

# **Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011 – 7.15pm**

## **Present – Fans' Forum**

Martin Haworth  
Julie Wilkinson  
Gordon Ormerod  
Tristan Stock  
John Billouin  
Andy Neill  
Tom Marsland  
Ben Pirraglia  
Neil Duckworth  
John Wareing  
David Brown  
Steve Birtwell  
Andy Robinson  
Ben Sumner

## **Present from BRFC**

Tom Finn  
Greg Coar

## **Apologies**

Duncan Gardiner  
Glen Pegden  
John Wareing  
Ray Williamson  
Pauline Perkins

### **1. Apologies for absence - accepted**

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

- i) Ian Filbin had resigned from the forum. The forum wished to put on record its appreciation to Ian for his contribution over the last eight years.
- ii) The forum wanted to put on record it's appreciation of the fine stewardship of the club provided by John Williams during his time at Blackburn Rovers, and wished him well for the future.

## **2. Matters Arising from the last meeting 1st February 2011**

### **a) Club Mascot**

GC stated that there had been around 200 entries for the competition to design a new club mascot. A winner would be selected in the next few weeks and a costume produced in time for the Asia Trophy.

### **b) Asia Trophy**

TF stated that the detailed press-pack for the Asia Cup was due to be released in early May. The point was stressed that entry to the competition was dependent on the club maintaining its premiership status. It was hoped that the club would act as the sole distributor of tickets in a process similar to the one employed by the club for previous European competitions.

### **c) Shirt Availability**

In response to an item raised by JW in the previous meeting, GC stated that shirts were back in stock at the Rovers store in town.

## **3. Management Structure Changes**

TF reported that discussions with the owners were ongoing regarding the management structure and the possible appointment of a new Chairman, but emphasised that there were no timescales against these actions.

He confirmed that he was managing the club's day to day operations as previous and communicating with the owners via the two directors that had recently been appointed. TF also advised that he had spoken to Paul Agnew concerning the recent press speculation linking him with the vacant Chairman's position. Paul informed him that he had not held any discussions with the owners on the subject.

TF stressed that it was inevitable that new owners with fresh ideas would have a different approach to how the club should be run. Any change would be a slow process. He acknowledged that a figurehead was needed at the club, and communication channels needed to be improved, but regardless, it was important that the fans played their part to rally round the team during this difficult time. He stated that the owners are ambitious and have a vision, but recognised that this needed to be communicated to the fans, preferably before season ticket renewals were due.

GO asked if the changes that had taken place in the coaching staff could be confirmed and communicated to the fans. TF stated that this would be addressed.

ND asked what role, if any, Jerome Anderson had within the club. TF replied that it was public knowledge that JA had played a part in the January transfer window but would not be drawn on any speculation regarding JA's current position.

### **3. 2011-12 Season Tickets**

GC stated that a proposal for season ticket pricing was currently being developed and was almost finalised. The club hoped to continue with the strategy of affordable pricing that had been so successful at boosting attendances over the last couple of seasons. He confirmed that there had been no indication from the owners that this policy should change.

GC mentioned some of the other ideas under discussion:

Rolling Direct Debit – it was hoped that this could be introduced.

Rolling Renewal – it was thought that, due to a number of factors, now was not the time to introduce such a scheme.

19 Game Darwen End Season Ticket – this is under consideration.

GC admitted that it would be a challenge to retain the current number of season ticket holders as the historically high current number makes finding new ones more difficult – and there is always a level of 'churn' due to lifestyle and other factors.

AN asked if dynamic pricing had been successful to which GC replied that it had indeed worked well.

BS asked what the take-up for tickets was, in other areas, by Darwen End season ticket holders when they were forced to move for the non-included matches. GC stated that the take-up of 'other area tickets' was disappointing, hence the consideration of a 19 game Darwen End season ticket option for next year.

MH asked if there would be any extra incentives for season ticket holders next season (e.g. a free cup tie ticket). GC stated that the season ticket offer would continue to follow a 'no frills' approach with the emphasis on keeping prices extremely competitive.

GC also stated that it was intended to continue with the young adult ticket and that a student ticket may be introduced on a match-by-match basis.

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

TF reported that there was no news regarding potential shirt sponsors but stated that the owners were confident of finding a sponsor in India. He also stated that the delay in securing a sponsor would lead to an inevitable delay on launching the new shirts for next season meaning that it would be unlikely that the away shirt would be un-veiled before the end of the season. Again uncertainty regarding the club's status for next season was having an impact on securing a sponsor.

## **5. Proposed Supporters Trust**

MH asked if the club had had any dealings with a proposed Supporters Trust which he understood was being formed. TF stated that the club had not been approached by such an organisation. AN indicated that he knew some of the main protagonists behind the venture and that in his opinion it was unlikely to get off the ground because some of these leading figures deemed it could become a vehicle for negativity which would detract from the club's fight against relegation.

## **6. Any Other Business**

- a) MH stated that the annual Disabled Club Player of the Year Award would be held at Ewood on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April.
- b) AR asked if there the club intended to provide free coach travel to any of the remaining fixtures. TF replied that although there was no such plan at the moment the matter was being kept under review and it was possible that the Wolves game may provide an opportunity for free travel if the importance of the game dictated it.
- c) BP asked if there had been any reply from Venkys regarding the invitation for a representative to attend a Fans Forum. TF replied that as yet there had been no response to the invitation but was hopeful a representative would attend a future forum.
- d) TF explained the implication of Manchester United's continued involvement in the FA Cup with regard to the home league fixture against Manchester United scheduled for FA Cup final day. He explained that if United reached the FA Cup final the Rovers fixture would be moved back to Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May, otherwise the game would take place on FA Cup Final day (14<sup>th</sup> May) with a 12:45 KO.
- e) A Q&A session with Tony Parkes would be taking place at Blues on the evening of Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April.

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Monday 23<sup>th</sup> May 2011, with the pre-meet in the Fernhurst pub on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 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 23<sup>rd</sup> May

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November