

Board Meeting Notes

As part of Bristol Rovers' aim to increase transparency, we wish to update fans on matters discussed at our recent Board Meeting.

As you will appreciate, it is not possible to post full minutes due to matters of confidentiality; however, we hope the below summary from the recent meeting on Friday 20 January proves useful.

The meeting was attended by:

Wael Al Qadi - Club President

Tom Gorringe - Chief Executive Officer

Karim Mardam Bey - Director

Chris Gibson - Non-Executive Director

Helen Wigmore - Supporters' Club Director

Stephen Lamble - Supporters' Club Director

Prior to the meeting, all directors were provided with a report detailing a current update on all aspects of the club by the department heads. A general overview of some of the points discussed can be found below:

Safeguarding - An overview was given on the new Single Central Record, as well as the improvements on safeguarding and player care within the Academy. The successful roll-out of training for a large number of staff was also discussed, giving us a wider support and knowledge base than before.

HR - An overview of the restructure that has taken place over the past twelve months was provided, as well as the current recruitment that is taking place. It was discussed that new employment contracts, handbooks and policies, along with the new HR portal, have all been successfully issued to staff. We now have over 15 Mental Health First Aiders working at the club trained by the EFL, plus a Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy ensuring that looking after mental health is at the forefront of what we do.

Commercial - Overviews were provided on the current core partnerships and the 1883 club, along with plans for the future. An update on the renovations within the main hospitality suite and the increases that this has provided in hospitality covers so far this season compared to last. Non-matchday events business has doubled year on year.

Retail – Record-breaking shirt, training wear, Black Friday and Christmas sales were all celebrated in line with a record-breaking turnover so far this financial year. The final designs for the 2023/24 season were also shared.

Ticketing - An increase in the average attendance year on year of 2,410 supporters was celebrated, as well as a record number of season ticket at 5,360 for year. Issues around access and distribution at the start of the season were discussed. Season Tickets for the 23/24 season will go on sale in March.

Safety - An overview of the various capacity restrictions that we have faced over the course of the season was provided, as well as plans for the future. An update was provided on attempts for the club to recruit more of our own stewards as well as an update on the current cost review measures being discussed. Plans to review the current travel management plan for matchdays were also discussed.

Media - An overview was given on our increases in social following, including the fourth highest increase in Twitter followers in the League this season. iFollow income surpassed £200,000 with the most followed game so far this season being Barnsley away, with 1,803 passes. The continued efforts to support Nick Anderton following his cancer diagnosis were discussed. Nick and his family will continue to have the board's full support.

Catering - Success in the away bar were celebrated with overall bars takings at 25% ahead of where they were pre-Covid. Kiosk sales are also trending above the previous average. An overview of the improvements in the Fanzone were also discussed.

Academy - An overview was given of the new staff that have joined the A academy over the course of the season. The vision, values and strategy of the academy were discussed along with the one-, three- and five-year plans. It was also noted the significant improvements that have been made in the Academy following the recent PGAAC safe to operate audit where the auditors commended the progress that has been made over the past year.

Community - The exemplary rating given during the recent EFL and Premier League capability status audit was celebrated. The continued progress of the Gas Girls and the provisions for the future stages of their development was discussed. An overview of current funding, finances and initiatives was also discussed. Most notably, the collaboration between our current pasty suppliers 'Phat Pasty', the club and the Trust to provide kit to African team Rusinga Rovers.

The board would like to place on record their thanks to all of the department heads and club staff for their efforts in providing the reports and driving continuous improvement across all aspects of the club.

CEO Report

Following the review of the report, the board heard a presentation from CEO Tom Gorringe.

This started with an update on current club finances. The club had budgeted to make a loss, funded by the continued investment from Wael Al Qadi. The budget set at the start of the season included a record level of turnover on top of the ownership investment. The current management accounts (December) were reviewed, showing a £537,488 over performance so far this season on turnover to budget. However, costs were also higher than budgeted, largely down to an approved over-spend on the first-team squad. It was confirmed that the audited accounts for year ending June 2022 were due for imminent release.

The club's matchday reporting mechanism was shared, showing matchday turnover across all touch-points is currently £116,427 ahead of the budgeted figure.

An overview was also given on the club's strategic objectives:

- Infrastructure Improvements
- Sustainability
- Youth
- Develop the Fanbase
- Continual Improvement
- Community

Football Update

An overview of the first half of the season was provided, looking at a few KPIs that we use to gauge performance. An overview of the current squad and plans/strategy to improve during the January window were also discussed.

Changes to the Articles of Association

Several changes to the Articles of Association were mandated by the EFL and our legal representatives highlighted some other clauses that were out-dated or required amendment. The proposed changes have been shared with all shareholders and were voted through in the AGM, which took place after the Board Meeting.

A 'new deal' for football

The club and the board remain supportive of discussions around a change to the financial distribution of football. We believe that both redistribution and reform are needed within our game in order to create a sustainable football pyramid for clubs at all levels. We await the Government White Paper following the fan-led review, as well as updates from the EFL and Premier League on their discussions.

Future Plans

Several items were presented to the Board for input, discussion and to agree the proposed next steps. This included the proposal to look to increase the capacity of The Memorial Stadium in the summer of 2023, through the installation of a new South Stand.

It was agreed to take this proposal to the next stage, in order to create more detailed plans for further consideration and discussion.

Initial options and strategy for Phase Two of the development of the Quarters were also discussed. The CEO was given the mandate to further explore these options to look to continue to improve the facilities for the first-team, Academy and wider community.

An update was provided on the club's ambitions for a new stadium, which remains a priority.

Supporters' Club Update

A report was provided on the current initiatives being run by the Supporters' Club. The Supporters' Club Board representatives posed questions to the clubs HoDs from their members.

It was agreed that the following work would continue:

- Away Travel Organisation
- Sale of Matchday Programmes and 50/50 tickets
- Priority Ticketing (ongoing liaison with FC to provide membership data for integration with Ticketmaster)
- Liaison with the club on matters raised by the Fans (where these matters cannot be directly resolved by the Supporters Club or Fans Directors).
- Support of all Supporters Club initiatives, with particular focus on the Cap initiative.

In addition, it was agreed that the club, Supporters' Club and Disabled Supporters Association will set-up a working group to work together to identify and tackle issues, as well as improving the facilities for supporters with additional needs.

Board of Directors

Applications are on-going to list all Directors on Companies House. Following the meeting, Karim Mardam Bey resigned from his position to explore new opportunities. He leaves with the Board's best wishes and we would like to thank him for his efforts whilst in post.

AGM/Date of next meeting

Following the Board Meeting, a shareholders' AGM took place at The Memorial Stadium. Seven resolutions were all passed with an overwhelming majority.

The next Board Meeting is booked in for May 2023, with the next AGM scheduled to take place in December 2023.