

BRENTFORD FOOTBALL COMMUNITY SOCIETY LIMITED (trading as Bees United "BU")

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD VIA A ZOOM CALL, AT 7PM ON 31ST



Board Members present:

Jon Gosling (JG) AGM Host, Stewart Purvis (SP) Chairman, Jim Walsh (JW) Treasurer, Chris Tate (CT) Secretary, Andre Sawyer (AS), Ron Cooper (RC), Bill Hagerty (BH), John Scott (JS), Don Tanswell (DT), Christine Powell (CP).

Apologies Received from Board Members:

Greville Waterman (GW), David Anderson (DA)

Meeting Attendees:

There were 75 Meeting attendees. In addition to the 10 BU Board Members present, there were 62 BU Members plus Jon Varney (BFC CEO) and Cliff Crown (BFC Chairman) who both attended for Items 1. and 2. only.

There was also a Technical Support for the Meeting

1. Host's Welcome

JG opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees, particularly the guest of honour for the evening, Bees fan Jamie Powell. JG then welcomed Jon Varney (JV), CEO of Brentford Football Club and invited him to talk to the meeting.

2. Q&A with Jon Varney, CEO, Brentford Football Club

JV spoke of his first two years as CEO of the Club and the difficulties of the past year since he spoke at the last BU AGM ahead of our game at home to Sheffield Wednesday on 7th March, 2020 – the last attended by fans before Covid-19 restrictions. JV said that there are now real grounds to be optimistic with 10,500 Season Ticket Holders, a playing squad pushing for promotion and a pathway for a return of fans to football stadiums.

JV said that looking forward, the clear key objectives for the club were:

Playing side – to build a Premier League team/squad

Off the pitch – Delivering outstanding fan engagement and to be the most inclusive Club in the country.

There was then a Question and Answer session with JV, with JG inviting Jamie Powell to ask the first question before putting pre-submitted questions to JV and finally opening to all attendees. JV answered all questions openly and honestly.

Before moving on to the formal business of the meeting, JG introduced Cliff Crown, the Chairman of Brentford Football Club, who gave a few words, thanking JV and saying how good it was to see Jamie Powell at the meeting.

3. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the last AGM were approved.

4. **Matters Arising**

JW told the meeting that an issue had arisen on item 4. of the last meeting, BU's Accounts to 30 June 2019. JW had made reference to the 2019 Accounts having not been audited. Whilst this was true, he should have stated that the accounts had not yet been signed-off.

A resolution for an audit of the 2019 and 2020 Accounts had not been put to BU Members. Following clarification from the FCA (Financial Conduct Authority), our regulatory body, a resolution to not require an audit of the 2021 Accounts will be put to this AGM.

5. **Chairman's Report**

SP gave some highlights from his Report (which had been made available on the BU website and included in a link in the Newsletter issued on 27th March 2021).

SP mentioned the BU Book marking the move to the new stadium and the role played by Bees supporters generally and Bees United in particular, introducing Paul Steadman and Brian Burgess to attendees. Paul and Brian had contributed to the book and were key players in the move to and development of the new stadium.

SP spoke of the Board's target of growing BU Membership and the strategy the Board had undertaken to achieving that, not least the huge amount of work done by JS in re-connecting with "lost" members. Two years ago our confirmed membership was around 450. JS had set an ambitious target of getting that up to 2,500 and was able to confirm to the meeting that confirmed membership now stood at 2,527.

The FSA (Football Supporters Association) have confirmed that BU is the only Supporters Group in the Premier League or Championship that has a Director on the Board of the Football Club. This gives a BU a unique and privileged position.

BU are looking to strengthen the voice of supporters – working with BIAS and other supporter groups. SP has invited CT to focus on this area going forward. The responsibilities of the role of secretary will be taken up across other Board Members to allow CT to do this important work.

SP referred to work done by BU including the Books (the Stadium Book and a digital book covering our last season at GP), the donation to the treatment fund for Jamie Powell and the BU Rule change proposals.

SP thanked AS who was standing down from the BU Board having served the maximum 12 years allowed under the Society's rules and mentioned that both GW and BH were stepping down from the Board but would remain involved with roles of Contributing Editors.

6. **Treasurer's Report and the 2020 Accounts**

JW told the meeting that both the Report and BU's Accounts for the Year Ended 30th June 2020 were available on the BU website and gave some key messages.

Two years ago the BU Board had taken the bold decision to make BU Membership free, in large part to grow membership numbers. Thanks to the work done by JS this had been hugely successful. JW pointed out that our Accounts for June 2020 show that we had 1,328 and that 9 months later, today, this had almost doubled to 2,527.

JW thanked the almost 400 members who, despite free membership, continue to make regular and generous donations via Standing Order, contributing over 90% of all BU's income. He also thanked the Jazz Club for their steadfast support and significant donations to BU over the years and wished them well in their search for a new home following the closure of Griffin Park.

Following distribution of the limited-edition book, a number of Members had asked about making donations to BU. As a result, we are working with our Web Designer on having a "Donate" button on the BU Website. This should be active very shortly.

JW said that, given the success of the Club on and off the pitch, Members might wonder if BU were still relevant and if their donations were still needed. With a seat on the Club Board and its Special Share (giving veto rights on any ground move) BU remains influential. It remains relevant thanks to the growing membership (being ever more representative of the total fanbase). The generous donations of members allows BU to cover its Admin costs, contribute to projects (recent examples being the Drone and the BU Books) as well as growing a “war chest”, should BU ever be needed to again step-in in the running of the Club.

JW then gave a brief update on the headline numbers in BU’s Accounts, including a look ahead. For 2020 Income was £26k (the same as in 2019) but costs, at £17k, were up by £6k, with significant spend on updating and improving the BU Website and an advance payment for the Books. The Net Surplus was £9k.

9 months into the 2021 Accounts, we are expecting a deficit for the year of £15k due to a significant increase in spend – up to £38k, largely covering the publication and distribution of the BU Books.

The BU Board have agreed a Budget for 2022 which would give a Net Surplus of £10k.

In conclusion, JW said that BU had a growing membership and, thanks to its Members, remained an active and influential part of the Bees family.

Christine Allen asked why we proposed not to have an audit of the Accounts. JW explained that as the Accounts were prepared and signed-off by independent and qualified Accountants, giving the members confidence in the numbers, the Board felt that the additional time and expense of an audit was unnecessary.

7. Resolutions

JW introduced **Resolution 7.1 Audit**

“Under the Provisions of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, that an audit shall not be required for the current Financial Year Accounts, ending 30 June 2021, hereby electing to dis-apply section 83 of the Act”. The result of the vote was:

For	89%
Against	4%
Abstained	7%

Requiring at least 80% in favour, **the resolution was passed.**

JW introduced **Resolution 7.2 Subscriptions**

“That there will be no membership subscriptions for the forthcoming financial year (2020/21)”. The result of the vote was:

For	91%
Against	2%
Abstained	7%

requiring a simple majority, **the resolution was passed.**

JW introduced **Resolution 7.3 Accounts**

“To adopt the Society’s Accounts” The result of the vote was:

For	91%
Against	0%
Abstained	9%

requiring a simple majority, **the resolution was passed.**

DT introduced **Resolution 7.4 Rules**

“To adopt the amended Rules proposed by the Bees United Board, dated March 2021, under the provisions of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014”. The result of the vote was:

For	95%
Against	0%
Abstained	5%

requiring 2/3 of the vote, **the resolution was passed.**

CT introduced Resolution 7.5 Elections

7.5 i) “To re-elect the following Board Member in accordance with the Society’s rotation policy of 3 years: Jim Walsh”. The Result of the vote was:

For	88%
Against	0%
Abstained	12%

requiring a simple majority, **Jim Walsh was duly re-elected.**

7.5 ii) “The meeting will then consider any other candidates who have applied for election”

Christine Powell gave a brief statement to the meeting. The result of the vote was:

For	95%
Against	0%
Abstained	5%

requiring a simple majority, **Christine Powell was duly elected**

Fran Carroll gave a brief statement to the meeting. The result of the vote was:

For	93%
Against	2%
Abstained	4%

requiring a simple majority, **Fran Carroll was duly elected**

CT read a brief statement to the meeting on behalf of **Jeffrey Roy**. The result of the vote was:

For	89%
Against	0%
Abstained	11%

requiring a simple majority, **Jeffrey Roy was duly elected**

8. **Any other business**

Ben Owen asked SP how he represents his fellow fans in his role on the Football Club Board.

SP said that he was conscious that BU was a child of BIAS (it had been set-up by BIAS) and recognised the importance of the club talking to BIAS, BU and other Supporter Groups and reminded the Football Club Board of this. SP gave the example of the 3 options that were given to Season Ticket Holders last year and the role played by BU and BIAS in shaping that offer.

There being no other business JG closed the meeting.

.....
Chairman