

Minutes of the CFU Monthly Meeting held on 2nd August 2006 at the Cambridge Joint Ex-Services Club, Barnwell Drive, Cambridge.

1) Attendees & Apologies

Present:

Dave Matthew-Jones (Chair),	Derek Wick (Treasurer),	Brian Attmore,
Lorna Morley-Medd	Robert Osbourn,	Colin Proctor,
Martin Jordan,	Justyn Medd,	Andrew Lang,
Jon Keane,	Carolyn Cater,	Ben Yelton,
Carol Looker,	Terry Wilby (Minutes)	

Apologies: Anton Thacker.

Guests: Mark Saywell, Ben Philips, Martin Chapman, Stuart Jacobs, Henry Millward, Jez George, Paul Barry.

2) Last months Minutes/Matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read

3) Financial & Membership

Derek reported:

- ~ £6,400 in the bank,
- £600+ to be banked, plus £1,000 from the YT
- Completing the cheque mandate form is in progress,
- The Norwich & Peterborough account is only available to personal customers

4) Membership

Derek reported on behalf of Eleanor:

- Current membership 451, plus around 20 recent applications.

Robert had generated a discussion document (attached).

- He felt that 451 was down on what might be expected, the peak had been over 600.
- CFU members were doing valuable work at CUFC, although this could give the impression that CFU were running the club.
- The 3 original aims of CFU possibly didn't give much to the fans, and recently CFU have had different priorities.
- Early Purchase Season Ticket Donations had not yet come from the club, Robert agreed to get the forms from the club to find out how much was owing, contact members and issue membership cards. **Action: Robert**

There were a number of reasons why fans had not joined CFU:

- Possibly seen as an alternative to the Supporters Club,
- Need something to sell CFU,
- Ask fans what CFU should be doing,
- CFU do not communicate well (newsletters are often out of date almost as soon as they are printed)
- CFU must show they listen to fans views

Robert agreed to generate a plan of action. **Action: Robert**

6) Footlights

Lorna reported that the proposed date of 14th August had not been suitable (clash with fixtures and availability of players) and the event had been postponed for a second time. It was hoped to find another more suitable date, however it was possible that the opportunity may have been lost.

5) Summer Tournaments

Adult:

- 16 teams with a few in reserve
- Teams have not paid yet.
- Carolyn has 4 referees booked so far.
- Balls will be supplied by either Stuart (FITC) or Jez (Youth Development).
- Justyn will use his BBQ for cooking food.
- Brian can not guarantee the Sainsbury's refrigerated van for either event, but may be able to arrange an early delivery for the Youth tournament.

Youth:

- Stuart will supply some goals and the Boing.
- CFU Youth group will help with setting up on the day.
- Terry has purchased a pop-up gazebo on behalf of CFU for use at the tournaments.
- The "coffee man" needs to be contacted. **Action: Andy.**

Stuart Jacobs was invited to talk about ways that CFU may wish to help FITC:

- £2,000 was donated by CFU last year. This was used towards Street Football.
- He would like to put the CFU logo on all FITC paperwork.
- Local media (CEN and affiliates) were showing interest in the work FITC were doing.
- Adidas had supplied kit in the past through the PFA, now Puma were supplying kit. However as CUFC were out of the Football League kit would have to be purchased if the coaches were to look professional.
- Another kit company (Macron) could supply kit packs, £700 would cover kit for all the coaches.
- Kids could also buy kit packs from Macron, £5 would be paid for each pack purchased.
- CFU logo could be put on the shirts, this could be an opportunity to interest kids in joining CFU.
- He hoped the Junior U's could be re-started, it was another opportunity to get kids involved with CUFC, the club could send birthday cards to keep up interest.
- The problems at CUFC had affected attendance at some course, and continued bad news sometimes affect parents too.
- CUFC give FITC a number of match tickets to give to kids, hoping that some parents will buy full price tickets and there should be other income from programmes and food.
- Costs: £800 for hire of venues, £400 in stamps to post leaflets to schools, £350 to produce the posters. He felt it may be better to go to the schools in person to give out leaflets to kids, and possibly schools could become ticket offices.

On other matters, Stuart felt that the Supporters Club do not do enough for the club, and that possibly the Player of the Year event could be done much better by CFU than by the Supporters Club.

Dave thanked Stuart for coming to the meeting, CFU would discuss possible funding later.

The meeting broke at 8:15 for 10 minutes.

Jez George was invited to talk about Youth Development:

- Jez had been in the Cambridge area for many years.
- He hoped to re-create a quality system with a broader base but cost neutral.
- Cambridge United Youth Development was a separate company and was to be run at break even, despite there being no FA funding.
- He works closely with Stuart and FITC.
- There are around 14 schools involved with FITC, to fund the scholarships the scholars work in FITC.
- CUYD have 10 centres (3 in Cambridge, Bury, Ely, Haverhill, Huntingdon, Kings Lynn, March and Newmarket).
- There are various levels:
 - Under 7 to Under 12, (~400 kids)
 - Run by Steve Lilley
 - They play in various tournaments, sometimes against other club teams.
 - Extra coaching is available for the better players.
 - Elite
 - Under 13 to Under 16
 - Centre of Excellence
 - Under 9 to Under 16
 - Have to make up their own fixture list (as Centre of Excellence outside of the Football League is not recognised) by contacting other clubs
 - No funding, kids have to find their own sponsors that in turn pays for better coaches.
 - Players cannot be signed, therefore players may be signed by other clubs. Jez does not believe CUYD should lose players to Boston/Colchester United/Southend United)
 - Scholars
 - The top level.
 - Currently 19 players (17 in digs locally, as they are in full time education housing benefit is available).
 - 3 or 4 should make it to the first team squad.
 - Play in the Ridgeons league, which is a good league to bridge the gap between youth and First team (Conference) standards
 - Name of the team is CRC (Cambridge Regional College) but are basically CUFC reserves and a feeder to CUFC.
 - Play at the Abbey when first team are away.
 - CUFC fans should be encouraged to support the team if they do not go to an away game.
 - Ridgeons games cost £4.
 - Possibility of loyalty cards (4 games for the price of 3)
 - packages to promote the team which give an affinity to the club.
- CUYD have various fundraising events through the year.

- Want to work with CFU whenever possible.

Brian commented that both FITC and YD are part of the community, and that both Jez and Stuart were doing very good work.

Dave suggested fixture posters similar to those regularly produced for the first team be produced by Ryan. Dave thanked Jez for coming to the meeting.

7) Fans Director/Chairman's report

Brian and Paul reported:

- There had been friction within the club over the past few months, however things had moved on. There may be short term pain for long term gain.
 - Not having a club Secretary had worried him, however a new Secretary was due to start next week, Wayne Purser who had been Secretary at Canvey Island. Wayne had been well recommended, and had been used to doing everything, similar to when Andy Pincher had been CUFC Secretary. He lives near Chelmsford, and has some childcare issues so his hours at CUFC will be 9:30 to 3:30.
 - An Admin assistant has been taken on, Joe Whitehead. Joe was taking a year out after finishing a degree course before starting an MBA, and wanted to experience work at a football club initially for 3 months. He would help where needed.
- At Board level there had been divisions:
 - Fundamental to where the club was going
 - Divide over the ground ownership issue (cannot reach an agreement with Bideawhile as terms keep being added). The original buy back options had been added after the sale and lease back had gone through, and were effectively worthless. If it was to be exercised it would mean erecting a building that would then have to be demolished. The club solicitor used were not experienced in property matters.
 - The £200k rent was killing the club, Paul had offered to buy John Howard's 50% of Bideawhile, this was declined by John Howard. Paul had not met Steve Clark, the other partner in Bideawhile.
 - At the meeting on Monday John Howard had been asked to go, and was voted off the board. He could have made it difficult by going to an EGM, this would have cost the club money. John Howard had agreed to keep it quiet until Wednesday (after the West Ham game) but chose to tell people on Tuesday. When John Howard said there had been rent reduction, it was actually rent deferral.
- The club had been losing £400k a year, now had 6 full time staff (was 17 a few years ago). There had been many volunteer helpers at the West Ham game.
- Ongoing losses of £300k a year.
- Poor use of the Abbey Stadium, no use of the South Stand undercroft. Better management of the Abbey should generate income to reduce the losses to £200k.
- Getting back into the Football League is a must. A team in the Conference get £30k a season, in the Football League it is £250k.
- More investment is needed, a stable club could talk to the landlord on equal footing. The Board need to agree on the direction the club is going in.
- Johnny Hon has re-joined the Board as Vice Chairman in an honorary role. He wants to see the club do well, and be associated with the club. He feels he was lied to in the past, and is angry the way the ground sale was conducted.

- Phil Law (who works for York Construction) is now a Board Member. He is a CUFC fan. He has experience in the construction industry, and Health and Safety. It is felt he match day costs are out of control, being much higher than they should be when compared to other similar clubs (it had been suggested that there should be segregation at the friendly games), stewarding and safety aspects will be subject to risk assessment. It currently costs £5k per game, and £50k had been required for the pop concert which was too much. Phil will be buying shares in CUFC.
- John Howard had done a good job on the playing side, and a replacement was needed. Lee Power had been invited to join the board as Chairman. Lee was a former professional footballer, runs a successful football programme/marketing company (works with top clubs such as Chelsea and Celtic) and was at one time a player's agent. He knows how to run a business, and has many football contacts, and is thus qualified in the position of CEO. He is fed up with the Premiership teams, and wants to get more involved with a club, possibly buying shares in the future.
- Brian will step down as Acting Chairman and will concentrate on Community issues, working with Jez and Stuart.
- Press releases will go out to the media during the week to spread the news.
- Nick is looking to transition off the Board, but there is much work to be done and it needs someone with financial expertise to work at the club 1 day a week. A suitable person may be sought through the Chamber of Commerce contacts.
- The atmosphere in the office is much better than it has been. Jez commented that working at the club is a privilege.
- Ian Darler is reporting to Brian, it appears his attitude is changing for the better.

Q: Will a stable club help the buyback?

A: It is believed that John Howard would like to make a small (say 50%) profit for a quick sale, whereas Steve Clark looks to the long term to make a big profit.

8) AOB

Justyn: CFU beer will soon be available again.

Martin Chapman: Q: Is the Harris Suite available to hire? A: Contact Heather for match day events, Fiona for non-match day events.

Martin Jordan: Has the Kick it Out information (One game, One community). Brian hoped there would be more done at the club this year.

Terry: Asked about fixture posters- Print run of 750, some would go to sponsors, some available for fans, some for putting up in prominent places.

Carol: Quiz night to be arranged in September. Race night (with Jez) on Saturday 14th October.

Dave: Congratulated CFU Youth on raising £320 with a raffle of football shirts at the Ipswich game. CFU Youth have organised a concert on 23rd August at the Man in the Moon pub. They are also selling raffle tickets for various prizes.

The meeting closed at 10:00pm.

Next Scheduled Meeting:

The next regular monthly meeting scheduled for Wednesday 6th September 2006 at the Cambridge Joint Ex-Services Club.