

Bath City Board Meeting

1900 Monday 19 Feb 2024

Hybrid

**Attendees:** Nick Blofeld (Chair), James Carlin, Andrew Pierce, Paul Williams, John Reynolds, Chris Coles, Pete McCormack, Jane Jones, Gareth Cooper

Apologies: Caroline White, Shane Morgan

**1. Redevelopment and 3G**

1.1 **3G** – 3G Working Group (WG) notes from their recent meeting had been circulated ahead of the Board. The levelling up fund application has been made towards the project – and we should have a response to that by the end of Feb hopefully.

The main challenge currently is the infill for the surface, as we didn’t get permission for the accepted, best infill of rubber crumb. We have permission for an organic infill – realistically cork or sand. Nick had spoken to the planning officer and swapped emails ref either appealing or re-applying for planning permission. Her latest view is that would need to re-apply if we wanted rubber crumb, and an “economic necessity” argument could sway the council..

Bioflex (brand name) is the best alternative to cork or rubber crumb, it is used in Scandinavia, and is a coated sand. Various clubs have been using it for up to 4 years now. They are FIFA Pro approved and semi-pro, but this surface has not been reviewed by the FA. The expected length of use before replacement is c8 years, so there remains some risk in adopting this. We aim to get guarantees from the suppliers that it will last the full 8 years. Bioflex is also slightly more expensive (c£10-15k) than rubber crumb, exact details tbc, and the maintenance regime/cost is the same.

The additional £80k for improved drainage is expected to be for any new surface, but we should look to increase the CIL contribution to cover any additional costs for the project.

The fact that the Bath Preservation Trust and council had pushed us in this direction, with neither having any knowledge of the impact of their decision on the Club was flagged again. It was also agreed the decision on the infill sits with the Board and not the CIC or Society.

Alongside the 3G we will need some new infrastructure/facilities to maximise the benefit of the 3G (eg secondary spend) and decent facilities for new guests (eg toilets), with a draft list also circulated ahead of the Board - eg toilets/café/storage. The floodlights are a separate but linked project, ie done at the same time to avoid further works and potential damage to the new pitch. A meeting with Stride Treglown has been set up for Tues 20 Feb (they did the work on the original redevelopment plans so have all the data/drawings etc).

Despite the challenges, there is a good PR/green story to told by the club if Bioflex is chosen. Only Bracknell in the UK currently use it, in a lower league, and it has only been down for a year there. We have visited them and will do so again.

**Action:** Finalise the exact increased cost of Bioflex versus rubber crumb; check maintenance regime is the same; set up a meeting with the leader and BANES CEO with Rengen ref pitch and redevelopment.

**2.**

A discussion was had on the extension of the loans, which are due in May 2024, which is clearly unachievable and needs resolving asap. The large majority of shares are effectively held by 3 people. Any loan could be “called in” which is a serious threat to the Club’s existence. The vast majority of loanees are “friendly” but it remains a significant threat and an extension needs to be urgently agreed.

There are still “good news” stories for lenders, in that the 3G planning has been granted and we hope to have the levelling funding announced soon.

With the accounts up to date for recent games the cashflow “gap” has dropped from after some more good attendances and matchday income.

Other positives are that CURO have said they will renew their car parking arrangement. We have also agreed an increase in revenue from the boxing gym in return for some more space.

Timing is clearly key for any incoming revenue and we should be trying to sell all our games as early as possible in advance, we have 7 home games left, with Torquay a big one to come. And it is time to start looking at Season Tickets (STs) to review pricing and timing of going on sale, probably in March.

A shirt sponsor has been agreed for the mens shirts and a contract has been drafted. For the other sponsored parts of the kit the commercial team are looking at options, with an emailing to potential sponsors and a different sponsors draw an option for less time sensitive elements.

There is also an idea about buying a scoreboard and clock display to get sponsored – probably raising the money initially through crowdfunding.

The priority now should probably be Season Ticket (ST) sales, then the scoreboard and “tlc” round the ground – based on cashflow pririties. A sub group should meet and come up with more of a plan – Jane, Nick, Gareth, James and Peter H (to bring him up to speed)?

We passed last season’s total gate receipts last week, another positive!

**Action:** Sub group to meet ref priorities(as above); Paul, Chris and Andrew to discuss extension of debt repayment; ST sales plan tbc (Caroline, Andrew, Jane?); all to look at early payments for any revenue streams! .

**3. Football update**

3.1 Women’s update

Not too much to report as the ropey pitches have meant that some games were postponed. 3 Mar and 10 Mar are the remaining home games and it Jane flagged that it would be great to get Board representation on 10 Mar especially, and the Mayor is coming to that game.

**Action:** Board to try and make 10 Mar women’s game; arranging an update meeting with Wealthtime tbc and is still proving tricky to set up.

3.2 Men’s update

Jordan left for Cheltenham as per the e mail, but hasn’t yet played. Oscar has returned to Colchester and Richard Chin has arrived from Charlton and made a very positive impact and settled in very well and is really enjoying it here. James Alabi has also settled well and is also popular with supporters with his larger than life character and positive demeanour!

The injury situation has been ok of late, but always a concern with a small squad. The players seem in good spirits, are “bubbly” and resilient and are on a decent run.

Quentin’s departure has been announced but we haven’t yet advertised the role, this should be done soon if we haven’t had good applicants or approached anyone successfully.

**Action:** High Performance Centre/Football Pathway – a vote taken and unanimous agreement to progress the thinking/planning on this via Andy Laker.

**4. Key SAG plans/actions**

Some discussion about governance and length or service, and what that means for H&S and Ops post Shane stepping down in the summer. A further conversation to be had and potential options explored. Pete highlighted that the Society won’t be dogmatic about length of service as there need to be pragmatic solutions. Nick and Pete will have a separate call on this.

The Weston game’s minor crowd trouble was raised, as James was keen to understand the process. It was explained that the safety officers from each club would discuss the issue and compare notes/reports. An initial report had been shared with the Board and Shane would update us of any agreed actions/learnings.

The scaffolding issue in the alleyway was again discussed, and it was agreed that James would flag it with Tim Ball as an issue. Technically it isn’t our problem, but does impact our supporters and there is an H&S risk associated with the lack of care taken with it. Ultimately BANES H&S Dept. should be aware and resolve the problem properly.

Sara Chivers meeting is still tbc ref the grandstand, barriers etc (with Shane and Accolade).

**Action:** Jamse to speak with Tim Ball ref scaffolding; BANES meeting still tbc (Council/Shane).

**5. 2000BC, Commercial, Community and WG updates**

The Directors rota should be reviewed and updated by us all regularly! Michael Clayton also offered his help if needed.

Commercial mostly coved above in the finance section. Recyclable cups going well again with Andrew’s sponsorship and others interested. The renewal/change of the beer deal with St Austell is the next significant focus for Gareth and we need to share the key information and discuss the best structure for that going forward (eg more than one supplier option tbc). Sponsoring the bars also to be explored.

The Supporters Awards were touched upon as they will be slightly “relaunched” this year. Cheryl is the key link here, and the event is usually organised by the commercial team , and Peter H can brief Gareth and probably help on this if needed.

**6. Society & Supporter update**

Pete said we were due and shared Board meeting with the Society Cttee. again soon, and suggested the April Board becomes a joint one, which was agreed.

**7. Minutes:** Proposer James and seconded by John.

**8. Actions from last Board & Board Minutes**

All covered off.

**9. AOB - none**

**Date of next meetings –** 18 Mar, 15 April (joint with Society Cttee.), 13 May & 17 June