

SWANSEA CITY SUPPORTERS TRUST

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Monday, 15th July 2019 at the Landore Club, Swansea, commencing at 5.30pm.

Present: Phil Sumbler (*PS*) (Chair), Andy Godden (*AG*), Stuart McDonald (*SMcD*), Andrew Cude (*AC*), Dave Dalton (*DD*), Sian Davies (*SD*), Cath Dyer (*CD*), Barbara Cook (*BC*), Viv Brooks (*VB*), Tim Bull (*TB*), Mike Bastin (Secretary), Jonathan Haydn Williams (*Trust Legal Advisor*).

Apologies:

Nigel Hamer (*NH*), Lisa Clement (*LC*), Rupert Thomas (*RT*), Dai Little (*DL*), Andrew McGlashan (*AMcG*), Roger Goodwin (*RG*).

1. Introduction/ Matters arising from the Minutes

SMcD welcomed new Trust Secretary, Mike Bastin, to the Board. No issues raised and no actions outstanding from the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th June 2019.

2. Chairman's Report

Due to the Chairman's arrival being delayed, elements of his report were covered off within subsequent agenda items.

3. Supporter Director's Report

SMcD reported following the appointment of *Steve Cooper* as Head Coach, *Mike Marsh* as his Assistant and *Martyn Margetson* as Goalkeeping Coach, the Club are continuing the process of recruiting the team to support *Steve* in football operations. The panel headed by *Trevor Birch* are now focusing on a Head of Recruitment and other football related staff. This has been a process that has been conducted in a thoroughly professional manner, and I have been kept updated throughout this restructuring process.

There are also ongoing negotiations regarding both incomings and outgoings of players, as *Steve* looks to build his own squad, and there are likely to be several movements before the transfer window closes. The transition though, is not helped by the difficulty in moving on high earning individuals, that is a millstone around the *Club's* neck that they are desperately trying to remove.

The Club arranged a *Fans Forum* for mid-July, with the panel comprising *Trevor Birch*, *Steve Cooper* and *Leon Britton*. It was held somewhat later than *Trevor* originally intended, but that was understandable in the light of the priority of recruiting a new Head Coach and support team. There was an openness and willingness to engage by the panel members, covering a range of both football and non-football matters, and that openness led to some healthy discussion, much appreciated by those in attendance.

I attended a *Club Board* meeting at the end of June, which provided an encouraging update in respect of the *Club* finances, with *Trevor Birch* and his team having undertaken a restructuring and rationalisation of the business, one which was undoubtedly necessary as we come to terms with the revenues available to us as a Championship club.

Season ticket sales are down approximately 3000 on the 2018-19 figure. This should not have been a surprise to anybody, as the previous year's figure would have been skewed due to 2018-19 having been sold when there was still an expectation that we would start 2019-20 in the Premier League. I am sure we are all aware that losing our Premier League status would also result in us losing a significant number of 'fringe' fans.

It was pleasing to see that at the recent Stadium Events and Hospitality Awards annual dinner (which covers all Clubs, including Premier League), the Swans won the top award, for '*Best Overall Matchday Hospitality*'.

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 to our Legal Advisers.

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, and this will be critical as the Club looks to achieve financial stability as we face up to life in the Championship.

5. Membership Sub Group Report

SD reported on current membership numbers of 1,599 against total membership for 2017/18 of 1,272.

We did reach 1,600 but, sadly, one of our members passed away. A message of condolence, sent on behalf of the Trust, was very much appreciated by the family.

On-line membership has been rolled over to the new 2019/20 membership year. All applications since 10th June have gone into this year, 2019/20. Current members are 13. 16 Membership queries have also been dealt with. The majority of these were change of address requests.

The development of the on-line system, whereby pupils completing the *Welsh Baccaalaureate Challenge* can apply for free membership, has been completed and is now live. The aim is to test it before the end of the current school year.

Work continues on the membership packs. Both Welsh and English membership forms with the new pricing structure are ready for distribution, as are the raffle tickets. 25th July has been earmarked as the latest date for posting as the Draw for the raffle will take place before the home game against Nottingham Forest on the 14th September.

6. Website and Social Media Report

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

The total numbers of page views in June were 2,662 (compared to 4,192 in May) which is slightly above the seasonal average. 48% of these views came directly from links we had placed on our social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram). 68% of visitors to the website came from UK while 30% were from the USA).

AdSense income (from impressions and direct clicks to a displayed advert on our Trust web pages) has generated income of £119.66 since implementation on 13th February 2017. Estimated earnings for June are expected to be in the region of £2.00 (compared to £2.40 in May).

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

1. Trust Home Page = 494 (18.56%)
2. Trust Board Elections 2019 = 452 (16.98%)
3. Croeso! (Steve Cooper & Mike Marsh) = 306 (11.50%)
4. Trust Board Elections Notice of Ballot = 201 (7.55%)
5. Join the Trust = 131 (4.92%)

Postings and links to relevant articles and content on the members Facebook pages continue with June's topics focusing on the appointments of Steve Cooper and Mike Marsh, potential signings and speculation about the new kit for 2019/20 !.

The total number of members to our Trust members Facebook page is 267 by the end of June. The number of members on our public Facebook page remains at over 12,000.

Twitter saw us continue to increase followers to 8,155 by the end of June with impressions and engagements remaining high.

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

info@swanstrust.co.uk = 10 (compared to 15 in May)

communications@swanstrust.co.uk = 2 (compared to 0 in May)

A total of 9 members joined (or re-joined) the Trust via the website facility during June (compared to 4 in May).

The online membership page on the Trust website was updated on the 14th June in preparation for the new membership year and any applications received and processed after this date will automatically fall into the new 2019/20 season.

No monthly updates to members via e-mail was sent out to Trust Members in June, but, 4 other e-mails were circulated relating to the new coaching appointments and the upcoming Trust Board elections. Four similarly related news articles were also posted up on our Trust website during the month.

7. Schools' Initiative Report

SD reported that *Dwr-y-Felin Comprehensive School* in Neath is currently undertaking the Challenge for the second year, with over 200 pupils. Over the two years of the Challenge nearly 500 pupils from the School will have completed the Challenge.

Gowerton School have asked to do the *Welsh Bacculaureate Challenge* again in the coming Academic Year, but this time will more than double the numbers they originally put through, to somewhere between 30 and 40. It should be possible, between **RG** and myself, to cope with these increased numbers using the model involving a morning trip to the *Liberty Stadium* featuring a launch in a double Hospitality Box and a tour of the Stadium.

The development of the on-line system, whereby pupils completing the *Welsh Bacculaureate Challenge* can apply for free membership, has been completed and is now live. The aim is to test it before the end of the current school year.

8. Shareholding and Mediation Report

AMcG had updated that it had been a relatively quiet month as all attention had been on finalising and circulating the consultation papers. (**SMcD** was not present for this update).

9. Disabled Supporters Association

CD reported that following a tender process, *RHINO UK* are the preferred provider of the *Sensory Room* as the quotation not only met the specification, but it includes additional support and ongoing maintenance. A site visit and consultation event are planned for the near future. The DSA have always stated that they would like to contribute towards the Sensory Room and the Club and the Disabled Supporters Association are working together on this.

Club Shop Quiet Hour – following a request to the *Club* from the *DSA*, re: the possibility of holding a quiet hour for our disabled supporters to have the opportunity of visiting the *Club Shop* with the option of switching off the lights, air conditioning, TV screens and music. *Catherine Thomas, Head of Hospitality and Customer Services* kindly worked with the *DSA* to organise the event for Thursday, 11th July. This went well, and there are discussions in place re: holding these events on a regular basis.

Mobiloo – the intentions are that *Mobiloo* will once again return to the *Stadium* during the 2019/20 Season as part of the matchday facilities which will provide a changing places facility at all Swans home fixtures. The *Mobiloo* will be located near the *South- East* corner adjacent to the *Jack Zone*.

Disabled Supporters Association coffee evening – held a successful coffee evening for our members in June. Over 20 of our members turned up for coffee, cakes and a chat, and we were also grateful to *Catherine Thomas, Head of Hospitality & Customer Services* who attended our event and let everyone have a tour of the home changing rooms, and also a chance to go pitch side. This was a great surprise for everyone. We hope to hold more coffee evenings throughout the season.

Disabled Supporters AGM – the *AGM* was held in early July, where our Committee has been elected for the 2019/20 season. Thank you to our members who attended. The *DSA* committee will be formed during the August meeting.

10. Governance

AC and **AG** confirmed their work was ongoing, though it should be noted that the focus is very much on subtle but necessary amendments, as opposed to a root-and-branch review of existing structures. The issue of skills mapping was raised, with **TB** questioning whether there should be a more directed approach taken to assigning members to sub-groups, based on their skills acquired in their professional and other capacities. The *Model Rules* state that the Board should produce a written record of the scope and authority of each committee. – **AC** and **AG** agreed that this could be taken forward by the future Board, post-election. They

also agreed to consider and return to the group on the question of membership and skills, with the Chair confirming that, regardless, flexibility exists to make subsequent changes to committee memberships, as needed. **PS** also noted that the current sub-groups have been in place for nearly a year and are working well for the most part

12. Wall of Fame.

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

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

Next Board Meeting Monday 12th August at the Liberty Stadium Swansea.