

Notes of the CFU meeting held on 2nd April 2015 at 7.30pm

In the Blues Bar – Swansway Chester Stadium

The meeting was attended by approximately 45 CFU members

1. **Welcome** – Grenville Millington welcomed members and introduced Calvin Hughes to make the presentations to the Youth Section
2. **Presentations to youth section** - presentations were made to three members of the youth section and CH highlighted the achievements of each player, in each case they had showed and a significant achievement:
 - a. Age 17/18 – Sam Hughes from the youth team
 - b. Age 12-16 - Jo Melia from the under 14's
 - c. Age 9-11 – Thomas Jones from the under 9's
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2015** – these minutes had been published on the CFU website and were accepted as a correct record; matters arising will be covered by the agenda.
4. **Chairman's briefing** – an update was provided on the CFU strategic objectives as follows:
 - a. **Continue on-going discussions with CWaC to secure a long term lease on the stadium of 30 years plus by November 2014** – Grenville Millington reported that the lease which is of 50 years duration had been signed at the Woking match.
 - b. **Launch a Community Shares Scheme in order to build and strengthen the infrastructure of the club** – on going.
 - c. **Adopt a mandatory future budget strategy aimed at creating and maintaining capital reserves to improve the financial resilience and balances of the club** – Mike Poole reported that significant progress had been made towards achieving the planned reserve of £100k and he remained optimistic that this would be achieved by the end of the financial year.
 - d. **Increase CFU membership to 2000 by the end of 2015** – Jonathan Freeman had now resigned as a director so a new membership secretary will be required and it was hoped that such an arrangement would be in place soon with membership renewals due from 1st July 2015. It was confirmed that arrangements would be put in place to promote membership at both the end of the season and the start of the season.
 - 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.
 - f. **Increase participation in the Seals Lottery to 1000 by the end of 2016** – This is still work in progress with Barbara Rogers having taken over the administration from Brian Burns and John Martin.
 - 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** – discussions remain on going and Mike Jones recently confirmed his support to this initiative and it is a long term aim.
 - i. **Secure improved viewing facilities for disabled supporters / wheelchair users in the main stand in time for 2015/2016 season** – Noted that whilst seating

arrangements have been improved, wheel chair users will still get wet and better quality ponchos are being sourced. The long term aim remains to have arrangements in place for much improved viewing facilities and for wheel chair users to be able to access the Legends Lounge. Hopefully now the lease is signed the club will be able to access external funding.

- j. **Produce a costed and funded stadium maintenance programme and improvement plan, identifying all sources of potential grant funding** – this issue is on going and work will need to start in the close season on priority issues.
5. **DNA** – GM referred to the DNA that he had produced for himself and identified the Chairman’s pledge based on:
- a. Teamwork
 - b. Passion
 - c. Excellence
 - d. Integrity
 - e. Innovation

GM said that his view was the club should come first, others second and self last. He also referred to work that the governance group had previously undertaken and said that developing a DNA for Chester Football Club was still ongoing with a plan to take this forward at an away day. GM concluded by posing two questions to the meeting:

- i) How are we going to combat the bad behaviour of some fans
- ii) How are we going to get more families involved on match days.

6. **Finance summary** – Mike Poole said the financial position was fairly clear and there was still some income due from the FA cup run and the club had benefitted from unbudgeted income from the Liverpool Youth and under 21 games. On the negative side, CFU subscriptions were below budget and programme sales not meeting their targets. Both the playing budget and stadium maintenance budget were not on track but this was an agreed variation. The budget planned for next season will be broadly the same with an increase in the playing budget and an aim to increase reserves further. In response to a question it was confirmed that the club made about £2k per game from the use of the pitch by Liverpool FC. Brian Burns also said that as well as the income the club was aiming to develop a closer relationship with Liverpool FC.
7. **Season ticket sales** – Jim Keegan reported that the board had agreed the following:
- a. There should be no increase in season ticket prices. Early bird sales would begin on 11th May and provide for 6 free games; there would be a price increase from 19th June but this would still allow for 4 free games.
 - b. There would be no free ticket for under 16’s as evidence showed this had not increased adult sales. A season ticket for this age group would be £51 for an early bird.
 - c. A concession season ticket to be introduced for 16/17 year olds at a cost of £85.
 - d. Legends lounge tickets would increase by £25 to £525 this would reflect the increase in parking charges.
 - e. Credit union facilities will also be offered.
 - f. Car parking charge to remain the same with the increase going towards car park repairs.

The introduction of the new arrangements for 16/17 year olds was welcomed and the rationale for not having a free season ticket for under 16's was understood. The question of having a family ticket was raised and JK said this was one of a number of initiatives that would be looked at for future seasons. There was also reference to restricting ticket sales for the Wrexham game to season ticket holders and CFU members and or having a voucher scheme in place.

8. **Commercial report** – Marion Needham gave the commercial report that had been provided by John Martin:
 - a. Remaining games all sponsored as previously reported
 - b. hospitality sold out for last home game v Nuneaton
 - c. Awards night sold out
 - d. Interest in advertising and sponsorship for next season is ongoing and is being followed up
 - e. Commercial Officer post being advertised this week.
9. **Youth development** – Brian Burns referred to the excellent record of both the youth team and the colts who were still top of their respective leagues. In respect of the scholarship scheme, he said that funding issues had now been resolved and the scheme will commence in September 2016 and be based at Christleton High School. BB also said that it was possible that soccer schools would also be run there in the future in addition to current venues. GM confirmed the board commitment to the youth section and thanked BB and Mike Day for their involvement and support to that section.
10. **Communications** – GM said he felt that communications were improving and there was a positive response to this, the newsletter had recently started again and this was welcomed.
11. **Fundraising** – Brian Burns said that £63k had been raised since the fundraising group had been established and that the club had benefitted from the Vanarama big day out with income from tickets of approximately £750; he was exploring the option of running a coach for anyone who may be interested. Income was still received from squad builder with the small change boxes contributing about £2k and it was hoped that people would be encouraged to take the £ a goal boxes as this could add a significant contribution. The benefits of joining the Seals Lottery still need to be promoted with members being encourage to try and get new contributors. Noted that the sponsored walk would take place on the final day of the season and sponsorship forms were available for this event both on the internet and from the office.
12. **Volunteers** – the following update was provided:
 - a. **Ground maintenance group** – this group needs to meet as soon as possible to ensure that all work is done in preparation for the new season
 - b. **Fundraising group** – need a chairman to replace Brian Burns
 - c. **Office group** – are meeting on a regular basis
 - d. **Media group** – are meeting on a regular basis and are happy to be contacted with ideas for improving things

There were no reports from other groups and GM said we need more volunteers and to look after them better. Representatives from the volunteer groups will be involved in the event to look at the DNA.

13. **AGM** – Marion Needham said that the date for the AGM would be later this year and asked members to note that it was planned for 26th November 2015.
14. **Q and A** – in response to a number of questions the following was noted:
- a. It was expected that all main sponsor arrangements would be in place for the new season.
 - b. There may be a collection in memory of Danny Jones
 - c. Liverpool v Fulham game – under 18's can attend free
 - d. There was concern about the amount of damage caused at the Wrexham game and how this can be avoided in the future, alcohol seemed to have played a part and the view was that alcohol should not be served in future. The police are still investigating potential issues of criminal damage. Representatives from the club will be meeting with representatives of Wrexham FC regarding the cost of the damage and to consider how similar issues may be avoided in the future.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm