

SWANSEA CITY SUPPORTERS TRUST

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Friday, 20th February 2015 at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea commencing at 5.00pm.

Present:

Phil Sumbler, Will Morris, Huw Cooze, Duncan Thomas, Jim White, Viv Brooks, Barbara Cook, Cath Dyer, Ron Knuszka, Ian James, Viv Williams, Stuart Macdonald, Gwyn Hughes, Nigel Hamer (Secretary).

Apologies:

Andrew Godden, Dai Little, Alan Lewis.

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 15th January 2015 were approved.

Some reports for the meeting were previously submitted by email and circulated to board members.

Supporter Director Report:

HC reported:

Attended a *Club Board Meeting* on the 7th February, a full report was given to the Trust Board. Main talking points were football and finance related matters. A full report of the many projects the Club were undertaking was presented.

Stadium Expansion – attended a number of meetings, the migration of season ticket holders, new season ticket holders, making the *Family Stand* truly a *Family Stand* again. We have to increase the away allocation to 10% meaning movement of home fans in the *North East* and *West* corners. We have engaged a Company, *Sport Alliance* with migration issues, they have worked with *Arsenal*, *Barcelona* and *Atletico Madrid* on similar issues.

Directors Report, Financial Statement and Annual Accounts have been logged at *Companies House* showing a net profit after tax of £1.75 million.

Took part in a *Radio 5 Live* discussion about *Democracy in the Boardroom* on *Tuesday 20th January* with *Adrian Chiles*.

Safe Standing – Supporters Trusts from *Cardiff City*, and *Swansea City* attended the *Safe Standing Roadshow* on the 16th February at the *Liberty Stadium*. *Newport County* were also invited.

Arranged a meal deal for *Jack Army Members* for the matches against *Blackburn Rovers* and a £5 ticket discount for home games against *Hull City*, *Stoke City* and *Liverpool*.

Met *Cardiff City Supporters Trust* with **NH** on the 8th February in *Bridgend* to talk through how our *Supporter Director* is accepted at Board Level, they are hoping for something similar at *Cardiff City*. We both wished them luck !

Chaperoned the *Under 17 team* from *Oss in Holland* on the weekend 7th February, they undertook a two hour coaching session at *Fairwood* with *Swansea City* coaching staff. No match was possible as the Club team had pre-arranged matches.

Treasurers Report:

SMac reported an increase in membership subscriptions. We have outstanding payments to *Bravehearts* and *Compass Catering* for Room Hire. Outstanding amounts are due for book sales in the Club Shop.

TBM 127/08 Disability Issues:

IJ reported on progress on renewing Disabled season tickets with Free Carers which is ongoing. There have been a number of complaints to the Club an *Level Playing Field* due to the required request for information and the letters which have been sent out, the letters have caused some confusion and it is expected to continue for the next month or so. There had been an article in the *Evening Post* regarding

this topic which is about the need to give evidence of the need for a Free Carer. This has proved to be very time consuming, next year should prove to be a smoother operation as there will be more understanding of the requirements. Work has started on next year's policy which will include the new *PIP* scheme alongside the *DLA* which is being phased out along with other *Disability* payments as part of the ongoing welfare changes imposed by *HM Government*.

Attended an *Evidencing Disability Workshop at Pride Park, Derby* with *Tony Avo* and *Lucy Norman* which was extremely useful and was attended by *Swansea City, Arsenal, Ipswich Town, Wigan Athletic, Reading, Wolves, Nottingham Forest, Brighton and Derby County*.

TBM 169/13 Website Update.

DT submitted a report on website statistics for the month of January. The statistics clearly show an increasing number of visitors and visits to the *Trust* website month on month. The same can be said of the *Trust's* presence on social media, which is obviously linked to the media speculation concerning "investment" in the Club, but, also due to the increased efforts by the *Trust* in being more pro-active in its communications by utilising the communication channels at our disposal. It is interesting to note the large increase in how we have acquired more users to the website via "referral traffic" – this is mainly due to the *Trust* now highlighting almost every website update on the main *Swansea City Fans Forums*. The increase in website updates – covering a wide range of issues/topics – is also helping promote the *Trust* and its efforts to represent the fans. One final note, January saw over 53% of users using either a mobile or tablet device to view the site. The most five most popular pages viewed (with over 5,277 page views) in January were the *Q&A, Home Page, Board Minutes, Join the Trust* and *Trust facts and History*.

TBM 172/14 Membership Renewal 2014/15.

AL reported on increased paid up numbers to date. The breakdown of members is, *Under 16's - 60, Over 65 – 432, Adult – 641*. Total of paid up Standard Members – 1133.

Social Media Stats. 4,617 Followers on Twitter, 1,107 Likes on Facebook, 2,013 Members on Facebook Group.

There was no report available at the time of our monthly Board Meeting.

TBM 174/14 Expert Working Group.

DL submitted a written report of the sub-group on *Financial, Legal and Taxation Issues* on the 30th January at *Wembley Stadium*. The attendees included *The Football Association, Department of Culture, Media and Sport, HMRC, Supporters Direct, Football Supporters Federation, Football league and representatives from the Pompey Trust, Wrexham trust, Swansea City Supporters Trust and Manchester United Supporters Trust*. The first presentation was given by *Duncan Drasdo* of *MUST* which looked at whether the *Companies Act* needed to be amended in relation to *Football Clubs*. It was noted that the old *Rule 34* that prevented ownership of the *Football Ground* being moved away from the *Trading Company* had been abandoned in the 1980's when *Spurs* set up a *Holding Company* and subsequently floated. *MUST* are also keen for the *90% sweep up Company Law provision* to be excluded in relation to *Football Clubs (MUST lost their shareholding in Manchester United when the Glaziers bought Manchester United and utilised the 90% sweep up.) MUST* are also proposing new *Tax Reliefs* for those investing in *Football* based broadly on *EIS* rules. Further presentations were also given by *Andy Green* who owns *Rockpool Investment LLP* and specialises in football financial management and a presentation was given by *James Mathie* of *Supporters Direct*. There were further discussions on financial, tax and legal barriers and incentives to *Supporter ownership and involvement*.

PS attended an *EWG Meeting* on the 9th February at *Wembley Stadium* the outcome of the Meeting will be disclosed in a document due out in the Spring this year. An interesting aside was the discussion on an *Asset of Community Value (ACV)* of *Stadium ownership*, something which could be discussed further if the *Club* buy the *Liberty Stadium*. Another interesting part was that *Arsenal Trust* break down the *Club's Annual Accounts* for their members – we could do the same. **DL** will attend the next *EWG Meeting* on the 6th March at *Wembley Stadium*.

TBM 176/14 American Share Purchase.

PS had forwarded by e-mail to the *Trust Board* the address for tonight's *Forum Meeting* which will take place in the *Gower Suite* from 6.30pm.

There being no further business the Meeting closed at 6.05pm.

Next Board Meeting date to be confirmed.