

Minutes of the CFU Monthly Meeting held on 2nd February 2005 at the Cambridge Joint Ex-Services Club, Barnwell Drive, Cambridge.

1) Attendees & Apologies

Present:

Dave Matthew-Jones (Chair),	Lionel Webb (VC),	Derek Wick,
Carolyn Cater,	Carol Looker,	Jamie Dyer,
Mark Saywell,	Justyn Medd,	Andrew Lang,
Brian Attmore,	Martin Jordan,	Terry Wilby (Minutes)

Guests: Jon Keane, Noam Harris.

Apologies: Ben Yelton, Anton Thacker Lorna Morley-Medd

2) Abbey Buy Back update

Dave thanked everyone for their help on the launch of the “Buy Back” campaign. The “Future plans” were changing daily as new information was received.

Justyn reported on how to drive the CCST programme forward:

- A meeting with City councillors at 3pm on 9th February, Dave, Lionel and Justyn to meet with the Chief Executive, Director of Finance, a Legal Services representative and Ian Nimmo-Smith.
- The meeting is to discuss financial matters and look at the business plan, including the set up costs which were estimated (guessed!) at £100k equity. (Justyn will contact similar groups for information).
- Other partners (Cambs FA, CUFC Supporters Club, Cambridge City FC) will also be contacted.
- The CUFC Supporters Club has a limited time to make a long term decision. Their building is in a poor state of repair, they may decide to build a new social club
- Cambs FA are looking at alternative sites, Justyn will contact Roger Pawley to find out what sum they could bring to the CCST.
- The speed that the CCST moves forward depends on agreement from all parties, and speed is not a typical council trait!
- Nick and Justyn are looking at costs.
- Resources are required. Rupert Matthews is a qualified accountant, Martin Page has offered help.
- Justyn spends about 35% of his available time on CCST matters, the rest on media matters.

Mark reported that the leaflet handout had been a big success, and there had been a good response on the message boards and on the radio. He felt we have to capitalise on this support at all the home games, but it was not worth doing much at away games.

There are “Sponsor-a-seat” and “Sponsor-a-terrace” opportunities, he has not set a price for the Sponsor-a-terrace which will probably be in the form of an engraved plaque. Martin agreed to help, and will take the phone calls concerning seat or terrace sponsors.

There may be a leaflet hand out at the next home game.

Events: Ryan Chapman is looking to organise a Pool tournament. Others events are being considered, such as a concert with some leads from Godric.

Justyn is generating the Loan Note form.(done).

Lionel has written to Tom Findlay.

Gordon is keen to help and has generated some posters, the website address on the posters has to be corrected.

A poster is being considered to be put up in various places in London where it is hoped that former Cambridge University students may offer donations or help. Andy will look at the wording on the posters.

Dave introduced Carolyn, John and Noam, and asked Noam to organise a small group of fans to be available to be filmed at the Abbey on Friday morning, possibly playing Monopoly.

3) Fans Director Report

Brian reported that a week was a long time with many changes, in fact there had been changes happening on a daily basis. There were 2 issues that the Committee had to decide on, and the decision should be made without personal emotion:

1. Who should be Chairman?

There is a board meeting on Friday where Gary Harwood is likely to stand down.

Brian felt that Roger Hunt would be the best choice. Other options were:

- John Howard -possible conflict of interest,
- Johnny Hon - possible conflict of interest,
- Gerald Lowe
- Richard Summerfield –possibly resigning,
- Paul Barry –lives in USA.
- Renford Sargent – Has not been involved for a while

A possibility would be for Gary Harwood to be asked to remain to the end of February to oversee any possible takeover of a re-constituted board.

Brian was not a candidate for Chairman.

Brian felt Roger would probably not want to be permanent Chairman, but might be persuaded to take the position temporarily. He would talk to Roger and Renford.

2. Should Richard Summerfield be asked not to resign?

Brian felt that perhaps Richard may think Brian said things out of turn when he reported to the media that the money would run out by the end of February.

Apparently Richard had been having sleepless nights over the financial situation, and at 66 years old he wanted to retire. He would also want to keep his credibility as an accountant.

In a vote it was unanimous that CFU had no support for either Gary or Richard, and that a new start was required. It was felt that both people had not done a very good job, and it was better that they go now. It was made clear that there was no suggestion of any illegal dealings, and no intention to discredit either person.

New directors could be added at the board meeting on Friday, and Johnny Hon had been invited to discuss his offer.

4) Johnny Hon offer

Brian reported that on the Friday before the CUFC AGM an email had been circulated that Dr Hon had a proposal, on Saturday a letter of intent was delivered, and on the Monday at 4:15 there had been a formal offer, which was tabled at the AGM.

The details of the offer are:

- £500k made up of 2 x £200k of share purchases and £100k loan.
- Geoff Morrow and Ed Friedman would hold 20% each.
- There are not enough unsold shares available so shares will have to be purchased from other shareholders, at discount rates.
- 1 Director would have to resign.
- If any shares were purchased from directors it was believed that those directors would loan the value to CUFC, and possibly convert back to shares at a later date.

There was the possibility of Edward Friedman becoming chairman.

There were a number of questions to be answered on the offer. It had been suggested that the money would save the club from relegation, however money may not be much help. What would Johnny Hon do if CUFC are relegated?

Gary Harwood had been approached a couple of weeks ago, £300k was needed to get the club to the end of the season, a further £200k to see them through the summer. When asked some time ago Johnny Hon had said he would not be in a position to invest any money until April 2005.

If Johnny Hon owns 51% of the shares, the Articles of the Association can be changed.

Dave reported that on Tuesday Nick Pomery had emailed Johnny Hon about a meeting for talks with CFU on Thursday.

It seemed that Nick had been able to change their opinions on CFU, and that they now see CFU as being "responsible", and are working for the best interests of CUFC. Gary Harwood had emailed Johnny Hon, urging him to talk to CFU.

Brian's first opinion on the offer was no, however a decision will not be made based on first opinions, the offer had to be looked into further.

It was not clear if Morrow was able to speak for Dr Hon, or what his position was in the Global group of companies.

5) John Howard Meeting

Dave, Brian, Derek and Nick had talked to John Howard to find out if he would support CFU, and if he would give any financial help.

It was felt that John was supportive of the CFU CCST proposal and that it was the way forward. It was possible that John's partner in Bideawhile, Steven Clarke, could get the re-location going by co-ordinating etc.

Planning for a new stadium would probably cost around £500k and could take 30 months. Clarke was used to such deals. The timescales suggested by Gary Harwood were very short. John didn't know much about Johnny Hon's offer.

It was believed that John Howard would want to get out of the Bideawhile deal if other plans did not happen in 3 to 5 years. His usual business deals happened in a shorter period. It was possible that Clarke could buy out Howard.

The CUFC Supporters Club land is separate to the Bideawhile land. Their building is falling down and they need to decide when to rebuild. A possibility is to build on their land (which is currently used as a car park) adjacent to Newmarket road (the area where a hotel was planned to be built), and use the space at the rear (where the current building is) as a car park.

John Howard is concerned about the Hon offer as the land could be acquired for non-football use.

Howard seems keen to work with CFU, and has not developed future plans. He also has no concrete plans for a new stadium.

Dave felt the CUFC board were not sure what would happen, so suggested that CFU continue on the CCST plans. The plans hinge on buying Bideawhile. It was noted that York City got a £2million loan to buy back their ground.

It was possible that the general fan base would think that the £500k from Johnny Hon would save the club and their help would not be required, when in fact the Hon money would only keep the club going through the summer.

Following press coverage a CFU member had asked for their money back because of the possible tie up with Cambridge City!

Dave would speak with Nick about Bideawhile, and try to find out what the boundaries of control are in that company.

6) Football in the Community

Dave had been approached by Youth Development, who fear for their survival. They are looking to use some spare rooms in the hostel for foreign students as income. It was hoped that some companies could be directed toward sponsoring the Youth development.

7) Relations with Club officials

Dave asked that we all be careful when discussing possible options that may involve CUFC club officials. CFU must keep good relations with club officials. We should also be wary of criticising players.

Brian commented that he had been approached by 4 stewards who believed that they need paying as they have the stewarding certificates.

8) CFU Way Forward

CFU must continue to keep talking with Johnny Hon, continue to work on the CCST, and try to get information from John Howard on his plans.

However some things happen that "muddy" the waters and make the path forward less clear.

A Greenfield site is much easier to develop than an existing site.

Should CFU try to raise the £500k to buy the club?

Justyn:

- Johnny Hon is the only one with money to put on the table.
- He is apparently a successful businessman.
- If his intentions are good then CFU should work with him.

- Anyone having 51% is not good, but Hon + CFU could make a majority holding.
- Positive things came from the meetings
- There could be a conflict between Howard and Clarke within Bideawhile.

Where are we with pledges?

From Nick: One (potentially the biggest) of the people who were interested last November wants to kept informed of progress, most of the others are still interested. Potentially Reg Smart may be interested.

Nick is speaking to all potential partners.

Lionel:

- CCST must continue.
- Convince Hon that a partnership with CFU is better than 51%.

Mark:

- The timescale is very short, and it would be a big ask to do something else.
- We cannot find £500k in 4 weeks.

Carolyn:

- Knows of a couple of bands that have CUFC supporting members who may be able to help.
- Suggested a Sportsman Dinner as a fund raiser.
- Will do anything to help.

Carol:

- Will continue to help wherever possible.
- Will shake buckets.

Andrew:

- Could the money in trust for buy-a-brick be used or put into CFU? Brian is a trustee.

Terry:

- Asked for clarification of what should be recorded in the minutes when it came to confidential information. It was agreed that all relevant information should be recorded in the minutes, and people should be careful not to send copies to non-committee members.

Noam:

- If CFU did raise £500k and take over the club, would CFU still raise money from the CCST? Answer: Yes, for CFU the CCST is the way forward.

9) AOB

How was contacting the Conference teams going?

Martin: The chairman of the Exeter trust was due in Cambridge soon, Martin was arranging a meeting where financial issues could be discussed. Shrewsbury had been very good, York City were unable to talk at the time they had been contacted, Carlisle were going to call back.

Terry Baker had donated his 50,000 CUFC shares to CFU, for which CFU were very grateful.

Dave clarified that CFU would continue to speak to Johnny Hon before deciding if CFU will put in an offer.

Next Scheduled Meeting:

The next regular monthly meeting is on Wednesday 2nd March 2005 at the Cambridge Joint Ex-Services Club.