



Argyle Fans' Trust

Board Meeting – MINUTES

Saturday 19th January 2019; 11.30am, Goals, Outland Road, Plymouth

No	Item	Discussion/Summary	Action
1	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	<p>Members present: Keith Brown (KB), Tim Chown (TC, Secretary), Chris Dean (CD), Sam Down (SD), Celia Ellacott (CE), John Lloyd (JL), Virginia Pike (VP), Emma Sellick (ES), Andy Symons (AS).</p> <p>Apologies received: Sue Clark (SC), Tony Hooper (TH), Roger Willis (RW)</p>	
2	Approval of and Matters Arising from previous meeting	<p>The meeting was declared quorate by the chair (8 of 11 members present).</p> <p>Emma Sellick (ES) was welcomed as the newly co-opted board member.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of 8th December 2018 were approved with one clarification; these are online at https://www.argylefanstrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/AFT-Board-Minutes-8dec2018.pdf.</p> <p>AS has not yet drafted text for the advert to co-opt a 12th board member. It was agreed that we need to consider the required skill sets, and that there is currently no rush.</p> <p>JL reported that the PO Box arrangements are now almost finalised. PO Box postal mail will be delivered to RW.</p> <p>It was agreed that the notes from the previous meeting with Michael Dunford, the Fans' Forum, and our own meeting with Simon Hallett would be summarised to one document for publication.</p> <p>It was agreed that the normal procedure is to give the club 2 days to comment on any inaccuracies in such documents before publication.</p> <p>TC is working on the updated share certificate.</p> <p>JL will look at a potential survey on premium seating.</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>TC</p> <p>JL</p>
3	Membership	RW sent a report in advance of the meeting stating that the membership stood at 412 adult members and 27 U-16 members for a total of 441 members.	

		<p>KB asked whether InTouch is sufficient; TC replied that the board had spent a fair amount of time in the past year determining that it was. The main issue is the accuracy of the data entered.</p> <p>TC has asked SD about the Club Collect system they had included in a recent mailshot. This might help with collection of memberships but would need to integrate with InTouch.</p> <p>It was agreed that the membership renewal process needs to be clearly defined; e.g., when are email and postal reminders sent? TC+RW+KB to look at it. It is important that we MUST write to people if necessary. We may require additional help in the membership team to implement the process.</p> <p>It was suggested that we might have a plastic or at least firmer membership card. RW+VP will explore. We had recently rushed some new cards in as we had run out.</p> <p>Discounts are being negotiated with local companies as a membership incentive. The Fortescue for example has supported the AFT for some time with a 10% discount for members on producing their card.</p>	<p>TC</p> <p>TC, RW, KB</p> <p>RW, VP</p>
4	Treasurer's Report	<p>VP reported that the balance on the main account as of 31st Dec Was £11,533.07, with 44p in the savings account. As of 16th Jan the PayPal account held £244.30.</p> <p>It was agreed that VP would move the bulk of the balance to a savings account and leave approx £2,500 in the current account.</p> <p>TC raised the question of the AFT investing the in the new GT's supporters' bar. This had been previously agreed by the board, but the cheque for £1,000 (the minimum investment) that was issued to the GTs had expired while the GTs put a hold on taking payments until the construction position was resolved. The board agreed by 7 votes to 1 to proceed with the investment and issue a new cheque.</p> <p>VP will go to the GT meeting after the match to find out more about the supporters' bar progress and the investment with the GTs. TC will also be attending as a private investor.</p>	<p>VP</p> <p>VP</p>
5	Social Media accounts	<p>The board discussed use of social media, including Twitter, Facebook (where Tony Cannan still posts for us) and other platforms.</p> <p>ES offered to set up an Instagram account for the AFT and try to promote various ideas through that channel.</p>	<p>ES</p>

		<p>TC reminded the board of the general communications policy which applies to more formal publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whoever has an article they want published writes up the piece. • CE then checks it as copy editor. • The board then has 24 hours to agree / object to the content • It is then posted to the web site as the authoritative source • The copy / link is then posted to the media channels. <p>It was agreed that board members should be encouraged to put photos and brief bios on the AFT web site, and a contact method, and similarly put details on the new Instagram page.</p> <p>ES suggested we might have 3-5 questions asked of each board member to be posted with their photos. ES to arrange, and TC/RW to upload to web site.</p> <p>While Instagram might feature lighter ideas like pets with Argyle scarves or Argyle flags at festivals, the more serious aim is to help drive supporter engagement with the AFT and in turn get new memberships.</p>	ES, TC, RW
6	Social events	<p>ES suggested the idea of an annual AFT ball, which was well received around the table.</p> <p>It was agreed to explore what might be possible this year, potentially working on it as a joint event with the GTs, and potentially building towards including club staff or players in the future. ES to lead.</p> <p>The timing of such an event is TBD, whether Christmas or near the end of season. VP will ask the GTs what they recommend.</p> <p>It was also suggested that we might run a quiz night and invite former players to be table captains. CD has experience setting questions, and it was noted that Paul Sturrock is a quiz master. VP+CD will explore the idea.</p> <p>The general aim in holding social events is to raise the AFT profile and show a more social and “fun” side to the Trust, with the aim of growing the membership. It was suggested that some of the funds raised might be directed to the Plymouth Foodbank. The board was unanimous on the ideas presented.</p>	<p>ES</p> <p>VP</p> <p>VP, CD</p>

		ES left the meeting at 12.20pm due to a prior commitment at HP.	
7	Future priorities	<p>KB opened the discussion on future priorities, asking what the AFT wants to do. He suggested that we should seek to be taken seriously, to be more than just a fans' group and be the voice of the community, and to have influence representing the fans. The priority must be membership; that drives everything.</p> <p>VP suggested running an open survey to ask members what they think should be the top three objectives of the AFT. It was noted that we need to listen to members and non-members.</p> <p>TC reminded the board that the AFT's core objectives (shared by all supporter trusts) are as described at https://www.argylefanstrust.com/mission/trust-objectives/.</p> <p>It was suggested that we might solicit offers of fringe benefits for membership.</p> <p>VP said that the main priority is to keep trust running, to have a war chest, and to have AFT ready to react if there is a problem in the future. The members help us keep the AFT ticking over. We should fundraise, help fans with issues and queries, and offer a mediation service if issues should arise between fans and the club.</p> <p>KB offered to sketch out a draft three-year plan for discussion; where do we want to be? How do we get there?</p> <p>JL said that the survey to ask members about priorities needs to be online. AS offered to 'code in' any paper responses from the AFT matchday table. The board needs to decide what questions to ask; probably 3-5 questions to help us set the priorities. ALL to contribute suggestions. JL to then set up the survey.</p>	<p>KB</p> <p>ALL, JL</p>
8	Marketing and fanzine	<p>TC suggested we produce an updated flyer for match days, to include a membership form. TC to circulate the existing flyer; we first need to agree the benefits of membership and Trust priorities for the flyer content.</p> <p>It was suggested that we might offer discounted membership for people to come back. JL pointed out that a letter to all lapsed members would be around £500 + postage.</p> <p>VP suggested that we could do phone calls to members, e.g., as their renewals are due. VP and RW to discuss.</p> <p>JL has an existing letter used to invite people to renew or join;</p>	<p>TC</p> <p>VP, RW</p>

	<p>this can be emailed via InTouch, but InTouch won't email people who have opted out, even though we have a legitimate interest" to offer them refreshed membership. TC will raise through Neil.</p> <p>JL suggested we have people who have lapsed become Associate Members (without voting rights, other membership benefits, but also without a fee) unless they request otherwise. This would allow us to have supporters "on call" should the need arise. JL to make a more specific proposal via email.</p> <p>It was agreed that we would add a feedback form to the web site. TC will also review the web site content and structure.</p> <p>The discussion then moved on to the fanzine.</p> <p>TC felt that while it had lost money, it adds PR value for the AFT.</p> <p>SD said it would be a shame to lose the fanzine; we should try to get adverts to cover the costs.</p> <p>VP had a quote for producing 200 copies rather than 400, reducing by 4 pages, which should then break even, without needing advertising. This would allow it to continue while we discussed ways to build it further.</p> <p>CE asked whether we can we get some Argyle Life content in the fanzine. SD writes for AL and will ask.</p> <p>KB said it was important to separate the production and distribution of the fanzine, e.g., arrangements to get the fanzine on the supporter coaches.</p> <p>TH's comments received by email in advance of the meeting were read out.</p> <p>CD commented that most fanzines are somewhat "irreverent", but the AFT fanzine is more of an extended newsletter format. It was agreed that the fanzine should not push irreverence too far, but that it is possible to be satirical without being offensive.</p> <p>JL noted we must have content from readers to drive the fanzine and queried where the sources will be. CE said we have some sources, like the referee.</p> <p>AS suggested that we invite people to expand on social media pieces. CE has done this sometimes.</p>	<p>TC</p> <p>JL</p> <p>TC</p> <p>SD</p>
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		<p>The board agreed to reduce the production costs as suggested by VP, to try to solicit materials, and to explore additional distribution channels.</p> <p>VP's quote for £200 was for 200 copies of 20 sides, with in return an advert and 10% off printing at Graphicomm (the local printers).</p> <p>CE suggested that we consider a fanzine subscription, adding in postal costs. VP added that we could have collect-in-person subscriptions. CE and VP to explore.</p> <p>It was agreed that the fanzine would continue, with 3 or 4 a season. CE made it clear that help was required. The next fanzine would be targeted for the 6th April home game.</p> <p>TC reminded the board that we are not sending out regular newsletters from InTouch as we used to three years ago (typically one every 2 weeks, including stories from the web site). SD agreed that we should restore these. TC will speak to RW about how to send emails. Such mailshots need web site content to drive them.</p> <p>TC asked whether we can we put old fanzines online. It wasn't clear whether we have the PDFs available. TC to ask VP and CE whether we can get these.</p> <p>CE requested that all board members think about who we could get as fanzine advertisers. CE added that a season sponsor would be really good to secure.</p>	<p>CE, VP</p> <p>TC, RW</p> <p>TC, CE, VP</p>
9	Organisational structure and new posts	<p>CE proposed that we set up a set of working groups (WGs), such that we have two or three people responsible for each WG, adding add externals as needed. These groups can then work relatively independently, reporting back at board meetings.</p> <p>This was agreed by all.</p> <p>The initial groups would be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance – TC, KB, TH • Finance and membership – RW, VP +1 to help on driving membership. • Comms and marketing – JL, ES, CE, SD <p>Other roles were suggested as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social events - ES • Disabled supporters' rep / liaison – SC • Special projects – Tony Cannan 	

		It was suggested that John Petrie be approached to take the role of community liaison. AS to follow up with John and with Tony Cannan.	AS
10	Review other football Trust activities	<p>KB noted that we need to benchmark what others do.</p> <p>TC has asked Supporters Direct for any material they have on what makes a successful Trust.</p> <p>TC suggested that every board member joins another trust to see what they do; this would get us ideas from 12 other Trusts. ALL to join one Trust.</p>	ALL
11	AOB	<p>The topic of merchandising was raised. AS said he had contacts who may be able to produce good quality items cheaply. AS to get prices and samples.</p> <p>VP suggested that Robby Bullen might do a t-shirt, or a book of cartoons. VP to speak to Robby.</p> <p>KB said it was important that we keep cash payments at the Trust table on match days separated into the appropriate pots. AS offered to buy a cash box.</p> <p>VP will contact Mike Perry to arrange recovery of AFT items from his garage.</p> <p>TC reported that the AFT Slack workspace had been set up, and board members invited. The aim is to cut down on email volume. We will see how it goes.</p> <p>TC passed around copies of the AFT board conduct policy for signatures.</p> <p>TC will send the updated board member survey to Supporters Direct, listing the new board members and contacts for the AFT.</p> <p>VP will book storage space near the Life Centre. This is useful, but not big enough for much more than table and a couple of boxes. TC suggested we ask whether we might get a cupboard in the new GT building. VP will ask.</p> <p>VP met with Michael Dunford this week; she will send a report of the meeting to the board soon. MD is happy to keep meeting with us, but there is no date set for the next meeting yet. AS will talk with MD at the upcoming PAFA meeting.</p> <p>The first Plymouth Argyle Fans' Alliance (PAFA) will be on Sat 9 Feb, from 11am to 12.30pm. AS will attend for the AFT and raise</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>VP</p> <p>AS</p> <p>VP</p> <p>TC</p> <p>TC</p> <p>TC, VP</p> <p>VP, AS</p>



		<p>the issue of whether the same person has to attend on behalf of the AFT each time; it would be highly preferable if this were not a stipulation.</p> <p>JL reported that the Ifollow surveyonly drew a small number of responses, which indicates no strong feeling in the fan base.</p> <p>TC reported that the AFT has formally signed up to the Fans' Fare petition.</p>	
12	Date of next meeting	<p>The next meetings were agreed to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23rd Feb before the Rochdale game • 23rd March before the Bristol Rovers match <p>Meetings will gather at 11am at Goals for an 11.15am start, and run to 1pm at the latest.</p> <p>Sub-groups should submit any relevant reports at least 7 days in advance of the meetings.</p>	
13	Close of Meeting	The meeting closed at 1.25pm	

TC
3 Feb 2019