

Minutes of meeting of Supporters' Board, September 17, 2022

Present: James Errington, Derek Daniels, Martin O'Hara, Paul Mayfield, Mellony Shepherd, Lizzie Robinson, Dan Pearson, Len South, Gill Shepherd
Club representatives: Gavin Baldwin, Shaun Lockwood, Liam Hoden
Apologies: Patrick Queen
Absent: Matty Davies

1. Minutes from the previous meeting (August 6, 2022)
 - a. The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record, following an amendment to item 3.
 - b. MO asked for an update on the items he raised in AOB in the previous meeting.
 - i. SL said there had been no movement on plans for a club museum.
 - ii. SL said the plan put to the Football Foundation for a semi-permanent fan park outside Belle Vue Bar had been approved and he expected something to be in place within two months. Other projects covered by FF funding include work in the family area, work in schools and with pupils on matchdays.
 - iii. MO raised that he felt Belle Vue Bar was 'looking tired' when he last visited. SL said updates to the facility would be discussed as part of bids for tender for the new catering contract at the club.
2. Standing items: Health and safety, safeguarding and equality, diversity and inclusivity
 - a. SL said that the AGM for health and safety plus equality, diversity and inclusivity had taken place at the stadium and minutes of that would be shared with Shadow Board members imminently.
 - b. SL gave a brief summary of the main themes which included:
 - i. Safeguarding for U14s who were left at matchdays
 - ii. The stadium's safety certificate was passed in May with no major red flags
 - c. LS said he had received reports regarding the West Stand lift, with waits of more than 90 minutes for use after games. LS also asked if the lift was safe.
 - i. SL said the lift had passed the safety certificate in May. The lift is maintained and inspected by a third party organisation.
 - ii. SL said the lift is tired and has previously been damaged but it is serviced and maintained regularly. Advice to prolong the life of the lift has been to reduce the weight capacity. SL said the club had used caution and restricted use to one wheelchair and one carer per trip. Stewards are in operation at the lifts.
 - iii. SL said the stadium is typically empty within 20 minutes of the final whistle so questioned reports of long waiting times

- d. SL said there were lots of EDI activity planned around matchdays throughout the season.
 - e. GB offered to share safeguarding and EDI reports with Shadow Board members.
3. An update on commercial activity and performance from chief commercial officer Jon Warburton
- a. JW explained the creation of the 100Club Partnership model and reasons why, including providing a structure of levels and an 'off-the-shelf' sponsorship product to meet the needs of the various organisations interested in sponsoring the club.
 - b. JW detailed the five levels with a loose cost of sponsorship at each level increase sponsorship at each - bronze (min £3,000), silver (min £7,000), gold (min £15,000), platinum (min £35,000) and diamond.
 - c. JW said the model does not rely on positive performance on the pitch reflected by the 21/22 season providing the strongest commercial performance the club had ever experienced.
 - d. JW said since the creation of the model, numbers of partners have grown from 35 in 2018, 45 in 2019 and 65 in 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, resulting in a growth in revenues until the pandemic. Since Covid, the number of partners levelled out at 65 but raised to 70 in the summer of 2022. Some left following relegation but new partners have been added.
 - e. JW said the 100Club name was to reflect the ambition of having 100 partners. JW is hopeful of having close to 80 by the end of the season.
 - f. JW said Eco-Power Group's sponsorship of the stadium and front of shirt has resulted in an increase of revenues from previous agreements plus previous sponsors LNER and Keepmoat have both remained as partners.
 - g. JW said the commercial team is tasked with partnerships, hospitality and sponsorships of Rovers, Dons and Belles, as well as non-matchday parking, tenancy at the stadium with 14 businesses based in offices, charitable donations to the Foundation, and events such as concerts and the Rugby League World Cup. Rovers is the key budget line of the commercial team.
 - h. JW detailed figures of performance over the past few years

19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
100%	85%* *Covid Year	122%	Target 129%

- i. JW asked the Shadow Board if supporters care about commercial performance, and can they be engaged on the issue
 - i. MO said he believes more people appreciate it now, along with the understanding of the Club Doncaster model.

- ii. SL said he believes a lack of comment on commercial performance shows supporters are content because shortcoming in previous years were regularly highlighted (eg lack of box sales).
 - iii. GB said the hope is that supporters can appreciate the partners and support them, as that will be beneficial to the club in the long term.
 - iv. JW said the commercial team are expanding networking events and looking to showcase how partners have worked with each other positively in business, which demonstrates why being part of the 100Club model is beneficial.
 - v. PM suggested having a commercial evening to make supporters aware of products they can be involved in. JW suggested Meet The Owners might be an ideal opportunity
 - j. LS queried how player sponsorship is being reviewed following issues. JW there are many mitigating factors in player sponsorship, including match-worn shirts being available, but he is striving to improve procedures this season
4. A presentation on the Bulbshare market research project with Rovers from Bulbshare chief strategy officer Jeff Macdonald.
- a. SL said the project was six weeks in with around four months remaining.
 - b. JM explained that Bulbshare is a mobile based engagement platform designed to create a genuine relationship between product and consumer in order to provide valuable data. The company has worked with major brands and government. He said the value comes from creating content together, with consumers contributing more than simple feedback to the platform as part of a community..
 - i. JM said the process is recruiting people into the community, engage with them by giving them content with value, then collaboration by getting the community . The ultimate goal is to make a clear difference, which will help the club but also promote more engagement because the community can see their contributions are making a difference.
 - ii. JM said there are two parts to the product with the public facing app used by the community and then the data delivered from that which can be analysed in real time. Trends can be delivered back to the club to highlight issues and positives.
 - iii. JM said the reason for beginning the relationship with Rovers was due to the positive way in which the club engage with supporters, which Bulbshare felt was an area in which football in general was falling short.
 - iv. JM said the basic goal was to attempt to give the fanbase a say in how the club is run and a space where they can share what

matters to them. It works as a two-way dialogue with the club able to talk back to fans through the platform.

- v. Projects done with Rovers so far include female fans feeding back on matchdays, stadium safety, food and catering, the general matchday experience, merchandise, social media, community engagement.
- vi. Questions can be multiple choice or open ended, providing data but also giving a platform for ideas to be shared. JM said the hope is to find issues early and dig deeper so the club is in a position to react and respond. A brief can be created within just a few hours to help.
- vii. JM said future projects will be focused on ticketing, catering and engagement with younger supporters. The hope is to improve the content and offer the community more rich content, along with user generated content.
- viii. JM carried out a short demonstration of the app, showcasing the content already live.
- ix. JM asked for feedback from the Shadow Board on how it can be spread further across the fanbase.
 - 1. LR asked if the app could be used for supporters to interact and get content onto the big screen at the stadium. JM said that should be possible.
 - 2. SL said the usual post-match survey would be done through Bulbshare to promote use of the app.
 - 3. JM provided his contact details for Shadow Board members to send feedback and ideas.

5. Shadow Board objectives

- a. SL provided the draft list of objectives for the Shadow Board and asked for feedback to be provided by email by the end of the following week.
 - i. SL said the list had been made 'more concise' as well as making it clear how the objectives will be measured. He said the list had been split between what the Shadow Board would challenge the club to do and what they would challenge themselves to do.

6. General operations update

- a. SL updated on events:
 - i. Three Rugby League World Cup games at the stadium in October, with revenue coming into Club Doncaster.
 - ii. The Big Bang fireworks display will take place on November 3. SL said the revenue generated from the Big Bang is equivalent to three League Two football games.
 - iii. The Purple Vouchers book will be launching to the public for £20 with an improvement in the number of offers from the previous year.

- b. SL updated on staffing
 - i. Recruitment of a new safety officer continues
 - ii. A new member of the grounds team and an apprentice groundstaff member have been employed
 - iii. Club secretary Mary Lally was to retire on the date of the meeting with Adam Grice coming in as her replacement.
- c. A question had been previously submitted on utility bill rises, with SL updating
 - i. Without changes, the utility bills will rise by £150,000.
 - ii. The club is looking to counteract that by looking to operate in a more green manner, including the introduction of more hand dryers, switching of lights to LED and use of light sensors etc.
- d. GB updates on finances
 - i. On top of the utility bill rise, the football operation has overspent by 6 figures +
 - ii. SL said the board has challenged club staff to cover the utilities and football operations shortfall which is why events such as the Big Bang and RLWC are so important, together with any sensible cost savings. The board will act as a backstop to should revenues not cover the shortfall.
 - iii. The EFL and the Premier League are to make available £90,000 to each club via a Facilities Fund to upgrade facilities. GB said an internal staff team along with supporters will debate how to use the fund and what to prioritise. DD suggested Bulbshare could be used to collect ideas
 - iv. GS asked about the possibility of games being brought forward to limit use of floodlights. GB said the issue had not been brought to the clubs. GB said it costs £750 to run the floodlights. The counter is that it would result in more overnight stays for clubs.

7. AOB

- a. GB said following the change in Prime Minister, the club had made representations to MP Dame Rosie Winterton to speak to the new culture, media and sport secretary to push for a commitment to the Fan Led Review into football governance. Dame Rosie committed to report back.
- b. LS asked about Remembrance Service procedures with no home game scheduled for November. SL said the plan was for the service to take place at the Gillingham game on October 29, unless the club received a home draw in the FA Cup for the weekend of November 5.
- c. SL added to an update on season tickets. SL said season ticket retention was at 95 per cent.

The date of the next meeting was to be decided, with a provisional date of October 29, 2022 set.