

MEETING NOTES

Annual General Meeting 2019

2nd March 2019, 12:30pm

William Gemmell Social Club, 507 Anlaby Road, Hull HU3 6EN

1. Attendees

G Bielby, R Richardson, P Fleming, G Cannon, S Pye, I Bunton, D Johnson, R Anson, D Batte, R Mathers, B Hadgraft, J Cannon, S Gatti, C Bell, A Flockton, C Johnson, J Beal, R Rooker, J Tindall, C Wilde, T Richardson, J Richardson, A Dearing

2. Apologies

Received from C Smith, T Irvin, I Waterson, C Hind

3. Welcome from the Chairman

Geoff Bielby welcomed everyone to the meeting, went through the agenda for the day, (*inc the need to elect or re-elect members to the Board as part of the Rules of the Trust*). He stated that Hull City Supporters Trust (HCST) will always communicate openly with its members and hoped they enjoyed the revised look of the Annual Report that has been produced. He added that it had been a busy year for the Trust Board which had included several members representing HCST in meetings with national supporters' groups.

4. Acceptance of 2018 AGM Minutes

Richard Mathers referred to the 2018 AGM minutes which were issued as a pre-read with the agenda and have also been available on the Trust website for the previous 12 months. These were approved by Russell Anson and Arthur Dearing as a true record of the meeting held.

5. HCST Annual Report

Geoff Bielby delivered his Chairman's report to the meeting, with the key points as follows:

- > The more 'corporate look' of the Annual Report was a further example of how HCST is becoming a more serious organisation.

Hull City Supporters' Trust is the trading name of Tigers Co-operative Limited, a Community Benefit Society registration number 29021R.
The registered address is
 HCST, 280 Ings Road, Hull HU8 0LZ.

Elected Trust Board Members (10): G Bielby (Chairman), R Richardson (Vice Chairman) P Fleming (Treasurer), G Cannon, S Pye, I Bunton, D Johnson, R Anson (Co-opted), D Batte (Co-opted).
Secretary: R Mathers

The Hull City Supporters' Trust Partners are:

COMMUNITY – Dementia Friendly East Riding, Hull & East Yorkshire MIND, Hull City Ladies FC
RETAIL - Aspects Opticians, Brookes Menswear, Co-op Energy, Dinostar, Dutton Moore Accountants, EasyPeasyPrint, Essence Holistics, Finesse Internet, Frank Pullen Butchers (Cottingham), Frying Farmer Fish & Chips (Aldborough), Fudges Den Holiday Cottage (Filey), Hornsea Walking Football Club, Hull Kingston Radio, IT Forward, Leasing for Business, Nudge Websites, Photo Express, Rob McFadyen ADI, Ska & Soul, Skin Deep Aesthetics, Wags & Whiskers, William Gemmill Social Club, Wine On-Line, Zip Dry Cleaners.



- > Even though 2018 saw a healthy increase in HCST membership numbers, this trend needed to continue
- > He offered thanks to the Board for their contribution in what had been a challenging but exciting year
- > Ultimately, the HCST Board were accountable to the Trust members but this was clearly not the case with Hull City football club
- > He referred to the reported asking price, (£50m), the Club Chairman had recently quoted in a BBC interview and wondered how it had risen by £9m on the apparently 'accepted bid' from an interested party of £41m, (*despite a £45m quoted asking price at the time*) back in October 2018.
- > He closed by thanking 2 Board members who are standing down at today's AGM but have made a valuable contribution during their time on the Board. Ryan Richardson, (*current vice-Chairman*), has served on the Board for 4 years and Sue Dyson for the previous 3 years.

Richard Mathers delivered his Secretary's report, with the keys points below:

- > Richard referred to the individual time and commitment that Board members undertake as part of their roles, although this is obviously understood at the time of their election.
- > He reminded members that commitments to national supporter group meetings in London only cost HCST the personal time of the attending Board member representing the Trust with most travel costs paid for by a centrally controlled 'Football Fund'
- > He advised that he had attended the AGM's for both the Football Supporters Federation (FSF) and Supporters Direct (SD) in July 2018 where the ongoing concerns of Hull City supporters had been referenced in their annual reports for the 3rd year running
- > He gave an overview of the current 'informal' communication channel he has with Vicky Beercock, (*Marketing & Communications Manager at the Club*), following a series of allegations made in writing against Geoff Bielby that was received in May 2018. He stated that along with Ryan Richardson he had met with Ehab Allam, (*vice-Chairman of the Club*), and Vicky in June to discuss the matter and assured members that a full investigation was conducted with all documentation and recommendations made available to SD who confirmed they full accepted the approach and findings.
- > Since then, HCST have sent several letters to the Club on concerns affecting HCST members and the wider Hull City fan base, but the Club have not had the courtesy to acknowledge or reply.
- > An offer to the Club for HCST to be represented by any Director other than Geoff or the Trust Secretary at meetings or events hosted by the Club have been rejected to date, even though the English Football League, (EFL), FSF & SD have all stated they believe the offer is fair and have encouraged the Club to reconsider.
- > He questioned the integrity of the Club's 'supporter committee meetings' when the largest and only truly independent supporter's organisation connected to the Club was not currently invited to attend.
- > He added that the reality of all football clubs is that owners will come and go as will 'senior management' but the only longevity of a club comes from the supporters.
- > The current membership breakdown is 20 x Junior Members / 185 x 1 year / 620 x 3-year / 136 x Lifetime (Total = 961). At 31st December the total was 949 members which was an increase of 213 during 2018
- > Richard closed by repeating a request for Trust members to engage more with the Board as ultimately, they are elected to represent their views and concerns.

Pete Fleming delivered his Treasurer's report with the key points below:

- > HCST had made a small surplus of around £500 in 2018, with around £13k currently held in the Trust bank accounts
- > HCST's current activity levels were sustainable on a membership of around 900 but wants to see an increase.
- > Looking ahead a few years on how HCST membership options are structured, the accounting process for Lifetime members, (*where their membership fee is apportioned over a 10-year period*), will see a need for the Trust to explore alternative revenue streams. (*Meetings have already been held with Betting and Cash Back scheme operators, but both have been temporarily parked due to Board concerns of morality and the fact there are other priorities currently for immediate focus*)
- > Pete explained that in the annual report, some costs had been categorised by Board sub-group activity, but the biggest expenditure requirements are still from communication channels due to costs associated with the website, e-mail addresses and domains

- > He then went into some of the detail of the Finance sub-group findings in 2018 and reminded members present that HCST continue to be open to assisting the Club on a revised model for matchday ticket pricing.
- > He added that extensive work had been undertaken behind the scenes on a potential Club sale, which has included the support of a nationally recognised football finance expert. It is always difficult to put a single valuation figure on any club and ultimately a 'willing seller and willing buyer' need to be found and reach an agreement on any purchase. However, a multiplication of 1-2 times the club income streams is a usual starting point for valuation, so with declining attendance figures for home matches and few remaining sellable assets within Hull City, it was difficult to see the current asking price being realistic, especially when independent calculations valued the Club at £30-£35m last Autumn and Premier League parachute payments have now ceased.
- > Championship clubs generally operate at a loss of £1-2 million per month and rely on player sales and potential property deals for cash injections, so it was possible that Hull City will look to sell further players to repay current debt.
- > Pete closed by stating that Ian Bunton and himself had commenced a benchmarking exercise on Hull City finance streams and comparing this to clubs of a similar demographic and fan base. The findings will be published once completed.
- > Geoff wished to acknowledge and thank Pete for his extensive contribution to the revised format and production of this year's annual report.

6. Election of Board Directors

Richard explained the HCST Election process, and that an Election Management Group, (EMG), was required to agree the voting process and verify that the members standing for nomination were full HCST members and had also been nominated by full members.

3 full HCST members volunteered their services for the EMG this year. John Tindall, (*3rd year running*), and Tom Irvin, (*2nd year*), and also Richard Rooker with the whole process overseen by Alison Branson who was an independent observer and non-HCST member. Richard thanked the EMG on a very thorough verification process this year.

There were 6 vacancies available for election, with 5 full members submitting nomination forms. Peter Fleming & Graham Cannon standing for re-election, (*having served 3 consecutive years on the Board*), Russell Anson & David Batte standing for election, (*having served the Board as co-opted Directors for part of the previous 12 months*), and finally Bobbi Hadgraft was also standing for election.

Richard added that the election/re-election process followed Rule 63 listed in the HCST Rules document, (*available to view via the website*)

The candidate statements had been issued with the AGM Agenda as pre-reading and hard copies were also made available to meeting attendees on the day. Questions were invited for the 5 standing candidates, but none were received from the members present.

Richard proposed that a vote accepting all 5 candidates as a group which was agreed, and the members attending the meeting voted unanimously by a show of hands to accept all 5 candidates to the HCST Board.



7. HCST Policy Amendments

Richard explained that he had reviewed all of the current HCST policies and that within the pre-issued meeting agenda and reading, a summary of some proposed amendments had been made, *(mainly of a cosmetic nature)*.

He advised that there was a further amendment required to sections 85.3 to 93 of the HCST Rules relating to the need for an independent audit and the associated acts of parliament which would be confirmed to Trust members once verified

Richard asked for a show of hands from the attending members to accept the proposed amendments which was unanimously approved. The amended policies will be made available via the website once completed and members notified.

8. Proposed Member Resolutions

Richard stated that no formal resolutions had been received from shareholders in advance of the AGM.

Geoff asked the members present if they had any Resolutions to propose but none were forwarded which is noted for the purpose of the minutes.

9. HCST Junior Membership fee

Richard advised that the Board regularly review the membership pricing for both adult and junior options. Currently Junior members pay an annual fee of £2, but the membership sub-group had proposed that the true value of this needed review. Options have been explored of producing Junior specific badges etc but the associated costs did not make it a viable proposition.

It was therefore proposed that the Junior membership fee was reduced to a 'one off payment' of £1, *(effectively 'Kids for a Quid')*, which would see any joining child retain Junior membership status, *(i.e. non-voting)*, until their 16th birthday. The aim of the proposal was to encourage more engagement with a supporter organisation connected to the Club, to retain awareness and interest during a period when some families cannot afford to take children to home matches due to the Clubs current pricing model that does not cater for concessionary age groups.

The proposal was accepted unanimously by a show of hands from the members present

10. Review of HCST Priorities

Geoff Bielby presented a review of the Trust's existing aims, objectives and actions that guide its day-to-day work. *(See the Annual Report for details)*.

Good progress was being made on all the current objectives, although it is noted:

- Point 1 (Concessionary ticket prices) – The HCST Board remain disappointed that the Club refused to announce the result of the first ballot held with supporters last Summer, and once again refute an allegation by the Club that we called for a 'boycott' of the 2nd ballot when all that was stated that supporters should wait for the result of the first ballot to be declared. *(For the record, our understanding was that only 18% of eligible supporters voted in the first ballot but those that did so voted unanimously for the return of concessionary prices for Junior, Senior and fans with disabilities whilst in the 2nd ballot that was heavily incentivised by the Club, only 7% of those eligible to vote did so)*
- Point 2 (Club Branding) – The HCST Board acknowledge that the Club has made some progress in this area although there are still issues to resolve.



- Point 3 (Meaningful dialogue) – The Club’s decision to suspend formal contact with HCST is impacting on the current capability for the Board to progress with this objective

The aims & objectives will be reviewed at the next HCST Board meeting on March 4th with any amendments documented in the minutes produced and published via the HCST website and weekly newsletter.

James Beal advised that the numbered bulleting for the aims and objectives could be interpreted as ‘priority status’. This was accepted and it was agreed that this will be amended to a standard bullet point format.

11. Any Other Business

No points were raised

12. Meeting Close

Geoff Bielby thanked everyone for their attendance and welcomed the newly appointed Directors.

He also offered gratitude to the management and staff at the William Gemmell (WG) for their continued support and use of their facilities in the past year at no cost to HCST, and reminded the members present that Board Directors were available at the WG prior to every home game.

The meeting closed at 1.30pm.