



BWFC Supporters' Trust

CHAIRS REPORT 2024



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Apologies to members of the Trust for any inconvenience arising from the postponement of the Annual General Meeting from February to April 2024. The Trust seeks your forbearance and understanding of the sudden and very serious nature of our secretary's illness immediately prior to the planned AGM, which necessitated the deferment until this evening, the 18th of April.

The current board is made of elected members Alan Houghton, Ian Pegg, Martin Parnell, Michael Smith, Paul Wood, Robin Fletcher and Sue Higson. There are also two co-opted members Maggie Tetlow and myself, Terence Rigby, together with our



Secretary Ian Bridge.

I am sure you will all join me in wishing Ian a full and speedy recovery. In the meantime, Robin Fletcher is acting as the temporary secretary.

Before giving my report, and in particular for any member who does not have a copy of the agenda, I would like to set out the order of tonight's AGM.

- I will summarise the activities the Trust have been involved in since the last AGM.
- I will then ask Maggie Tetlow, in the absence of our Treasurer Martin Parnell, to give an overview on the Accounts.
- I will give an update on our membership numbers.
- Robin will provide us with an update on the Board Elections.
- Followed by what we are looking to do over the next twelve months.
- We will then move onto the Motion(s) received for resolution.
- Deal with Any Other Business.
- Wrap up the AGM having dealt with any questions from members present this evening.

2.0 ACTIONS SINCE THE LAST AGM

2.1 The Board has continued to have a collaborative relationship with the Club both at the executive level of Sharon Brittan and Neil Hart, and, at the operational level, led by Phil Mason. Every quarter there is a Structured Dialogue Meeting with Neil and Phil, and members are encouraged to submit topics for discussion by emailing enquiries@bwfcst.co.uk.

Furthermore, a more informal discussion take place monthly which gives a forum to air any immediate matters and nurture a close relationship between the Club and the fans.

There have been a number of notable achievements since the last AGM, which result from the afore mentioned collaboration, and I very pleased to be able to record them in my Report.

2.2 The Trust initially established in 2017 the stadium was an Asset of Community Value (ACV) and this was successfully renewed in place until the 27th of November 2027.

2.3 The Fan Zone has successfully opened. The Trust have established a cabin within the zone and encourage members to drop in. It's always good to catch up and ideal place for members to raise any points with the Board. Despite the popularity of the space, feedback from the fans is crucial. The Trust is the conduit to get the wishes of the fans to the Club. A good example has been the increase in the number of canopies.

2.4 The Trust Board proposed to Neil Hart the concept of having a fans vote for this seasons' kit. Furthermore, we suggested styles which we felt would be popular. The vote attracted massive interest and sales achieved record levels.

2.5 Neil Hart has had the confidence in the Trust to involve us in the timing and the launch of next season's ticket sales.



- 2.6 The Trust has worked with the Club in the development of the Bolton Primary School family season ticket programme, which sees over 70 new and different families attending each game. This initiative expands the supporter base and aids the sustainability of Bolton Wanderers Football Club.
- 2.7 The Trust has carried its own survey to assist in assessing the needs of the Disabled Supporters. Furthermore, it has also given input into the Club's Surveys.
- 2.8 Members of the Board meet with our Affiliates in the Disabled Association and I am proud to report significant strides have been made to improve their facilities.
- Last September the new Changing Place Toilet and Quiet Room were completed and opened. This project was lead and delivered on time and in budget by the Trust.
 - An Accessible Passport was developed and sponsored by the Trust , and, introduced at the start of this season. The passport addresses the challenge that 'Not All Disabilities Are Visible'. It contains a section for the supporters to describe how a steward could assist them if required, which takes away potential misunderstanding between them.
 - Recently a Trust initiative to introduce Audio Descriptive Commentary has come to fruition. It allows visually impaired/blind supporters to come along on match days and sit anywhere in the stadium with family/friends and to listen to specialist commentary of the game. Several fans are now benefiting from this service at every home game.
- 2.9 The Trust promotes the FSA, Fair Game and Level Playing Field, with several of our Board Members taking on senior roles within these groups.
- 2.10 The Trust instigated a members survey on each and every element of the Fan LED Review. To the best of our knowledge we were the only Trust to do so.
- 2.11 We have extended our reach to disparate supporters' groups through our Affiliate Programme, welcoming the women's game with 'Her Game Too', the local community with Bolton Lads and Girls Club. Slightly further afield, West County Whites have joined the fold. Three of our affiliates. Lancaster, London and Norway have continued their practice of sponsoring 1st and B team players this season, and, are looking to do so again next year.
- 2.12 Once again the Trust have sponsored a Fan Award for the End of Season Dinner being this Saturday, the 20th of April. Hopefully, you will have taken the opportunity to nominate a worthy recipient. For clarity the Trust do not choose the winner of the Award. We administer the nominations the selection panel.



3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS

- 3.1 The Trust's accounts for the financial year ending 31st of July 2023 are attached to this Report and will be filed with the FCA following this AGM. We currently have a balance of circa £27,000 and £13,000 in the 'Fighting Fund'.
- 3.2 As our turnover is relatively low, we are legally in a position to not require the appointment of an external auditor. We would recommend that the members in attendance this evening vote in favour of not appointing an external auditor but utilising an independent examination of the accounts for the next financial year in accordance with motion put forward by the Board.
- 3.3 The Trust rely on the financial support of its members and those who are currently Associate members are encouraged to convert to Full members by taking out the annual subscription of £10 per annum.

4.0 UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 143 new members have joined the Trust since the last AGM and the current shareholding membership stands at 6,386.
- 4.2 The Board acknowledge there are many of our members who would have preferred to have been in attendance this evening, however, distance of travel, other pressing commitments etc. deemed it not possible. The Board do seek the current members to actively encourage friends and family to join the Trust. The greater the number the greater the voice we have in ensuring Bolton Wanderers Football Club is sustained.

5.0 BOARD ELECTION

- 5.1 At the close of Nominations at 5pm on the 26th of March 2024 the following four members had put themselves forward as candidates for the election process:-
Alan Houghton
Martin Parnell
Ian Pegg
Michael Smith
- 5.2 As the number of nominations received has not exceeded the four Board positions available for election, in line with the BWFCST Election Policy (refer to item 8.3) and the BWFCST Model Rules (refer to item 56), there is no requirement for a ballot process to be undertaken and the four members noted above are deemed to be duly elected and will now join the existing retained board members Robin Fletcher, Sue Higson, Terence Rigby (co-opted), Maggie Tetlow (co-opted) and Paul Wood to form the BWFCST Board of Directors.



6.0 THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

- 6.1 We intend to work with the Club to improve the facilities in the Fan Zone. Furthermore, we will have dialogue with the Club to increase the usage of the Zone on non-match days e.g. International and European games.
- 6.2 The Trust is aware of the movement to bring in 'Safe-Standing' at Grounds across the country. The Trust wish to work with the Club to assess the feasibility of the implementation of standing, which is believed will enhance the matchday atmosphere.
- 6.3 We do not intend to rest on our laurels in respect of improving the the disabled facilities within the Stadium. The Trust is privy to the content of the Level Playing Field Audit carried out in 2022 and are methodically working through the suggestions contained therein. Currently the accessible toilets on the concourse are being refurbished, largely with funds raised by the Trust.
- 6.4 In association with the Club a Youth Advisory Board is to be established. The Trust will be able to tap into the resources available at our new Affiliate, Bolton Lads and Girls Club.
- 6.5 In addition to improvements for the Disabled Supporters we are assisting the Club to carry out maintenance elsewhere. We recently commissioned a survey of the leaks to the roof.
- 6.6 The Board wish to carry out a number of social events during the course of the year including the postponed Q&A with Neil Hart and Ian Evatt.
- 6.7 To continuously seek the views of our members for ideas that maybe of benefit to the Club, the fans and the community as a whole.



