

## **Minutes of meeting of Supporters' Board**

### **January 24, 2023**

Present: James Errington, Derek Daniels, Matty Davies, Mellony Shepard, Dan Pearson, Len South

Club representatives: Gavin Baldwin, Shaun Lockwood

Apologies: Patrick Queen, Lizzie Robinson, Gill Shepherd, Paul Mayfield

1. Minutes from the previous meeting (December 2, 2022)
  - a. The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.
  - b. SL provided an update to a query made by LS in the previous meeting in regards to the allocation of away tickets Rovers are set to receive for the game at Harrogate Town in April. SL confirmed Rovers would receive around 600 tickets and that the club was examining measures to ensure fair distribution.
  
2. Standing items: Health and safety, safeguarding and equality, diversity and inclusivity
  - a. SL noted that a safeguarding concern had been raised by parents of players within the Academy regarding a fan attending games and the situation would be investigated.
  - b. SL confirmed the safety certificate was due for renewal in May and the club would be looking to take the necessary measures to ensure the certificate is granted. While there is not anything of major concern, there are items to be addressed prior to the inspection.
  - c. While not in attendance at the meeting, member PM submitted concerns about the lighting situation outside the Belle Vue Bar and potential safety hazard. SL noted the concern.
  - d. SL confirmed that previous EDI lead Dan Breslin has changed roles within the club and joined the Academy meaning a shift in responsibility for EDI matters, led by head of people and culture Kirsty Cavanagh.
  
3. DD raised the non-disclosure agreements which had been handed to members of the Supporters' Board and encouraged those who had not yet returned their forms, to do so as soon as possible.
  
4. Proposals for 2023/24 season tickets
  - a. SL detailed the pricing of season tickets, including the creation of a new 14-24 age bracket in order to address crowd safety issues plus a £20 U13 season ticket in the Family Stand.
  - b. LS raised an issue of teenagers being accompanied by an adult when entering the ground but not throughout the game. SL said this was

difficult to police on a match-by-match basis but adults would be held responsible for any ill behaviour. SL said the belief is the season ticket pricing change for the age group would help combat poor behaviour. SL said the big issue is currently underage drinking.

- c. MD raised a concern over the size of the jump between U13 and 14-24 pricing for new season ticket holders and suggested a cheaper price. SL said the club was keen to have fewer age brackets than in previous seasons. SL said the price in Cat B areas for the age bracket was cheaper than most other clubs.
- d. MD asked if there are plans to return to allocated seating in the South Stand. SL said there are no plans.
- e. SL said feedback from Bulbshare and other surveys was that fans were interested in the return of season ticket benefits so they had been reintroduced.
- f. SL said photos would be included on season membership cards to help with policing the use of cards, which has been abused in the past. DD asked how photos would be gathered. SL said pictures can be taken at the Box Office or submitted digitally. MD asked how those pictures would be stored in line with GDPR and SL said ticket sellers Seat Geek will take care of that issue.
- g. SL discussed the introduction of unused match credits. This idea came via fan research through Bulbshare. DD asked how much notice supporters must give of non-attendance in order to receive credits. SL said the aim is up to 24 hours of the game.
- h. SL detailed potential additional discounts for season ticket holders which would come at a later date.
- i. MD asked if staggered payments will still be available. SL confirmed they would.
- j. MS asked when the on sale date would be. SL said the aim would be for late January/early February.
- k. DP asked if missed game credits would be carried across at the end of the season. SL said there would need to be a cut off date, likely to be the end of April.
- l. MD asked what the price increase would be following the early bird period. SL said a range of factors would determine that and the decision would be made much closer to the time.

#### 5. Shadow Board elections

- a. DD detailed that he had spoken with several other supporters board chairs along with his fellow board members. He said the election process would be discussed between himself, JE and SL and fed back to other members. DD said feedback from other members was that there is frustration with a lack of progress but he believes plans are ahead of target.

- b. DD asked if other members wished for him, JE and SL to draw up the election process and only feedback once a decision on the process had been made.
- c. GB asked when the decision-making regarding the process would be completed. SL said a draft plan had been drawn up and shared with members but there had been no feedback to date. SL asked for any feedback in the meeting.
- d. LS said he was happy for the process to be drawn up away from meetings but felt the final plan should be signed off by the board as a collective. DD said the process should be fairly quick.
- e. DD said the aim is for 25 per cent of the board to be vacant for elections and said that quote is already vacant due to member departures.
- f. SL suggested members should provide feedback by the end of the month.
- g. MD asked whether there should be an EDI presence in the elections, with a supporter(s) elected to represent different demographics. SL said once the election process has been completed, every member should have a specific role, such as EDI, based on the Fan-Led Review. SL felt it would be difficult to stage a valid and open election if it was restricted to those who would fit roles best. SL says the board could not influence who was nominated for election other than with the broad criteria that would be set out. GB said the Charities Commission recommends that during the nomination process that it is stated that candidates from minority backgrounds will be encouraged, which is all that can be done. GB said the only demand from Charities Commission recommendations is a male:female split of at least 75:25. SL the current make-up of the board is three females from eight members.
- h. GB asked when the elections would take place. DD said the aim was June/July but it could be earlier. GB suggested that the final say on the process should be taken by April with elections completed by August. DD agreed that is fair.
- i. DD said he hoped to be in a position where the process could be presented at the next meeting, provided there was not significant feedback on the initial proposals.

## 6. AOB

- a. DD said he had been in touch with Martin O'Hara of the Viking Supporters Cooperative regarding the renewal of the Asset of Community Value on the stadium. DD said MO is adamant the ACV will be renewed and the matter is currently with Doncaster Council for approval. DD said he is assured by MO that the matter is not of concern to the Supporters' Board and would be taken care of by the VSC.

- b. MS asked if there would be a Meet The Owners event in the near future as supporters were asking the question. GB confirmed that the date would be February 13 and would be made public shortly.
- c. DP asked about the drop in the number of season tickets sold by 26 from the 21/22 season and how that has impacted the club financially, along with the make-up of the demographic of season ticket holders. SL confirmed that adult and senior numbers were almost like-for-like between the two seasons and the biggest drop in numbers per age category was 18-24 but it was still higher than pre-Covid figures. The 17 & under category saw a growth in numbers and the revenue beat budgeted targets. SL said season ticket revenue overall was down but that was expected due to the pricing of tickets and it was felt that the drop could be covered by other areas of Club Doncaster, leading to the decision to reduce prices.
- d. DD asked if SL believed the target set for season ticket sales for the 23/24 campaign was a realistic one. SL said he did not believe the cash target had been missed in the last 15 years.
- e. LS asked if biographies had been submitted by members. SL said he would chase Liam Hoden to check what had been received.
- f. DP suggested the marketing of loyalty being rewarded in regards to season tickets be handled carefully so as to not alienate supporters that could not afford to attend every game. SL said the language of loyalty had come from the Bulbshare surveys. He said the marketing would be handled sensitively.
- g. DD asked if there was any imminent good news to come out of the club. GB said there was still funds to make more signings and head coach Danny Schofield was assessing a central midfielder who had been training with the club. DP asked if it would be a permanent signing or a loanee. GB said it would be a loan and the player would be out of contract in the summer so Rovers would request first refusal.
- h. LS asked about the opening times for the club shop and if they had been updated on the website. SL said they were up to date. DD said he had spoken with counterparts at Lincoln and their club shop opening times had been significantly reduced. LS asked if the box office opening times were up to date. SL said they were.

The date of the next meeting was set for March 11, 2023.

Meeting closed