

Cambridge Fans United



"Uniting Our Community"

Sept/Oct 2011

AMBER NEWS

FREE TO MEMBERS

Cambridge Fans United



"Uniting Our Community"

Issue 10

COMMUNITY STADIUM MOVES A LITTLE CLOSER

Landlords give fans update

Grosvenor, the international property development company headed by the Duke of Westminster and landlords of Cambridge United Football Club, gave U's fan's a



progress report on the relocation of the Club in a recent meeting in the Supporters Club. Representatives from Grosvenor, Wrenbridge and Savilles, their

partners in the scheme told the well attended meeting that they had narrowed the possible sites for the new stadium from ten, as stated at the January meeting, down to two.

The two remaining possible locations are Trumpington Meadows and NIAB2, both would require planning permission to release land from Green Belt situations.

Trumpington Meadows, which Grosvenor own and are starting to develop as housing with community buildings and some offices, is partly within the city boundary. NIAB2, off Histon Road near the A14 is just outside the city.

Fans to be part of Trust running Stadium

Both sites offer the opportunity to incorporate the new stadium within a Sports Village situation. The new stadium would have a capacity of 8,000 with seating and standing areas. Grosvenor hopes to incorporate the opportunity for expansion of the stadium up to 15,000 capacity, if required in the future. There will be extra revenue making opportunities for the Football Club and because the ground will be owed by a Trust the rent should be set at a level that is well within club budgets. Ed Skeates from Grosvenor said "it's envisaged the Trust would be made up of Local Authorities, The Football Club, Youth Development Trust and Fan's Groups".

Skeates went on to say that is was regrettable the preferred site, Marshalls north of Newmarket Road, was not a possibility



because "Marshalls did not want to sell, as they had idea's of their own for the land" Chris White from Wrenbridge stated that a ground share was unlikely, "both Cambridge City Football Club and Cambridge Rugby Club have been approached, Histon have not.

It's not a total impossibility, but at this stage it's very unlikely.

A joint venture with Cambridge University has also been ruled out as it was stated "the University seek facilities for their own students and not the wider community" Nobody from Grosvenor or Wrenbridge would say they are confident of getting planning permission on Green Belt land but they did say the scheme was well on target to be completed in the original time scale of 5 to 7 years.

More details of the Cambridge Community Stadium and Sporting Village can be found at www.cambridgecommunitystadium.org

FANS TRUSTS CAN LEARN FROM STOCKPORT EXPERIENCE

Dan Levy was a board member of the Stockport County Supporters' Trust and a director of the club. He is still a member of the trust, and is writing in a personal capacity.

When I was a director of Stockport County, we were bottom of the league, I was having lunch before the match in the boardroom of a club which had a one year stay in the Conference. The Chairman looked over the table and said "You know you chaps really ought to avoid being relegated. There are some clubs in the Conference where they don't even serve wine with lunch". At another club, the well-known chairman told us he owned the club because he had already spent all the money he needed to on Ferraris. Why am I telling you this? Because it highlights that football is a rubbish business, where most clubs lose money, and in which there are really only three possible reasons to own a club. Either you are a fan, or you don't care about losing money, or you are a chancer who thinks he can make some money out of property.

Stockport County Supporters' Trust ended up owning the club and thinking that we could run the club on a breakeven basis. We failed, and ended up in administration. Essentially we ran out of cash, the MD foolishly entered a debenture arrangement with some not-very-nice people with an eye on a property deal, and we were put into administration days before we were expecting to refinance the debt. All clubs have cashflow problems – income is lumpy, expenditure is constant, and it is always tempting to spend the next transfer income or the next set of season ticket revenue before it comes in. Fans want the club to do as well on the pitch as possible. Managers want to spend as much on the team (and in some cases on themselves) as they can. Success increases indebtedness, if only because the amount owed to the VAT

authorities grows as crowds get bigger or players get transferred. However, the real reason things went wrong is that we didn't own Edgeley Park. County had been sold by a previous chairman to Brian Kennedy, the owner of Sale Sharks Rugby team. Kennedy wanted a ground in Cheshire for his team. After a few years, he got fed up of owning County, with its stropky fans and its cash absorbing team, transferred ownership of Edgeley Park to his shell company, Cheshire Sports, and looked for someone to buy County.

This was the point at which the Trust got involved. In hindsight, we should have walked away, let someone else take over, and then pick up the pieces a few years later once they had failed. Hindsight is a wonderful thing. Instead we negotiated to buy the club for £1, take an option to buy the ground for the value of the debt which County had with Kennedy at any point in the next 10 years, and share income from non-football activities with Cheshire Sports. It was actually a pretty good deal, and we were confident of making it work.

The only problem was that it is incredibly difficult to run a football club. We got through a succession of chief executives. We found a ramshackle organisation. We had to pay a big chunk of our income to Kennedy. And most importantly, we didn't have either a war-chest of cash or the ability to borrow from anyone, to help us through the points at which the cash ran out. We couldn't use the ground as security because we didn't own it, and we couldn't borrow from the owner, because the owner was a set of fans. Trust owned clubs will be at a real disadvantage if they can't get borrowing facilities. Would we do it again? I don't know. I think we could have made more of a go of things. But better run trusts than ours have chosen to sell out after a period of ownership. The current successes like Wimbledon are all phoenix clubs - with the notable exception of Exeter City, who are remarkable because of all the people who volunteer to help at St James's Park. The current owners of County, despite taking over a debt free entity, seem to be finding things as difficult as we did off the pitch, and a lot harder on it.

The New Stadium situation is likely to be progressing in the coming months.

NOW IS THE TIME TO JOIN

CFU

Make your voice heard

£20 Individual Membership

www.cambridgefansunited.org

or Tel. 07957 344005

Cambridge Fans United



"Uniting Our Community"

Sept/Oct 2011

AMBER NEWS

FREE TO MEMBERS

Cambridge Fans United



"Uniting Our Community"

Issue 10

JEZOLUTION MOVES ON!

Teamwork and Belief in Strong Evidence at Abbey

The new season is seven weeks old and every Blue Square Bet Premier team has played thirteen games. The Jezolution which swept through the R-Costings Abbey Stadium in the summer when Jez George was given the Managers job on a permanent basis, shows no signs of abating. With six wins, four draws, three defeats and 22 points Cambridge United are sitting in ninth position. This shows a marked improvement on the situation at the same stage last season which saw the Club ten places lower having gained 13 points.

Fourteen goals scored is the only figure that is consistent with the first 13 matches of last season. However only conceding 9 goals not only makes the U's the best defending team in the league, but also the most economical on a points to goals scored ratio. Highlight of the season so far is the away win at high spending Luton Town where a very tenacious all-round team performance was capped off with a head banded Rory McAuley heading the winner in front of over 500 travelling U's fans.

With all the euphoric celebrations of United becoming the first visiting team to win a league match at Kenilworth Road since February, the



2011@Cambridge United FC

quote of the month must be from Jez George. When asked by Stuart Hammonds from the Non League Paper "will you have to get your players feet back on the ground before taking the bus to Southport?" Jez replied "Their feet will be on the ground before the coach leaves Luton".



CFU Bridge the Gap for Habbin Fans

Trust Helps Club Keep Popular Stand Open

Towards the end of last season the state of the access bridges to the Habbin stand came to the attention of the Health and Safety people. Unfortunately, if the club wanted to keep the Habbin open repairs would have to be made quickly. It wasn't a job that could wait until the summer.

The Club asked fans groups for help and CFU paid £1,850 with the Vice Presidents Club chipping in £500. The repairs were carried out, almost without anybody noticing, and the Habbin regulars and the Health & Safety executive

kept happy. Trust Chairman, Dave Matthew-Jones said "CFU were only too happy to help with this project,



it was an ideal way to help the Football Club and make sure Fans were able to continue watching the U's from their favorite positions". This and other financial help, like helping with updating office equipment are just two ways which CFU have helped support or Football Club as we move on into our second decade.

JOIN the JEZOLUTION

Get Your Jezolution T-SHIRT

ONLY £6 MEMBERS
£7.50 NON-MEMBERS

AND

JEZOLUTION BADGES

£1

Both available while stocks last at the CFU caravan on matchdays

CFU
WOULD LIKE TO THANK
Nightingale Press Ltd

Newark Close
Royston
Herts. SG8 5HL
01763 248393

www.nightingalepress.co.uk

For their help in producing this Newsletter

Trust are Proud to Sponsor CRC Again

After being programme sponsors and player sponsor for goalkeeper Martin Tunca last season, CFU are pleased to increase their sponsorship of CRC, the clubs youth development team.

This season we are CRC's home matchday sponsor and also three individual player sponsor's for Rowan Cooper, Martin Trunca and Kieran Westwood. Young emerging talent is the future of our Football Club and we look forward to watching their progress as the season goes on.

If you are not able to follow the first team to all the away matches, CRC are normally at home on alternate Saturday's and some Wednesday evenings. You may be surprised at the high standard of football played in the Ridgeons Premier League. They will be grateful of your support, they are currently in mid table position in a league that's made up of adult teams, apart from themselves.

CRC at the R-Costings Abbey Stadium

Wed 12 Oct Ely City

Sat 29 Oct FC Clacton

Sat 05 Nov Wivenhoe Town

Sat 12 Nov Wroxham

Wed 16 Nov Newmarket Town

Sat 26 Nov Kirkley & Pakefield

Sat 10 Dec Hadleigh United

Saturday matches KO @3.00pm

Wednesday matches KO @7.45pm

COMING SOON! A BRAND NEW

WEBSITE

FOR ALL

CAMBRIDGE UNITED

FANS

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR DETAILS

AWAY TRAVEL CLUB

Coaches go to every away match
Pick up at Barton Road Ely & the
R-Costings Abbey Stadium
£10 Membership saves £2.50 off
each trip

Details from Carol Looker on
07749 829883