



Notes of the CFU meeting held on 14th September, 2017 at 7.30pm

In the Blues Bar – Swansway Chester Stadium

The meeting was attended by 37 CFU members and 20 on the streaming service.

1. **Welcome and apologies** – apologies were received from Laurence Kirby.
2. **Notes of the last formal meeting** – MN said these had been published on the CFU website and they were accepted as a correct record, with any matters arising being picked up during the meeting.
3. **Updates from the chair and chief executive** – Jonny Hughes said he would not be giving a detailed report as this would be presented at the AGM and will cover the whole year and Mark Maguire would provide updates on a number of topical issues.

Key points from the chair:

- a. The CFU board minutes that are posted on the CFU website now show that reports are received from each Director at every meeting so that they are able to provide an update on the portfolio they are working on.
- b. The board had recently agreed for the management of the Junior Blues to move to the Community Trust, this is a really important development and there are a number of exciting things planned to promote membership of the Junior Blues and to involve our younger fans.
- c. The Senior Blues are having a race night on 15th September as a fundraiser for the youth foundation.
- d. There had been no response to the advertisement for a volunteer to undertake the link role between the fundraising committee and the CFU board – anyone interested in this role or volunteering in any other area should contact info@chesterfc.com in the first instance.

Key points from the CEO:

- a. **Vote of thanks to Brian Burns** - MM thanked Brian Burns who would not be standing for re-election to the CFU board. He praised his hard work and tenacity in ensuring that key systems were in place to protect the club from risk. He referred to the fact that BB had taken him to task a number of times but also the supportive conversations they had. He said that he hoped that BB would not disappear and that there would still be a role for him and expressed his thanks on behalf of the members.
- b. **Commercial** – MM said that progress had been made on a number of commercial deals and that season ticket sales had been good; these issues lead to a positive environment but there was a need to win matches and to build on the momentum on the pitch. Key deals were:
 - a. Swansway coming back on a two year deal, which did not just relate to the amount received for sponsorship but the value to our commercial partners through social media publicity.

- b. Red Insure – as a new sponsor and whilst Grosvenor Insurance had been a good sponsor, Red Insure wanted an exclusivity deal. This deal for the east stand and replaced the one with Maxiflow which was a contra deal and did not bring in cash.
 - c. There was a new deal with C&C catering and ICS had renewed.
 - d. The next initiative is the 100 club, which would be a networking club with a fee of £1000 to join. There was already significant interest with a plan to launch the club as soon as possible through a partnership with Cullimore Dutton.
 - e. Discussions continue with MBNA regarding the sponsorship of the south stand.
 - f. The issue of Stagecoach having use of the car park is still in the early stages of consideration and it would have to bring in serious finance before any decision is made.
 - g. The class room in the west stand that is being created for the youth scholarship scheme may also bring in additional income.
 - h. Contracts have been put in place for the young players involved in the youth scholarship scheme, this ensures that they are committed to the club.
 - i. Direct marketing of ticket sales is being explored as a means of increasing match day attendance.
- c. Football Manager** – MM referred to difficult discussions that had taken place prior to the dismissal of Jon McCarthy, he referred to the loyalty of the back room staff and players and also the varying views of fans. MM talked about the end of last season when there had been a dreadful run at home and the recruitment plan that had been put in place to improve the squad for the current season. He said that JMcC knew the first 10 games were crucial and as time went on the games against Torquay and Solihull became must wins. MM was in constant contact with board members and a decision made to see what happened at the Solihull game; given the result it was then necessary to act very quickly. Discussions took place with members of the Operations board and the majority of the CFU board who were all of the view that there was a need to act quickly and fairly to ensure that JMcC was not further exposed at the Ebbsfleet game. MM said that it had been an emotional time for all concerned and not an easy decision. He said he felt that 95% of what JMcC was doing was what is wanted in the future and criteria had been drawn up and there had been 120 serious applications in response to the widely advertised vacancy. Interviews will take place on 18th/19th September and the full board will need to approve the recommendation of the interview panel and it was hoped that the new manager will be in place for Thursday to meet the team at training prior to the Maidenhead game. MM paid tribute to Tom Shaw, David Felgate and Calum McIntyre for the work that had done over recent weeks.
- 4. Update on youth academy** –BB said that everything was progressing well with the youth scholarship scheme even though it had taken a long time to get to this point. The creation of a class room in the west stand was progressing well and it was expected that it would be completed by the end of September, There are 17 contracted boys and all except one are under age 17 and he is training with the first team. The qualification they are studying is the BTech extended diploma in sports and exercise science. This will provide the basis for either a career playing football or in the sports industry. The team played their first game and won 4-0 and will have regular fixtures on a Wednesday afternoon both home and away. The

youth team that plays on a Sunday are top of their league after 3 games. Some of the boys are playing both in the scholarship team and the youth team.

5. **AGM** – MN said that all the packs of papers were in the process of being sent out for the AGM which will take place on Thursday, 5th October, 2017 at 7.30pm – she urged members to make sure that they used their vote in respect of the election of board members.
6. **Q and A session**
 - a. **What is the latest position on training pitches** – still being explored.
 - b. **What's the position in respect of any fee for James Alabi** – the latest bid from Tranmere has been rejected, so the ball is in their court, it could well end up at a tribunal and this could take some time.
 - c. **Do sponsorship deals depend on success on the pitch** – no they have to stand up commercially rather than be about the performance of the team.
 - d. **Lack of medical back up and training facilities, is this a real issue** – MM explained the resources that were available to enable players to regain fitness as quickly as possible and these arrangements were better than in previous seasons and had resulted in both Ross Hannah and Harry White being back earlier than anticipated. If players have previously played in the league they are covered by the PFA and this was beneficial last season with James Akintunde. In respect of training facilities a training pitch next to the stadium would be ideal but at present there were good facilities at Saughall and the University.
 - e. **Stagecoach, planning permission** – it was confirmed that they have made a planning application but have not secured planning permission. A lot of work still needs to be undertaken to see if it is a financially worthwhile proposition and how it would be possible to compensate for lack of parking space on match days.
 - f. **Funding for youth scholarship scheme** – the players are not salaried they get an educational support allowance of £25 per week. The overall project is funded through the Skills Funding Agency and the cost of the support allowance and delivery of the education element to cover sots of tutors etc. has to be covered from this. The Skills Funding Agency retain 20% of the cost until the scholars have completed the course.
 - g. **New manager length of contract** – this will depend on a number of issues and many factors will need to be considered.
 - h. **How high on the list of criteria is that the team should play attractive football** – it will be a consideration, the panel will need to be convinced that the manager can win matches.
7. Date of next meeting 23rd November, 2017 and this will be informal

The meeting closed at 9.15pm