

Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Tuesday 8th November 2011 – 7.15pm

Present – Fans' Forum

Martin Haworth
Julie Wilkinson
Gordon Ormerod
Tristan Stock
Tom Marsland
Ben Pirraglia
Neil Duckworth
John Wareing
Steve Birtwell
Glen Pegden
Andy Neill
Ben Sumner
Ray Williamson
Mark Hitchen
Jennifer Lewis

Present from BRFC

Simon Williams
Paul Hunt
Greg Coar

1. Apologies for absence

John Billouin
Andy Robinson
Pauline Perkins

2. Jennifer Lewis

MartinH welcomed Jennifer Lewis to the meeting. She is Treasurer of the disabled supporters' group and would be their new representative on the Forum.

3. Matters arising From the Minutes 13th September 2011

None.

4. Pune Trip Feedback

Asked for feedback from the club regarding the recent trip to Pune, SW stated that everything had been very well organized on the ground, the two events had gone extremely well. Rovers were pleased to be the first Premier League team to play in India and there had been lots of fairly positive media coverage both in India and the UK.

MartinH said that there were still difficulties with some fans who had unrealistic expectations of the trip but that was understandable whilst

results on the pitch were not happening.

SB confirmed the view of Forum members that they would like to keep up an ongoing dialogue with the owners, including at some time having some representation at Forum meetings if possible. It was generally accepted that more dialogue would be a good thing but there was also a recognition that the current situation made such moves difficult.

5. Fans' Protests

PH stated that the club had been facilitating the planned protests over the previous few matches and had had full co-operation from the protest organizers. In general the club were relaxed about post-match protests as it allowed those who did not want to be involved to not be affected. Pre-match protests were a different matter as other fans could not avoid them and they could also be disruptive to the team warm-up routines. The club were pleased to note that there has been no injuries, arrests or damage in any of the protests and that was testament to the three way liaison between organisers, the police and the club.

6. Forum Visibility

MartinH noted that the profile of the Fans Forum had been greatly increased by the Pune trip and it had been clear that many fans were not aware of its work. Forum members would be discussing ways of increasing visibility of the Forum and its work and would bring ideas to the next meeting for discussion.

7. Merchandising

MartinH asked what plans were in place for items for Christmas in the club shop and various items were discussed. MarkH asked why infant kits were no longer available. SW replied that the minimum order for infant kits from Umbro was about 2,000 – the most the club had ever sold in one season was 200 so it was not currently commercially viable, although they continued to look for alternatives.

GC advised the meeting of a new licensing deal which had been set up with a web based company who could offer very flexible personalized Rovers merchandise. The offer was already available through the One Rovers website and more publicity would be launched very soon.

8. Roof Leaks

JohnW had reported a number of situations where fans had suffered from leaks in the roof in both the Darwen and Blackburn End stands. GC replied that John Newsham was aware and was looking at ways to rectify the faults. It appeared to be a problem with rusting rivets but there were difficulties in locating the actual sources of the leaks.

9. Any Other Business

- a) BS reported that one of the flagpoles for the Darwen End flags was missing. GC replied that he was aware and that a new pole had been ordered.
- b) GO stated that the Walker Fame bricks were looking quite grubby again. SW explained that that were unable to be power washed as it would dislodge the sand on which they were mounted, so cleaning had to be done by hand and was therefore costly and time consuming.
- c) SB asked whether more ex-players could be asked to perform the half-time draw as it was popular with fans. SW undertook to consider this.

10. 2012 Meetings – Proposed Dates

Tuesday 10th January

Monday 5th March

Monday 30th April

Monday 25th June

Monday 20th August

Monday 15th October

Monday 10th December

The next pre-meet will be in the Fernhurst pub on Tuesday 3rd January 2012. Note that this is a day later than usual as 2nd is a Bank Holiday.

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.