



Mariners Trust AGM - Wednesday, 1 November 2017

In attendance: Jon Wood (chairman), Paul Savage (vice-chairman), Ian Townsend (Treasurer), Sharon Dobbs, Stuart Raithby, Kristine Free, Alan Rutter, Terry Rudrum, Sandra Raithby, Pete Roberts, Dave Roberts, Paul Roberts, Sara Wood, Dan Roberts, Pete Freeman, Barry Whittleton, Derek Snell, Carl Hullet, Catherine Hullett, Jack Hullet, Brian Nicholson, Chris Parker.

Apologies: Andy Nutting, Joyce Snell

1. Jon Wood opened the meeting by reading his annual report. He ran through the events held by the Trust during the last year, stated a fans' forum would be held in the New Year and thanked everyone involved in hosting or attending Play on the Pitch and the Open Day. He paid tribute to the work of Sharon Dobbs and her staff for the running of the bars which have gone from strength to strength with income having gone up year-on-year since the Trust took over the management. Jon paid tribute to Terry Rudrum who resigned as Chairman earlier this year and stated he would be stepping down as Interim Chair at the next Trust meeting. He recognised the Trust had to work harder to communicate with members and stressed there would be more timely use of social media and that minutes of meetings would now be published. He stated that he had been proud of the leadership the Mariners Trust offered in the wake of the Stevenage scandal. He was sickened by the way our fans were treated and the subsequent efforts of Stevenage to smear our fans and make excuses. We received local, national and international coverage and are now at the forefront of the fans rights movement. He was bitterly disappointed with the whitewash final report but said the Trust would do everything it could to help any supporter who wished to take this further.
2. Ian Townsend then gave a verbal update for his Treasurer's report. He said the headline figures show a nett. loss for the year of £7258. As a company with only one creditor and, as always, the bulk of the money we make goes to GTFC as we fulfil our obligations under the agreement which sees us pay £30,000 in return for a place on the board of the football club. Including wages and heating/lighting costs he stated around £62,000 had been paid to the club in the last 12 months. Ian said the losses came from a drop in membership fees as members failed to renew after their Operation Promotion membership lapsed. Sales of merchandise were also lower and there were fewer fundraising events as the Trust recovered some energy after the Operation Promotion year. Ian said plans are in hand to rectify that situation. The main fundraiser remains the 100 club. He also paid tribute to the work of Sharon Dobbs and her bar staff.
3. It was proposed by Paul Savage that DH Tuck and Co remain as independent examiner. This was seconded by Dave Roberts and unanimously agreed.
4. Jon Wood informed the meeting that Hannah Dawson had resigned leaving the Trust without a secretary. He said there were now 8 board members with 4 spaces on the board. There were no nominations and therefore no election required. Jon said he was disappointed with the lack of people coming forward to join the Board and re-iterated that all were welcome to get involved.

End of formal meeting





Questions were then asked from the floor and a discussion took place regarding the incident at Stevenage. It was alleged the stewards acted upon information supplied by Grimsby Town FC. This was denied by Kristine Green, Alan Rutter and Paul Savage who, between them, spoke at length about the investigation they had carried out following the match.

They stated that just about all of the public bodies involved had refused to answer questions. Most were very unhelpful. Hertfordshire Police failed to answer questions via the Freedom of Information Act hiding behind Terrorism legislation. The Safety Advisory Group said the issues could only be answered by Stevenage. Stevenage Borough Council confirmed the stewards searched the women and children as they were looking for 'pyrotechnic smuggled in lunchboxes but wouldn't respond further when we asked for proof of this. Stevenage FC failed to respond to any of the questions raised and failed to deal with any of the complaints raised by supporters, instead referring them back to Grimsby Town and the SLO. This, it was felt, was at the very least a breach of their own customer charter. Although the EFL investigation failed to punish Stevenage, it was noted that nowhere did it deny the incidents took place. It also stated there would be changes to the EFL's rules, leading to speculation the only reason there wasn't a punishment is because there wasn't a rule in place regarding asking women to show their bras, therefore it couldn't be broken. There was general agreement the Trust would lead a full boycott of Stevenage FC next season and would encourage fans of other clubs to do the same, hitting the club in the pocket. The trust were disappointed that there had been no club response and Jon Wood would be raising it at the next GTFC board meeting.

A discussion then took place regards a tweet issued by Derbyshire Police after the Chesterfield game which intimated that pubs had been forced to close due to the behavior of GTFC supporters. Kristine Green said this had later been proved incorrect and that the police had stated on social media this wasn't entirely correct. It was suggested this may have had a hand in the behavior of the stewards at Stevenage but it was confirmed this wasn't in any of the reports sent to Hertfordshire Police in advance of the game.

Jon Wood was asked when the next fans forum would be held and he stated he hoped this would happen, alongside the revamped auction night, in January.

Close of meeting at 8.10pm

