



## Sheffield Wednesday Supporters' Trust (the "Trust")

### Board meeting held by video conference

on Thursday 17 December 2020

### MINUTES

#### Minute

#### Action

##### Interim Directors

|                       |       |                                   |
|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|
| James Silverwood      | (JS)  | Chairman                          |
| Christopher Macdonald | (CM)  | Community Coordinator             |
| Gary Slinn            | (GS)  | Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator |
| Jenni Smith           | (JSm) | Communications Coordinator        |
| John Dyson            | (JD)  | Membership Coordinator            |
| Matt Millward         | (MM)  | Treasurer                         |
| Michael Brown         | (MB)  | Community Coordinator             |
| Steve Walmsley        | (SW)  | FSA Liaison Coordinator           |
| Tom Scott             | (TS)  | Website & Communications          |

##### In attendance

|            |      |                              |
|------------|------|------------------------------|
| Paul Smith | (PS) | Secretary to the Trust Board |
|------------|------|------------------------------|

The meeting started at 19:00. All were present.

#### 2020-16 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

It was noted that since the last Board meeting Robert Bonser (RB) had resigned due to work commitments. The Directors thanked RB for his contribution to Trust. This means that there are now three vacancies on the Interim Board.

#### 2020-17 Minutes of previous meeting

- a) Paper 1, the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 26 November 2020, were approved.
- b) Paper 2, the Action Log, was noted. Attendees were asked to inform PS of any progress regarding the outstanding actions.

#### 2020-18 Club Engagement

The following items were discussed:

- a) Meeting on 1 December 2020 – CM and MB reported that the meeting with the SWFC Community Programme team was positive. It was noted that Julian Winter (CEO at Swansea City FC) set up the SWFC Community Programme 16+ years ago. CM reported that Marcus Bramhall, who has been involved with the Programme for 20+ years, liked the ideas from the Trust and was keen to work with the Trust.

- b) Meeting on 16 December 2020 – Paper 3, a summary of the meeting with Trevor Braithwait (TB), was noted. SW reported that a range of issues relating to discontent within the fanbase was discussed. It was noted that SWFC (“the Club”) is aware of the discontent, but TB believes that the primary cause is results on the pitch and TB suggested that if the Club was at the top of the table, then the other matters would not be of concern. SW reported that any issues relating to ticket prices, finances or strategy would need to be discussed with Dejphon Chansiri (DC), the Club’s Chairman. It was noted that the meeting is to be concluded on 18 December 2020.
- c) Debate on situation at SWFC – a discussion took place regarding the future direction of the Club.

CM reported that he had done some research on other, more established, Supporters’ Trusts, including Charlton Athletic and Newcastle United. It was noted that football club owners may not want to engage with the Supporters’ Trusts, but the Trusts can still be successful as a campaigning group and within the local community.

The Directors noted that the Club appears to meet most of the FSA’s warning signs of a club in crisis (e.g. players paid late, limited Club board, real estate being sold off and leased back, rumours of transfer embargos, schemes to generate early ticket sales, submission of late accounts, lack of engagement with fans).

GS suggested that registering the Hillsborough stadium as an Asset of Community Value should be near to the top of the list of priorities for the New Year.

JSm stated that if the Trust was to change direction to more of a campaigning group, then the Directors would need to be clear on what this looks like and it would also need to be consulted on with members.

The Directors discussed a possible change in direction for the Trust, but agreed that the Trust’s current strategic approach is broadly right i.e. covering the four areas of influencing club strategy, community / diversity work, campaigning on specific issues and club engagement. Further, it was unanimously agreed that JS / SW would seek a more formal structure of engagement with the Club which includes regular meetings with DC.

JS / SW

- d) Trust Vision – Paper 4, a memo from JS on the Trust’s Vision and its Underlying Dichotomies, was discussed with reference to the current situation at the Club.

The Directors unanimously agreed that the Trust is trying to achieve a positive campaigning strategy with the Club in the following areas:

- i. better engagement with the fanbase
- ii. season ticket refunds / ticket pricing strategy
- iii. the future business strategy of the Club
- iv. developing connections within the local community, including the Club as a community asset

SW was asked to draft a revised Trust strategy to reflect the four above themes.

SW

It was further unanimously agreed that a ‘noise’ strategy (e.g. producing snapshots of the ticket pricing reports via the Trust’s social media channels) would run parallel to the formal strategy, with emphasis on fan engagement and community connection, refunds, match day ticket pricing policy and strategic / future business planning.

It was noted that there are some blogs and research reports that are ready to be published. It was agreed to wait until January to publish these. It was also agreed that JS would circulate the draft Open Letter for comment. It was noted that the results of the charity selection could be published between Christmas and the New Year.

JS

| Minute         |   | Action |
|----------------|---|--------|
| <b>2020-19</b> | <p data-bbox="240 188 443 224"><b>Finance Report</b></p> <p data-bbox="240 253 727 288">Paper 5, the Finance Report, was noted.</p> <p data-bbox="240 318 1294 376">MM reported that there 11 new members joined in November and that the bank / PayPal balance was £1,931.</p> <p data-bbox="240 405 1348 504">It was noted that the upfront website cost of £259.20 has been spread across the year. In addition, cash forecasting has been done up to Summer 2022 so that quick decisions can be made on spending.</p> |        |
| <b>2020-20</b> | <p data-bbox="240 533 596 568"><b>Any Other Urgent Business</b></p> <p data-bbox="240 598 866 633">MM was asked to share the link for the shared drive.</p> <p data-bbox="240 663 1348 745">JW stated that with family and work commitments, he can't commit the time to manage the relationship with the Club. As such, JW asked if another Board member would be prepared to step into this role alongside SW, noting that he is keen to remain as Chair of the Trust.</p>  | MM     |
| <b>2020-21</b> | <p data-bbox="240 775 604 810"><b>Plan for Next Board Meeting</b></p> <p data-bbox="240 840 1348 898">The Directors agreed that there may be a need for a Board Meeting between Christmas and the start of the New Year, with 29 December 2020 identified as the possible date.</p> <p data-bbox="240 927 587 963">The meeting closed at 20:55.</p>   |        |