

Minutes of Aldershot Town Supporters Trust AGM

EBB Lounge, EBB Stadium, Aldershot
Wednesday 31 July 2013

PRESENT : Tommy Anderson, Ian Goodwright, Bob Green, Stuart Griffiths, Peter O'Donnell, John Orme, Sefton Owens, Terry Owens, Vanessa Storey and a quorum of members.

Ian Goodwright (IG) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the top table.

- 1 **Apologies** : Apologies for absence had been received from Peter and Lee Bridgeman, Bill Toothill, Jonathan and Roger Humphrey, Stephen Morrison and Gary Kent. IG also apologised that the AGM had been postponed from 27 June but this had been overtaken by matters concerning the Football Club which had taken precedence. He anticipated that the 2014 AGM would take place as it should by June next year.
- 2 **To approve the minutes of the 2012 AGM** : Simon Stevens asked for clarification regarding the proposed trip to Wembley and IG confirmed that this had not taken place due to lack of time. However, it was hoped that a further trip would be arranged. John Hannah Senior proposed and Mike Billett seconded that the minutes be approved. This was agreed unanimously by those present. IG stated that members unable to attend the meeting had had the opportunity to vote on line and 181 members had voted on the minutes. 83 were in favour, 1 against and 97 abstentions, mainly from members who had not attended the meeting. There were 5 Postal votes and 1 Proxy vote in favour. The minutes were therefore approved.
- 3 **Vice-Chairman's Report** : IG reported on Trust activities throughout the year.
 - i) **Replacement of mascot** – A deposit had been placed for a replacement Phoenix costume but, with the Club going into administration, the Trust had decided to place this on hold until it was certain that the Club was moving forward, and also to consider whether a change of mascot should be considered.
 - ii) **Matchday help** – this had been received in varying degrees. Paul Blundell had been managing the Trust office on matchdays with the help of Jill Broadhurst, and Ian and Carol Read had assisted with player of the month and player of the year voting. The Trust were very grateful to these volunteers.
 - iii) **Scoreboard** – This went live last season but the Club have not maximised its potential with advertising and promotion of events. The Trust were disappointed about this but understood the Club did not have the expertise to operate this or come up with advertising ideas or design. The Trust would like to see the facility used much more. There have been some intermittent problems with water getting into the scoreboard or wiring becoming loose but John Orme (JO) explained that the scoreboard was still under warranty and therefore did not cost the Club anything and the remedial work was carried out promptly.
 - iv) **Strengthening the Board** – Last year there had only been four members of the Trust Board but Terry Owens had come forward at the last AGM, as well as Mike Hammond, and things had continued to improve. Pat Llanwarne, Steve Brett and Andy Scott also provided support during the year and IG said that they were now in the fortunate position of having strength on the Board. In addition, one new Director had been appointed who would be introduced later in the meeting.

- v) Financial Statements – IG stated that accounts had been issued to members. Turnover was down on the previous year with a downturn in income from membership and away travel. In addition, the lack of manpower had made it difficult to hold fund-raising activities. IG admitted that the loss of members was quite concerning and the Board would be looking at ways of attracting members. However, the Trust had shown a profit of nearly £2,500 which was good, and the bank account currently stood at approximately £23,000. In response to a question from Simon Stevens, IG stated that there had been no income from the Wembley trip as this had been held in the previous year. It was hoped that any future trips would be arranged on a break-even basis.
- vi) Membership – IG stated that it was important to grow membership. Some adult and senior members had transferred to 5 year adult or seniors. There had been a disappointing reduction in junior members as no Junior Shots teams had enrolled. However, since administration, the Trust had generated the pre-share offer which had generated interest in the Trust and there were now 750 members. This meant that about 40% of the home attendance were members of the Trust. The aim was to reach 1000 member which was quite achievable.

The Trust had carried out a survey on where members lived which showed 20% members lived in the Aldershot area, 35% further afield and 45% much further afield with supporters all over the world. The issue was why more people from the Aldershot area did not attend the Football Club.

- vii) Away travel – 11 coaches or minibuses had travelled to away games last season which had generated a gross profit of about £700. The net profit was less because any money received through Paypal incurred a charge. The Trust will continue to provide away travel whenever possible. They were always reluctant to disappoint people by cancelling coaches and tried to run minibuses where viable but it was important that the travel did not run at a loss. Fortunately, cancellations with the coach company did not incur any costs, provided the company were notified in time.
- viii) Community Activities – This was a very important area for both the Club and the Trust, especially now with the need to increase the fan base. IG and JO had taken part in the Step by Step Big Sleep Out and had raised £400 for the charity. A small donation had also been made to the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice. The Phoenix had taken part in the Mascot Grand National and had finished 4th. This was a good opportunity to promote the Club and the Phoenix. The Player of the Month presentations were very rewarding and generated a great deal of goodwill. Many of the children involved and their parents provided good feedback to the Trust.

Members had voted for a £5000 donation towards the Community Stand and this had provided 25 seats for every home match for people nominated by the Trust for the next two seasons. IG and JO will be working on this again this season. JO stated that the Trust had helped make this a good matchday experience for those in the seats with a deal with the club shop for scarves, and with Eagle Radio for other goodies. It was intended that several local youth teams would join the Trust which would entitle them to one free day in the Community Stand during the season and this would hopefully encourage them to continue to come to games. JO asked Trust members to let him know of any deserving cases, not necessarily children. The Trust currently had access to 50 seats per game.

- ix) Projects – Projects completed in the last year were :
- Improved window in the Trust office
 - Extractor Unit in the Phoenix Lounge
 - Toilet refurbishment – High Street and South Stand
 - Community Stand
- x) Media – Tommy Anderson (TA) had joined the Trust Board as the media man and was getting the Trust messages out to about 40 outlets via twitter, radio, television, the press, etc. TA, as well as TO, had built up a good relationship with the media. Sefton Owens (SO) continue to look after the website which had had a refresh earlier this year, and this would be done on a regular basis.
- xi) Database – this held 1450 email addresses which was a fantastic basis for getting messages out, whether they were general or specific for Trust members, in which case they were only sent to those members. About 90% of Trust members had email addresses and the other 10% would receive messages by post. IG asked that members advise him of any change of email address.
- xii) Programme – The Trust would have a page in the programme for the coming season.
- xiii) Scoreboard – The Trust wanted to expand the use of this to promote events, away travel, etc.
- xiv) Video – IG introduced a video the Shots Trust in action and what had been achieved in the last couple of seasons. This received tremendous applause.

4 To approve that the Financial Statements continue to receive an independent check - The Trust accounts had been independently checked at no cost by Mike Greenwood, a qualified accountant, as the turnover had not exceeded £25,000 per annum and it was proposed by Paul Hopkins that they continue to receive an independent check. This was seconded by Richard Llanwarne and agreed by the meeting. Of the votes cast online, 177 were in favour and 4 against; 5 Postal votes and 1 Proxy vote were in favour. The motion was therefore carried.

5 To approve membership fees commencing 1 September 2013 – Members had been invited to participate in an online survey in April 2013 concerning membership fees and based on the results of the survey and taking into account membership fees set by similar organisations, the Board proposed that the following membership fee structure be adopted from 1 September 2013 :

Membership Type	Adults	Seniors (65+)	Juniors (u18)
Annual	£10	£6	£5
5 Year	£40	£24	N/A
Lifetime	£200	N/A	N/A
Family (new category)	Two adults and two or more juniors - £25		

It was agreed that the new family membership was a good idea, especially to encourage links with the Community.

It was pointed out that, under the motion, the age at which members qualified for the Senior category was amended from age 60 to age 65 but existing Senior members aged 60+ could remain Senior category members subject to the proposed new membership fee rates.

Steve Brett proposed and Rogers Sanders seconded that these new rates be accepted. This was approved by those present, with two abstentions. The on-line voting had shown 177 in favour and 4 against. Of the Postal votes, 5 were in favour. There was no Proxy vote for this item. The motion was therefore carried and the new pricing structure would be introduced from 1 September 2013.

In answer to a question from the floor, it was stated that membership was on a rolling basis, ie. if someone joined on 1 July 2013, their membership would need renewing on 1 July 2014.

- 6 Election of Directors** – As outlined in the Trust rules, IG and JO had resigned from the Trust Board but had put themselves forward for re-election. During the last year the following Board members had been co-opted – Vanessa Storey, Terry Owens, Tommy Anderson and Stuart Griffiths. All have resigned and have offered themselves for re-election. One new Director nomination had been received - Ian Barnett. Ian's election statement had been included with the AGM papers and he addressed the meeting briefly, saying he felt it was a good time to join the Trust Board and he was looking forward to the Trust going from strength to strength. All those put forward for re-election, together with Ian Barnett, were elected to the Board.

IG thanked those who had joined the Trust Board on a temporary basis during the season, ie Steve Brett, Pat Llanwarne and Adrian Scott and also for Peter Bridgeman and Mike Hammond, who had both stepped down. IG was also disappointed that TO had informed the Trust Board that he was going to step down from Chairman of the Trust and this had reluctantly been accepted by the Board. TO had done a tremendous amount of work during the period of administration and he was thanked for this, receiving a round of applause.

TO made an impassioned speech, opening by expressing his appreciation for Peter Bridgeman, which received a round of applause. He then outlined his intensive involvement with the Football Club and the Trust over the last thirty years.

This culminated with the Club was placed into administration. The next eight weeks were nothing short of a whirlwind, as the Trust looked to take the Club out of administration and into community ownership. However, the workload and responsibilities became greater than he, or the rest of the Trust Board, could ever have imagined, and he found he was working seven days a week full-time, attending numerous meetings, receiving phone calls, etc.

After all this, TO stated he was mentally and emotionally exhausted and wanted to get back to just supporting the club he loves and, more importantly, get back on track with his wife and family and spend more time with his grandchildren. Therefore he was stepping down as Chairman of the Trust with immediate effect.

He closed by saying that it had been great serving the members of the Shots Trust and, more than anything else, it had been a pleasure serving the supporters of the Club over the last thirty years. He sincerely wished the current Trust Directors every success, especially over the next six months, whilst they worked alongside the current Football Club Chairman and Directors, looking for common ground and windows of opportunity that are in the best interests of both parties, the Football Club and its Supporters in particular.

TO received a richly deserved, prolonged round of applause.

7 Objectives for the forthcoming year – IG outlined objectives for the forthcoming year, including meetings with the Football Club Board and it was hoped to have a meeting with the Chairman in the next couple of weeks. More people were needed to join the Trust Board, especially with TO resigning.

Mascot - the purchase of this was on hold and members' views would be sought before moving forward on this.

Community Stand – it was important to drive this forward.

Escrow Account - IG explained that this had been set up to handle the pre-share offer and had been quite successful. Peter O'Donnell (PO) said that the Trust Board wished to thank all those who invested in this. At its peak, the account had held £80,469 and a further £28,750 had been pledged by those investing, with the account balance currently standing at £71,419. 217. There was an administrative charge by the solicitors of 1.5% of the total amount deposited which was being funded by a donation made to the Trust specifically for this purpose.

PO continued that the Trust Board recognised that transferring money into the Escrow account required a considerable effort, which may have been a barrier for many people who had pledged in the initial survey, and they also acknowledged that raising the sum required was an ambitious target and perhaps unrealistic, but was considered justified in case the Trust became the only bidder. However, it was considered that the amount of money raised in such a short space of time was remarkable – particularly when compared to similar offers at other clubs.

PO said that the Trust Board wished the new consortium every success on and off the pitch and would support them for the benefit of the Club and supporters. However, it should be acknowledged that there was a risk that the club might at some time in the future find itself in a similar position and supporters might wish that the Trust be in a stronger position financially should this eventuality arise. Therefore, the Trust Board requested that those who have contributed to the Escrow Account consider leaving their money in the Escrow Account for the time being. The Board intends to consider the available options and to draw up some firm proposals to put to members regarding the Escrow Account, Pre-Share Offer and any other options, within the next 2 months. However any supporters who wished to withdraw their money could do so by contacting the solicitors, DWF, whose details were available on the pre-share offer documentation and would also be notified to supporters shortly.

Mike Hammond said that the Trust would have needed a substantial amount of money to survive every year and it was his opinion that the Trust would not have this amount of money taking to take the Club forward. PO explained that the money raised would be to pay off the debts and to run the Club on a commercially viable basis, living within its means similar to other community clubs. TO said it was hoped that more funds would be donated to the Escrow account through other means, such as monthly standing orders. Ian Anderson said it was crucial to keep the Escrow account and accrue as much money in this as possible as it was likely that the club would find itself in difficulties again. PO explained that the money in the Escrow account, irrespective of how donate, would remain the individual's money, and the Trust would be unable to do anything with this without referring back to trust members. Richard Llanwarne explained that money raised through fundraising activities would go into the Trust account whereas money in the Escrow account would remain separate. The Trust would still need funds to carry on community activities.

Scoreboard – maximise the use of this.

New set of rules – IG explained that the current Trust rules did not allow for a community share issue. As a quorum had not been achieved at the Special General Meeting to enable a rule change and with the consortium now running the Club, it had been agreed to carry out a thorough review of the Trust rules and present these to next year's AGM.

8 Any Other Business

TO had spoken to Shahid and the administrators that evening and had been asked to inform the Trust members that a statement was imminent regarding the Club situation with regard to administration. Paul Hopkins said that he believed that a football club was required to register a team with the Conference a week before the first game of the season, which would not be possible if the Club did not come out of administration until the following week. However, Bob Green stated that Club had fulfilled the requirement by already registering 14 players, made up of scholars and senior staff. In addition, he already had signed contracts on his desk which would be sent as soon as the Club was out of administration. The players would be full-time.

John Hannah Senior said that TO and Graham Brookland had requested supporters to donate £50,000 to help the Club come out of administration and asked how much had actually been raised and what the money would be spent on. TO explained that this money was to pay the creditors and an announcement would be made the following Monday on the actual figure raised. This could not be announced before as the creditors would have demanded more money. TO said that, in fact, the Club could have come out of administration two weeks previously had some of the creditors, eg some players, not demanded more money. The PFA had been instrumental in advising players not to take a reduced amount. In contrast, TO paid tribute to Kris Machala who had agreed a package and had lost a great deal of money.

Steve Brett said that it was important that the Trust was a critical friend to the Club and some members felt that the Trust should not give money to the Club to bail it out again. IG said that Trust funds were only given to spend on specific projects and that the views of members would always be sought before any money was paid over to the Club. In response to a question from Mike Billett regarding whether the Trust would have any leverage at Board level, IG said that this was an item on the agenda for discussion with Shahid next week. It was important that supporters' support was recognised appropriately.

Steve Brett asked how much had been raised through SPENDANDRAISE. Richard Llanwarne said that £1000 had been raised over the last season but there was potential to raise much more than this if supporters used the site to do their internet shopping. He explained how to use the scheme and the benefits for both the supporters and the Trust.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.