and fans.

5. 2011-12 Season Tickets

GC stated that the season ticket package had been finalised and would be launched the following day.

6. 2011/12 Shirt Sponsorship

TF reported that there was no news regarding potential shirt sponsors but that the process to find new sponsors could begin in earnest now that the club's Premiership status had been secured. He also reiterated that the delay in securing a shirt sponsor would lead to an inevitable delay in launching the new shirts for next season.

7. Recent Ticketing Issues

Three points were discussed in this section:-

- i) Infiltration of Manchester United fans into home areas for the recent fixture. The general consensus of the discussion was that although there were isolated incidents of infiltration, by-and-large considering the timing and importance of the game, the day had been a relative success. TF stated that warnings issued by the club of the consequences of touting tickets had probably played a part in reducing the practice.
- ii) Infiltration of Arsenal fans into the away section at the Emirates. MH raised this issue which he stated had been a persistent problem over the years since Arsenal had moved to the Emirates. TF responded that in previous years tickets had got into the hands of home fans via Arsenal themselves, but conceded that the recent problem was almost certainly caused

by ticket touts gaining purchase history on the Rovers ticketing database. This was being investigated with a view to tightening-up the purchasing procedure in future.

- iii) Several forum members expressed disappointment at being unable to purchase tickets for the Wolverhampton Wanderers match at the advertised time of midnight on the date of sale. GC apologised for any inconvenience and stated that a technical issue had caused the problem.

8. Pre-Season

TF confirmed that in-light of Rovers retaining their Premier League status they would definitely be participating in the Premier League Asia Trophy Tournament in Hong Kong.

MH asked for confirmation of a rumoured friendly match in India. TF stated that he could not confirm this.

TF also stated that Rovers would have a training camp in Austria but would NOT be playing any fixtures whilst there.

8. Any Other Business

ND had received a request to clarify the clubs position regarding smoking electronic cigarettes within the ground. GC indicated that he would look into it.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 18th July 2011, with the pre-meet in the Fernhurst pub on Monday 11th July 2011.

Members should contact John Wareing at 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 18th July
Monday 12th September
Monday 7th November