



ARGYLE FANS TRUST INTERIM STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES

Saturday 9th April 2011, Royal Mail Office, 10.00-12.00

Present: John Petrie, Lee Jameson, Celia Ellacott, Graham Clark, Peter Ryan, Richard Blight, Margaret Carn, Chris Webb, Sally Snow

1 Welcome etc

Apologies: Ed Shillabeer, Warren Bowden

The Minutes of the meeting on 14th March 2011 had been approved by email and were accepted for publication on the website.

2 Chair's Update:

- James Brent was set to put his cards on the table on Monday (11th April) - his bid would have been approved on Tuesday and CVA exit would follow. However, this was all put on hold when Paul Buttivant and an unknown Irish buyer expressed an interest. James Brent, while not an Argyle or football supporter, has said that he does not want Argyle to be liquidated as he recognises its importance within the city and region. He has said he would step aside if someone with an interest in football comes forward with a credible bid.
- Brendan Guilfoyle, the Administrator, has been working for five weeks now without pay. While he obviously wants to secure a buyer at the earliest opportunity, he is duty bound to listen to parties that come forward and express interest and get the best deal for the creditors. The legal deadline for the end of administration is May 2012. It has been suggested that there is a real danger that the latest expressions of interest might unsettle the creditors and jeopardise our football club and the lives of the staff.
- JP suggested that the Trust should write a statement dissuading any parties coming forward and causing potential damage to our club without actually naming names. It was agreed that John should work on this.
- CE wondered why James Brent would not come up with money for exclusivity, as this would put an end to future speculative expressions of interest. GC said this was because in his mind he is the last man standing. He is funding the CVA – paying Lombard, PAST&DT, arranging the agreement with Mastpoint investors (1p in the £).
- Rick Cowdrey has written to GC reporting on a very stressful staff meeting at Argyle. Staff were struggling with rent and mortgage payments – needing between £350-600 a month. LJ explained that they should be applying to the Local Authority Hardship Fund which provides help in these cases. LJ will liaise with GC and arrange for a member of the Council to go to PAFC and speak to staff – there was surprise if it emerged that the club had not already acted on this themselves. The Trust had been advised by Supporters Direct that we should not offer finance via the club.
- All present reiterated a desire to do whatever could be done within our remit to assist the Green Taverners and other short term efforts to assist the club and staff.



3 Secretary's Update

- The timing of the election was again discussed. Feelings ran in favour of both options (in the close season, at the start of the new season). SD recommends the latter. Our choice relates to when the ISC/Society Board will need to engage with the new owner. So matters are largely out of the ISC's hands in that regards. The matter was carried over for final decision to the next meeting.
- James Brent's plan is to have a board consisting of a Chairman/CEO (Ridsdale?), Finance director David Jones, Brent and 3 Non-executive Board Members with no financial contribution. The Trust would be involved in the decision of NEOs either formally or informally. Due to the possible involvement of the Trust in choice of board, it is imperative that we get encourage suitably qualified people to come onto the Society Board during the election process.
- John Simmons who will oversee the Trust election is available after 5th May.
- CE asked for a timetable for the election process to be set up – PR said that Brentford have their process on the website.

PR will put together a relevant papers for the ISC to consider at its next meeting which will primarily be to consider election issues.

- PR requested extra help with administrative tasks – this will mean that he is able to carry on as Secretary.
 - PR suggested that the Trust needs a media protocol (as per e.g. the Pompey Trust). GC is currently the first point of approach by the BBC for interviews and statements. A media protocol will ensure any questions/requests are directed to the relevant Trust member for their attention. CW as communications officer will be able to prepare a protocol within a week – after approval this will be given to TV, radio and media contacts.
 - PASOTI – if posting, stick to facts only; a policy matter needs to be agreed before it is posted. The Trust Forum on PASOTI is under-used, but should stay in place at least until our own website has been improved.
 - **CE proposed the following resolution:**
The interim steering committee of the Argyle Fans' Trust resolves to hold an Away Day organised by the ISC and facilitated by an external expert (suggest Andy Milligan) with the intention of:
 - * *gaining knowledge on the structure, role and running of the Trust organisation and its potential relationship with the new Club Board*
 - * *increasing the profile of the Trust*
 - * *encouraging participation in the Trust elections*
 - * *engaging with external stakeholders in the community and with the new Club ownership. Such a meeting to be held early in or just before the start of the election period. The meeting to be by invitation and advertisement and to include potential candidates for election.*
- Vote – In favour 4: Against 1: Abstention 2**
- Share certificates – WB needs help to prepare the share certificates – they need to be completed before the last match of the season so that they can be presented to VIPs, e.g. Peter Reid, Romain Larrieu. MW and GC volunteered. POST MEETING NOTE – as WB was



away on holiday, it was resolved to present symbolic mock ups at the MK:Franchise match and then WB could take up the issue of proper share certificates on his return.

4 Communications Update

- Website – CW is meeting with Mark Russell next week. To finalise domain names etc.

5 Membership

- At the time of the meeting there were 788 members with a few others waiting to be processed. 145 letters are being sent to non-internet user contacts.
- No arrangements had been made with PAFC re distribution of flyers prepared by CW at today's match. ISC members to take and hand out at Fanfest and bars but not take any money.
- It was decided that all energy should be put into one event – the match against MK was the natural target – it would be dubbed "Trust Day". It was unanimously agreed that the Trust will sponsor the match ball for £750 – this price includes 10 VIP seats in the lounge for the match and nine of these will be given to Trust members as an incentive for joining up. GC offered to help towards the cost of sponsorship but PR checked that the cost falls within allowable expenses under SD rules. CE to contact Bill Martin at the Herald and arrange a piece including a membership form, and programme space.
- LJ will speak at next meeting of Senior Greens to explain Trust position.

12 noon – LJ and RB left meeting to meet with Rick Cowdrey re staff hardship fund.

6 Campaigns

- CE proposed that the Groundswell campaign plans are in place and will not cost any more to continue.. Green balloons and 'wear green' initiative for Southampton game should go ahead, but outline plans for ISC and Argyle Legends to have a space in Drake Circus should be postponed until the start of next season if it is decided that Groundswell is to continue.
- Argyle celebrates 125 years in October this year – plans?
- CW to contact Chill Pilgrim (Mel Harris) who is very keen to help with videos.
- CE to liaise with St Austell Brewery re Resurgam beer.

7 Finance

- **MC on Finance** – MC can now sign cheques. Previous problems on PayPal have been sorted. No bank statement yet, the current balance is £10,016.82. All expenses due to ISC have been paid. An indemnity form has been completed to enable us to process cheques that have been made payable to Argyle Fans' Trust (worth £300) can be paid into the (Plymouth Argyle Supporters' Society) account. MC confirmed that the writers of these cheques have already been entered on the membership database.



8 Fundraising

A well known stand up comedian has again agreed to do a gig for the Trust at some stage.
WB is to contact him to follow up.

GC thanked CW for the use of Royal Mail facilities and refreshments.

Next meeting: 2nd May, venue Home Park.

The meeting closed at 1225.