

Minutes Salisbury FC Supporters Club Annual General Meeting 2017

Raymond McEnhill Stadium, Magnet Bar

Thursday, 8th June 2017

Agenda

1. Introductions and apologies
 - a. Bob Erskine welcomes the 38 supporters club members and introduces the members of the committee. Anna Hawke - committee member, Kevin Clubb – committee member, Michaela Menzel – Secretary, Trevor Purse – Membership Secretary, Bob Erskine – Treasurer, Ray Neal – committee member, Keith Gale – committee member, Leona Clubb – committee member
 - b. Gordon Plumb – Chairman sends his apologies
2. Chairman's report
 - a. Unfortunately, due to health reasons of Gordon's wife, he is unable to attend the AGM but he is willing to continue as chairman if nobody else gets elected in.
3. Treasurer's report and presentation of accounts
 - a. Bob presents and explains last year's accounts. Accounts summary attached to these minutes as Appendix 1.
 - b. 24000 50/50 tickets were sold in 2016/17 compared to 19000 in 2015/16.
 - c. We hosted 2 very successful race nights and ran a Mega 50/50 for Christmas.
 - d. Net income £16712.60. Donations made to the club total £14020.00. The donations were used, amongst other things, to fund floodlight repairs, pitch maintenance, a TV for the Magnet Bar, legal costs for the new 5 year lease, coats for the players and backroom staff and painting/cleaning the stadium.
4. Secretary's report including media
 - a. The committee has met 11x in the last 12 months. Each meeting happens on the last Thursday of each months. All minutes are available on request.
 - b. The committee also had a meeting with Amanda Newbery, Ian Ridley and Dave Phillips at the beginning of the season and a further meeting with Amanda in the autumn. Committee members have been in very regular contact with Dave Phillips and Thom Belk and have worked increasingly well together on projects. The latest one being the presentation evening which was a great collaboration and the upcoming maintenance weekends.
 - c. Most recently the committee had a meeting with the revised board of directors to get answers to questions raised by supporters. We also brought up the issue of having a supporters club representative on the board of the football club. The Q&As of that meeting were published on the SFCSC Facebook page and are also attached to these minutes as Appendix 2. They include a statement by director Jeremy Harwood, clarifying the situation further.
 - d. The committee also tried to provide members with as much information as possible through a number of outlets. There are our website, the Twitter account, the Facebook group and the Facebook page, the smart phone Team App, the mailshots and the posters in town.
 - e. Andy Munns, our website host, has recently moved up north and he has unfortunately also not got the time anymore to host the website.

- f. Liam Brown, who has been an absolute star when it comes to live match updates on Twitter, is considering moving very far away this autumn and we will need to find a replacement for him, too.
 - g. Finally, I am hereby resigning as Secretary of the Supporters Club. I have very much enjoyed working with the committee.
- 5. Membership Secretary's report
 - a. We have 327 members signed up of which just 7 are U16 and 8 families have taken advantage of the reduced family membership offer.
 - b. The total number is roughly the same as it was the previous season.
- 6. Election of Officers and further members for 2017/18
 - a. Since there were no new nominations for chairman Gordon Plumb will continue in his role.
 - b. No new secretary was found but Dom Savage promised to think about it.
 - c. All other committee members were reelected.
- 7. Other business
 - a. Potential representation of the supporters on the board of the Football Club
 - i. The committee has been trying and will continue to try and get a representative of the supporters club on the football club committee.
 - ii. The club have agreed to let a supporters club representative take part in parts of the board meetings and they will attend part of the supporters club meetings to improve communication.
 - iii. The position offered by the football club is not sufficient in the eyes of the supporters club but we recognise that it is a 'foot in the door'.
 - iv. There was a suggestion to buy shares in the football club and the question whether there are any examples of other clubs who have supporters representatives on the board. The committee pointed out that there are plenty of successful examples; some of which are quoted in the proposal that was submitted to the football club. A copy of the transcript of the proposal is attached to these minutes as Appendix 3.
 - b. Away day travel
 - i. There was relatively little uptake of the offer of organised away day travel during 2016/17. The committee are hoping to improve that in 2017/18 by offering a new size (41 seater) coach that was recently acquired by Value Car Taxis. They are also considering buying a 31 seater coach which would be the perfect medium between the 14 seater minibus and a large coach.
 - c. Supporting a charity
 - i. The committee would be interested if the supporters think the committee should support a/some (local) charity/ies with a percentage of the money raised. Ideas and suggestions were invited. No decision was taken.
 - d. Membership fees for 2017/18
 - i. The committee put the current membership cost of £5 up for discussion with the suggestion to raise it to either £6 or £7 or leave it as it is. A vote by show of hands resulted in the majority of the members present voting for an increase to £7. The committee will consider this result and inform you of any changes to the membership fees before the beginning of pre-season.
 - e. Any other issue raised by the members present
 - i. Dave Phillips stood and thanked everybody present for the great time he has had as a director and chairman of Salisbury Football Club and what it

pleasure it has been for him to work with the supporters club. The Supporters Club can only return the compliment and wish him well for the future. Dave's speech was followed by a big round of applause.

The Salisbury FC Supporters Club

8th June 2017

Appendix 1

SFCSC

ye 31 May 2017

Summary

	2017	2016
	£	£
Income		
50:50 (net of prizes)	12,598.00	9,719.00
Mega 50:50 (net of prize)	1,125.00	
Christmas draw (less expenses)		515.52
Memberships	1,545.00	1,460.00
Pitch squares	125.00	680.00
Coaches (less costs)	152.00	704.09
Race night (net)	1,379.50	
Quiz night (net)		307.00
Other income	807.46	3,060.25
	<u>17,731.96</u>	<u>16,445.86</u>
Expenditure		
50:50 lottery registration	40.00	40.00
PoM costs	91.94	37.00
Players' trophies		525.00
Shirt sponsorship	162.00	100.00
Christmas party		500.00
Web site costs	175.82	
Gazebo	88.00	
Baby changer		149.98
Car stickers	292.16	
Wrist bands	112.00	
New shirt for Chalkie	35.00	
Other expenditure	22.44	195.00
	<u>1,019.36</u>	<u>1,546.98</u>
Net income	16,712.60	14,898.88
Donations		
Salisbury Football Club	14,000.00	11,500.00
Other donations	20.00	1,008.00
	<u>14,020.00</u>	<u>12,508.00</u>
Net funds at start of year	2,390.88	0.00
Net income less donations	2,692.60	2,390.88
Net income at end of year	5,083.48	2,390.88

Appendix 2

The following was published by the Supporters Club on Facebook to inform their members of the outcome of the meeting with the directors.

Last night (24th May 2017) the Supporters Club was given the opportunity to meet with Jeremy Harwood, Steve Claridge, Ian Hammond and Graeme Mundy to hear the Football Club's view on the departure of Chairman Dave Phillips. We also took the opportunity to ask other questions which had been put to us by fans.

Here are the answers:

Q1: Has Dave Phillips gone altogether or is he still a director and member of the board?

A1: He is currently still a member on the board but he has been served notice, so he won't be on the board going forward, however he will remain a shareholder.

Q2: How do the club intend to be more competitive on the pitch whilst saying they will run the club the correct way and not at a loss even though we lost money last year after having huge gates against Hereford. We won't have games against Hereford next year and we may not have cup runs and play off games next year.

A2: The club are looking to increase the commercial income. A new sponsor will be announced shortly.

Q3: Was the difference over budget and ambitions why Dave was voted off? Was his ambition more focused on us making the club break even rather than getting it back to where the board say it belongs?

A3: The board do not understand Dave Phillip's motivation. All they know is that Dave Phillips did not want to work with neither Jeremy Harwood nor Steve Claridge any longer but Dave Phillips failed to get support from the rest of the board. Ian Hammond, the new director voted for the status quo because he thought it would be better to go forward in a united fashion.

Q4: What is the set up with the SC Foundation in relation to the football club? What does the club get out of it? Is it part of the club and if so what revenue does it generate for the club? If not, what does SC Foundation pay the club for the use of its facilities?

A4: The Steve Claridge foundation is not part of the football club. They are using the facilities (not the pitch) and paying a commercial rent for that. They are also providing use of the academy minibuses to the club for away games at no cost.

Q5: How many season ticket holders did we have last season and how many are we expecting for the coming season? Have the board thought about a special promotion re season tickets?

A5: About 150, and they are hoping to have the same this season

Q6: What average attendance did we budget for this season? What average attendance are we budgeting for next season?

A6: The attendance for the next season is relatively easy to calculate because we are in the same league and now have a certain amount of experience which fixtures will draw what sort of crowds. The Club budgeted for 650 last season and achieved around 700.

Q7: What is the annual cost of running the Raymac Stadium?

A7: The running costs are much higher than anybody ever expected. Taking into account the rent, the rates, water and electricity, the pitch maintenance and so on it is close to £2k per week.

Q8: How long have we left at the Ray Mac, and are there any sites in mind for the new stadium? Are they (presumably the trust) planning on doing anything to the ground.

A8: A new longer lease has just been signed. Talks are underway with trustees for relocation and a new stadium, we also have a lot of support from the council with our search.

Q9: I am very surprised that the club ended with a debt in view of the great support and all that the Supporters Club does and gives to the club. I do believe there is insufficient monitoring of funds. There needs to be an accurate account of where the money has gone.

A9: Ian Hammond has taken over looking after the finances. He is currently reviewing all financial matters with an audit company. All future donations from the Supporters Club will be made towards specific projects or items.

Q10: Andrew is querying why new signing Jake Wannell and Chris Shephard are under the impression that they won't have to come to training.

A10: All players have to be trained regardless where they live. If there are games Tues/Sat/Tues then they might not be required to train Thursdays, too. However, if there is no game on Tuesdays, they will definitely have to train Thursdays.

Q11: What is happening about signing Justin Bennett?

A11: Steve Claridge is currently awaiting Justin's decision. Steve has made a number of signings from the existing squad as well as new players. The full list of players will be published by the club shortly.

Q12: For me personally I have never had any conversation with Dave where I felt he didn't have a sustainable, community club at the heart of his objectives for SFC - this includes at numerous games where he's walked round chatting to fans, sharing the match day enjoyment with us.

On the other 'side of the coin' so to speak, I have very little to go on as those with clearly a different opinion on how the club should be run have been far less communicative and happy to share their vision which, up until now, I had imagined to be those taken by Dave.

All in all, this leads me to the conclusion (until otherwise told) that this is not a good move and could end up with a less involved fan base rather than more and also one less voice promoting the sustainable culture...

A12: The board is offering to establish a 'management committee' consisting of club staff, supporters club members and other volunteers to work closely together. Improved communication has also been identified as another important issue that will be addressed through regular meetings between supporter's club and board.

The board assures us that they are 100% behind the ideals of a more inclusive club and promise to operate within its budgets at all times.

Q13: Will you allow a Supporters Club representative on your board?

A13: A member of the Supporters Club committee will be allowed to take part in board meetings. The exact conditions of that will have to be agreed upon.

A longish thread then formed below this and Jeremy Harwood commented as follows:



Jeremy Harwood Fascinating thread, it is becoming obviously to me that there is a small core of people that are going to find fault with anything we do. Thankfully most people seem to be sensible and one can have sensible conversation with.

Reading threads like this, will install no confidence in the club for sponsors and people that actually spend money.

If I can keep it very simple, money comes into the club from various sources the gate, sponsorship and donations and commercial activities.

Then money leave the club to pay for the stadium and various football costs. Players wages – we are not one of top payers in this league - far from it.

If there is shortfall we pay it, we don't want to put money so we are happy to ensure anything needed is minimal, - which goes in as a donation not as a loan - so the club doesn't owe us the money.

I hear some of you ask what will happen if we make a profit - the money would stay in the club, and be put to strengthen the playing staff for the following year.

We could make a profit easily every year, by reducing the playing budget, having a weaker team- and not moving forward. So we push to have a decent chance at promotion. At some point in the future we will reach a level that we stay in, that level will be higher if we can increase the club income.

Before someone asks what happens if we have a great cup run beat Man Utd and Draw at Spurs and bank £500,000. this would mean that the club would have money in bank – something in the pot towards a new stadium - I can only dream.

Comments about Directors taking money out – relate to STEVE, our manager who gave up an income of about £70,000 to join us, is now paid just under £20,000 per year – which was agreed when we set up and he came over. -in fact he hasnt all this AND has put money in .

We have agreed the way forward with the supporters' club, someone will come to a board meeting to discuss matters at a specific point. There will not be a full board member.

We will join them on their meetings for a slot at the beginning to discuss things.

I am sorry if people feel the need to snipe and bitch about things, - I am minded of the expression –

You can please all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time but never all the people all of time.

We can only do the best we can do, so many others in the past have got involved and frankly cause lot of issues.

So long as the people we respect are happy then we will carry on to the best of our abilities.

Appendix 3

1 Proposal

The Salisbury FC Supporters Club wishes to propose that a representative of the Supporters Club be allowed to attend all board meetings of Salisbury FC. We further wish to propose that that representative has the same voting rights during board meetings as all other board members.

2 Background

- ▶ The Salisbury FC Supporters Club was reformed when the new football club Salisbury FC was formed in 2015 after the supporters club had collapsed in the wake of Salisbury City FC ceasing to exist.
- ▶ The supporters club lost a substantial amount of money when Salisbury City FC collapsed and items which were paid for by the supporters club (such as pitch covers) disappeared with the previous regime.
- ▶ Memories of those times have not yet faded and trust in the new board of the football club still needs to grow.
- ▶

3 FACTS AND FIGURES

- ▶ The average attendance for Salisbury FC home matches is 696. More than half of those are paying members of the supporters club. The support for the current supporters club is unprecedented.
- ▶ Equally, the amount of 50/50 tickets sold on a weekly basis is at an all time high with average jackpots well exceeding £300. Those figures were not even achieved during the Conference Premier days.
- ▶ The supporters club are also raising substantial amounts of funds for the football club through race nights, quiz nights, raffles etc.
- ▶ The supporters club have a strong social media presence that has undoubtedly improved the bad reputation this club was struggling with. Regular mail marketing and Twitter campaigns are designed the support the efforts of the football club to increase the average attendance.
- ▶

4 PURPOSE OF THE SUPPORTERS CLUB

- ▶ The new supporters club rewrote their constitution to put much greater emphasis on being the voice of the supporters but after two seasons of working with the new football club the supporters club find themselves in the position of working hard to raise money but having absolutely no control over how the money is spent by the football club or having a vote in matters of importance.
- ▶

5 CURRENT SITUATION

- ▶ More than 50% of the fan base are supporters club members.
- ▶ The supporters club is one of the biggest sponsors of the football club. The donation over the last 2 seasons total £25,500.
- ▶ The supporters club have no way to control how this money is spent.
- ▶ The money donated does not give the supporters a stake in the club like it would be if it was coming from a director/investor.
- ▶ Committee members are used as a free work force that is expected to raise funds for the club
- ▶ The supporters club committee does not get consulted over any football club related decisions

6 CURRENT SITUATION

- ▶ Most decisions are only communicated once they have been finalised and it becomes public knowledge through social media
- ▶ Recruiting new members into the committee is difficult because it is obvious to supporters that the committee is merely a work force without a voice
- ▶ Events do not yield the possible income because the committee does not get involved in the planning at an early stage which results in unwillingness to help with some individuals
- ▶ Football club decisions are hard to understand due to the lack of background knowledge

7 **ADVANTAGES to THE FOOTBALL CLUB**

- ▶ The club would gain excellent PR by displaying genuine trust in the supporters club by giving supporters a voice and showing how much the club values the supporters' opinions
- ▶ Improved communication between football club and supporters club
- ▶ Achieving success for the football club through cooperation
- ▶ Transforming the supporters club committee members from a source of cheap labour into valuable team members with the same interests
- ▶ Utilising the knowledge base that is the supporters base to help with decisions that are difficult for directors relatively inexperienced in running a football club.

8 **CONCLUSION**

- ▶ The committee understands and appreciates that in the early days of Salisbury FC it might have been difficult for the newly formed board to trust the supporters club sufficiently to allow a representative on the board. We believe, however, that over the past 2 years the members of the board and the committee have got to know each other well enough to put that mistrust behind them.
- ▶ We are also convinced that the current board have no reason for secrecy. Both the board and the committee want to take this football club forward and together we have a better chance of achieving that. There are numerous examples throughout the UK of football club boards working successfully with supporters clubs by allowing a representative of the supporters club on their board.
- ▶ Finally, we feel that if the current football club is to become a true community club, and we believe the board have already recognised that this is the only way the club can survive long term, then having the supporters' representative is a vital step in the right direction.
- ▶

9 **PROPOSED PROCEDURE**

- ▶ The board of directors and the committee agree on the person who shall be the representative on the board as well as a deputy who shall be taking the representative's place if the representative cannot attend a board meeting.
- ▶ The supporters club committee sign a strict confidentiality agreement.
- ▶ The committee representative reports back to the committee on issues concerning the supporters club.

10 **VOICES IN THE PRESS**

- ▶ *"Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport James Purnell has called on every professional football club in England and Wales to appoint a supporters' representative at boardroom level." The Football Supporters Federation*
- ▶ *"The commitment by the Labour party to see elected supporter representatives on the board of all football clubs is a landmark step in the agonising, attritional battle to recognise that Britain's historic clubs are sporting homes of passion and belonging, not mere businesses for financial speculators to exploit." The Guardian*
- ▶ *"The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that Scottish football supporters have the opportunity to be involved in the decision making and running of their football club wherever*

possible. It is for that reason we believe it is important to bring forward legislation that protects the rights of football fans whilst also enhancing and strengthening the sustainability of Scottish football clubs." Minister for Sport, Health Improvement and Mental Health

- ▶ *"Football clubs are the heartbeat of local communities & must be protected & cherished. Club owners are custodians. Fans are the real owners." Tony Incenzo, Talk Sport*



11 **EXPERIENCE FROM OTHER FOOTBALL CLUBS**

- ▶ *"Perhaps one of the most influential impact the Chelmsford City Supporters' Club had last season was having two representatives attend Football Club Board meetings. Derek Murr and Simon Stancevic had the task to be the go between of both the Football Club board and Supporters Club committee in a way of improving communication between the two parties and ensuring that the Supporters Club had an active voice at board meetings."*

- ▶ *"Kingstonian FC supporters club also have a supporters representative on the Board of the Football Club and work closely with the directors and management to ensure the success of Kingstonian Football Club."*

- ▶ *"As you are aware the Supporters Club have had a representative at Folkestone Invicta FC Board Meetings for the last two seasons. The Board would like to make that position a full board member. This is a fantastic offer to make the fans' representative a full member showing how much this football club values the fans' contribution."*

12 **TIMINGS**

- ▶ Considering that we are now in the summer break, the Supporters Club feel that this would be a good time to implement the above.

- ▶ The next Supporters Club AGM is scheduled for 8th June 2017. It would be good to be able to announce the outcome of our proposal.

