

SWANSEA CITY SUPPORTERS TRUST

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Monday 12th November, 2018 at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea, commencing at 5.30pm.

Present:

Andy Godden (AG), Stuart McDonald (SMcD,) Cath Dyer (CD), Dave Dalton (DD), Roger Goodwin (RG), Secretary Nigel Hamer.(NH).

By Conference Call:

Lisa Clement (LS), Andrew McGlashan (AMcG), Rupert Thomas (RT)

Apologies:

Phil Sumbler (PS), Sian Davies (SD), David Little (DL), Andrew Cude (AC), Viv Brooks (VB), Tim Bull (TB), Barbara Cook (BC),

In the absence of **PS**, **AG** chaired the meeting.

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st October 2018 had previously been approved.

1. Matters Arising from the Minutes

2. Shareholding.

AMcG updated the meeting in respect of the on-going Legal issues with the current *Owners* and the selling Shareholders (**SMcD** was not present for this update).

3. Supporter Director's Report

SMcD reported that the *Supporters Trust* as we have done since the unveiling of the *World War One Plaque* at the *Liberty Stadium* in 2014, placed a wreath in a short *Remembrance Day Ceremony* on the 11th November.

The *Schools Initiative* project through specifically the work of *BM's Sian Davies* and *Roger Goodwin* continues to gather momentum with more activities utilising the *Liberty Stadium* facilities with the *Club* being particularly supportive and engaged.

The second of the *Club's Fan Focus Group* meetings on the subject of *Digital Focus* has been held with *Dave Dalton* attending on our behalf. In that same field the *Club* have been particularly active, and driven by *Chris Pearlman (COO)* and *Rebecca Edwards-Symmons (Head of Digital)*, have become the first *Club* in the *UK* to launch *in-app season tickets*.

The *Trust* page in the *Swans* matchday programme is now set up as a regular feature, and we will look to widen its subject matter as it develops.

The 2019/20 Season ticket packages will be announced shortly, and we have had input in the process as it has developed. There are always likely to be differences of opinion on the structure and prices set, and it is an area where we have made our views known for many years. WE do not always achieve levels we would like, but, feel that the constant discussions that we have regarding ticket prices does impact on final pricing, and the ongoing communication gives the *Club* an understanding of supporters views and concerns.

In recent conversations with *Graham Potter*, he has expressed his keenness to undertake another *Fans Forum*, and we are now liaising with the *Club* to arrange this in the *New Year*.

On football matters, we have been kept informed of the ongoing contract developments, and although there has been an inevitable impatience amongst the *Fanbase*, there has never really been any doubt about our crop of youngsters committing to new contracts.

4. Treasurer and Finance Sub Group Report

SMcD reported that Income received during the month amounted to £3,800 from Membership and Raffle monies received.

SMcD reported that there was nothing to report on the situation regarding the *Football Club* budget for the next two years, we are currently still at an impasse regarding access to full financial data of the *Club*, which is 'tied in' with the negotiations regarding the *Shareholder* situation.

5. IT Sub Group Report

DD summarised the Swans Trust website and social media stats for October 2018.

The total numbers of page views in October were 2,268 (compared to 4,017 in September). which is around 20% below the seasonal average for the site.

63% of visitors to the website came from UK while 31% were from the USA, the highest monthly ratio of visitors from the States since the Trust website statistics began being recorded..

AdSense income (from impressions and direct clicks to a displayed advert on our Trust web pages) has generated income of £97.81 since implementation on 13th February 2017. Estimated earnings for October are expected to be in the region of £4.85 (compared to £.44 in September).

The top 5 pages (in terms of page views) in October were:

1. Trust Homepage = 515 (22.71%)
2. Join the Trust = 326 (14.37%).
3. Matchday programme Page v. Reading =221 (9.74%)
4. Schools Initiative Update = 120 (5.29%)
5. What is the Swans Trust = 114 (5.03%).

Postings and links to relevant articles and content on the new Facebook Trust member's page continue with last month's topics focusing primarily on increasing our Membership and the October update to Members. The total number of Members to this page has reached last years figure of 241. The number of Members on our Public Facebook page has risen to 11,708. Twitter saw us increase to 7369 followers to the end of October

The total number of emails received and responded to in October via our @swanstrust.co.uk addresses were:
info@swanstrust.co.uk = 13 (compared to 19 in September)
communications@swanstrust.co.uk = 3 (compared to 7 in September)

A total of 77 members have joined (or re-joined) the Trust via our website facility during October (compared to 112 in September). Again this is a considerable increase for the same month last year.

Finally one e-mail was sent out to all current Trust Members to update them all on the Legal situation. Those Members without e-mail addresses were sent the latest update through the post (approximately 11). A total of 3 News articles were posted up on our Trust website during October..

6. Membership Sub Group Report

SD reported on current membership numbers which were 1284, a target by the end of October has been set at 1500. There are approximately 370 members from last year who haven't renewed, however there have been 370 new/returning members to date.

Activities completed to date included

- Fliers have been handed out and have proved to be quite productive, however there is still need for more Board Members on the ground to distribute fliers in areas away from the Pod.
- The article on the flyers 'what is the Swans Trust' has been put on the website.(English & Welsh).
- Current Members have been e-mailed thanking them for joining and asking to recruit family and friends.
- Members who haven't renewed have been e-mailed one final time reminding them to renew.
- 'non renewers' without e-mail addresses (37) have been contacted by phone. Phone numbers were not available for all of these and older members (>80 years old) and Juniors weren't contacted. Consequently 6 of the 12 contacted have now renewed.
- The decision has been made to not to produce a new glossy membership leaflet for this year, but, to use the Fliers and prepare a new leaflet, based on the Fliers, for the 2019/20 season.
- Contact has been made with established Supporters Groups in Wales and USA.
- The viability of a day/half day pop up in the Quadrant Swansea is being explored.

Short term activities/Incremental growth in Membership – actions remaining.

- An article in the *Evening Post* – ‘Introducing the Trust.
- Explore the viability of a presence in the Square in *Neath Town Centre*, also *Aberafan Shopping Centre*, *St. Elli Shopping Centre*, *Llanelli*.’ on a one off basis.

7. Community Sub Group Report

Disability Supporters Association

CD reported that the Club had received the *Annual Fan Experience Survey* from the *Premier League*, overall the *Club* had received a lot of positive feedback from Supporters. Improvements have already been made following some of the feedback including the *Catering Service* introduced to *Row J* which began during the *Nottingham Forest* fixture on the 19th September where *Catering Staff* began selling hot dogs. The trial proved hugely popular with *Disabled Supporters*. Other positives were the introduction of the *Changing Places* and *Matchday Experience* and facilities, but, areas to improve were increased parking and travelling to matches.

The *Club* and the *Community Trust* are working to promote and engage with the *INCLUSION PROJECT* which enables local sports groups to host and promote inclusive sports sessions. The *Club* understands that promoting and networking with *Supporters* and *Disabled Peoples Organisations* through the project that it provided an opportunity to promote and improve our existing facilities. The aim is to encourage *SCAFC* employees and supporters to volunteer with the project which should lead to greater disability awareness, and ensure the projects are sustainable for when the funding is reviewed next year.

Zeelo match transport – unfortunately at present these buses are not fully accessible. The coaches don't have wheelchair lifts, but, if Supporters are able to get on board with assistance with their wheelchairs able to fold up, the coaches will be able to accommodate them. Some *Disabled Supporters* have shown an interest in using this facility if accessibility improves. The *Disabled Supporters Association* are interested with working with *Zeelo* to achieve a solution.

The *Disabled Supporters Association* are holding a *Social Event* in the *Stadium* on the 5th December. The *Club* have withdrawn financial support for this event.

Schools' Initiative

SD reported that fifteen pupils from *Gowerton School* in *Swansea* visited the *Stadium* on the 27th September and undertook a tour of the facilities as an introduction to the *Challenge*. Pupils are now continuing with the *Challenge* supported by **RG** and the whole **WB** team. They are looking to complete the *Challenge* by *January 2019* when each *Group* will present their ideas to a panel which will include a *Trust Board* member and hopefully a player/

The *Club* has prepared an article about the *Club Ambassador's* visit to *Dwr-Y-Felin Comprehensive School, Neath* that has now been posted onto the *Club Website*. **SD** has had discussions with *Jonathan Wilsher (Head of Media and Marketing)* re: using some of the pupils' ideas on a matchday, in particular, face painting, probably in a home game after *Christmas*.

An updated article re the initiative has also been posted on the *Trust* website as part of the campaign to encourage more *Schools* to become involved with the intention of moving further west of *Swansea*.

Also, as part of the campaign, **SD** has had discussions with the *Welsh Baccalaureate Manager* for *Neath Port Talbot* and *Llangatwg Comprehensive School* in *Neath* re using the *Challenge* with their *Year 10* cohort (some 120 pupils) before the end of the *Christmas Term*. *Llangatwg Comprehensive School* will adopt the same model as *Dwr-Y-Felin Comprehensive School* as this worked very well in July. This involves **SD** visiting the *School* as the pupils prepare their work for the *Challenge* and taking part in the assessment of the pupils' presentations. A small group of pupils chosen by the assessment team will then visit the *Liberty Stadium* for a tour and a visit by the *Club Ambassadors* will be arranged to view the pupils' work and talk to the pupils about their ideas.

8. Comms/PR Report

AG reported that Programme articles submitted during October were:

- Ipswich Town: Focus on Schools Initiative and Trust Raffle.
- Blackburn Rovers: Focus on the Wall of Fame.
- Reading: Focus on Kick Racism Out Of Football events both in the Club and the Community within October, also expressed the Trust's view that football should be inclusive for all.

Generally within the *Programme* articles we've tried to be a toe line between commenting on *Club* and *Trust* matters, often praising *Graham Potter's* work to date and also the progress of the youngsters, as noted by the recent *Wales* callups of a number of the *Playing Squad*.

The *Comms Group* are currently preparing a *Statement to Members* announcing the upcoming *Mediation* meeting on the 29th/30th *November* (pending outstanding documents from the *Majority Shareholders* and *Selling Shareholders Legal* representatives) and the intention to hold a *Members Consultation* once that is complete to vote on the relevant options available.

As discussed via e-mail with the *Trust Board*, the services of *Kevin Rye* as our *PR Consultant* have been cancelled as the *Board* feel we have sufficient expertise within the wider *Board* to perform this function without financial impact to the *Trust*.

9. Shareholding

AMcG had submitted an update on the current position regarding *Mediation*. (*SMcD* was not present for the report).

10. Governance

AC had informed the Board that he and **TB** would review the *Trust Governance* documents as soon as possible.

11. Football Supporters Federation.

DL had attended the *FSF EFL Fans Group Meeting* on the 29th October at the Wesley Hotel, London.

Attending were:

Brentford Independent Association of Supporters, Barnsley Supporters Trust, Supporters Direct, FSF, Pompey Independent Supporters Association, Sky Blues Trust, Gills Independent Supporters Club, The Railwaymen, Swans Trust, QPR 1st Supporters Trust, Mariners Trust, Stevenage Supporters Association, Stoke City Supporters Trust, Colchester United Supporters Association, Port Vale Supporters Club, Bradford City Supporters Trust, Blackpool Whites, Vikings Supporters Co-operative, Association of Millwall Supporters, Blues Trust, Exeter City Supporters Trust, Charlton Athletic Supporters Trust, Leeds United Supporters Trust, Middlesbrough Fans Forum, Shrewsbury Town Supporters Parliament, Hull City Supporters Trust, Millwall Supporters Club, Dons Supporters Trust, Blackpool Supporters Trust.

Supporters Direct and the *Football Supporters Association* will be merging into one body.

Agenda Items for the meeting were:

- *New single organization & representation on National Council*
- *Stand Up For Choice (FSF update).*
- *Weather postponement.*
- *Supporter Liaison Officers.*
- *Broadcast matters/Follow/International streaming.*
- *Concessionary ticketing.*
- *Supporter engagement.*
- *Watching Football Is Not A Crime !*
- **Full notes from the meeting can be found on our website.**
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12. Fans Focus Group Digital Meeting

DD attended the event as a Trust Board Member, the following points were discussed:

- *Under 23's, Under 18's and Ladies fixtures appearing on the App and on the fixtures carousel as a combined effort on swanseacity.com. Drop down effort on the App by category and a combined option.*
- *Add fixtures to calendar functionality.*
- *Match Centre on website – ask the team to add images and embed tweets on the minute by minute commentary tab like Twitter.*
- *Match Centre on app – explore different options outside of automated Opta feed.*
- *WhatsApp for business – can it add value for us.*
- *Fifa Tournaments – can we do more at the Stadium.*
- *Can we get a Club License for Pro-Evolution Soccer.*
- *Monitor social channels for volume of content and ensuring important content gets distributed across all channels.*
- *Birthday Messages on the big screen – can we offer a paid for option of £5 per message at half time.*
- *Can we do a weekly email summarizing the big news stories regards to football news and Club news.*
- *Welsh version of the website.*
- *Esports – what are we looking at doing in the future.*
- *Bringing the fan into contentFlipping the content on its head at times – explore options for players to interview fans on why they became fans of the Club. Look at the fan content we can create in terms of vlogs and also fans memories on past visits/fixtures.*
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There will be a follow up to the discussions when the next meeting is held in February 2019.

13. AoB

NH reminded the *Board Members* that the *AGM* has to be held before the end of *January 2019*.

SMcD will submit the Accounts to the Auditors before the end of November.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 7.10pm.

Next Board Meeting Monday 3rd December 2018 at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea at 5.30pm.