



Cardiff City Supporters Trust – 2nd Preliminary Meeting

**Saturday 8th December 2007 – The Lansdowne, Lansdowne Road,
Canton, Cardiff**

Meeting Chaired by Paul Corkrey (PC).

Total 57 in attendance.

An agenda was prepared for the meeting, and while the topics for discussion were touched on during the meeting, as is inevitable with 57 in attendance, the flow of the meeting moved around the issues for discussion. Hopefully these meeting notes reflect the content and discussion which took place during the meeting.

Opening Remarks

PC welcomed everyone to the meeting, and explained that this was another step towards preparing for the “Open Meeting” which will take place in the New Year.

The intention is for a smaller Steering Group to take the Trust idea forward and put in the groundwork which is required before the Open Meeting formally launching the Trust can be held.

The Steering Group will act as a working group and will remain in place until the Trust's first AGM at which a formal committee will be elected.

PC explained that the Cardiff City Supporters Trust will be receiving support from Supporters Direct, whose aim is to offer support and advice and information to groups of supporters wishing to play a part in the life of the clubs they support. Supporters Direct have a 3 stage template available which takes a new Trust through the setting-up process right through to the first AGM, and the intention is to follow this template with some adaptations which allow for the particular circumstances.

PC outlined the intention of the Trust to become an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) – this is the model adopted by the vast majority of trusts in the UK and is regarded as the most democratic and transparent.

PC stressed that everyone who joined the Trust would have an equal share in the organisation, there would be no distinction based on the amount of money contributed by individuals.

In terms of objectives, a number of proposals have already been floated on the Trust's message board by individuals, and there are some excellent suggestions. There will no doubt be some long-term overarching objectives for the Trust, but there may well be smaller aims and objectives which might be short-term in duration – one example was campaigning for a statue of Fred Keenor to be placed outside the new stadium.

It was stressed that a Trust would not be anti-football club, and should ultimately benefit the organisation by involving the community and enabling the club to tap into representative views of supporters. While any Trust will be independent of existing supporters' organisations such as CCSC, The 1927 Club and others, it is likely that a large number of potential Trust members will be members of a supporters organisation, and the Trust would work alongside existing organisations.

Possible Aims and Objectives

PC introduced Geraint Jones (GJ) of the Wales Co-Operative Centre to the meeting. GJ has already been extremely helpful in taking the Trust concept forward, and are willing to offer assistance and advice through the process.

GJ stressed that it was for supporters to decide what the Trust would become and its aims and objectives. It is vital that ideas are floated, information is provided and supporters discuss proposals. Before the Open Meeting proceeds – there is a need to establish that there is a mandate and supporters actually want a Trust to be established.

GJ added that there were currently over 120 Trusts established in the UK with Spurs Supporters Trust being one of the biggest with in excess of 20k members. GJ also pointed to the example of the Manchester United Supporters Trust who had been pivotal in the establishment of FC United following the Glazer Takeover.

While there was no point in discussing legalities in detail at this stage, GJ was clear that in his view any Trust needed to be inclusive of the Cardiff City fan base - and the fledgling Trust needed to be mindful of the need for inclusivity when deciding on meeting venues, and channels of communication. There was a discussion on how to enable supporters based abroad to play a full part in the life of the Trust.

The not for profit principle of the Trust was explained – any profits made by the Trust would be reinvested into delivering the aims and objectives of the organisation. GJ also explained how existing supporters holding shares in the club would be able to proxy their voting rights to the Supporters Trust if they so desired.

GJ distributed a list of sample aims and objectives for the Trust, which is reproduced on page 7 of these notes. These had been put together from

ideas suggested by supporters and researching the aims and objectives of other Trusts already operating. They are a starting point designed to start a discussion – nothing more and will be refined as supporters talk about them.

GJ was of the view that if 200-300 people complete an 'Expression of Interest' form, then that will enable the Open Meeting to go ahead on a firm foundation, and will enable the fledgling Trust to establish some power and influence. The open meeting would finally provide a mandate to make a Cardiff City supporters trust a reality.

Before the meeting moved to formal reports on progress so far, the meeting was opened up to questions to enable points made by PC and GJ to be clarified and to enable supporters present to ask any specific questions about the Trust and the process and how it would work.

Questions from the Floor

How would the Trust seek to raise interest and how many people would be needed?

- More people who join, obviously the better
- Need to widen the provision of information beyond the website and message board – PC has been in contact with Andrew Turton at 'The Thin Blue Line' and they have agreed to place an article about the Trust in a future issue and carry expression of interest forms.
- PC will liaise with CCSC to enable Expression of Interest Forms to be carried on buses to Bristol City next week
- Noted that Soccer Sunday and local press were in attendance at the meeting today and as things move forward there will be a need to ensure these links remain strong as they are a key player in getting the message out to supporters.

If the Trust was established as a charitable organisation – this would mean supporters could 'Gift Aid' donations

- Trust needs to be established first.
- While legal structure likely to be that of Industrial and Provident Society (IPS), does not necessarily mean that organisation would be charitable.

When is it planned to hold the “Open Meeting”?

- Steering Group will set a date for the key open meeting and work backwards
- Vital that the meeting is planned properly and actions that need to take place are completed before the Open Meeting takes place as that will give the Trust the best possible chance of getting off to a successful start.

- Those who are on the Steering Group step down before the first AGM at which a Committee is formally elected and those who are part of the Steering Group now are not committing themselves beyond that point.

There has been talk of different scales of fees for Trust Members. How does that work?

- Members of the Trust will decide how any fee structure will operate but vital that Trust is inclusive so any fees payable should be within the financial reach of all supporters.
- There can be a standard fee or different categories of Trust membership – the important thing to remember is that whatever is paid or donated by the individual, each person is only able to have 1 share in the Trust and no-more. The organisation will then operate on the principle of 'one share, one vote'

How big will the Trust Committee be?

- That depends on the size of the Trust and the aims and objectives it adopts – these will be decided by Trust membership
- A wide variety of structures and size of committee amongst existing Trust. Wimbledon Trust for example use a system of sub-committees working on a task and finish basis to deliver particular objectives set by the Trust membership.

What is the Trust for and how does it differ from the existing Supporters' organisations?

- Main aim of Trust may well be to be seen as the representative and democratic voice of the supporters. This may help to overcome the situation that has existed in the past when the club have approached representatives of different organisations for views or to spread the opinion of the club or individuals amongst the fan base. Should also mean the supporters voice is more powerful, as Trust representatives will be dealing with the club from the position of representing the views of a democratic supporter's body.
- A long-term aim of the Trust may also be to buy shares in the club, and to possibly ultimately have a representative on the Board of the club – giving supporters a voice at the heart of the club. Any stake built up in the club would not be for speculation, and as the ownership of the club changes the Trust would be there as a constant; always representing supporters interests.
- Unlike the existing organisations, the Trust will be legally constituted, as opposed to a member's organisation, which forms around a constitution.
- The basis of the Supporters Trust movement is set around democratic governance – the limitations of which will be set by the members.
- Also view in the room that the club takes supporters for granted and supporters feel remote and divorced from the club, and a strong Trust would enable that particular problem to be addressed.

How many members meetings would be held each year apart from the AGM and possible social occasions?

- Will be dependent on what the members want and issues that arise during the year.
- While the Trust Committee will have delegated powers, it may be that at times they need to call open meeting to discuss particular issues.
- All meetings of the Trust committee will be minuted and made available to members, and the Trust will seek to build on the coverage of Trust meetings by VRTV – as this is an excellent way of involving those members who may not be able to attend in person.
- A wide variety of communication methods with the membership will be put in place including e-mail, newsletters etc. It may well be that in order to be as inclusive as possible members will be able to cast votes using e-mail, proxies etc. on the issues that matter if they are not able to get to meetings.
- One of the misgivings expressed at the meeting was the impact of the club's huge catchment area on the operation of the Trust, and there was some discussion on how this could be overcome.

Where will the money come from to buy shares in the club?

- From membership fees and donations, if the supporters decide that one of the aims of the Trust should be to establish a stake in the club.
- The fledgling Trust has already been promised £34k worth of proxy shares in the club by individuals who are willing to give control of the voting rights of those shares if the Trust is set up in a properly constituted, transparent and democratic manner.
- Leighton Andrews (AM) who was in attendance at the meeting noted that he had a copy of the shareholders register and he had also spoken to Matt Burge (CEO of club sponsors Communications Direct) at a function on the previous evening and he had been willing for Leighton to convey an offer of support from Communications Direct to the meeting – the offer of support will be explored further by the Steering Group.
- Important to note that the purchase of shares may well be a long-term aim, in the short-term the aim was to establish structured dialogue with the club with the Trust representative speaking with the authority of being an elected representative voice of the fans.
- An example given, was that if Trust had 2k members paying £4 per month – in five years time that could equate to almost £500k in the bank. In times gone by that would have been more than enough to secure a seat on the board of the club.

Progress Reports –

Bank Account

Tim W (TW) reported that a bank account had now been opened and pending incorporation of the Trust it was a clubs & societies account. 2 signatories

including TW and PC are required to access any of the funding. The fledgling Trust already has £1600 pledged and more donations were received at the meeting meaning that the organisation already has a positive balance of nearly £2k.

Web site/Data Base

Mike Morris (MM) reported that a Trust Message board has been established at the cardiffcity.com site and available at www.ccmb.co.uk . Trust website has also been established which already contains links to minutes of meetings, VRTV coverage of Trust issues and other useful links - www.ccfctrust.org .

The aim is for the Trust website to become a focal point for Trust activities. MM will work with others on setting up a database of interested supporters using the Expression of Interest forms filled in at the meeting. A key task for MM will be to set up a web based Expression of Interest Form which will enable supporters who are unable to make meetings to express their interest in being part of the Trust.

Forming a Steering Group to prepare for the Open Meeting

A decision was taken not to allocate specific positions to supporters interested in forming the Steering Group at this stage – at this stage it is vital that all offers of help are welcomed and all meetings should be open to all in the interests of inclusivity.

Supporters present at the meeting were asked to complete an Expression of Interest form outlining their skills and nay help they were willing to give in establishing the Trust. The Expression of Interest form will be available on-line and circulated through existing supporters groups to ensure the Trust is inclusive as possible.

The next meeting will take place at The Duke of Clarence on Cowbridge Road East on Monday 17th December 2007, where planning for the Open Meeting will begin in earnest. It is likely that a smaller group of supporters will be at this meeting to take the proposal and process forward but any supporter who is willing to assist or interested in the process is welcome to attend.

Although all the preparation work, mentioned in the minutes, is useful, it should also be noted that it is only work done to prepare for the possibility that that the supporters will want a Trust set up. It could all be for nothing.

Nothing is set up yet, no mandate has been established

The open meeting that will take place in the New Year will hopefully sanction the setting up of the Trust and therefore provide a mandate to take it forward.

At the Open meeting “Supporters Direct” will attend to further explain the merits of a supporters trust; hopefully there will also be a representative a supporter’s trust already set up by another club.

All through the process and beyond we intend to work closely with supporters Direct, who will not only help us establish a trust, but continue to guide us once the Trust has been set up.

<http://www.supporters-direct.org/>

Proposed Supporters Trust Statement of Aims (For Discussion)

The operating principles of Cardiff City Supporters Trust (CCST) will be based on internationally recognised co-operative principles. In particular, to be a fully inclusive, democratically run, not for profit distribution organisation, established to represent supporters and dedicated to work for the common benefit of supporters and club.

The possible aims of Cardiff City Supporters Trust are to:-

- Be a vehicle for communication and to strengthen the bond between Cardiff City Football Club, its stakeholders, and the communities it serves.
- To encourage Cardiff City Football Club to take full account of the needs of its supporters and local communities in its decision-making.
- To seek the views and opinions of all stakeholders, communities and supporters in promoting Cardiff City Football Club.
- To advance the principle of democratically elected supporters representation on the Board of Directors of Cardiff City Football Club.
- To buy and hold shares giving a voting right in Cardiff City Football Club.
- To be a vehicle for ensuring the highest level of democratic governance in the management of Cardiff City Football Club in particular stressing the need for transparency and communication.
- To further the development of the game of football as a recreational and sporting activity and as a focus for community regeneration.

The above are just some examples of aims and objectives a Cardiff City Trust could attempt to achieve.

They are for discussion and debate only.

If the trust is set up the members will decide which aims and objectives they want for their Trust.