

SWANSEA CITY SUPPORTERS TRUST

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 7th December 2021 16h00 BST – STADIUM / MS Teams videoconference.

Present:	
Ceri Stone (CS)	Adam Lewis (AL) - video
Howard Corder (HC) - video	Nick Phillips (NP)
Sian Davies (SD)	Howell Williams (HW) - video
Chris Golledge (CG) - video	Roger Goodwin
Terry Sinnett (TS)	Dave Dalton (DD) - video
Rupert Thomas (RT) - video	Paul Barrett (PB - Secretary) - video
Apologies:	

Website Designers/IT Update

- AL gave an update showing the layout of the new Trust website. It comprised: (i) Breakdown of the structure, (ii) Featured News, (iii) Removal of local business partners, (iv) Links to Join the Trust, (v) Home Page.
- AL confirmed that WordPress would still be used for new website uploads.
- Plan is to launch the new website in Jan 2022. It's possible that links to the CRM membership, and to the membership database may be included. Automated email generation will also be included, reducing our admin burden. Proud Swans and DSA links can also be added.
- The Club are announcing season ticket sales in December; the Trust hopes to include the option to renew Trust Membership as part of that launch.
- The Club's Heritage Project (2010) may be resurrected with lottery money support. AL could represent the Trust's input to this earlier work.

Trust Strategy Update

- The Swans Trust Strategy Plan will be set for the next 3 years.
- A Trust Strategy working group will be established, led by AL. CS, SD, CG, PB and HC have all offered to support the work required to set the strategy. The need for each sub-group will be challenged, to define what is the best structure for the Trust to meet its objectives.

Julian Winter Update

- Julian and Beccy addressed the TB in person, however, the link to the external folk was very poor, and therefore reference should be made to the Supporter Directors report (see Appendix 1) for more details.
- Jake Silverstein has arrived; Jason Levien and Steve Kaplan are also due to arrive.
- The early bird renewal offer was launched on Monday 13th Dec. Beccy spoke about the costs and analysis of the season ticket arrangements.

Supporter Director Update

- Reference should be made to the Supporter Director report in Appendix 1.
- The pay-as-you-go contract with Virgin for the Trust phone expires on 6th Jan 2022, and will need renewal.

Membership & Fundraising

- Reference should be made to Sian's Report in Appendix 2.
- All the envelopes containing the outstanding 20th Anniversary pin badges and window transfers have been distributed by post to all the trust members.

PR/Comms

- We need to define if the Trust can assist with the club initiative “Whose Coat is that Jacket?” The link was added to all the Trust platforms.
- We need some PR for the Trust Monthly Draw – “20 for 20”.
- The recent report to members that was penned by TS and shared on all the Trust platforms was well received by the members. It was agreed to repeat this notification every couple of months.
- The Trust Chairman will publish a new message to members in the New Year.

Social Media

- NTR for the moment

Governance

- *Governance subgroup would pick up once the legal dispute has subsided.* We aim to resurrect this topic in February 2022, after the AGM has been conducted.

Finance

- HW advised that Barclays had mislaid the bank mandates which resulted in delaying the formation of a new online bank account for the Trust.
- Two other invoices have arrived for payment.
- PB has confirmed some of the non-financial details which will form part of the 2020/21 accounts. Once the accounts have been completed, they will need to be signed off and uploaded on to the FCA website.

Inclusivity (inc. DSA)

DSA

- Reference should be made to the DSA Report in Appendix 3.

Other The Trust has been involved in all of the following initiatives:

- White Ribbon Day (ending violence against women) was held on Thurs 25th November.
- Rainbow Laces Day was celebrated at the Forest home match.
- Proud Swans held an evening at the club shop on Friday 10th December.
- An Inclusivity Questionnaire has been posted on the Club website.
- Her Game Too – NTR.

Schools

- Reference should be made to Roger’s Report in Appendix 4. Some key points are as follows:
- The Swans Foundation is “finance lead”, with commercial objectives.
- RG suggested that it is now time for the trust to resurrect the Welsh Bacc initiative.

Supporter Groups

- NTR – continue in January 2022.

Trust Charities 2021/22

- NP advised that just a couple of volunteers needed for the Christmas Hamper distribution. All are screened.
- The club’s “Whose Coat is That Jacket” initiative is available for drop-off from Dec 13th – 19th at the Stadium.
- The Foundation is running a Jack Frost Raffle, and also a Secret Santa.

AOB

AGM (proposed - Tuesday 15th February 2022)

- The Trust Board has agreed to this date, to maximise everyone’s availability. The AGM will be conducted on MS TEAMS, similarly to the previous AGM in 2020.

- The Trust PO Box postal address location will be deferred until March 2022.

Big Step

- NP advised that this is a campaign targeted against gambling advertising. It is aiming to get all football trusts involve, and all fans on board. As shareholders of the club, the trust is somewhat restricted in the support that they are able to give to this initiative.
- NP advised that a white paper is due out in February 2022 for prohibiting front-of-shirt gambling adverts. The club tend to sign contracts for 5 years; they have 3 years remaining, so they are limited in what they can do until the contract expires.
- DD suggested that once the legal situation is resolved, we would most likely get better engagement with the club. He suggested that NP should compile a document (inc. evidence and statistics) to enable the Trust to make a case to put pressure on the club to adopt change towards a gambling advertisement embargo. Also to prepare a detailed questionnaire to support the members' evidence. This would be a good example of a proactive initiative, instead of the previous five years of reaction. JW would like the Trust to engage more with the fan base; we will conduct an on-line meeting with the fans in the New Year.

Swans Foundation

- No feedback received yet from Helen regarding the proposal for SD to join the board of trustees. The Foundation has a board meeting on 16th December, we are hopeful of a favourable response.
- AL is able to assist in the club's Heritage initiative which is being resurrected.

Rhodri Mugford - Secretary of Swansea Schools FA –Postponed to the next TB meeting

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

The next Trust Board meeting will be in Stadium on Monday 10th January 2022.

Appendix 1 – SUPPORTER DIRECTOR REPORT – DECEMBER 2021

These notes cover the meeting with Julian Winter at our December Board Meeting (7/12] at the Swansea.com stadium. Rebecca Edwards-Symmons, the club's Commercial Manager was also in attendance.

Ownership Visit

Jason Levien & Steve Kaplan had to cancel their planned visit due to Covid isolation restrictions. Jake Silverstein, and his family arrived in Swansea 10th December and are planning to stay for about a month. He was at the Forest game on Saturday.

Player Contracts

All discussions are going ahead. Expect most transfer activity towards the end of the window, even though the club would prefer deals to be done early. At the least, weekly meetings are happening to discuss players.

POD Wifi

They have ordered a new router for the POD and it will be fitted as soon as possible.

Travel Club

No adverse reports about the National Express service to Middlesbrough though numbers were small in comparison to other matches. Club are still hoping the Travel Club will start back up in the New Year.

Heritage Project

JW has sent the proposal to me. I will circulate to BM's for consideration. We confirmed we would be happy to contribute to the costs on a 50/50 basis. No rush to make a decision.

U23/Ladies Games

I mentioned that there was little or no improvement in promoting or advertising the games. I suggested a fixture list could be published on a monthly basis. JW advised that dates and times of games do change regularly.

Fan Behaviour

Still a matter of concern though the problem is not restricted to the Swans - it's a national issue which has grown since crowds were allowed back into stadiums after the lifting of Covid restrictions.

Blue Plaque

I explained that previous BM's had resurrected this project which was put on hold at the start of the pandemic. I explained it was a joint project between Swansea City Council, the Club and the Trust. The plaque is being commissioned by the council and will be positioned on the Vetch wall in Glamorgan Street.

21/22 Season Tickets

Beccy gave the board a presentation of the ST price structure for next season, which had been approved by ownership. Overall view was that the offer was really good and should be well received by the supporters.

Swans Foundation (Update)

Julian has confirmed that in their last meeting chair Andrew Rhodes will contact Dave and myself to 'manage the process of nominating someone from the Trust' to the board. The nominee, will have to fit in 'with a trustee sill mix exercise that has been undertaken recently'.

Fan Led Review

Julian recommended that as a minimum we read the executive summary of Tracey Crouch's Fan Led Review. Important decisions will and must be taken in the New Year.

Terry Sinnett

16 December 2021

Appendix 2 - Membership & Fundraising Sub-Group Report –5th December 2021

Memberships

There were 1005 members on 5th December an increase of 34 since the previous report. This is 75 less than 2019/20 and compares with a gap of 85 in the last report.

Initially 45 members indicated a willingness to help the Trust. All were sent an e-mail at the beginning of November asking if they were still interested and asking members to introduce themselves, what skills they have and how they think they could help the Trust. There was a positive response from 6. One member would like to help but work commitments at the moment may prevent this. All those who responded were sent a holding e-mail, followed by an e-mail inviting them to help with the Christmas hamper campaign. There was one positive response and Nick has been in touch.

159 badges and stickers have been collected from the Pod, leaving 846 to post. Arrangements have been made for Board members to fill and label envelopes, ready for posting, prior to the Board meeting on 7th December. To save cost those packages to the US will be sent to HC for posting, labelled gifts for customs purposes.

The December Prize Draw will include those members joining on, or before, 7th December. As it's our 20th anniversary year there will be 20 prizes (20 for 20 – thank you Ceri!). This will be advertised on SM. The group also decided that Junior members should all receive a Swans scarf from the Trust for Christmas.

The Pod

JW did not see an issue with putting the Trust's logo on Swans jackets. RE-S is working on badges. The Club wifi signal will be checked to ensure it works at the Pod prior to purchasing a Zettle for card payments. TS will confirm the password. CS will update the Pod rota and circulate

Strategic Planning

A draft Strategic Plan has been prepared by the group and the format approved. The draft will be parked for now pending the planning away day for the full Board

JW is keen to do more with younger fans, for example, a forum with Russell Martin and players.

20th Anniversary Plan

NP has agreed to work with AL to co-ordinate content.

Trust Website

AL demonstrated a draft of the new website which was very impressive. The group thanked AL for his work.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for Wednesday 5th January at 5.30pm via Teams

Sian Davies
Swans Trust Membership & Fundraising Sub Group
5th December 2021

Appendix 3 - DSA report for Swans Trust Meeting 7th December 2021

The Swans DSA were proud to present 65 Mr X bags to the appeal, which helps needy and vulnerable children in the community. This is the 3rd year that we have supported the appeal. Thank you to DSA members, family and friends who brought their Christmas bags to the stadium on the 12th November.

DSA secretary Cath Dyer attended the Trust's Remembrance service at the Stadium on the 14th November. These services are so important.

The DSA held a coffee morning at the Harvester Gowerton on 17th November and collected £85 for the BBC Children in Need appeal.

The Cymru DSA held their quarterly meeting on 18th November, where discussions and ideas around accessibility, ticketing, grounds etc are put forward to help disabled people attend the international games. Representatives from Swansea, Cardiff, Newport, and Wrexham DSAs were in attendance, along with someone from Wal Goch y Menywod and Level Playing Field. All the club attendees give a report on what their clubs are doing. Cath Dyer attended from Swansea.

DSA secretary Cath Dyer recently set up a championship DSA group, where clubs get together monthly to share ideas and best practice on an informal basis. We have also received interest from clubs in other divisions. We currently have Fulham, Nottingham Forest, Sheffield United, Derby County, Huddersfield Town plus Norwich City, Wycombe Wanderers and Wrexham involved, and everyone enjoys being able to discuss ideas together. Liam from Playing Fields is invited to the meetings.

The FAW have recently held many zoom meetings re PAWB – which have been around equality, diversity and inclusion. These were very informative and interesting.

The Swans DSA recently held a face-to-face Christmas social event at the stadium. 127 members attended. It was fantastic to see so many smiles around the place, and we have to appreciate that many of our members hadn't seen each other for so long. We had Mal Pope and Johnny Tudor entertaining us, whilst Eirian Wyn was the MC for the evening. Alan Curtis attended and stayed for the whole event. The buffet provided by the club was delicious. Santa arrived with an elf and handed out surprises to everyone. The DSA raffle consisted of 30 prizes and we would like to thank everyone for their support with this. Our special guests were Russell Martin, Dean Thornton – goalkeeping coach, captain Matt Grimes and Flynn Downes. All the DSA members were given a gift of a Welsh Hamper.

3rd December was International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPD). To celebrate the day, the club and DSA held a joint coffee morning at the stadium, where they launched new signage which has been installed in all toilets at the stadium. These highlight that "not all disabilities are visible." The signs include an image of a wheelchair, but also silhouettes of men and women, to ensure that invisible disabilities are considered.

The club shop was open between 6pm and 7pm that evening exclusively for DSA members to have the opportunity of shopping in a quiet environment. Members who attended thought that this was a fantastic idea.

Merry Christmas to you all / Nadolig Llawen I chi gyd.
Cath.

Appendix 4 - Meeting between Roger Goodwin and Curtis Grant (Foundation Education Manager, curtisgrant@swansfoundation.org.uk , 07751 172511) on 1st December 2021.

I gave a Curtis an account of just how the Schools' Initiative works as it is fair to say that he had no real knowledge of our activities in this area. This included:

1. The Trust having "ownership" of the Welsh Baccalaureate Challenge because it was the organisation that obtained approval from the WJEC for its inclusion in the WB listing.
2. Emphasis that we all gave our services voluntarily and in consequence there was no cost to the schools except possible transport costs for stadium visits.
3. Making it plain that we did not deliver the programme in terms of basic skills as this was done by school staff, although we do plan on delivering a session for Business Studies GCSE.
4. The Trust providing the framework for the WB Challenge in terms of introducing it to pupils either directly or via school staff, occasional monitoring when requested and playing some part in assessing the final presentations.
5. The difference in the ways large and small school groups tackled the Challenge and how that affected our involvement.
6. The role of the club in making ambassadors, boxes and stadium tours available to the Trust and the schools free of charge and appropriate thanks.

In turn Curtis described the activities of the Foundation:

1. In both primary and secondary schools with particular emphasis on the latter.
2. I was surprised to hear that Swansea's relegation from the Premier League had not had a massive effect on the education funding the Foundation received from it. No longer being a PL club meant that it does not receive any of the "Core" payments to cover the cost of things like management which dilutes funding somewhat but the Foundation's record in delivering programmes in school and particularly the Club's "reach" puts them in the top of four groups of clubs for the remaining funding – "reach" relating largely to the geographical area the club serves, so Swansea comes out well as compared to an individual London club for example.
3. Relegation has not led to a very significant scaling back of the Foundation's education activities therefore.
4. Running three PL programmes in secondary schools but only one in KS4 and that to a limited group of disadvantaged pupils.
5. PL funding subsidises the delivery of these programmes but the schools pay the rest of the cost to the Foundation.

Our subsequent discussion concentrated on the ways forward:

1. It was agreed that there was almost no overlap between the Trust's and the Foundation's activities in secondary schools. Very few pupils would be involved in both our Challenge and the KS4 PL programme.
2. Consequently it was agreed that the activities of the two organisations could continue to run in parallel.
3. I indicated that the Trust would be happy for the Foundation to become involved in the programme at any or all of the launch, monitoring or presentation phases with schools.
4. As anticipated Curtis, whilst not ruling this out, was reluctant to commit to any involvement on financial grounds.
5. So it was agreed that, while there might be occasional involvement from Foundation personnel in the Challenge or Business Studies GCSE programmes, the ongoing relationship would rather be the Trust keeping the Foundation informed about general developments and possibly creating occasional opportunities for its staff to become involved where that involvement might enrich our activities or further improve the Foundation's understanding of how our Initiative is developing.
6. In essence therefore, it is clear that the notion of the Foundation taking our Initiative "in house" is not on the agenda – on financial grounds and, as mentioned earlier, because of our "ownership" of the Challenge through the WJEC approved list.
7. Curtis could see no reason why the club should not continue to kindly make ambassadors, stadium tours and boxes available on the same basis as before, but this is not his area of responsibility (being a "Club" rather than Foundation matter).