

## **Trust meeting with the club – 16 September 2014**

*Tim Hartley and Keith Morgan from the Trust Board had a chance to introduce themselves to the club's new General Manager, Ken Choo at a meeting at the stadium. They told him about the Trust's work and put your questions to Ken, his team and to the club Chairman, Mehmet Dalman. Here's their report.*

We kicked off the meeting by asking once again what were Vincent Tan's intentions regarding his investment in the club and when will he convert his debt to equity? Mehmet told us that Mr Tan still intended to do this but that the debt will remain, and increase as he puts more money in. It is unlikely that the debt will be transferred into outright ownership until we are back in the Premier League and additional income streams are again available.

The question most of us want answered is when will we return to playing in blue or at least have a 'compromise' kit? Club staff told us that some small compromises were already visible – the new backgrounds for much of the new signage, the match day programme, and marketing materials are in both red and blue, Craig Noone is wearing blue in the poster on the front of the stadium and there is quite a lot of blue merchandise in the club shop. We said that almost every conversation we have with members returns to this issue and that it continues to be a big deal for fans. We were told that Vincent Tan has a very strong attachment to the colour red and that he may consider a compromise, but not until we are back in the Premier League. The Trust will continue to campaign on your behalf for a return to blue as soon as possible.

Mehmet Dalman was very honest when we asked him how the club is run. He said that there are three board meetings a year but as we have a single major shareholder the directors and indeed the Chairman have little real power. We asked what the Malaysian directors do on the board. Mehmet said they have no executive role but that they oversee how Mr Tan's investment is being managed and the money is spent. We had been told at previous meetings that the club was looking to bring someone with considerable football experience into the boardroom and it was interesting to see Glenn Roeder at the recent Middlesbrough match. Mehmet is keen not to create any conflict with a manager but said that there are still re ways of getting some additional advice and experience into the club.

Ken Choo introduced himself to us. He's an accountant by profession, is Vincent Tan's personal appointment and said he had full executive powers at the club. Ken talked us through the present financial situation. Our income this season will drop from £80m to £40m and there have been and will be cuts to the budget and like all clubs we must adhere to the financial fair play rules. We are likely to see more players go out on loan so that the wage bill is kept under control. Mehmet Dalman added that things look ok for this season but that if do not get promoted then the club will be in serious financial difficulty.

Some members have been concerned at the lack of communication between the club and fans and want to know who the new Supporter Liaison Officer is. We were introduced to the new SLO, Adam Gilliatt, a Cardiff City who has worked for the club for 5 years. He will continue to work in the Stadium Department but has already made contact with all the Championship clubs that we have hosted and visited. Adam can be found on the terrace and

outside turnstiles in his purple tabard and is the first point of contact for all supporter based queries, issues and complaints. We wish him all the best in his new position. The SLO role is a UEFA requirement and we want it to become a proper channel of communication between fans and the club.

The Travel Group meetings are being broadened and will now be called 'SLO' meetings. Adam has arranged the first meeting of this group on Thursday 9th October at 6pm at the Stadium. The agenda will include discussion of recent Home Office arrest & banning order statistics, a review of recent away fixtures, upcoming games, stadium issues and views on electronic cigarettes at the stadium. If you are interested in representing the Trust at these meetings then please contact us at [help@ccfctrust.org](mailto:help@ccfctrust.org)

We suggested to the club that there needs to be a more structured relationship with fans and were glad that the Chairman supported the idea of a Fans Forum where we can all sit down with the club's staff and discuss those things which matter to us. The club said it would schedule the first Fans Forum for the next international break and we look forward to them becoming a regular fixture throughout the season. We also want regular fans meetings with the manager and to the stadium for Trust members.

We joined Citizens Cardiff in writing to the club in January asking them join the likes of Manchester City and become a 'Living Wage' employer. The Living Wage is different from the Minimum Wage, is set independently and is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK. More than 500 organisations are now accredited as Living Wage employers, including the Welsh Government and Cardiff Council. The club says it is still considering this and we will continue to press for it to pay the Living Wage to their directly-employed and subcontracted staff.

The 5 year price freeze comes to an end next year and many members are concerned that the cost of season tickets may become prohibitive. The club has been considering this for some time but the price of tickets will depend on where we are at the end of the season. Wayne Nash told us that they do not want a big hike in prices and also that they want to reward fans for their loyalty. Prices for families have been reduced this season and there will be more promotions channelled through season ticket holders so that they can bring their friends and family to the stadium at reduced prices. One Trust members was concerned that offers were only being made via Facebook. We were told that Facebook, twitter and the club's website are all used at the same time to push these deals.

A member in the new Upper Ninian Stand said he was disappointed at the range of food and drink on offer compared to the Lower Stand. The club now has a full licence for the new stand, three kiosks and two bars have been built and will serve the whole range of food and beers. The club hopes the audio visual facilities in the Upper Stand will also be ready for the next home game. It has also been noted that non-official merchandise is more prevalent at games than official merchandise. The club says it is looking to re-energise the club shop with new visuals and a different range of content.

Following the revelation of the content of texts between Malky Mackay and Iain Moody we received more than one request for the club to make a statement condemning all forms of discrimination. These members said that homosexuality was a crime in Malaysia and that the club should make its opposition to this clear. Mehmet Dalman said that the club is not discriminatory and that in every interview he has given he has condemned any such behaviour, but that he will not at this stage be making any further public statement. We were told that Vincent Tan has made it clear to all his staff that prejudice and discrimination will not be tolerated in any of his companies. The club will soon be putting posters in the concourses giving fans a text number to call if they hear any racist or offensive language. Every such incident is recorded by the club and South Wales Police have a positive arrest policy on these matters.

While the club has successfully improved the experience of the visiting supporters, Trust members have asked what it is planning to do for the home fans. Wayne Nash said this could be discussed at the new SLO meetings but was more than happy for us to bring forward new ideas. So, if you have something you think could improve the atmosphere at the Cardiff City Stadium then email us at [help@ccfctrust.org](mailto:help@ccfctrust.org)

It was good to have the opportunity to put your questions to the club but let's hope that do not have to wait six months for the next meeting. We will of course look forward to working with Ken, the new General Manager and with Adam as Supporters Liaison Officer in the interests of all supporters.