

SWANSEA CITY SUPPORTERS TRUST

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Monday, 10th June 2019 at the Liberty Stadium, Swansea, commencing at 5.30pm.

Present: Andy Godden (AG) (*Chair*), Stuart McDonald (SMcD), Roger Goodwin (RG), Dave Dalton (DD), Cath Dyer (CD), Barbara Cook (BC), Viv Brooks (VB), Nigel Hamer (NH).

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

Apologies:

Phil Sumbler (PS), Sian Davies (SD), Tim Bull (TB), Andrew Cude (AC).

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 13th May 2019 had been circulated and approved..

1. Matters arising from the Minutes

As per Agenda.

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

SMcD reported that there was quite some upheaval following the end of the season with the *Club* losing *Manager Graham Potter* and his management team. His departure to *Brighton* was a significant blow, despite the best efforts of the *Club* to retain his services. I had several meetings with *Trevor Birch* on the matter, and was fully consulted and supportive of the attempts to keep *Graham* and his management team at the *Club*, but it was not to be. The financial lure of the *Premier League* is difficult to resist.

And so to the search for a new *Manager/Coach*, and in conjunction with that, the structure of his support team. We have been fully briefed on the recruitment process being followed, and kept up to date with the candidate selection criteria as it has unfolded, and the subsequent appointment of *Steve Cooper*. A newcomer to the world of club football management, but one that follows a path that we have successfully trodden in the past. We wish *Steve* every success, and look forward to seeing the composition of his support team. The departure of *Graham Potter* and his staff also gives the *Club* the opportunity to restructure the football operations department, something that *Trevor Birch* is very keen to undertake.

The long drawn out saga of *Daniel James'* transfer to *Manchester United* is finally drawing to a close, a successfully negotiated deal that provided a timely boost to the *Club* finances. It is hoped that further potential departures (of high earners) can contribute to improving financial stability for us. The restructuring process, led by *Trevor Birch*, has made significant inroads into the *Club's* cost base, a necessity as we learn to live with the financial reality of being a *Championship* club.

The new Stadium caterers, *Sodexo*, are now in place, and it is hoped that, with the investment that they are making in the *EPOS* system and other equipment, supporters will see both improved service levels and quality of fare.

It was hoped to have held a *Fans Forum* following the season's end but, the challenges and priorities facing *Trevor Birch* have caused an inevitable delay in that. It is now hoped to hold a *Forum* in mid July, where there will also be the opportunity for supporters to meet our new *Head Coach*.

The replacement of the *Liberty Stadium* pitch is now well under way and on target for readiness for our pre-season friendly on the 27th July. This will be the first complete replacement since the *Stadium* opening in 2005. There are regular 'partial' replacements during the close season, but this has been the first full replacement.

4. Treasurer and Finance Sub Group Report

SMcD gave an update on the Trust's current financial position, and there was only one significant outgoing during the month, payment of the Wall of Fame plaques.

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. Our new *Chairman, Trevor Birch*, continues to lead the drive to reduce our operational costs, along with the removal of the high earners.

5. Membership Sub Group Report

SD reported on current membership numbers of 1,599 against total membership for 2017/18 of 1,278.

The focus of the membership group has been twofold this month.

1. The development of an on-line system, whereby pupils completing the *Welsh Baccaulaureate Challenge* can apply for free membership, continues with modification being made to try to make the site more secure. The estimated completion date of 1st July remains.
2. The membership form has been edited to include the new membership pricing structure and is now ready for distribution.
3. The following prices have been obtained from *Apex Mailing* for the planned Membership Renewals and raffle tickets mailing with a proposed mail out date of Thursday, 25th July (prices based on 1550 individual mailings). Estimated total costs (VAT to be added where applicable), £1534.45

6. Website and Social Media Report

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

The total numbers of page views in May were 4,192 (compared to 1,619 in April) which is slightly above the seasonal average. 40% of these views came directly from links we had placed on our social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram). 76% of visitors to the website came from UK while 20% were from the USA).

AdSense income (from impressions and direct clicks to a displayed advert on our Trust web pages) has generated income of £116.41 since implementation on 13th February 2017. Estimated earnings for May are expected to be in the region of £2.00 (compared to £0.80 in April).

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

1. Trust Statement on departure of Graham Potter = 2308 (55.06%)
2. Trust Home Page = 528 (12.60%)
3. Forthcoming Trust Board Elections = 264 (5.30%)
4. Join the Trust = 95 (2.27%)
5. History of Swansea City = 94 (2.24%)

Postings and links to relevant articles and content on the members Facebook pages continue with May's topics focusing almost entirely on the impending and eventual departure of Graham Potter to Brighton and subsequent speculation on who would come in as his replacement.

The total number of members to our Trust members Facebook page is increased to 266 by the end of May. The number of members on our public Facebook page has now gone over 12,000 for the first time.

Twitter saw us continue to increase followers to 8,140 by the end of May with impressions and engagements remaining high.

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

info@swanstrust.co.uk = 15 (compared to 3 in April)

communications@swanstrust.co.uk = 0 (compared to 0 in April)

A total of 4 members joined (or re-joined) the Trust via the website facility during May (compared to 1 in April). An update to Members e-mail was sent out to all current Trust Members during May together with the Trust's Statement on the Departure of Graham Potter while 2 other news articles were posted up on our Trust website during the month.

7. Schools' Initiative Report

RG reported that *Dwr-y-Felin School* are about to begin the *Challenge* with their new *Year 10* group ,about 230 pupils. It is good to see schools now repeating the *Challenge* *Dyffryn Taf School, in Whitland*, will complete the *Challenge* on the 11th June, **RG** will be in attendance at *Whitland*. Many thanks to **VB** for volunteering to attend in support, although this turned out to be not necessary as **SMcD** waved his magic wand and arranged for *Lee Trundle* to attend. Thanks to **SMcD**. By the end of this term approximately 700 14-16 year old pupils will have been introduced to the *Trust*, and the history of the *Club* back beyond *Petty*, by the *WB Challenge*.

Work continues on the mechanism to allow those pupils completing the *Challenge* to apply for and enjoy a year's free membership of the *Trust*.

With respect to future launches, looking forward , it seems that we can handle groups of up to 40 on any given day – rotating between a session in a *Hospitality Box* and the *Stadium* tour.

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). Currently the sub-group are involved in setting out the Consultation Document which should be completed mid July.

9. Disabled Supporters Association

CD reported that a specification on *Sensory Space Funding* has been drawn up by the *Club*, the *DSA* have recommended some actions. It has now been sent to various Companies to provide quotations.

The *DSA* highlighted that issues with *Row J Signage* since its introduction. The *Club* will continue to monitor and liaise with both supporters and stewards and will look to review during the coming season. The signage was only installed at the end of last season, and a trial period has not yet been achieved.

Season Ticket Renewals/relocations, this has now taken place with only a handful of supporters with information outstanding. The *Ticket Office* have completed all move requests with priority given to accessibility requests.

Trevor Birch, the *DSA* recently met with him who attended one of our Committee meetings. He also met with some of our *DSA* members, who were pleased that he was able to present them with a signed ball that they had won during a raffle. We look forward to working further with him.

Coffee Evening Tuesday, 25th June 6pm, the *DSA* are holding a coffee evening for current and new members to enjoy a cuppa, cake and a chat with our *DSA* Committee. Please come and join us.

10. Governance

This group has reformed with **AC** and **BC** being joined by **AG** and **CD**. It is hoped that some progress will be made by the July meeting especially as the sub-group members are all up for re-election, so the work needs to be completed prior to the new *Trust* membership year.

12. Secretary Post.

NH reported that arrangements along with **SMcD** had been made to meet with one of the applicants for an informal chat to discuss the role of Secretary. **NH** offered the continued use of the *Registered Office* address going forward in the event of an alternative not being sorted in time.

13. Wall of Fame.

VB to liaise with the firm who supplied and fitted the plaques as there are a few errors on the plaques.

AoB

AC raised on behalf of the late *Terry Coles* the previous promise of a *Plaque* to be placed at the *Vetch Field*. **SMcD** agreed to take this forward with the *Club*.

TB had produced a paper on *Governance Review and Reflections of a Newly Elected Trust Board member based on his experiences to date*.

Due to the lateness of this being seen by Board Members, this could be discussed further at the next Board meeting.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 7.25pm

Next Board Meeting Monday 15th July 2019, from 5.30pm, venue to be announced..

