

moving to a different beat



CARDIFF CITY SUPPORTERS' TRUST

SEPTEMBER 2021

ABOUT THE TRUST

Cardiff City Supporters Trust (CCST), is a formally constituted democratic and not-for-profit organisation of City fans who, like all other Supporters Trusts, is committed to giving City fans a voice in the decision-making process of the Club and to strengthening the links between the Club and the community it serves. CCST was set up in 2008 and since then has worked to influence the running of the club at a strategic level as well as representing its members views.

The Trust, on a regular basis, works with the club to resolve specific issues for members relating to all aspects of the match day experience.

The Trust Office is located near Gate 5 and is open on matchday. Normally, Trust Board Members are present so there is an opportunity for members to raise any issues they may have or offer ideas. In any case, just call in for a chat if you so wish.

WHAT WE DO

- Maintain a regular dialogue with the club on behalf of our members. Each month we meet with Club representatives to discuss current issues and, prior to these meetings, we invite members to submit questions or issues that they may need resolution. Such issues may range from those of a high level nature to those relating to the match day experience.
- On a regular basis the Trust Chair will meet with the Senior Management of the club to discuss issues of a strategic nature. Issues dealt with at such meetings may relate to governance, finance (e.g. annual accounts, conversion of debt to equity), and matters that cannot be resolved at lower levels of consultation.
- CCST, like all Supporters Trusts, places great emphasis on the bond between the club, its supporters and, importantly, the community. Encouraging a positive image for the club in all local communities and helping overturn negative attitudes and prejudice towards it is an important aspect of Trust objectives.
- CCST maintains a shareholding in Cardiff City FC on behalf of its members. This ensures representation at shareholder and other extraordinary meetings to allow a voice for the views of CCST members.
- Through its umbrella body the Football Supporters Association (FSA), CCST seeks to influence the approach taken by the Football Authorities on issues of a national and international nature. The recent controversy regarding the formation of a European Super League is one where the Trust was able to feedback views.
- CCST gives financial support to benefit the community and other appropriate good causes. Each year we invite members to nominate a local charity to support and then raise funds for it accordingly by such methods as arranging a quiz night and organising match day bucket collections in conjunction with the club.
- We produce a free quarterly magazine for members covering a wide variety of football issues from those of a nostalgic nature to those of national significance.
- Our aim is to achieve supporter representation on the board of Cardiff City FC.



CCFCTRUST.ORG

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR.

At the time of writing, our season has got off to a mixed start with us in the top 10 of the Championship. Where we will eventually finish is hard to guess in what is (as always) a highly competitive League and will be likely to depend on activity in the transfer windows, as well as avoiding injuries and suspensions of key players.

This season will also be different in that most clubs continue to try and operate under significant financial restrictions caused by the Covid lockdown period so player wage and transfer budgets will almost certainly be tight for Cardiff City now that parachute payments have also ended.

As a Trust, we will continue to represent our members views to the club at a senior level. We have been involved in matters such as settling queries and problems of members regarding season ticket renewals, in the Peter Whittingham tribute arrangements, the proposed establishment of a Cardiff City Museum at the stadium and we will also continue to liaise with the club on matters of a strategic nature as they arise.

On our return to the stadium I was saddened to hear of the death since we were last able to attend games of one of the Trust's stalwart members Heather Mann. My condolences go to her husband Clive and of course to all members who have lost loved ones in recent times

Please enjoy this magazine. I look forward to meeting some of you at the Trust office near gate 5 of the stadium now that we are back watching the game "in the flesh".

Keith Morgan, Chair

GAIR O'R GADAIR.

Wrth i mi sgwennu hyn mae'r tymor wedi bod yn eitha cymysg mor belled gyda ni'n aros yn neg ucha'r Bencampwriaeth. Mae'n anodd dweud lle wnewn ni ddiweddu lan yn y gynghrair sydd (fel arfer) yn un cystadleuol iawn, fydd yn ddibynnol ar drosglwyddiadau yn ogystal ag osgoi anafiadau a diarddeliadau i chwaraewyr allweddol.

Bydd y tymor hwn hefyd yn wahanol wrth i'r rhan fwyaf o glybiau barhau i weithio o dan amgylchiadau ariannol tynn oherwydd cyfnod clo Covid a bydd cyllidebau i dalu chwaraewyr a throsglwyddiadau yn rhwym o fod yn dynn i Ddinas Caerdydd nawr bod y taliadau 'disgyn' wedi dod i ben.

Fel Ymddiriedolaeth byddwn yn parhau i gynrychioli barn ein aelodau i'r clwb ar lefel uchel. Ryn ni wedi bod yn rhan o drafodaethau ynglŷn â phroblemau aelodau gydag adnewyddu tocynnau tymor, trefniadau ar gyfer teyrnged teilwng i Peter Whittingham a chynllun arfaethedig ar gyfer Amgueddfa C.P. D. Dinas Caerdydd yn y stadiwm, a byddwn yn parhau i gydlynnu gyda'r clwb ar faterion o natur strategol wrth iddyn nhw godi.

Wrth i ni ddychwelyd i'r stadiwm rown i wedi dristau o glywed ers y tro diwethaf i ni allu wyllo gemau, am farwolaeth un o selogion yr Ymddiriedolaeth, Heather Mann. Cydymdeimladau dwys i'w gŵr Clive ac wrth gwrs i bob aelod sydd wedi colli anwylion yn ddiweddar.

Mwynhewch y cylchgrawn yma. Rwy'n edrych ymlaen at weld rhai ohonoch yn swyddfa'r Ymddiriedolaeth wrth Giât 5 y stadiwm nawr ein bod yn gwyllo'r gem "yn y cnawd."

Keith Morgan, Cadeirydd

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THE NEW RISKS WE HAVE TO TAKE.

Trust Member and author of the Blog on all things Cardiff City "Mauve and Yellow Army", Paul Evans writes about the changes Covid has made to his Cardiff City supporting life.

As an overweight sixty five year old with atrial fibrillation, I followed the rules religiously during Covid lockdowns and there's no way I would have gone along to City games when the 19/20 season restarted or during 20/21, even if I'd been allowed to.

In the spring of 2020, I would take my one permitted "exercise period" very early in the morning and that would be it for me for the day, unless it was one of the very rare occasions when I'd do some essential shopping (a volunteer used to do my weekly shop) or I had to visit the doctors. As spring turned into summer and the rules were relaxed a little, so my one walk a day became two and I'd meet up with a fellow dog walking friend of mine now and again, but I was still a stickler for the rules (more so than many older acquaintances who were, on the face of it, more at risk than me).

However, despite my precautions, it was a very unnerving experience to discover around June that my sense of smell had all but disappeared and that things were tasting different to what they normally did. Stupidly, I did not get myself tested at the time because I believed your sense of smell had to disappear completely for it to be Covid and I could still catch a fleeting aroma of things for a second or two before they'd fade to nothing. My sense of taste recovered completely within about ten days, but the problem I had smelling things remained. However, as the weeks turned into months, it was clear that, if I'd had Covid, I was lucky in that it was a mild dose of it.

BY PAUL EVANS

"I only missed one home game in the 1970s and, until early last year, had only missed four home matches in the twenty first century."

Doctors I spoke to told me I'd probably had the disease, but they couldn't be fully sure and I learned to live with how my sense of smell had changed until, early in the New Year, I noticed that it was coming back gradually. Consequently, I had about three weeks when things returned to normal, before fading again and it has not recovered since. Although I didn't think of it at the time, I realised eventually that the return of my damaged sense of smell coincided exactly with when I got my first Covid vaccine and my GP has told me that this makes him about 99 per cent sure I caught Covid in the summer of 2020.

To be honest, I spent the first half of last season believing I'd had Covid and so it might be that I was immune to catching it again. So, although it was never likely to happen in Wales, when limited crowds were allowed back into matches in some parts of England late last year, it did cross my mind that I might



"As an overweight sixty five year old with atrial fibrillation, I followed the rules religiously during Covid lockdowns..."

have a chance to watch City play again sooner than I was expecting.

I would definitely have rejected such a possibility though. My thinking on attending games again was shaped by my attitude towards the flu vaccine I've had around October every year for about a decade – once I've had my jab, I don't give flu another thought all winter and so I reasoned that I would return to Cardiff City Stadium once I'd had a Covid vaccination. Of course, I'd figured without the need for two vaccines (I had mine in February and May), so it was always going to be that fans were likely to be allowed back in to games for the start of the 21/22 campaign.

To digress for a short while, I only missed one home game in the 1970s and, until early last year, had only missed four home matches in the twenty first century, all for reasons of ill health. Although it's daft at my age to think like this, when you're on a "run" like those two, it became not a case of going to games because you want to, but because you have to!

However, just before lockdown, I had to admit defeat to Storm Dennis. If I had still lived in Cardiff, I would have been able to get along to the ground no problem, but, having moved to Treherbert in 2018, the flooded roads and train lines that lie between me and Cardiff City Stadium presented too big an obstacle to me attending the game with Wigan in which Keiffer Moore scored both of their goals in a 2-2 draw.



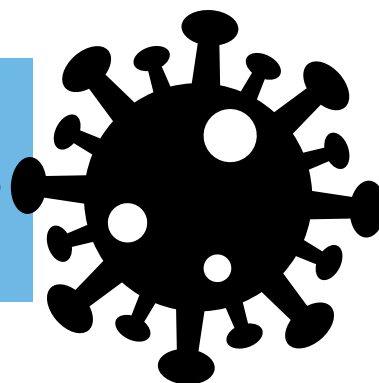
So, my run of attending games unless I was poorly had ended before the full horror of Covid was unleashed on the UK and this may have had an influence on my changed attitude towards attending games now.

Time was, I would have been at the pre-season games with Southampton and Newport, but I gave them a miss and decided on the Barnsley season opener as the day I would see my first "in the flesh" City match in just short of eighteen months. Even so, as matchday dawned, I still had doubts about going and there were times on that Saturday morning when I almost convinced myself not to bother. Why I felt like that, I'm not really sure – I definitely feel a lot safer now I've had my jabs, but there is still a residue of fear which is hard to pin down.

For example, pre lockdown, I had increasingly been travelling to and from matches on the train and I used that means of transport once or twice during the time of my exile from watching City, but there's no way I'm going to travel on a train as packed as they used to get after matches, so it's the car only for me for the foreseeable future.



"There's no way I'm going to travel on a train as packed as they used to get after matches, so it's the car only for me for the foreseeable future."



I eventually pushed my doubts to one side and went along to the Barnsley game, but it all felt a bit strange. I sat with my old schoolmate, who I hadn't seen since the game with Brentford 29 February 2020 and it was as if the last eighteen months hadn't happened between us. However, despite there being no one sat within yards of us, I still had this vague feeling of danger – it was hardly a "I've got to get out of here" panic, more that something wasn't quite right.

Covid cannot be blamed entirely for the slight cooling of my love affair with City though. Missing that Wigan match means the spell has been broken to some extent. Furthermore, I think it was more memories of all of those cup ties I've seen since the 2012 League Cup Final where a couldn't-be-bothered City team have been outplayed and beaten by sides they should be swatting aside that made me say no the Sutton League Cup match.

I also have to admit that the likelihood that I'm going to be bored watching us playing in a manner which I don't like enters my calculations these days. Strangely though, despite so much of the Millwall game fitting this description, I must say that I felt much more at home watching it. This was the team I've felt so comfortable supporting for nearly sixty years playing at a venue that, like Ninian Park before it, I've loved

attending throughout my life – I came out of the game feeling exhilarated and realising that it was a feeling I'd not experienced in almost a year and a half – I'll be back for more!

I daresay that some will read this and think "what a wuss" and, to an extent, I'd agree. However, unless you're old enough to have experienced the Second World War, almost all of us have been through something the like of which we've never had to face in our lives before over the past year and a half and it isn't over yet.

I can't entirely explain my feelings as outlined here myself, but would just say that we're all different (I know of a fair few City fans who are still not attending because of Covid) and tolerance and understanding of opinions which differ from yours is as important now as it has ever been – Lord knows, the world could do with more of that now.



THE WORLD AT YOUR FEET.

Tim Hartley's "The World at Your Feet" follows on from, "Kicking Off in North Korea," itself an enjoyable meander around the author's world of travelling the football globe.

Like Tim Hartley's writing. For me, he combines the wide-eyed wonder of an eleven-year-old with worldly-wise contemplations born from his lifetime in PR and the media. The fact that he chooses football as a vehicle for his thoughts in this title, puts this latest work even further up my "must read" list.

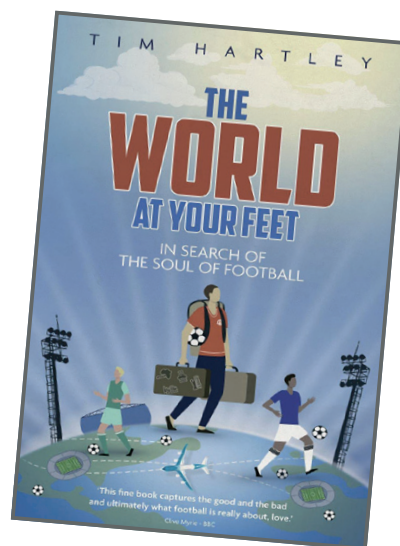
Hartley opens this odyssey by, helpfully, describing his first ever trip to a football match. Ninian Park in the 70s. This was the former home of Cardiff City, an arena renowned for its "boisterous" atmosphere. The author captures the mood of the time well, establishing his early fascination both with events on the field and wider terrace culture. It set the tone for a lifetime of football studies.

We read how the grown-up Hartley experienced football culture under Covid-19 restrictions, glimpsed the game behind the Iron Curtain and formed thoughts on "football tourists." Not many of us have experienced the Beautiful Game "Hong Kong" style, but Tim has - and explains the experiences to us.

Do not be mistaken though, by dismissing this title as a mere collection of boozy stories from Bulgarian Bars.

Sure, Tim moans about the price of a Guinness at Stanstead Airport but he also peels away the layers behind each trip, explaining how the games are central to it all but not the whole experience. Chuck in the writer's incisive commentaries on life in Gabon, Finland, Dublin and we have a book which delivers more than you might expect.

The author appears almost misty eyed, in recounting the story of the Homeless World Cup, held in Cardiff in 2019. One of the most emotional football occasions I have had the privilege to attend.



BY DAVID COLLINS

Tim discusses racism, Russians in Klu Klux Kan hoods and the state of modern hooliganism. National Identity. Basques. Team GB and the Clapton Ultras. He champions football supporters as agents of change, tells how Welsh fans have travelled the globe on charity missions and meets families, friends and fans.

The most intriguing account occurs when Tim recalls his visit to HMP Prescott. The chapter has pathos, colour and empathy and he describes a football occasion which few have witnessed. This chapter perhaps sums up the whole book. Tim glances at life through a football lens. Whether this takes him to Barcelona or behind bars, to Cardiff or Korea. Few things diminish his love of the subject and his understanding of the place of the game to individuals, organisations, even states, around the world. At times, Tim Hartley looks at football as a microcosm of society. Of life itself, even.

The book is, of course, deeply rooted in football stories. It will probably appeal best to the "groundhopper" audience but there also enough reference to familiar teams, names and places to retain the audiences of most students of football, politics or social history. At times he is Michael Palin, at other times he is Danny Baker. Mostly though.... he is Tim Hartley.

The book works very well indeed and is certainly worth a read.

IT'S NOT OVER.

Rob Jeffery outlines the response to the European Super League proposals which created such consternation back in April.

The idea of a European Super League launched by 12 English, Spanish and Italian clubs did not necessarily come as a surprise.

After all, greed at the top level of football is nothing new.

What was astonishing, however, was the instant reaction from all quarters decrying the whole idea. Football clubs, politicians and, more importantly, supporters all manned the barricades in response to the self-perpetuating greed of these "big clubs" which had little regard for the rest of football.

Recognising the importance of football as a community asset the Government announced a fan-led review to be overseen by Tracey Crouch MP, a former Sports Minister. She has consulted fan groups, leagues, the FA, clubs at every level, academics and many more. An update on her initial findings has now been presented to Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. There is more work to be done before final recommendations are issued in the Autumn but the initial proposals give a good indication as to the direction of travel.

Whilst a number of stakeholders were consulted, it was made clear that it was the voice of the fans that came over the loudest and clearest. Supporters are the lifeblood of football and it is their passion, commitment and activism that are the foundations on which clubs survive. Owners, be they successful, incompetently well intentioned or just plain dodgy, may come and go but the

BY ROB JEFFERY

supporter is a constant. Fans are the strength of football and need to be nurtured and cherished.

The review makes it clear that football is no ordinary business. Our clubs play a critical social, civic and cultural role in local communities. Clubs need to be protected - sometimes from their owners who are, after all, simply the current custodians of a community asset. Equally, although clubs are not ordinary businesses, they should not be immune from the ordinary financial controls, checks, balances and behaviours that are good practice in any multi-million-pound company but are too often absent across the game.

The initial findings of the review are divided into a number of sections.

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Finance

It must be remembered that the sad demise of Bury FC emphasised the financial vulnerability of clubs and the pandemic has



“The sad demise of Bury FC emphasised the financial vulnerability of clubs and the pandemic has only served to make the situation worse.”

only served to make the situation worse. Financial risks were present at the top level of the game before the effects of the pandemic. The Deloitte Review of Football Finance 2020 showed clubs across the Premier league and EFL living beyond their means.

Operating at such a level of consistent losses is clearly unsustainable in the long term. The impact of the pandemic and the threat of possible future reductions in income expected as the broadcast market diversifies indicates that, without reform, English football could face an existential crisis in years to come unless pre-emptive action is taken now.

Regulation and Governance

The ESL proposal has arisen under the current regulatory framework, which should in itself be an indicator that the framework is not working. It has become evident from consultation that the football authorities have lost the trust and confidence of the fans as have, in a number of cases, clubs themselves. There has not been from football authorities a single, unified response to the problems of English football. It remains clear that there is currently no single body that is responsible for stewarding the game and that different organisations still have different views about what should be done. This continuing lack of coordination significantly reduces the confidence in the football authorities being

able to successfully address the problems identified.

It is also clear that the current governance structures in clubs and the football authorities have not delivered sufficiently on an equality, diversity and inclusion agenda. Significant contributions to the Panel indicate that football is an immature landscape lacking the basic data for improvement across a range of fundamental issues.

Throughout consideration of the problems faced by English football its greatest strength - the supporters - has shone through. As was said many times to the Panel in evidence, owners as temporary custodians of a community asset come and go but fans are forever. However, fans have been consistently underrepresented in football governance, something which appears to have led - in part - to the European Super League proposals. Fan engagement and influence is an important part of the game's governance at all levels and is identified as a key factor for the future.

Establishing an Independent Regulator

The initial findings underline the need for an Independent Regulator in football now given the amusingly appropriate acronym 'IREF'

IREF would be established to address issues that are most relevant to the risks to the game and already at least partially a matter of English Law - particularly financial regulation,



“Too many clubs have not made sufficient, meaningful progress...”

corporate governance and ownership. The related requirements are likely to include cost controls, real time financial monitoring, minimum governance requirements (including a requirement for independent non-executive directors on club boards) and revised separate tests for owners and directors of clubs on an initial and ongoing basis.

Protecting Heritage Assets

Strong evidence was presented showing that existing protections of key club heritage items of great cultural and emotional importance to fans is not sufficient. The most pressing of these has been the many clubs who appear to have lost the rights to their home grounds, but much evidence was also received of concerns relating to items such as club badges, location, colours and competitions. Proposals will be made that offer greater protection for these important assets through a ‘golden share’ for fans, giving veto powers over reserved items, to be held by a democratic legally constituted fan group.

Deepening Fan Engagement and Transparency

It became clear from the evidence provided that, while there has been progress with some clubs demonstrating excellent fan engagement and transparency, too many clubs have not made sufficient, meaningful progress. This lack of transparency also extends to football authorities. Proposals to mandate greater fan engagement, and in particular, measures that will seek to

provide for fan consultation on key issues will be further considered for the final recommendation

Apparently, there was no consensus in the evidence presented to the Review on the correct vehicle for such fan engagement, with suggestions such as fan appointed directors not universally favoured by supporter groups. Indeed, evidence was received from existing fan elected directors of some significant difficulties that they face. The final results of the Review’s fan survey are awaited and will inform the final decision on the approach to fan engagement.

Navigating Financial Gaps

Good governance must be allied to genuine financial reform. The Review will make recommendations on more effective cost controls and financial management across the pyramid. One of the most difficult issues in regard to Club financing and sustainability is the sharing of revenue and how best to ensure financial structures within and between leagues are constructed to enable clubs to successfully navigate the financial gaps between divisions which naturally arise as a result of market forces.

So called ‘parachute payments’ are seen as both a symptom and cause of some of the difficulties in ensuring club financial stability as clubs move, or aspire to move, or are threatened by a move, between divisions. They distort competition and drive unsustainable financial activity but recognise that they do also assist the ambition of promoted clubs and stability of relegated



“The review took a dim view of the existing working practice agreements between the Football Authorities.”

clubs. This is an area to be subject to further consideration.

Reforming Football Authorities' Governance

Significant evidence was produced of a need for greater independence in the decision-making structures of the existing football authorities – the Premier League, English Football League, The FA and National League.

The removal of club directors from the Board of the EFL and the National League with both appointing new independent directors would also be a welcome reform. With regard to the latter, urgent reform of the National League Board and voting structures is recommended as it has become clear that a significant part of the league has no confidence in the current set up.

The Football Supporters' Association survey of National League supporters identified that a strong majority supported the National League top division being absorbed into the EFL.

The findings of the review took a dim view of the existing working practice agreements between the Football Authorities.

Investing in Football and Growing Women's Football

The case for greater investment in grassroots football, amateur football, and women's football was made to the panel. Further work will be done to explore how parts of existing finance flows in football such as new or existing transfer and/or agent levies might be more usefully diverted to grow football in the country at the grassroots, amateur, and in the

women's game. Money should be found from within the game to nurture future stars, and to boost football in general.

Protecting the Welfare of Young Players

Compelling evidence was heard that the football industry needs to take greater steps to protect the welfare of young players, and in particular the vast majority of young players who become part of football academies but do not go on to have professional careers. It was recommended that the FA, Premier League, English Football League, National League and PFA urgently cooperate to develop a joined-up approach to player development and player care both inside and outside of football.

You can see that the breadth of the review so far has been very wide but has been described as “just the start”.

A commitment has been made to further substantive work over the coming months to take these proposals forward to a final report in the Autumn. What happens then? How will the Football Authorities and Clubs react? How will the final recommendations be implemented? There is a lot to be resolved and a lot of vested interest to overcome.

Meanwhile, back at the European Super League, on 30 July Barcelona, Real Madrid and Juventus committed themselves to continue plans for the ESL. Then it was announced that Barcelona could not afford to honour the new contract offered to Lionel Messi resulting in his departure to PSG. Arguably, Barcelona cannot not afford not to be in an ESL. It's not all over yet. It's going to be an interesting Autumn.

THE SKELETON IN THE CORNER.

Rob Phillips, BBC Wales Football Correspondent, recalls life during the pandemic as Managers' Press Conferences switched to Zoom...

As a journalist, it's a little bit disconcerting. Cardiff City manager Mick McCarthy is more familiar with the skeleton in my cupboard, than I am with any which might exist in his! Why, he has even had glimpses of my hardly palatial home. If you are confused, allow me to explain.

The tragic Covid pandemic altered all our lives. Working from home, where possible, has become increasingly the new normal. At BBC Wales Sport, I and my fellow football commentators have felt privileged to be YOUR eyes and ears at games during the various lockdowns. Take it from me, football is not the same without YOU the fans present. That was evident even sat in the press box amid the relatively small numbers for Cardiff's pre-season friendly with Newport County. Needless to say, the feeling was multiplied at the opening Championship home game against Barnsley. That occasion, mirrored around the UK, was emotional as football remembered fans and players who had passed away in the time the game has existed behind closed doors. No loss was felt more collectively at the Cardiff City Stadium than that of Bluebirds legend Peter Whittingham.

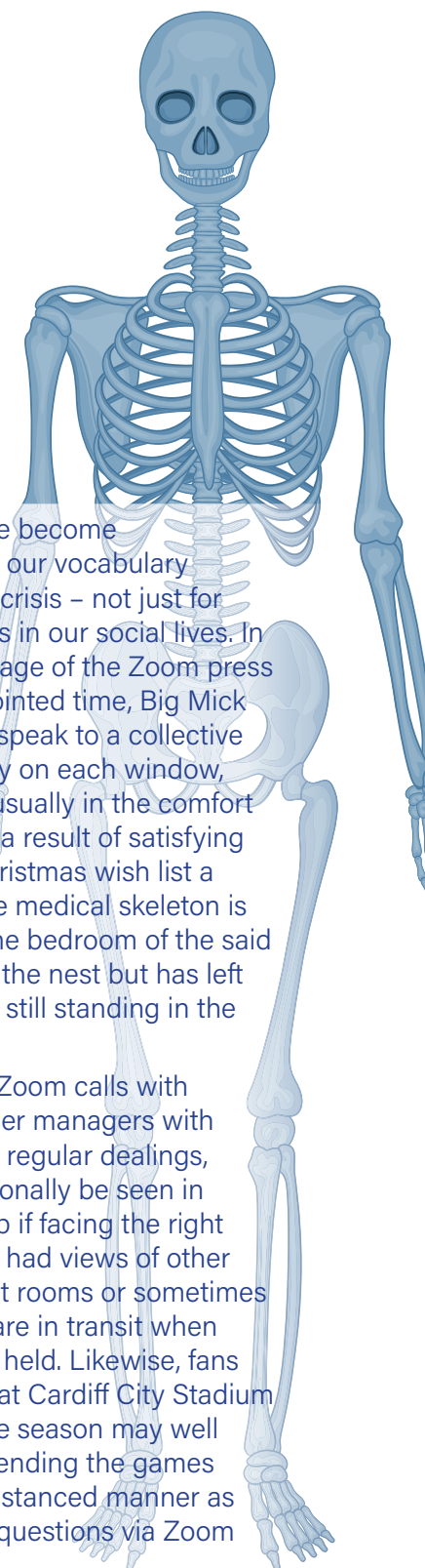
As I write this piece in the bedroom turned office which Mick McCarthy has regularly seen since his arrival in January, football is emerging from its Covid cocoon step-by-step. Like all of us, it may never be the same again. For the pandemic, has brought a new relationship between football managers, players, administrators etc and the media. It has brought the dawning of the virtual press conference.

BY ROB PHILLIPS

"Zoom" or "Teams" have become commonplace words in our vocabulary as a result of the Covid crisis – not just for quizzes or virtual parties in our social lives. In football it has been the age of the Zoom press conference. At the appointed time, Big Mick will sit in his office and speak to a collective array of faces (names by on each window, you know the score) – usually in the comfort of their own homes. As a result of satisfying one of my children's Christmas wish list a few years ago, a full size medical skeleton is housed in my office – the bedroom of the said child who has now fled the nest but has left the unmissable present still standing in the corner.

So, when I have sat on Zoom calls with Mick McCarthy and other managers with whom BBC Wales have regular dealings, the skeleton can occasionally be seen in the corner – if my laptop is facing the right direction. Mick has also had views of other reporters' kitchens, front rooms or sometimes journalists' cars if they are in transit when the press conference is held. Likewise, fans around the media area at Cardiff City Stadium in the early weeks of the season may well have seen reporters attending the games gathered in a socially distanced manner as Mick and a player take questions via Zoom after games, too.

Zoom has been sweet and sour experience, even without the all too frequent Wi-Fi problems. On the one hand it means we don't have to travel for physical style Press Conferences ahead of games and the speed





“Mick McCarthy is more familiar with the full size medical skeleton in my office than I am with any bare bones in his cupboard.”



by which you can deal with the material is inevitably hastened. I would suggest much more material has appeared on social media (and more quickly) as a result of virtual press conferences. Yet, you also lose the human touch and the chance to build relationships with whatever manager or player you regularly deal.

It's all a far cry from when I first began reporting on the fortunes of Cardiff City more than 30 years ago. When I joined the South Wales Echo as a football writer, covering Cardiff was my main job. So, a priority was to get to know the manager – who at that time was Frank Burrows. With Frank, you got what you saw. He was diligent, hardworking and obsessed with football. It's no surprise he discovered ex-Wales and Bluebirds defender Mark Delaney on a night off. He fancied going to watch a game (typical) and saw this young, right back galloping up the right flank for Carmarthen. A fine career was born.

For this reporter, the daily duty was to ring Frank and have a chat to collect the latest lines. This was the late Eighties, well before the advent of club press officers and media departments. A relationship with the manager

was key. That said, it was not always smooth and plain sailing with managers, players or club chairmen and administrators. Cardiff fans will remember I was banned from Ninian Park for a year by then chairman the late Tony Clemo for stuff I had written. Some fans will also recall I used to attend games anyway, in disguise. Occasionally the club, I was told, would ask stewards at Ninian Park to look for me. I was never caught – even though some supporters would say “hello” as I did my best to melt into what was then a pretty sparse crowd!! May be the stewards just ignored me. I should say myself and Tony Clemo laughed about all that subsequently – it was just a hazard of the occupation for him as a chairman and me being the reporter covering the local club!

Of course, some managers are inevitably easier to deal with than others. Results can affect a relationship but the best managers are those – like Burrows – who will tell you what they think, give you a dressing down if they believe it appropriate and then it's forgotten the next day. It's part of the job. Fair play to Neil Harris, whose time at the club encompassed normal press relations and

“As we say in the profession he is ‘good value’ and gives us plenty to write and talk about.”



then the Covid style virtual press conferences. Towards the end of his reign, he faced some difficult questions from the media about his job and his future in the post. Zoom may keep you at a distance, but when a manager is under pressure, it can be a difficult experience all round. Speak to any of the local media who were on those Zoom calls with Harris and they will tell you he gave some refreshingly frank answers to our questions. He realised it was the game, results dictated those questions had to be asked and there was nothing personal in the lines of interrogation. It meant a lot afterwards when he told me that he found the regular media corps who regularly cover Cardiff City had always treated him with respect despite some awkward press conferences.

At the time of writing this article, some clubs were beginning to resume the 'old style' physical press conferences. But it won't be too much of a surprise, if you are seeing managers and players on your televisions and social media feeds talking via the magic of Zoom on a more permanent basis.

And as far as Mick McCarthy is concerned, despite the relatively small amount of face-to-face dialogue to date, you won't find complaints about his media dealings from this quarter. Ask him a question and he will always give you a straight answer in that down to earth, homely Yorkshire accent. As we say in the profession he is "good value" and gives us plenty to write and talk about. He has been in the game long enough to know the score and how important it is to inform fans whenever possible.

It looks like Zoom is here to stay in all our lives. So, Mick and other managers may well be peering into their laptops to speak to me for a good while yet - with the skeleton (outside the cupboard) over my right shoulder!



BLUEBIRDS BRAINTEASERS

Trust member Rob Jeffery has come up with some great questions to test your Cardiff City knowledge. A £50 prize goes to the lucky winner. The answers are all Googleable, can be found in reference books or you might be a good quizzier who knows the answer off the top of your head. Anyway, make sure you have a go and be in with a chance of the first prize...



- 1** He played eight games in goal for us in 2007-08 and went on to win a Champions League Winners Medal - who is he?
- 2** Which future Bluebird escaped to victory?
- 3** In a distinguished career that involved 59 International Caps, 2 First Division Championship Medals, and FA Cup and ECWC winners medals this player scored the winner on debut at Carlisle in 1993 - who is he?
- 4** Kieffer Moore has played football for clubs in three Countries - Wales, England and which other?
- 5** We signed this centre half from Cardiff Corries in 1957. He only played 67 times in six years but ended up at Northampton where, famously, he was on the losing side on 7 February 1970 in an 8-2 FA Cup defeat to Manchester United when George Best scored six - who is he?
- 6** A Degree in Chemical Engineering qualified this Nigerian International midfielder to spend the 2010/11 season with us on loan from Hull City - who is he?
- 7** This England one-cap wonder scored on debut as a sub against Leeds in February 2013 and then scored twice on his first start against the Wurzels two weeks later - who is he?
- 8** Two goalkeepers played for us in 2008 in our FA Cup run to the Final - one was Peter Enckelman who was the other?
- 9** In 1965/66 the City paid the princely sum of £2,100 for Gary Bell and George Andrews, a fee which remains a record to this day for which receiving club?
- 10** Which goalkeeper played in all 55 League and Cup games for the City in the 90/91 season?

To be in with a chance of winning the prize, members should email answers to members@ccfctrust.org or post them to CCST, PO Box 4254, Cardiff CF14 8FD. The winner will be chosen by drawing lots.

THE TRUST NEEDS YOU



MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Trust is only £12 per year or, put another way, only £1 per month the equivalent of the cost of a packet of crisps ! The Trust encourages family membership so membership for under 16s is free. Membership fees can be paid in a variety of ways including monthly standing order and PayPal.

All membership details are held by the Trust in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Each member will receive a membership card and a CCST enamel badge. Everything CCST does relies on volunteers so there is an opportunity for members to get actively involved in its work and also stand for election to the Trust Board.

Cardiff City Supporters Trust gives City fans a voice. The more members we have the louder our voice and the greater our influence

Please join us.

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