

**BRENTFORD FOOTBALL COMMUNITY SOCIETY LIMITED**

**(trading as Bees United "BU")**

Minutes of AGM

Held at Brentford Football Club Offices, 27 Great West Road. TW8 9BW

At noon on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Board Members present:**

Stewart Purvis (SP) Chairman, Jim Walsh (JW) Treasurer, Andre Sawyer (AS), Ron Cooper (RC), Bill Hagerty (BH), Greville Waterman (GW), David Anderson (DA), Joh Scott (JS), Jon Gosling (JG)

**Apologies Received from:**

Chris Tate (CT)

**Other Members present:**

Bruce Powell, Christine Powell, Trevor Inns, Michael Mayo, David Merritt, Brian Burgess, Don Tanswell, Terry Blackburn,

Others Present:

Sally Stephens (Fan and Community Relations Director, Brentford Football Club)

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**1. Chairman's Welcome, Minutes of previous AGM and**

SP opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. The minutes of the previous AGM were approved.

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

SP introduced Jon Varney (JV), CEO of Brentford Football Club, and asked him about the "new" Club offices, the venue for the BU AGM. JV said that he started the role almost a year ago and the first thing that struck him was the widespread locations in use at the Club and the lack of collaboration as a consequence. It was evident that there was a need to get everybody together. Having looked around the area, JV made the case to Matthew Benham to move the back of house staff to 27 Great West Road. The offices have helped create a togetherness and, overlooking the new stadium, provide a common focus for all staff.

JV mentioned that although the new stadium may look "match ready" there is still work to be done, particularly on the Mechanical and Electrical elements.

SP then invited questions from the floor to JV.

- GW asked what were the current thoughts around Test Events at the new stadium and would the stadium be too welcoming, diluting the Home advantage we get from Griffin Park

JV said that stadiums are really about people, not facilities and that the club had done a lot of work with the process for the sale of Season Tickets to get the right people into the right areas (e.g. Ealing Roaders into the West Stand). The onus is on all of us to take the Griffin Park spirit to the new

stadium.

- JS asked if there were any contingency plans for people who had bought premium packages who might be “giving it a try” for one season, who then might not renew.

JV said that there were c. 2,900 premium seats, including c. 1,000 in the “Dugout”. The Dugout seats were renewable on a season by season basis. All other premium packages were on a licence basis (for a minimum of 3 years)

- Michael Mayo asked if both Home and Away team dressing rooms and facilities would be equal.

JV said that Home team facilities would be better.

- Bruce Powell asked if there was any progress on car parking arrangements for the new stadium.

JV said that the club were still working through parking plans and that this was still work in progress but is confident there will be plenty of parking. There is potential for “Park and Ride” but this has not yet been decided.

In response to a follow up question about the potential relaxing of the CPZ restrictions around Griffin Park, Sally Stephens, Fan and Community Relations Director at Brentford FC, said that this was unlikely and, in any event, would need to come from the residents within the CPZ.

- RC asked if the club would be looking to grow “Brand Brentford” abroad, similar to Wycombe Wanderer’s ambitions under their new owner.

JV said that he would look to nail West London first but that, on a more serious note, clearly, promotion to the Premier League and the international media coverage that it attracts would offer the club significant opportunities.

- Carl asked if the club could sustain a period of playing matches behind closed doors should such measures be taken in response to Corona Virus.

JV reassured that BFC do not rely on gate receipts for survival and that the current model of investment from Matthew Benham and Player Trading would not be impacted by such measures.

- Don Tanswell asked if the club had any plans to change the infrastructure around volunteers managing the away travel coaches (and looking to grow away support).

JV said that this was not currently on his radar but urged any fans with ideas to feed into Sally Stephens.

- There was a question raised on whether there were any plans for tours of the new ground.

JV said that there were no specific plans for tours of the new stadium but that this might be covered by one of the Test Events which would be all about familiarisation. No one will be allowed on site until after the stadium has been handed over.

- Trevor Inns asked if there were any details and dates for Stadium Handover, Pouring Rights and Stadium Naming Rights

JV said that the original planned date for handover was the end of March but it would not happen until everything was complete and ready. Pouring rights have been done, signed, but not announced and naming rights are at an advanced stage but not signed (and not announced)

- A question was asked about the Ticketing Website which, at least judging by posts on fan site Griffin Park Grapevine, remained a big issue for a lot of fans and was not seen as user friendly.

JV conceded that it had a lot of bad press and that mistakes had been made by both the Club and the system suppliers/installers on its implementation. It was still a bit “clunky” and needed more resource but the club will be sticking with it as we move into the new stadium and JV believes it will improve.

- There was a question on catering at the new stadium - and concerns raised about the high levels of food wastage at other stadiums where Levy held the catering contract.

JV said that it was an interesting subject that the Club had got into with Levy and there was a desire from all parties to get ordering levels accurate and minimise wastage. JV believed Levy had already made significant improvements in this area at, for instance, Stamford Bridge.

- JV was asked about approximate dates for Test Events.

JV said these were still to be confirmed but should be in May.

- Michael Mayo raised a very specific question on refunds related to putting season tickets back up for resale for individual matches.

JV asked MM to give any details to Sally Stephens.

- JV was asked if there would be free streaming for any matches played behind closed doors (related to Corona Virus).

JV said yes, he believed this would be the case and that Broadcasters would be attending meetings between Government and sports organisations on Monday (9<sup>th</sup> March).

### 3. **Chairman’s Report**

SP gave some headlines from his Report (which had been handed out before the Meeting) which covered the playing side, new stadium and the twin focusses of BU – Community and Sustainability – outlining the work that had been undertaken on a new BU website and ongoing work to ensure BU were compliant with GDPR. SP gave thanks to the BU Board and to Trevor Inns for his technical help with our digital migration.

### 4. **Presentation of the 2019 Accounts**

JW gave the Meeting the key numbers for the accounts but stressed that the accounts are currently unaudited and that full, final, audited accounts will be downloaded to the BU Website in the near future. JW said that although BU Membership was now free, BU income had held up well when compared to 2018 as many members continued to make their monthly contributions. JW thanked these members for their valued donations to BU.

Key numbers for the Period Ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019, subject to finalising and audit, included; Revenue £25k (2018: £30k) Operating Profit £13k (2018: £24k) and Net Asset Value £1,011k (2018: £990k). The Net Assets were made of up c. £323k cash at Bank and c. £688k owed by the Football Club.

Michael Mayo asked if BU should write-off the money owed by Brentford FC. SP and JW said that whilst it was not foreseen that BU would ask for repayment anytime soon, there was no need to write it off.

**5. Society Board Elections**

Under the Society's rules, JG, RC and CT were all standing for re-election to the BU Board and were duly welcomed back.

SP said that Don Tanswell had completed and submitted the necessary application forms and was welcomed as a new member of the Board.

**6. Any other business**

There was no further business.

The Board thanked the Football Club for use of the Club's offices as a fantastic venue for the hosting of the AGM and also thanked N??? and Leah Cheatley for all their hard work in making all the necessary arrangements (Registration, refreshments, etc.)

**The meeting closed at 1pm**

SP then invited all attendees to feel free to go onto the balcony and view the new stadium.

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Chairman