

## Minutes of the BCFCSA EGM held on 10<sup>TH</sup> April 2019

### Present

Einion Williams, Les Pegler, Matt Johnson, Richard Williams, Mark Jones, Pete Jones, Glynne Roberts, Dylan Fernley, Dafydd Hughes, Andy Walsh, Alec Thomas, Amy Macdonald, Anora Rigby, Brain Evans, Brian O'Shaughnessy, Bryn Davies, Carl Holmes, Carwyn Sion, Ceri Roberts, Christopher Dogan, Christopher Williams, Clive Walmsley, Chris O'Neal, Dafydd Llywelyn Evans, Dave Roberts, David John Hughes, David Lawson, David W Jones, Dewi Roberts, Dylan Owen, Dylan Willimas, Eilian Williams, Elizabeth Williams, Gareth Williams, Geraint Thomas, Geraint Williams, Glyn Groundsell, Gruffydd Thomas, Gwydion Edwards, Harry Taylor, Helen Roberts, Howard Mitchell, Ian Roberts, Ianto Parry, J Alwyn Roberts, Jamie Davies, John Gibson, John Kevin Owen, John Lawson, Jonathan Ervine, Kevin Coleman, Kevin Dogan, Kevin McSorley-Jones, Kevin Owen, Kevin Taylor, Liam Ellis Jones, Linda Roberts, Llion Jones, Marc Owen, Michael Edwards, Norma Jones, Paul Martin Roberts, Peter Davies, Richard Jones, Ben Leggatt, Robert Lewis, Robin Edwards, Robin Williams, Selwyn Jones, Simon Jones, Simone Lewis, Sion Williams, Stuart Kewley, Trevor Jones, Vera Owen, Wain Morris, Arwyn Edwards, Dylan Jones, Ian Gill, David Jones, Charlie Panton, Elgan Rhys Jones, Andy Dogan

Einion W welcomed everyone then introduced agenda point 1

### 1. Apologies

Matt Shooman, Cath Pegler, Alwyn Pegler, Bethan Morgan, Steffan Morgan, Ifan Jones, Geraint Parry, Anna Jones, Llyr Jones, Rhys Jones, Elan Jones, Aran Jones, Helen Johnson, Kathryn Johnson, Beryl Hughes, Delyth Williams, Meilir Williams, Steffan Williams, Rhodri Williams, Daniel Roberts, Dafydd Roberts, Tom Lewis, Dylan Jones, Huw Thomas, Dan Thomas, John Dexter Jones, Charlie Jones, Jo Jones, Sam TC Jones, Brian Lucas, Eric Thomas, Meirion Williams, Phil Rigby, Phil Burton, Marc Hughes, Aled Hughes, Dan Shooman, Joe Shooman, Hywel Hughes, Jan Musche, Nick Redfern, Anna Redfern, Sian Redfern, Tom Redfern, Steve Lunn, Dilwyn Jones, Maxen Owen, Hugh Jones, Gwyn Davies, Gerald Hughes

Those offering apologies asked a proxy to represent them during the votes.

### 2. Update from last EGM

Einion W outlined the progress made towards honouring the resolutions passed during the last EGM.

- The BCFCSA will begin the process of incorporation as a CBS – **We are conducting a vote tonight**
- The BCFCSA will contact SD for help with the production of draft documents of incorporation - **Done**
- The BCFCSA will schedule another EGM to discuss the draft documents. – **If the proposal to incorporate as a CBS is carried we will contact SD for assistance with drafting the constituionschedule another EGM/AGM.**
- The BCFCSA will Invite a representative from Supporters Direct to the next EGM - **Andy Walsh Is attending this meeting.**
- The BCFCSA will take legal advice regarding contact with VSM with a view to sending an open letter to VSM / Billy Adamson – **Letter sent but no response as yet.**

There has been another development since the last EGM; last week we received an unsolicited e-mail offering to sell four well-known artefacts from the walls of both Farrar Road and Nantporth. The artefacts were the signed Atlético v BCFC match poster, the Reggiana pennant, a fan's flag from the 1984 FA Trophy final and the photo of the FA Trophy Final team.

We replied to enquire about further details but we have yet to receive a reply. We have contacted the police and they are now investigating the matter.

It is difficult to put into words just how unsettling the implications of this e-mail were. These artefacts are physical representations of how much our club means to us, they represent our history and our memories. In fact they are not only valuable to our club and our fans they are vital parts of the city's social history.

We will report back when more details emerge.

### 3. The incorporation of BCFCSA as a Supporters Trust,

*(The meeting was provided with a document containing background detail for consideration. See Appendix 1 in "4. Appendices to April 2019's EGM minutes")*

Einion welcomed Andy Walsh, the representative of Supporters' Direct, to the meeting. Andy gave a presentation on the importance of incorporation as a Community Benefit Society (CBS) and general ideas about the communal ownership of football. Here's a brief summary of what was said.

*"We all know football's place within society. You choose your football club and then have a duty to make sure the club carries on for future generations, that it's not used or exploited. But what exactly is a football club and who owns it?"*

*The ownership of the club is obviously related to who controls the board but who really owns a club? We could say that it is the fans that own a club but what is a football club. The ground? The bricks and mortar? The board? The owners? Well in a strict legal sense the owner owns a club but what does he own? The club is really owned by the fans because a football club means something thanks to the shared history of everyone associated with the club, for example all memorabilia only becomes interesting because of the memories that people have. It is in this sense that fans own football clubs.*

*Looking at football in these terms means that we can say that Football is one of the biggest community activities that still takes place, and if that's the case we can harness that sense of community. Actually is you think about the ideas of community and football negative situations can actually lead to hope, they allow supporters to control clubs themselves, and then offer a more community-minded way of doing things.*

*Supporters Direct will help supporters to control and run football clubs.*

*If a football club adopts a CBS status they will become a body that's mutually owned by their members, in other words they will become a co-operative that exists to provide benefits for their community. In this case a football club as much a safety net for the supporters as it is a traditional football club.*

*Bangor's situation is not unique and that's why there are now over 40 club mutually owned clubs with a CBS structure in Britain. Mutual ownership is also popular in Europe, for example Germany has the 50+1 rule and both Barcelona and Real Madrid are owned by their members. Basically speaking a CBS model is good because it enshrines democracy within a club.*

*Ireland offers is a good example for Welsh clubs to emulate because they are afflicted by the same issues; the bigger English clubs attract fans and players. More clubs in Ireland are becoming mutually owned as a way of dealing with this situation because a CBS status allows you to focus more on your own community.*

*Running a football club can be a daunting thought due to the nature of football and the pursuit of success. However football is not just about winning. we don't all need rich benefactors so we can challenge that thinking.*

*The vast majority of football clubs do not consistently win matches yet they still have fans. People must be interested in football for another reason than merely winning. Football is about winning in the right way. It's about feelings and emotions, it's about hearts as well as minds.*

*Everybody needs to take part in the running of a football club and when that happens it feels good to know that you're doing things a bit differently.*

*You are faced with a new opportunity, you could become a beacon in the area, you could create something that is truer to the spirit of football. With a CBS structure you automatically share values with other parts of society, therefore you can gain wider support with community-based values, people will want to get involved because you are displaying community-based values, and that is a very powerful argument.*

*Doing things the right way is a good thing, and a CBS structure is the best way to organise a club."*

Andy W then took questions from the floor.

**Meeting** - What happens if a genuine rich individual wants to get involved in the future?

**Andy W** – The members should decide because everyone has an equal say in a CBS Structure. You will decide matters in meetings. For example, Portsmouth were resurrected as a CBS, had great success but then decided to accept the Eisner takeover.

if you establish a CBS with 500 members then you decide what to do by organising meetings and conducting votes. This is the benefit of a CBS' One member One vote system. At the moment BCFCSA is unincorporated and that is very risky.

**Meeting** – What about the money invested?

**Andy W** - Money that's generated by the club stays within the club. A CBS has an asset lock, which means that their assets cannot be used for speculation.

**Meeting** - What sort of investment will be required every year?

**Andy W** – Generally speaking you elect a committee, they draft a business plan and then you decide on various issues yourself - how to set the budget, how much to pay player, commercial decisions etc - through meetings. A CBS club can still generate matchday income and fundraise in traditional ways.

**Meeting** – How does the example of Wimbledon help?

**Andy W** – As Wimbledon moved up the league their business plan changed to suit their surroundings. Salford City represents a totally different way of doing things by ploughing through the leagues with massive backing. A CBS status is not about ploughing through the league, it's about community engagement. A CBS can still attract sponsorship but the ownership structure, voting structure, remains in the hand of the owners, i.e. the fans.

**Meeting** – Can outside investment be traced?

**Andy W** – A CBS has transparency of accounts, you cannot buy control like you can with a normal company, i.e. by buying shares. If any money is invested it has to have a distinct purpose and the club has to state they need money.

**Meeting** - Can the SA remain as a Supporters Trust without creating a new club?

**Andy W** – At the moment BCFCSA are an unincorporated entity and that is risky. If you incorporate as a CBS you will be legally bound to act in a certain manner and have more control. A supporter's trust can rescue a club but you need to incorporate first.

**Meeting** – Is a CBS structure really that good? Just look at FC United

**Andy W** – Football results are football results but FC United fan still control their club, they have built their own ground, and attracted investment and funding. Their club might not always win but their members always have a say. More importantly, they exist for their members as an alternative.

Besides that, where is the safety in the "traditional way" of doing things? Coventry City, Bolton, Bury, Blackpool have all been in trouble recently. In general football needs to think about what is affordable /

sustainable. Adopting a CBS is not a panacea for all a football's ills but supporter-ownership is still preferable because it is more democratic.

**Meeting** – Will having 500 members complicate decision-making?

**Andy W** – You need to set parameters. You can decide to vote on key strategic matters rather than all of the day to day minutiae. The governance of the club is actually aided by members having their say You could imagine a full club review held every 6 or 12 Months

**Meeting** – How many of the 40 CBS clubs were homeless when they started?

**Andy W** - A number were “homeless”, FC United, Wimbledon being two of the more notable ones. Facilities can be rented by CBS clubs.

### **Proposal**

Dave Roberts proposed a vote on the question “Should BCFCSA incorporate as a CBS?”, Dylan F seconded the proposal.

### **Result**

An overwhelming majority voted in favour of the proposal and therefore BCFCSA will now be incorporated as a CBS. We will deal with the implications of incorporation as a CBS over the next couple of meetings.

## **4. Proposal to set up a new club**

*(The meeting was provided with a document containing background detail for consideration. See Appendix 2 in “4. Appendices to April 2019’s EGM minutes”).*

Matt J presented the BCFCSA’s statement.

*“We realise that the phrase “new club” could be worrying for some. We’d like to reassure everyone that we’re not disowning our club or its history, Bangor City is still our club and it will always be our club.*

*To be honest, we don’t really want to start a new club. Who wants to go through the hassle of setting up a new club when you’re happy doing what you’ve always done? We’d rather be getting fully behind a Bangor side, just like we’ve always done. Sadly, circumstances are getting in the way and in effect, we’ve been forced into this decision.*

*So why found a new club? We have provided the reasoning behind our decision on the document you’re holding.*

*The information in front of you can be summarised into 4 main reasons.*

- 1. Insurance** – *Imagine the club goes bust or VSM pull their funding without notice?*
- 2. A Safeguard** – *We need to ensure football’s presence in the city of Bangor.*
- 3. Reawakening the Bangor spirit and bringing people together** – *We need to rid ourselves of the atmosphere of mistrust and restore the feeling that attracted people to our great club.*
- 4. Creating something meaningful** - *We can do it, we can make it work and we owe it to ourselves to try and make our own future and control the destiny of Bangor City FC.*

*The most important of these reasons is insurance. What if the club goes bust in June? What if VSM pull their funding without notice? What do we do then? The city would be without a senior club for at least a year.*

*Timing is crucial at this moment because the deadline for registering new clubs is 1st June.*

*Bangor City is presently unsustainable and liquidation continues to be a major risk. As major shareholder we simply could not accept the idea that the city of Bangor would be left without a senior club.*

*We have tried working with VSM but this has proved virtually impossible due to the lack of formal communication.*

- *VSM offered the SA a director's role so we asked for the relevant paperwork, we received nothing*
- *As major shareholders we asked for the accounts but we received nothing*
- *We were offered the club for a £1 so we asked for the offer in writing, we received nothing*
- *We wrote an open letter, as per the EGM resolution, but we've received nothing.*

*We understand that we face a lot of hard work. Tonight is merely the starting point but all journeys need a starting point. A new club can be the start of a positive and inclusive process that not only allows us to eventually re-take control of Bangor City and Nantporth but also allows all stakeholders (the club, the fans, the local area and local businesses) to create a mutually respectful partnership.*

*We have already taken some initial steps in preparation for a potential new club. Firstly we have contacted the following;*

- *FAW, to ascertain what is required*
- *Local stakeholders, to garner support*

*Both groups were supportive of our approach. We have also taken the following practical steps*

- *Secured a Tier 3 compliant ground*
- *Approached a well-respected local management team*
- *Made preliminary agreements with a kit supplier*

*We must remember that there is more that unites us than divides us. Bangor City will always be our club but so will the new club. To borrow a song lyric from FC United there would be "Two clubs but the soul is one".*

*At the end of the day going to the football is not really about going to watch footballers running about, it's about having a laugh with your mates."*

Questions were then taken from the floor

**Meeting** - Have we sorted a ground?

**Committee** – Yes, we have a provisional agreement.

**Meeting** – "We don't want splits".

**Committee** - We don't want splits either, we are all Bangor fans when it comes down to it. As our statement said, we don't really want to be starting a new club but we don't want our present circumstances to continue either. It is clear that the present club is unsustainable in the long run.

We'd just like to reinforce the message this team is a temporary measure until things return to normal and an insurance policy if things suddenly go wrong. We cannot emphasise the following point enough; everyone, no matter what their opinion, is still a Bangor fan.

#### Other comments from the floor

"We need to be working with the community".

"There is a danger in having two competing clubs in Bangor".

"If the Vaughans left everyone would get back".

"Everyone needs to communicate more".

"I don't believe in the club that's in Nantporth. A new club will give people a choice that they don't have at the moment".

"Not everyone's going to want to watch the new club but at least there would be a club that's properly constituted".

"If we are going to step in to Nantporth, or the club goes bust, we need to be incorporated".

"What will happen on June 1<sup>st</sup>?" (This is the deadline for application, we will find within a few weeks of this date if we have been successful).

#### **Proposal**

Dave Roberts proposed a vote on the following question; *"Should BCFCSA found a new community-centred football club?"*, Eilian W seconded the proposal.

#### **Result**

An overwhelming majority voted in favour of the proposal and therefore BCFCSA will now begin the process of founding a new club.

It was pointed out that in the light of both tonight's votes we will need to organise a founding EGM in order to move forward with matters.

In terms of the name of the new club it was suggested that we involve local schools in a consultation process and also look at the potential for further involvement from local schools in the development of the new club. This will reflect our aspirations to be a "community" club.

The meeting was closed at 8:03pm

**Date of Next Meeting**; TBC (Members will be notified via e-mail or social media)