

SWANSEA CITY SUPPORTERS TRUST

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Monday, 11th March 2019 at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea, commencing at 5.30pm.

Present: Phil Sumbler (*PS*) (*Chair*), Andrew Cude (*AC*), Andy Godden (*AG*), Stuart McDonald (*SMcD*), Sian Davies (*SD*), Roger Goodwin (*RG*), Dave Dalton (*DD*), Viv Brooks (*VB*)

By Conference Call: Andrew McGlashan (*AMcG*), Lisa Clement (*LC*), Rupert Thomas (*RT*)

Apologies:

Tim Bull (*TB*), Cath Dyer (*CD*), Nigel Hamer (*NH*), Barbara Cook (*BC*)

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th February 2019 had been circulated.

1. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes

2. Chairman's Report

Due to the overlap between this agenda item and Agenda Item 8 it was agreed to combine these agenda items and discuss under Agenda Item 8

3. Supporter Director's Report

The SD, along with other Trust board officials, has been involved in discussions regarding the appointment of a new Club Chairman, and we now await an announcement from the Club.

There have been interesting discussions regarding the potential merger between the Ospreys and the Scarlets, and the impact that might have on the Club's financial operation of the Liberty Stadium. Thankfully, that eventuality is something that is not going to happen in the short term, although it is something to be aware of for the future.

The ticket prices for the Manchester City FA Cup Quarter final have been set after discussions with the Trust, and whilst there has been an inevitable increase from the previous rounds, the quality of opposition and stage of the competition have obviously played a part. It is pleasing that the Club has continued with the policy employed in earlier rounds of allocating a number of seats to local junior football clubs.

Regarding the Wall of Fame, our successful FA Cup run has made scheduling of the event difficult, but it is hoped that by our April meeting there will be some certainty regarding a date, which is likely to be at the end of the season.

4. Treasurer and Finance Sub Group Report

SMcD gave an update on the Trust's current financial position.

SMcD reported that the Finance Sub-Group continue to have access to the Club monthly Management Accounts which are reasonably detailed, and which, as far as we are able to scrutinise, give no evidence that the Club is currently being mismanaged. There is no doubt that significant cuts and savings needed to be made following relegation. We continue to be at odds with the Club regarding the amount of details that they are prepared to provide to us so that we can make a judgement on the forecasts for the next two years and our opinion and suggestions for any alternative or additional cuts. This is the impasse that we are at, which is now tied in to the Shareholder negotiations.

5. Membership Sub Group Report

SD reported on current membership numbers which were 1586 against a total of 1278 for 2107/18. This was an increase of 90 since the last Board Meeting (1496).

Update since last Meeting.

There were only 2 BM's (SD and TB) at the Pod for the *Millwall* fixture. A request on Social Media for volunteers to distribute membership flyers before the game was unsuccessful. At one stage it looked as if the Pod for the *FA Cup* fixture against *Brentford* would be closed, **VB** stepped in at last minute as **DD** was ill. There was a discussion around how to raise the Trust's profile and increase the Trust's presence around the ground on matchdays. The Membership group will explore number of different options including an increased use of social media (as below) and targeting certain games, and areas of the stadium, during the season for brochure distribution.

Stateside Jacks.

Since the last meeting **DD** has been in preliminary discussions with *Jonathan Notman* from the *Stateside Jacks Supporters Group* about how to encourage more of their members to also become full members of the *Trust*. They currently have around 1300 active members.

The *Trust Board* were also provided with a copy of a letter the *Stateside Jacks Supporters Group* had sent to *Chris Pearlman (COO)* asking for a meeting with the *Club* owners. We were subsequently advised the meeting had taken place but most of what was discussed was confidential. Neither **DD** nor the *Trust* were informed of the meeting until afterwards.

Since that meeting **DD** and **AG** had an informal *WhatsApp* conference call with *Marc Padro* from the *Stateside Jacks Supporters Group* in an effort to begin working on how to forge closer working relationships between both parties. Overall this was seen as a positive step forward by both groups and further discussions and possibly an online Q&A are being considered in the near future.

Carried forward from the last Board Meeting for discussion.

The last meeting of the Membership Sub-Group (14th January) concentrated on strategies to increase membership numbers for the 2019/20 season. Following discussion and review of demographic data, the Sub-Group propose the following actions for discussion by the full Board.

- Revisit the website profile and update content re: membership. *In process*
- Improve the use of Social media to raise the profile of the trust. We have some 11,500 'general' Facebook members (in addition to those on the Members Only Facebook page) and about 8000 Twitter followers. *In process*
- Tap into local and overseas Supporter groups to encourage them to join the Trust – *as above*
- Explore the possibility of some sort of joint membership with the Travel Club. *The Travel Club now distributes Trust flyers to those purchasing travel tickets*
- Give one year year's free Junior membership to those young people who have complete the Trust's Welsh Baccalaureate Challenge. *In process*
- Expand the Age range of Junior membership from 16 to 18. *Agreed.*
- Review the membership pricing structure for 2019/20 - £5 Adults and Seniors, £1 Junior members. *Membership fees for the 2019/20 season were agreed – Junior members (up to 16) £2, Junior members (16-18) £2, with voting rights, Adults (19-59) £10, Seniors (60 and over) £5.*
- Explore the concept of a Junior Trust with one co-opted Junior Member to attend full Board meetings (for restricted agenda items?) – *remains under discussion*

It was also agreed that a budget of £5000 be allocated to the Membership Group and that, in future, the percentage change in membership numbers be reported rather than number of members.

6. Website and Social Media Report

DD summarised the Swans Trust website and social media stats for February 2019.

The total number of page views in February was 17921 (compared to 2937 in January) which is the second highest number of monthly page reviews since the website was relaunched in 2014. Over half of these views came directly from links we had placed on our Social Media platforms (*Twitter, Facebook and Instagram*). 84% of visitors to the website came from the UK, while 14% were from the USA.

AdSense income (from impressions and direct clicks to a displayed advert on our Trust web pages) has generated income of £105.63 since implementation on 13th February 2017. Estimated earnings for February are expected to be in the region of £8.50 (compared to £1.77 in January).

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

1. Trust Statement following closure of transfer window = 3838 (21.42%)
2. Trust Statement on Huw Jenkins Resignation = 3229 (18.02%)
3. Trust Response to Press article = 3192 (17.81%)
4. Trust Homepage = 1898 (10.59%)
5. Join the Trust = 1826 (10.19%)

Postings and links to relevant articles and content on the Facebook pages continue with February's topics focusing primarily on the closing of the *Transfer Window*, *Huw Jenkins' resignation* and the article in the *Daily Mail*. There was also debate involving the meeting that the *Stateside Jacks* had with representatives of the *Club owners* early in February. The number of members on our public *Facebook page* has dropped slightly to 11587, the total number of members on our *Trust members Facebook page* has increased to 264. *Twitter* saw us increase to 8000 followers for the first time by the end of February. The total number of impressions made as a result of our *Tweets* in February exceeded 80,000 of which over 12,000 were active engagements which is by far and away our highest interaction since we created our *Twitter* account 10 years ago.

The total number of emails received and responded to in February via our @swanstrust.co.uk addresses were:

info@swanstrust.co.uk = 42 (compared to 28 in January)
communications@swanstrust.co.uk = 3 (compared to 2 in January)

A total of 191 members have joined (or re-joined) the Trust via our website facility during February (compared to 17 in January).

2 emails were sent out to all current Trust members during early February while 6 news articles were posted up on our Trust website.

7. Schools' Initiative Report

SD reported that a small group of pupils, from *Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School, Neath* offered face painting in the *Family Stand* before the *FA Cup* game with *Brentford*. The pupils worked in two groups (boys and girls) and raised £125 in 75 minutes for their *School Charities*, such as *Ty Hafan* and *Great Ormond Street Childrens Hospital*, charging £1 per time that took some doing! The pupils were a credit to the *School* and the *Trust* and it was very rewarding to see an idea developed during the *Challenge* actually being put into practice. Our thanks to the *Club* which has been very supportive throughout this venture. *Dyffryn Taf School, Whitland* will be the first *Carmarthenshire School* to undertake the *Challenge* when a group of pupils visit the *Stadium* in May. We hope to introduce it to them in a *Hospitality Box* before giving them a tour of the *Stadium*. Back in school they will complete the *Challenge* over two days in early June with *Trust* representatives in attendance for part of the time.

8. Shareholding and Mediation Report

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).

9. Disabled Supporters Association

CD reported for *Season Ticket* renewals, the *Club* have introduced an *Internal Declaration Form* for a members of the *Equality Team* to sign stating that they have seen proof of awards being paid into their *Bank Accounts*. This applies to awards where a yearly update statement is unavailable, this isn't available to *PIP* or *DLA* as the mobility component is deducted for those on the *Motability Scheme*.

The *Community Trust* are supporting *ASD Info Wales* to host *Wales' first national Autism Conference*. This is being held at the *Liberty Stadium* on the 3rd April, 2019, with the *Swans Disabled Supporters Association* attending the event to promote ourselves and the *Club* facilities.

The *Club* and the *DSA* are supporting *Level Playing Fields' Weeks of Action March 2nd-17th 2019*, *Cara Readle* was featured on the big screen prior to the *Bolton* fixture with *Richard Haselgrove* featured in the *Jack Magazine*. *Players* from both teams wore *Level Playing Field T-shirts* during the warm up, and *LPF Ambassador, Morgan Parry* attended the game.

The *DSA* are holding a *Social event* on Tuesday March 29th at the *Liberty Stadium* for our *Disabled Members* and guests. We will be presenting our '*unsung hero award*' during the event. *LPF fans liaison officer, Liam Bird* will be joining us for the evening.

The *DSA* are very pleased to welcome *Budget Carpets* as a *Sponsor*, *David Roberts* met with us at our recent monthly meeting and we look forward to working together.

The *Club* and *Disabled Supporters Association* meet monthly to discuss any issues, projects and updates, and this forms an excellent working relationship.

10. Governance

It was agreed that this review is now urgent and needs to be completed prior to the new Trust membership year. **AC, BC** and **TB** to take this forward.

AoB

TB, in conjunction with **NH**, to take forward the preparation of the Secretary's job description and advert as a matter of urgency.

CD had previously circulated updates on the Awards Dinner

It was agreed to donate some Trust books to the Alzheimer's Society as part of their 'Football Memories' project

VB to provide an update on the Blue Plaque in the next meeting

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8.05pm

Next Board Meeting Monday 8th April 2019 at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea at 5.30pm.