

SWANSEA CITY SUPPORTERS TRUST

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Monday, 8th April 2019 at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea, commencing at 5.30pm.

Present: Phil Sumbler (*PS*) (*Chair*), Andrew Cude (*AC*), Stuart McDonald (*SMcD*), Sian Davies (*SD*), Roger Goodwin (*RG*), Dave Dalton (*DD*), Viv Brooks (*VB*) Cath Dyer (*CD*), Barbara Cook (*BC*)

By Conference Call: Andrew McGlashan (*AMcG*),

Apologies:

Tim Bull (*TB*), Andy Godden (*AG*), Nigel Hamer (*NH*), Lisa Clement (*LC*), Rupert Thomas (*RT*), Dai Little (*DL*)

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th March 2019 had been circulated.

Prior to the meeting the Board met with the new Club Chairman, Trevor Birch, for a brief introductory discussion.

1. Matters Arising from the Minutes

VB gave an update on the position re the Blue Plaque. The Board agreed a tripartite agreement with the Club and Swansea Council and a contribution towards the cost.

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

This last month has seen the focus being very much on the appointment and arrival of our new Chairman, Trevor Birch. I have met with him several times in my capacity as SD. Trevor brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the role, and the expectation is that he will be open and communicative with supporters, having already indicated his desire to hold a fans forum as soon as is practicable. It is hoped that he will bring some clarity regarding much of the uncertainty that has surrounded the Club in recent months, and his experience of dealing with player contracts and agents will hopefully prove invaluable.

The Trust page in the Swans matchday programme is now set up as a regular feature since its reintroduction in September, and it is hoped that we can build on it going in to next season, as we look to widen our ways of reaching out to supporters.

4. Treasurer and Finance Sub Group Report

S McD gave an update on the Trust's current financial position, and amongst the movements during the month, there was an influx of memberships (approximately £3000) and the payment of the annual audit fee.

SMcD reported that the Finance Sub-Group continue to have access to the Club monthly Management Accounts which are reasonably detailed, and are in line with budget. The appointment of a new Chairman, Trevor Birch, has already seen measures being introduced to implement cost savings, which are a necessity for being a Championship club. It is hoped that the undoubted knowledge and experience that Trevor Birch brings to the table will drive this forward in a structured and protective way

5. Membership Sub Group Report

SD reported on current membership numbers which showed a 0.4% increase since the last meeting

The group is currently focusing on

- (i) developing a new membership brochure. Two quotes for a full colour glossy leaflet have been received and one chosen.
- (ii) developing an on-line system whereby pupils completing the Welsh Bac Challenge can apply for free membership. DD is in discussions with Duncan Thomas re the system and costs.

6. Website and Social Media Report

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

The total numbers of page views in March were 3387 (compared to 17921 in February) which is slightly above the seasonal average. Over half of these views came directly from links we had placed on our social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram). 78% of visitors to the website came from UK while 18% were from the USA.

AdSense income (from impressions and direct clicks to a displayed advert on our Trust web pages) has generated income of £113.92 since implementation on 13th February 2017. Estimated earnings for March are expected to be in the region of £2.20 (compared to £8.29 in February)

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

1. New Chairman Appointment = 1577 (46.56%)
2. Trust Homepage = 477 (14.08%)
3. Trust Response to Press Article = 110 (3.25%)
4. Welsh Baccalaureate Project Goes Live = 100 (2.95%)
5. Trust News = 94 (2.78%)

Postings and links to relevant articles and content on the members Facebook pages continue with March's topics focusing primarily on the appointment of Trevor Birch as the new Chairman of the club and the ongoing shareholding issue.

The total number of members to our Trust members Facebook page has increased to 266 by the end of March. The number of members on our public Facebook page has picked up again to 11965.

Twitter saw us continue to increase followers to 8071 by the end of March with impressions and engagements remaining high following February's exceptional figures.

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

info@swanstrust.co.uk = 19 (compared to 42 in February)

communications@swanstrust.co.uk = 2 (compared to 3 in February)

A total of 4 members have joined (or re-joined) the Trust via the website facility during March (compared to 191 in February).

1 email was sent out to all current Trust members during March while 2 news articles were posted up on our Trust website during the month.

7. Schools' Initiative Report

SD reported that arrangements for a group of pupils from Dyffryn Taf School, in Whitland, to undertake the challenge in May/June have been finalised. They will begin the Challenge by visiting the stadium on 16th May. **RG** and **SD** recently attended a meeting of the Carmarthenshire Welsh Baccalaureate Co-ordinators group to introduce them to the Challenge, which was very positively received. A number of schools have indicated that they would like to use the Challenge next year.

Dwr y Felin school intend using the Challenge again this year with a full cohort, some 230 pupils.

Feedback re the idea of free membership of the Trust for all pupils undertaking the Challenge has been very positive. Discussions are underway in the Membership group as to the mechanics of this.

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

Swansea City remains committed to creating a Dementia – Friendly football club. This includes inviting employees to attend Dementia Champion sessions, to roll out training between other departments within the club. The club intends to hold a football memories session during Dementia Action Week, (week commencing May 20th)

The Community Trust supported ASD info Wales who hosted Wales' first national Autism Conference at the Liberty on the 3rd April. The DSA had a table in the room to promote themselves and the club facilities.

Through investment from the Premier League and the BT Disability Fund, funding has been secured to support the installation of a mobile sensory room at the Liberty Stadium and the club is pleased to announce that they have been successful in securing funding for further sensory equipment. The process is supported and guided by the Shippey Campaign, with the Lord's Travellers and Experia facilitating the fit-out of the space. The club aims to launch a new pop-up sensory space available for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) supporters and their families to further enhance the matchday experience.

The DSA is very pleased that the club will now be providing a pop-up sensory room having highlighted the requirement for this service at the stadium and instigated talks with the club from early 2017. "A sensory room is a calming space, which can help people who get frustrated and anxious in understanding their surroundings. The sensory room is designed to be a relaxing, calming, quiet space, with various stimuli which can help a person relax and de-escalate." "The sensory room will allow the inclusion of families with a member who has ASD to enjoy football as a shared activity and be a part of the Jack Army." "We look forward to continuing to work with the club, donating equipment on behalf of the DSA and helping promote the sensory room." "Ahead of the launch of this new service, the Swans would like to invite ASD supporters and their families to a consultation meeting to discuss the sensory room proposal, and to provide advice and feedback.

The DSA were proud to donate, on behalf of their members and sponsor, Budget Carpets, a wheelchair to the club for the use by home and away supporters should they need it. The wheelchair was presented to the DAO at the club during the Brentford match on 2/4/19.

A social evening was held by the DSA on 19th March, where our guests were Lee Trundle, Leon Britton and Nathan Dyer. The host for the evening was Kev Johns. Over 90 of our DSA members, plus guests attended, and we were joined by the DAO at the club, Mark Phillips, and Liam Bird of Level Playing Fields. A great evening was enjoyed by everyone.

As part of the Level Playing Fields Weeks' of Action the DSA approached Chris Pearlman at the club re the possibility of some of our members having the opportunity of a tour around Fairwood training facilities, and this was arranged for Thursday 28th March. 23 of our DSA members attended, along with 4 of the DSA committee. Huw Lake gave us a very informative tour of the facilities, where we also watched the first team training. We had a long discussion with Suzan and Mike Eames, in their kit room, who very kindly gave a shirt to every attendee. Leon Britton and Alan Tate also came along and had a chat with our members. At the end of the tour, members of the first team plus head coach, Graham Potter, joined us for autographs and photos. Everybody had a really enjoyable time. Thank you to the club for helping us with this event.

PS thanked **CD** and the DSA for their excellent work.

10. Governance

TB has started some work on this. It was agreed that the aim is to complete a draft of the documents by the May meeting as the work needs to be completed prior to the new Trust membership year.

11. Awards Dinner Update

CD had provided an update prior to the meeting following the last Awards Dinner committee meeting. The Club is leading the event with the EFRC and the Trust members of the Awards Dinner committee. Tickets are now on general sale.

12. Secretary Post.

TB had requested clarification as to whether or not this was a paid post. The Board agreed that it is a voluntary role and is not paid. **AC** has included information in the Stoke matchday programme re the Board's quest for a new Secretary. Anyone expressing an interest should contact the Trust for further information.

13. Wall of Fame

The remaining plaques will be unveiled on 27th April prior to the game against Hull. **VB** explained that the cost of hospitality has been agreed and will be shared equally between the Trust and the Club.

AoB

DD raised the issue of a monthly update to members. There was a discussion around the content.

CD raised the issue of disabled members being charged £50 to prove that they need a PA with them despite being in receipt of PIPs/ESAs. This will be put on the agenda for discussion in the next meeting

DL attended the March meeting of the EFL Network on behalf of the Trust. Other Supporters' Trusts represented included: Gillingham, Hull, Aston Villa, Grimsby, Stoke, Colchester, Port Vale, Norwich, Bradford City, Tranmere Rovers, Exeter, Bolton, Hull, Nottingham Forest, Portsmouth, Leeds, Middlesbrough, Coventry, Millwall, MK Dons and Blackpool. Items discussed included an update on the work being done to blend and merge Supporters' Direct and The Football Supporters' Federation, the format of EFL Network meetings, an update on cross network communication between the Premier League and National League Networks, flexible football rail tickets, governance/clubs in crisis, pitch incursions and structured dialogue.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 7.40pm

Next Board Meeting Monday 13th May 2019 at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea at 5.30pm.