



**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

**Present:** Robin Causley (RC) – vice chair, Rob Burkitt (RB), Bob Cole (BC), Rob Dickinson (RD), Sam Druiff (SD), Clive Hayward (CH), Harry Lovering (HL), Michel Thomas (MT), Rick Williams (RW) - Secretary

**Apologies:** Nick Brodrick (NB), Ali Bryant (AB)

<b>24/109</b>	<p><b>Welcome, apologies and thanks</b> RC welcomed CH to his first meeting and congratulated NB, RB and HL on their election.</p> <p>RW gave apologies on behalf of NB and AB and then read a letter from Matt Gorman thanking the board for the gift he had received in recognition of his work on the Community Share Issue and expressing his appreciation of the support he had received from the TUST board during his term as co-optee.</p>	
<b>24/110</b>	<p><b>Election of officers</b> NB was proposed by MT, seconded by SD and unanimously elected as Chair for the next twelve months.</p> <p>RC was proposed by MT, seconded by RB and unanimously elected as Co Vice Chair.</p> <p>BC was proposed by SD, seconded by RB and unanimously elected as Co Vice Chair.</p> <p>AB was proposed by RD, seconded by HL and unanimously elected as Treasurer.</p>	
<b>24/111</b>	<p><b>Appointment of Secretary</b> RW had stood down from the board but was willing to continue as Secretary. It was unanimously agreed to appoint him to the unpaid position of Society Secretary.</p>	

24/112	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b> The minutes of the meeting were tabled and approved and there were no matters arising that were not on the agenda for this meeting.</p>	
24/113	<p><b>Review of election, AGM and TABM appointment processes</b></p> <p><b>a) TUST board election</b> It was generally felt that the process had gone well for what was TUST's first contested election. The Election Management Group, chaired independently by Andrew Fiderkiewicz, had overseen the process without any issues and the on-line Election Runner platform had been effective and efficient.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the merits of holding hustings to give candidates more opportunity to make their case and to be questioned by the membership. It was agreed that this would be beneficial in the future.</p> <p>CH gave his thoughts as a new candidate and suggested that statements could be longer than 400 words. After some discussion it was agreed to keep the existing limit as it focuses the mind but hustings would enable candidates to expand on their statements in future.</p> <p><b>b) AGM</b> Holding the meeting in The Cove had been very successful and the attendance, both in person and via Zoom, had increased over previous years.</p> <p>Having pre-registration for Zoom attendance had worked well and feedback from those attending virtually had been generally positive. One suggestion had been for a roving camera to cover those asking questions from the floor. This will be implemented in future.</p> <p>RC suggested that TUST should produce an Annual Review in future years which could then form the basis of a presentation at the AGM. Exeter City Supporters' Trust produce a good example.</p> <p><b>c) TUST Appointed Board Member (TABM)</b> A few members had expressed concern at the process adopted by the board, both on social media and at the AGM. Greater transparency in setting the criteria required of the candidates and how they are assessed against these criteria was suggested.</p> <p>Some thought that the membership should elect the TABM rather than the decision being made by the board, a view shared by CH. Others, including MT and BC, supported the existing policy.</p> <p>Some had questioned whether it was appropriate to have the Club Co-Chairmen in attendance at the final selection meeting (although both withdrew after the interviews and were not part of the final decision which was made independently by the TUST board). SD explained that a couple of the TUST board members had initially expressed such reservations but had subsequently agreed that the process benefitted from their presence, a view shared by both short-listed candidates. It was noted that this does not set a precedent for future appointments.</p>	

	<p>RW had shared an e-mail from the unsuccessful final candidate which was generally positive about his experience of the process but noting that he felt the 400 word limit to candidate statements was restrictive and the layout of the room where presentations were made could be improved.</p> <p>The board agreed that all the above points should be considered when the TABM Policy is reviewed but that this should be done immediately prior to the next vacancy when circumstances might be very different.</p>	
<p><b>24/114</b></p> <p><b>a)</b></p> <p><b>b)</b></p>	<p><b>TUST/TUFC partnership</b></p> <p><b>Report from the TUFC board meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December</b>  NB had previously advised the TUST board that this routine club board meeting had been re-designated as a finance meeting and had provided a report on the outcomes. In summary, expenditure required in various aspects of the Club, particularly infrastructure, has been greater than anticipated. Despite the higher attendances and successful marketing from the Club shop, it was going to be challenging to achieve break-even in the consortium's first year of ownership.</p> <p>The Club had asked for TUST's assistance in attracting more volunteers. While the board are keen to help, more information is required about what roles are needed, how much time commitment, what responsibilities and rewards. NB to advise. Some potential sources of volunteers were identified.</p> <p><b>Marketing initiatives</b>  The Club have also asked TUST to come up with new income generating ideas. A number of suggestions were made and discussed. SD thought there is scope for better marketing to the business and sporting communities. Sports focussed dinner events with celebrity speakers are popular elsewhere and other ideas included comedy nights and food taster evenings. Another club had held a 'Picnic on the Pitch' event after the last game of the season.</p> <p>A further suggestion was a supporters' funded 12<sup>th</sup> man whereby fund raising was specifically targeted to finance the costs of a player who the fans 'adopt' as their own.</p> <p>Michael Westcott had mentioned a membership scheme similar to Plymouth's Evergreens at the AGM and BC was able to provide a bit more detail on what that scheme offered.</p> <p>It was proposed to form a Marketing Sub-Committee to consider these and other proposals. A brief for the group was agreed as follows; 'To consider practical ways in which increased income can be generated for the direct benefit of the Club'.</p> <p>SD was appointed as chair of the sub-committee with RB as a member and invitations to be extended to Joe Uglow and Danni Wyatt to also join. The group would report to the TUST board in the first instance but would then meet with Club representatives to discuss its proposals.</p>	<p>NB</p> <p>SD</p>

<p><b>24/115</b></p>	<p><b>Community Share Issue - Investor Rewards</b>  BC updated on progress with the various rewards as follows;</p> <p><u>3<sup>rd</sup> shirt</u> has proved very popular. Unfortunately, two investors' names have been left off the shirt in the production process despite being correctly provided by TUST. BC reported that the Club had recognised the error and made generous offers to compensate the investors which they were very happy with.</p> <p><u>Investor Member Board</u> – a proof of the names had been shared with all investors and six amendments had been received. A final decision on the colour of the wood was imminent and then the order would be confirmed.</p> <p><u>Share certificates</u> – all have been printed and names checked against the schedule of investors.</p> <p><u>Pin badges</u> – there have been issues with the supplier who has been ill but the order has now been placed and delivery is expected in early January.</p> <p><u>Director for the Day</u> – has been running successfully for the last few games with positive feedback and BC has allocated investors for the next few months.</p> <p><u>Meet the Manager</u> – event still planned for Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January but confirmation awaited and some uncertainty over timing so close to Xmas. Arrangements for publicising it were agreed and numbers and timings. If there is excess demand we may need to run a second night.</p>	
<p><b>24/116</b></p>	<p><b>Paint Up Plainmoor</b>  NB advised that there is further work planned for the New Year.</p> <p>BC enquired about the TUST banner which is currently at the ground pending a decision on where it may be displayed. CH had a meeting with Joe Lovell the following day and would follow this up.</p>	<p>CH</p>
<p><b>24/117</b></p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>	<p><b>TUST Partners</b></p> <p><b>Community Sports Trust</b>  RD reported that the next meeting of the TUCST Trustees was due on 18<sup>th</sup> December. They are keen to further develop the three way partnership with the Club and TUST.</p> <p>There was some negative feedback regarding the experience of some children and their parents in the youth teams.</p> <p><b>Women's team</b>  Despite a defeat on Sunday the team remain in contention for promotion. A deal has been agreed to host home fixtures at South Devon College and Danni Wyatt is also in discussion with the Club to play at least one match at Plainmoor.</p>	

<p>c)</p> <p>d)</p>	<p><b>Travel Club</b> HL reported that two coaches are fully booked for the Boxing Day game at Weymouth with 106 supporters making it the biggest trip for a number of years. Michael Westcott is personally subsidising the day.</p> <p><b>Corporate Members</b> Review to form part of the Marketing Sub-Committee remit.</p>	
<p>24/118</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>	<p><b>Media &amp; PR</b></p> <p><b>Coverage</b> RB reported increasing traffic on the new Bluesky account including interest from the Football Supporters in Europe group.</p> <p><b>FSA Awards</b> RC summarised his and NB's attendance at the awards. Despite TUST's nomination in the Non-League category being unsuccessful, it had been a good networking opportunity and an enjoyable evening.</p> <p><b>My Club, My Shirt</b> BC intends to pursue this project once the CSI rewards are sorted.</p>	
<p>24/119</p>	<p><b>AR30 Annual Return to the FCA</b> RW had circulated the form which was approved by the board subject to the addition of a few trusteeships held by board members.</p>	<p>RW</p>
<p>24/120</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>	<p><b>Projects for 2025</b> Having successfully navigated 2024 and got to an unimaginable position of strength, there are a series of new projects to be undertaken in the first half of next year.</p> <p><b>Accounting advice (by March)</b> We need to get independent professional advice on our accounting policies, potential tax liabilities and audit requirements. RW to lead with AB, Matt Gorman and Andrew Fiderkiewicz</p> <p><b>Governance review (for General Meeting in April)</b> It is proposed that we consider the adoption of updated FSA Model Rules. This will require members' consent at a Special General Meeting, possibly on-line. There may be other areas of governance that we need to review. RW to lead.</p> <p><b>Strategic Review (for consultation at General Meeting in April)</b> TUST is now a very different beast to that of twelve months ago being a 28% shareholder in the club with triple the membership and a consequent increase in income. We are no longer planning for the worst and ploughing funds in to a war-chest. What are TUST's priorities now? What should the balance be between funding the Club, holding a reserve fund and community outreach? The review will include short and long term financial projections (a business plan).</p>	<p>RW</p> <p>RW</p>

<p>d)</p> <p>e)</p> <p>f)</p>	<p>Existing Strategy Team members RW BC RD and MT will be joined by SD and CH, with Matt Gorman standing down. The review will include extensive consultation with the membership.</p> <p><b>Website review (by April)</b> This is long overdue for a complete review, probably starting again from scratch and including accessibility issues. RB to lead with assistance from other TUST members as necessary.</p> <p><b>Youth Strategy (by May and on-going)</b> Building on Harry's ideas and those put forwards by others to stimulate interest among younger supporters in both TUST and the Club. HL to lead.</p> <p><b>Fan engagement and communications review, Community outreach and Membership records</b> To follow Strategy Review.</p>	<p>RW/BC</p> <p>RB</p> <p>HL</p>
<p>24/121</p>	<p><b>Any other business</b> MT noted that the Ian Twitchin Suite had been renamed and there was no longer any visible recognition of the player at Plainmoor. He was particularly concerned about the impact this might have on the Twitchin family when they found out. It was agreed that he would contact the Club to seek a solution, possibly renaming one of the new suites.</p>	<p>MT</p>

The date of the next meeting was fixed for Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 6.30pm

Chairman's signature.....Date .....