



Notes of the CFU meeting held on 6th November 2014 at 7.30pm

In the Blues Bar – Swansway Chester Stadium

The meeting was attended by approximately 40 CFU members

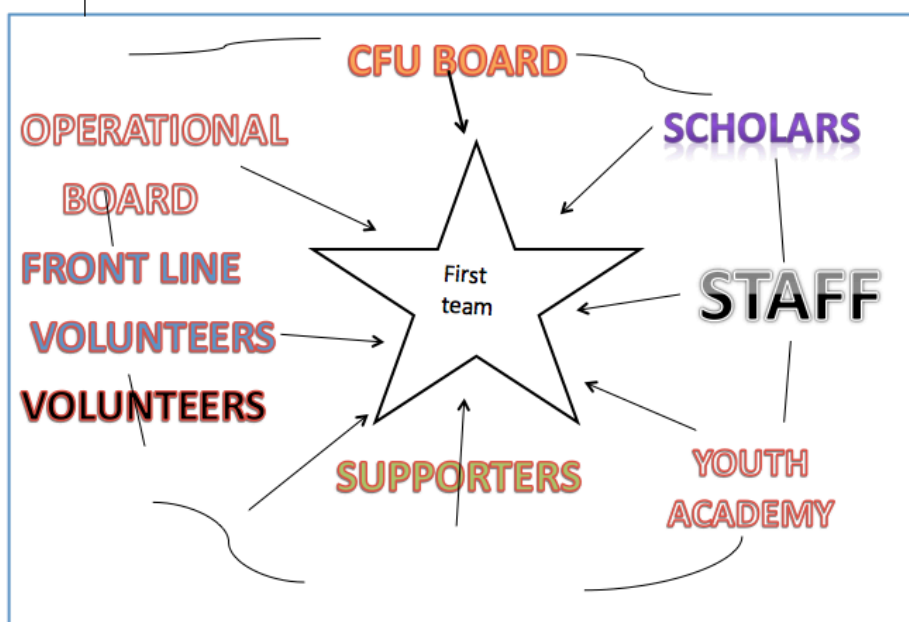
1. **Apologies** – these were received from John Martin
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2014** – these minutes had been published on the CFU website and were accepted as a correct record; matters arising will be covered by the agenda.
3. **Chairman’s briefing – Grenville** Millington introduced the new board members, he also reported that Chris Pilsbury had recently had a heart by pass operation and was now undertaking rehabilitation and had sent his best wishes to GM. He went on to give an update on the CFU strategic objectives:
 - a. **Continue on-going discussions with CWaC to secure a long term lease on the stadium of 30 years plus by November 2014** – a draft lease for 50 years was being negotiated and it was hoped that this would be signed off by the end of November.
 - b. **Launch a Community Shares Scheme in order to build and strengthen the infrastructure of the club** – a draft scheme has been prepared and will be taken forward by the board.
 - c. **Adopt a mandatory future budget strategy aimed at creating and maintaining capital reserves to improve the financial resilience and balances of the club** – this is an on-going issue which the Operations Board have been working on through fiscal controls, with the target being to have £100k reserves by the end of the 2016 financial year. The CFU board will receive management accounts and monitor the position on a monthly basis.
 - d. **Increase CFU membership to 2000 by the end of 2015** – noted that Jonathan Freeman as membership secretary is leading on this and there had been a recent increase in membership.
 - e. **Launch CFU Corporate Membership Scheme to recruit 100 members @ £100 membership fee in the first year by June 2015** – this initiative has still to be taken forward and JF will lead on this
 - f. **Increase participation in the Seals Lottery to 1000 by the end of 2016** – Brian Burns reported that some progress had been made on this – see also later item on fundraising.
 - g. **Continue to upgrade / repair car park utilising funds from the recent increased parking charge** – this is an on-going item.

- h. **Continue discussions with CWaC to secure training facilities / playing pitches on land adjacent to the stadium** – the feasibility study has been completed and the highways department have been asked to look at moving the route of the relief road; a decision is expected by January 2015.
 - i. **Secure improved viewing facilities for disabled supporters / wheelchair users in the main stand in time for 2015/2016 season** – consultation has been undertaken with the Inclusive Blues and the Community Trust and it was hoped that it may be possible to secure grants to take this forward.
 - j. **Produce a costed and funded stadium maintenance programme and improvement plan, identifying all sources of potential grant funding** – this is an issue that Jim Keegan, Paul Iverson and John Needham are working on.
4. **Chairman's vision** – GM set out his vision for the club as follows:
- a. To make Chester FC the best football club it can be by working together, inspiring and developing the two boards, staff, volunteers and supporters.
 - b. By meeting challenges with the best interests of the club at heart.
 - c. To continue to grown the club back into the football league

GM referred to what he called the DNA of the club (see later diagram) this set out how everyone needed to work together and how important this was and how it could impact on the performance of the first team on the field. GM said that after three weeks in the role of chairman there were a number of things he had identified:

- ✓ The idea of the first team, scholars and youth academy coaches and players having at least some of the same DNA needs immediate work.
- ✓ The CFU board and operations board must work in unison and neither in isolation and be completely transparent – this will be crucial for the all round good of the club.
- ✓ Staff should be given the chance to share ideas and concerns on a monthly basis and the opportunity to review targets. This arrangement could also be extended to front line volunteers.
- ✓ The finance team run a commendable tight ship.
- ✓ The football side is in good hands.
- ✓ Volunteers require further organisation and the newly established groups will each have a director which will improve communications.
- ✓ Decision making processes need to improve and be quicker.
- ✓ There is a need to improve hearts and minds to make sure staff and volunteers are professional and smart in appearance. A pro social role needs to be adopted where the club is put first and personal feelings second.

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GM concluded by saying that he thought the foundations had been laid and there is now a need to move on the message being ***'TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT – DIVIDED WE HAVE NO CHANCE – TIME TO MOVE ON AND THINK – WHAT CAN I DO?'***

5. **Finance summary** – in the absence of Laurence Kirby, Tony Durkin provided the finance update:
 - a. The budget for 2014/15 had been agreed at the July CFU board, this was planned on a break even basis, at the present time a small profit of £3.5k was projected for the year end. The Wrexham gate receipts had been disappointing but it was hoped that gates from the Bristol Rovers, Altrincham and possibly Telford would be better than forecast.
 - b. The management accounts for the half year to the end of November would be available in mid December.
 - c. A bonus had been the prize money of £12.5 from the Stockport cup game and details of the share of gate receipts was still awaited, some of this income had been included in the budget setting process, but gate receipts and potential prize money from Southend game had not been included in the budget.
 - d. The cash flow position was good.
 - e. In response to a question TD said BT had not offered the club any further options for televised games.
6. **Commercial report** – TD provided the commercial update:
 - a. He referred to Dave Riche leaving in September and the decision that had been made not to replace him immediately. He said that the rationale for this decision was that all the main sponsorship deals are in place for season 2014/2015 and that a group comprising himself, Tracey Wainwright, John Martin and Andy Cummins had been set up to oversee match day arrangements. A decision regarding any replacement for DR would be reviewed in the New Year.

- b. In respect of match day sponsorship only Dover was still available, 5 match balls and 7 programmes were still available and any help in filling these would be appreciated.
- c. Two administrative apprentices recruited through West Cheshire College are due to start shortly and Jonny Hughes a new volunteer is now supporting the commercial section and has been working on website materials.
- d. The carvery arrangement had been unsuccessful and would no longer continue.
- e. The operations board is looking to review the Legends Lounge experience with a view to improving it.

7. **Fundraising** – BB said that since the fundraising committee had been established a sum of about £58k had been raised. Evidence of how money has benefitted the club can be seen with the new doors on the blues bar, and the 36 new window units (an initiative undertaken in conjunction with the senior blues.) Squad builder brings in £13k per annum and the small change boxes £2k, with the monthly quizzes having raised £1k.

BB said that the board had made a decision to open up membership of the Seals Lottery beyond CFU members and he urged those present to try and recruit more members and it was hoped that new recruits may also come through mini kickers and the youth section. Any new members joining in November and December will go into a draw for match day hospitality.

BB also promoted the Christmas raffle which would have a wide range of prizes in addition to the main prize of £1k; he asked members to take tickets as there was not going to be a mail shot this year. He also asked for volunteers to give tickets out at turnstiles prior to home games and confirmed that tickets would be available at the gazebo.

8. **Volunteers** – GM referred to the recent event held for volunteers and the groups that had been established each with a director lead as follows:

- a. Media / communications – Neil Bellis
- b. Stadium maintenance – Jim Keegan
- c. Match day hospitality – John Martin
- d. Fundraising – Brian Burns
- e. Finance – Mike Poole
- f. Governance – John Reddy
- g. Office / shop – Jonathan Freeman
- h. Match day – Grenville Millington

NB outlined the way the groups would work which would ensure that the voice of volunteers would be heard at board level. The intention was also to have a volunteering section on the CFU website.

9. **Q and A session**

GM confirmed that the proposed scholarship scheme would not run this season due to lack of numbers and there would be no financial impact on the club.

NB said he would like to look at live streaming of CFU meetings but it would be possible to do an interview with GM based on the CFU meeting and put it on YouTube.

Agreed that more publicity was needed around the dates of CFU meetings and that it should go on the club website as well as the CFU website. The programme and match day

announcements can also be used to promote meetings. Dee 106.3 could also be used as a more effective means of communication.

The idea of having a fans forum on the CFU website was discussed, this would give members the opportunity to post a question on using their own name and to receive a response, as opposed to the way they can post on Deva Chat on an anonymous basis.

Confirmed that Squad builder money does go directly into the playing budget.

Calvin Hughes said that Mattie Hughes was now on loan until 6th December and that Ibou Touray had signed until the end of the season. He also said that an unnamed player would be going out on loan shortly.

The meeting closed at 10pm