

Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Tuesday 7th May 2013

Present – Fans' Forum

Andy Neill
Ste Birtwell
Ray Williamson
John Wareing

Present from BRFC

Paul Agnew (Items 1-6 only)
Greg Coar (items 7-8 only)
Lynsey Talbot

The original Fans Forum had been scheduled for Tuesday 30th April, but was postponed until 7th May due to Paul Agnew's illness. A short meeting was held on 30th to deal with some issues (recorded here as items 7 and 8).

1. 2013-14 Season Tickets

PA stated that plans for season ticket prices for the 2013-14 season were in the final stages of preparation. He was therefore unable to give full details of the plans but he was able to state that the overall aim would be to reward loyal Rovers fans going forward. He was keen that those who had stood by the club during some difficult times were rewarded for that loyalty. It was understood that significant price rises were not possible in the current climate.

2. Meeting With Owners

AN stated that this referred not so much to a face to face meeting between the owners and Fans Forum members, but rather to a desire to get real communication between the owners and Rovers fans in general.

PA replied that he was firmly of the opinion that there should be, where possible, direct communication between the club and the whole of the fanbase, rather than any piecemeal situation with a variety of fans' groups. He thought things had become fragmented.

3. Next Managerial Appointment

PA stated that the club felt it better that a decision be reached as early as possible, to give the manager every possible chance to prepare properly over the three months leading up to next season. Whilst not appropriate, for obvious reasons, to discuss names, he did say that Gary Bowyer made a strong claim. He answered that, ultimately, the decision might not be left to the directors but rest totally with the Owners, the common practice throughout football in his experience.

4. Financial Fair Play Regulations

JW asked what the club's position was in respect of the impending financial fair play regulations. PA acknowledged that compliance to the regulations would be a difficult issue for the club and that meetings were currently ongoing to assess the situation.

5. Club Hierarchy

AN expressed concern about continuing public criticisms of the way the club was run. PA agreed that such publicity, much of it without any foundation and some of it unjustified, was always regrettable, but stressed that the club was fundamentally strong with a positive future. Paul stressed that working hard for BRFC was his only concern and that he had no personal agenda whatsoever. He also felt that public criticism of football clubs usually heightened during times of poor results on the field and that it was imperative that the club should strive to go forward as one. He added that having been personally involved on the club's management board for the past 15 years, he could state that most of the off-field activities were being run just the same now as down those many years.

6. Pre-Season

PA stated that arrangements for the 2013-14 pre-season games were close to finalisation. Whilst he was unable to give full details at this time, the plans included the return of the pre-season friendly at Ewood Park on the weekend before the start of the season.

7. State of Ewood Park Pitch

GC stated that the pitch has improved a bit as the weather has finally got a bit warmer, but still needs some work on it. Hopefully this can be done over the Summer although it is a very short close season this year because of next year's World Cup - the first game of the new season is on 3rd August.

8. Policing Issues at Burnley and Bolton Games

GC stated that the clubs have had a de-brief after the Burnley game and it is possible that the end of the Riverside nearest the Darwen End will be sectioned off to prevent a repeat of what happened this season. There were a number of fans who had bought tickets across the Riverside and then stood at the front of the stand - many of them fans who had not been seen at Ewood in recent times.

AN raised issues at the end of the game at Bolton and GC agreed to raise them with Bolton ahead of the game next season.

Pre-meets are held at Ewood 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.