



Registered Charity 1179794

Aldwinians Trustee & Guests Committee Meeting – 17/3/2021

Minutes

Meeting started 7:31pm

Present:

Trustees:, Kevin Tuner-Hague (acting Chairman), Chris Rushworth (Treasurer), Lee Bradley, Ian Wilson, Robert Palmer, Paul Lyons, Katy Davies

Attendees/Guests: Dan Hardy, Ryan Jennings, Mark Grimley, Yvonne McGuire, Phil Hopwood, Danny Robinson

Apologies for absence:

Christine Spivey (secretary), Ian Spivey, Gina Hardy, Stephen Marrow.

There was a brief discussion about the Lancashire RFU meeting, being attended by CS & IS, looking at league structures & re-organisation, and how we will not be travelling more than 75 minutes' drive to any club. DR stated that level 8 (one level below where we were) now only has 6 teams, and there is no level 9 now. Due to numbers, it is likely these will change.

Previous minutes:

Accepted as accurate.

Correspondence

- Given to CR by KTH. Bromley's (solicitors) have received everything now and we have a zero balance with them.

Finance Report - CR

- CR has composed an email that he will send out (after reading its' contents to the meeting) – very happy to report that we have been granted £50k from the RFU Winter Fund (CR had initially thought it was a scam) to cover our expenditures, and the money needs to be spent on what we stated our expenditures were as some clubs will be audited for this money.
- After a lot of work, YM and the Munch have completed the Charity Commission Return including getting a letter from the accountant to state that the accounts have gone, which can be used to set-up the bank accounts.
- The VAT return went in one-day late due to issues logging in. CR believes we are unlikely to get a fine for late return after having spoken to someone about it, though we have had 2 previous late returns. Though we are also due a rebate of about £1.8k
- Russell Moore has sent in the VAT group application. He had been waiting for the UTR, but we have that now. CR is hoping for information on Wednesday but is hopeful that the reclaim will be 'substantial'.
- PAYE cannot be set-up until a month before we are due to start paying employees.

- PL has completed an historic view of the accounts from which CR has done a very broad estimation of monthly running costs – these come in at about £6k but does not cover capital and revenue costs (loans or anything spent on the building or grounds); wages, utility bills etc come in at about £3k. In total CR estimates it costs about £9k per month to run the club. With income of £4k pm from membership, and turnover giving a net profit of about £80k pa (about £6.5k pm) giving a total of approximately £10.5k pm in (not including any grants or other income). This tallies roughly with TH’s old figures. With savings from utilities due to timers, and not having to pay the brewery loan, CR expects to save close to £2.5k pm, which would mean an overall of ~£4.5k pm in the black. PL still needs to look at rolling and non-rolling costs we may have in the future – we are currently spending a lot on infrastructure, and we will need to look at costs. This included a brief discussion about M&J being part of the ‘single-club’ mentality and any income or non-rolling costs needing to be treated the same as from any other part of the club. RJ asked if there was any plan for a particular percentage to be used for paying back loans – CR stated that there was no current plan, but that repayments will need to come out of the surplus. IW also put forward that playing costs will also need to be part of the standard running costs. PL re-emphasised the need to look further into these ‘rolling’ costs, including those for providing food that have been historically ‘hidden’ from us. Price per head of £2.20 per meal is unlikely to cover costs. There was a discussion about the kitchen; with the view that the Saturday kitchen service is more for service than for profit, but that the Sunday, with both home and away teams as well as parents, is potentially profitable. Potential options were raised as: i) operate it as a franchise. ii) we oversee it and pay staff. iii) someone else runs it. It was stated that previously we had paid staff £40 working from 8:30 to 3pm and we will not get anything like that again. Some members of the meeting wanted there to be some form of service via an outdoor container, whilst others stated they would prefer to bring people inside the club. Discussion was terminated by the chair as it had gone too far off topic.
- Account balances: Main account, £15.3k; 200-club, £1.6k; club-shop, £9.2k (includes a deposit of £2.8k that has been paid for the bi-fold doors).
- Regarding the new bank accounts, PL has sent all of the documents from the Charity, and Mick Murphy and the Munch have provided the TC documents. NW Bank have received all documents, and we are now waiting for the confirmation of set-up. This does now mean that the date of 1st April for the split cannot happen as the bank accounts will not be set-up in time for CR to put many of the aspects that need to be set-up (including PAYE as already stated), and there is no way around this as it could have implications for the VAT group.

Trading Company Report - MG

- As already stated the split is now not happening on 1st April, but we are now looking at 31st May. Advice from the Munch is that we could apply to shorten our financial year for next year to 1st April 2022, or even 1st January 2022 if we want to (to tie-in with the financial year for the Charity). At the moment there are a lot of aspects (contract, insurance, etc) just waiting until we really know the dates.
- Phased re-opening – the TC needs to look at in detail. In the first instance we will be able to do sales outside, where we can put a temporary bar up to bi-fold doors and use the patio area. It is recognised that if we use the main bar there is a risk that people will come in and stay in, and we would need to ensure that it is policed properly. It was agreed that this is now a TC issue on how to proceed further.

Agenda Items

- Funding bids – Peter Doherty has sent an application form from Allianz for between £500-£3k. This has been forwarded to RJ.

RJ stated that the Suez bid was good to go on the second phase, and that the funding is specifically for windows, bi-folds, ceiling tiles, front door – however, as the £50k grant needs to be spent by the end of this month, there then began a discussion on what we need to spend and in what order. KTH had put together a spreadsheet of costs today (already sent to CR & PL), and emphasised that the £50k is not just for improvements, it can also be spent on utilities and running costs. The breakdown of costs was: £5.2k for roof repairs (already carried out and can come out of the £50k); Alan Moss windows £2.3k – currently on order (2-3 week delivery); bi-fold doors £2.5k – currently on order (2-3 week delivery); poly-floor £4.2k – 2-3 day delivery, so will be ordered once dates are known for windows. Further to this potentially is bi-fold door for the dancefloor at £2.5k; entrance in aluminium at £7k; replacement of the lounge windows £1.77k. Additionally there had been applied for £1k for the ceiling tiles that have now been taken from the gym. There was brief discussion about cost effective and appealing colour changing LED panels or spot lights.

The discussion then moved to when and how the £50k needs to be spent and whether a proportion could be spent on paying off loans, and how much of the current spend duplicates, and therefore negates, the work to be done from the Suez bid – this became particularly important as the Suez bid money is considered to be about 80% certain at this moment, yet the £50k needs to be accounted as spent for costs between October 2020 and March 2021. Added to this was discussion around money potentially to be spent on gym refurbishment, for which there have been enquiries by members and is considered a good asset to the club if it is in good condition. RJ has recently previously had 3 quotes between £16k-£20k for gym refurbishment.

RJ proposed that currently the bi-fold doors, Alan Moss room windows and ceiling be completed from the £50k (currently committed to spending £9k on those), and to leave the entrance, lounge windows & extra bi-fold doors from the Suez bid, assuming we are successful in the bid. KTH added that there were potentially other bits of works that could be done from the Suez money that would match the criteria of the bid (upstairs windows, facias & soffits, etc), and that this phase 2 would potentially costs a total of around £16.5k. This action was generally accepted, and it was also left with general agreement that we should look further into gym refurbishment.
- Membership / 200-club – DH reported there was still no further significant change with membership, and the 200-club has not yet been drawn for February. KTH asked about whether R Mooney had either paid the owed debt, and or, re-started his membership as agreed several months ago – it was reported no actions had occurred & RP was asked to chase this up.
- Website/email addresses – SM is looking into this, but nothing to report as he was not at the meeting.
- Function room upgrade – already covered in discussion around fund-raising.
- SSE contract – PL has not yet had enough time to look at this.
- PSH contract – RP in discussions with the chairman of Milnrow Cricket Club about the solicitors they had used, but that the solicitor in question is on furlough currently and is due back on Tuesday. RP has also had someone else looking at the small print of the contract. LB also suggested that DB have a look at it too – RP to send a copy to LB. RP also has alternatives already lined up at an approximate cost of £40pm (as opposed to the current charge of £325pm from PSH).

- Trustees and Directors Q&A –24th March will be held via zoom as MM and the Munch need to maintain covid shielding protocols, though RP stated a strong preference for face-to-face meeting and wondered if those shielding could attend via zoom with everyone else as a physical presence. YM has sent out an email asking for signatures, and has only received 2 back so far. The meeting is designed to cover the constitution, CC3 and Charities Commission guidance, and should allow for roles and responsibilities to be confirmed to satisfy the Charities Commission requirements.

Action Tracker

- No updates have been made. It was suggested to put the TC action tracker together with this AT in a single live folder. DH to send CR current AT and CR to arrange them being shared on the live folder.

AOB

- CR stated that there is about £23k of the £50k that is available to spend and was looking for ideas on how we suggest it is spent. After a brief discussion it was agreed that there should be a rough three-way split between: 1-refurbishments to the bar (~£7k); 2-Refurbishments to the gym (~£8k); 3-pay back loans (~£8k). It was requested that committee members return to future meetings with some clear costing proposals for the gym, and that bar-refurbishment proposals should be made by the TC. PL formally proposed that the first loan payments made should be to repay CR the money he has personally put into the club – all present agreed with the motion.
- PL enquired around the TC's proposals for opening up at the end of the current lockdown restrictions. There was brief discussion around outside service after 12th April and enforcing social distancing rules, but it was accepted that this is for the TC to determine and not this meeting. With respect to a sail to cover the patio area, KTH has determined that the largest available is too small (4m x 3m) and is looking at other options tomorrow.
- RP raised an issue that we had put some employees on furlough originally in the first lockdown, then had let them go (as 'casual workers' there was no work for them) but then not returned them to furlough from the second lockdown. There was a long discussion around the history and moral background to the decisions that had led to this course of action, and there was a sense that we may need to review the whole course of events. However, PL clearly stated that given that the employees in question had been let go and had not been working between the two furlough periods, they could not be furloughed the second time as we would have to provide evidence of them working in the interim between the two lockdown periods.
- Renaming the function room – KTH had already proposed some time before about renaming the function room to the "Bill Thorpe" lounge/room/suite, and wanted clarification on whether this was going to be done. There was some objection from the meeting with naming something after someone who was still around the club, yet others felt it was far more appropriate as a tribute whilst the person was still alive and could appreciate the gesture. There were examples of precedent for both sides of the argument. A vote was taken, with 5 Trustees voting for the naming, and the motion was carried. On a similar token, CR stated that VR wanted to put a bench at the club for NR after money was raised at the funeral for such purpose. There were no objections, but there was also

discussions around who could be included on plaques on the memorial wall – it was agreed, without dissent, that anyone with ‘significant connections’ to the club would be automatically accepted onto the memorial wall.

- RP enquired about, when the TC opens up, whether we are going to be having some form of party/event for the members or around the club in general, as we are aware that other clubs and organisations are looking at arranging festivals and events and we shouldn’t be missing out. After a brief discussion this was referred back to the agenda item in the TC report about phased re-opening. CR then stated that although we are in a transition period where we are still an unincorporated club we’re already moving towards formally acting as two bodies, the TC and the Charity. A further point in reference to this was brought by RP, who stated that he felt uncomfortable about the presence of the Treasurer and Chairman of the Charity being directors within the TC as this appeared to be a similar balance of power that there had been with the previous Treasurer and Chairman, and that a significant number of the membership may also feel as though there has been no actual change in the way the club is managed. This led to some energetic discussion around the practical aspects of having Trustees, particularly the Treasurer, within the Directors as actual positions, as well as personal issues around the fact that it was CR and KTH involved here. CR stated his intention to only continue in his current position as Treasurer for a maximum of 2 years and wanted it to be clear that he had no interest holding position of power. It was made clear that this was not about CR and KTH personally, but it was about the actual titles of people and their influence within decision making processes. The point was made that the Trustees are in a significant minority in the Directors, significantly one of the reasons the number of Directors was increased from 5 to 7, and it was also pointed out that having a cross over for an organisation of our size was recommended by the Charities Commission. The discussion then moved to accusations of decisions being made outside of meetings by fewer than a quorum of Trustees, and not in a democratic manner. There was particularly long and heated discussion based around the recent investigations led by RJ to provide Easter and/or Summer rugby camps on behalf of Tameside Council for under-privileged children, and how the ideas around this had been apparently rebuffed by CR and KTH, with RJ having removed himself from planning, leaving KTH to make a decision as to whether to proceed with the Easter camps or not, as well as the argument over payment of volunteers/Trustees/members with any form of vested interest in the club for any time or resources given to the club, as opposed to paying coaches for their time specifically for an activity paid for by the Council but via the club and this leading to a higher level of professionalism for running the activity. The discussion was brought to a close by agreement that members need to be clear about proposals, and ensure that all proposals are brought to meetings so that full and open discussion can be had, and that votes can be taken as no Trustee has any more power than any other yet they can still clearly provide their opinion and suggestions. In the event that a proposal needs to be enacted quickly and before chance for a meeting, then the proposal still needs to be made clear so that all Trustees can vote via email. There were also clear statements made by several members at the meeting that whilst they may have volubly disagreed with one another there were no negative personal feelings between each other and the meeting was ended amicably.

Next meeting to be held 31st March 2021.

Meeting closed 22:33 p.m.