Cambridge Fans United

CFU

"Uniting Our Community"

AMBER NEWS

Special "Valentine's Day" Edition

February, 2019

"Love conquers all things – except poverty and toothache."
Mae West



Opening Sonnet,

It would be wonderful to report that love has been in the air during this most romantic of months but the unavoidable truth is that our beloved team have displayed all the bewildering contradictions so unreasonably associated with the fairer sex. Of late, some home performances have set the pulses racing and have only been a goal or two short of perfection. Although Port Vale were only defeated 1-0 at the Abbey, the victory was well deserved. At times some of our attacking play was irresistible but we have been complaining all season about not taking chances. Similarly, our performance against Tranmere lacked nothing – except goals. The feeling was that as soon as Rushian or Alex break their ducks we'll be battering teams and heading for the play offs.

Well, that's how the romantics would have it. Our next two games at Cheltenham and Yeovil were desperately disappointing – given how high our hopes had been raised. Thank goodness our home form is so good now – and yet, as expected, social media had us relegated, our recent form an illusion and those of us given to unstoppable optimism busted to the status of 'Happy Clapper'. Personally, I enjoy clapping the team and being cheerful. Football has the capacity to fill you with unexpected joy before trampling on your dreams. Those of us who've been coming for decades have always known how true love can leave you feeling miserable and without hope….



But I ramble. I am confident that since the arrival of Colin Calderwood and some astute signings, we are now far too good to go down. I am well aware of what a dangerous statement that can be but there you have it. I look forward to matches once again, knowing that we will be a match for most teams and that we are once again really easy on the eye.

Finally, hats off to Ian Darler, whose book I am really looking forward to when it is published. He is an outstanding servant of this club and a wonderful groundsman. We are lucky that his fierce loyalty led him to turn down 'bigger' clubs like Tottenham Hotspur. Cambridge fans are fans for life. It is in the blood and non-negotiable and instantly recognisable. Anyway, the FA told him that he can't cut shapes on the pitch. Neither Christmas trees nor hearts. Ian has more sense than the faceless bureaucrats. Well done sir!



Questions for Gary Deegan

I am grateful to Gary for taking time out of leading the team to answer our questions. He has had his critics but he is an inspirational captain who bleeds Black and Amber. He'll do for us!

What do you think of the level of support at Cambridge and away. Does it make a real difference to the team?

The support at home has been special at times this year and really gives us that lift we need. Northampton is one game that sticks out and had everything you want as a fan. But for me the away fans they deserve a shout out, they travel up and down the country regardless of the result so when we put a performance in like Grimsby away, it means a lot to send them away happy. I hope we can do that on a more regular basis.

What do you make of the four loan players so far? It must have increased competition for places but does it give us more tactical options?
The four lads have been brilliant since arriving and integrated really well with the boys. They are eager to impress, and you could see that on Saturday with Rushy coming off the bench and scoring. Hayden also came on and made a big impact and should've scored as well. It really gives us that flexibility to change it up if needs be



How do you like the new nickname some of the fans have given you.....The Beast From the East? Do you have others?
It's the first I've heard it, and to be honest nicknames are not something I've ever really taken notice of.

The form of the team has really improved during the last few weeks. What do you put this down to?
Players in the team know if they don't play well or are not putting a shift in for the team that they'll be out. So that keeps players honest, and on their toes knowing if I'm not at it, the gaffer isn't afraid of taking you out. Look, winning also breathes confidence.

Has Colin Calderwood made many changes to the way the team is set up? We seem to have become harder to beat. Why do you think that is?



The gaffer has got rid of some bad habits that we had picked up. He constantly reminds us about doing the basics really well and keeping it simple, playing within a structure and not been too rigid or robotic but just knowing your job in the team.

What are your own ambitions in football and do you think you can achieve them here?
Ambition is to keep driving myself to become a better player to play at highest level possible.

What was your favourite game this season and your least?
Favourite game this year for me was Bury at home. Going behind, a man sent off, we really showed great character and grit. My least favourite was FA Cup away to Guiseley.

Finally, do you think that Cambridge United have the potential to be a bigger club?
Definitely think so. Every club has the potential, we're no different in wanting to become a bigger club.

Shaun Grady Responds

1 How often does the full Board meet?

- The Board meet monthly, usually on the last Friday of the month.
- When needed there are additional Board meetings and occasionally the Board meet by teleconference if there is a topic that needs to be discussed quickly and everyone can't be in the same place.
- The Board is obviously also in very regular informal contact by e mail

2 Is there always an agenda and minutes?

- Every meeting has an agenda circulated beforehand and minutes are taken and circulated ahead of the next meeting.
- There are a number of standing agenda items that are discussed at every meeting such as Football and Commercial Operations review, Finance update and Health & Safety and Safeguarding reports.
- Other topics will depend on the issues that need to be raised and discussed at that point in time.

3 How often are up to date finances seen and discussed?

- A Financial Report is prepared for every Board Meeting.
- Duncan Foyle and the Finance Team have introduced systems and processes to produce reliable information that reflects the latest view available.

4 Are all decisions voted on and voted on by the whole Board?

- Decisions are made by consensus and everyone's views are sought and taken into account.
- If there was disagreement, then yes a vote would be taken, but that happens very rarely.

5 Are issues of staffing levels ever discussed and the ratio of playing staff to non playing staff?

- Staffing levels are discussed regularly and subject to a review periodically.

6. Which Directors are tasked with bringing which issues to meetings?

Any Director can bring any issue to the meeting, however in general terms;

- Duncan Foyle reports on Financial matters
  - Ben Strang reports on Football Operations supported by Graham Daniels
  - Henry Comfort updates on Commercial performance supported by Shaun Grady
  - Godric Smith and Dave Matthew Jones takes the lead on Fan Engagement
  - Ian Mather leads on the Stadium redevelopment project
  - Andy Beattie leads on Health & Safety and Safeguarding

7 Who deals directly with Paul Barry?

- Paul is in fairly regular contact with several Directors including Renford Sargent with whom they have been fellow Directors for many years
- Graham Daniels and Ben Strang talk to Paul about football matters on a fairly frequent basis
- Shaun Grady and Ian Mather talk to Paul periodically about the business
- When Paul is in the UK we typically meet him with several members and sometimes the whole Board

8 Who is responsible for communicating with fans and the media?

- Tom Stewart is obviously responsible for communications
- Godric Smith provides support and advice to Tom
- The work we have been doing on the fans parliament (‘CUSP’) is a good example of this
- When there is an important matter that needs to be announced, this would be reviewed and discussed with the entire Board

9 Is the FED party to all Board discussions? If not,why is this?

- Every Board member is party to all Board matters

- There is no distinction at all between the FED and any other Directors

10 Which matters discussed by the Board are regarded as confidential?

- Inevitably there are a lot of matters that are discussed at the Board which are confidential
- These include financial and commercial matters, information relating to the playing squad and other staff and so on and so forth
- It wouldn't be in the Club's best interest for these matters to be made public other than through appropriate channels

11 Are the Board satisfied with their image in the minds of fans

The Board accept that there has been a lot of change at the Club over the last twelve months or so

- After Dave Doggett and Jez George left the Club this unarguably created a vacuum
- More recently the Board have working to improve relations with the fans and media
- This includes two meetings with various stakeholders, the Fans Forum, the formation of CUSP, more information in newsletters
- We have taken some steps forward but know there is more to do. It is a Board priority to continue to improve communications with fans

12 Will the Board ever accept responsibility for the financial losses or explain the reasons more fully in the public arena?

- Members of the Board talked about the 2017 Financial performance at the last shareholders meeting
- The 2018 numbers will be presented at the next Shareholders Meeting
- As Directors the Board are very mindful of all their different responsibilities on behalf of the Club. We take the role very seriously and never forget that it is a privilege to serve the Club.

I am very grateful to Shaun,who I know is very busy at the moment,for answering our questions so thoroughly. We all appreciate the greater transparency at the club.Ed.

Helping Away Fans

As part of my role as SLO, I have to make an Away club's visit here as safe and enjoyable as possible.

In my blog SLO part 3 I spoke of how we contact Away teams in advance and try to ensure their match day goes smoothly. Recently after the match against Northampton a visiting supporter failed to return to the coach for the trip home.



The search for him involved the emergency services. Ian Darler and Andy Pickard along with the Police searched the stadium and also the common for him late into the evening. Fortunately, the gentleman was found safe and sound having returned home via a lift. This time it ended happily. It was good to know that everything was in place and the procedures ensured the searches were carried out in an organised and systematic manner.

The only downside was the romantic meal Lisa Darler had planned for Ian was ruined.



After every match a search of the ground is undertaken to ensure that nobody has collapsed or fallen ill.

In addition I meet with our Club's Safety Officer Andy Pickard to understand ground regulations and safety measures. I attend pre-match briefings when I can - but sometimes the role of SLO requires me to greet coaches, meet fans and sponsors, and be available in the NRE, Main Stand and Habbin all at the same time which can be a challenge

Hopefully as the role of SLO becomes more understood, I will find more willing helpers to work with me to make fans' match day experience as good as it can be. Sarah and Simon King help me on matchdays and their help is invaluable filling in

wherever needed and doing checks for me around the ground before and during matches.

Margaret Pearson also helps by contacting the clubs in advance of match days to pass on information for those coming to the Abbey and also to provide information for our supporters when visiting other clubs

Most clubs are starting to have SLO teams carrying out the role required. Others have a single point of contact and are employees of the club. Either way the role is becoming more and more a part of the match day.

Don't forget I am able to be contacted by e-mail: dave.matthew-jones@cambridge-united.co.uk or leaving a message for me at the club: 01223 566500 or by talking to me as you see me around the ground.

If anyone would like to volunteer their services on a match day please do contact me.

DMJ

The Future of Lower League Football

Disincentives to promotion. The top clubs hoarding too much of the cash. Owners gambling a club's long-term future on immediate promotion. All major issues and all covered when Accrington Stanley majority shareholder and chairman Andy Holt met with MPs on Wednesday (9th January 2019).

The *What is the future of lower league football?* event was co-hosted by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Football Supporters, which the FSF acts as secretariat to, and the All-Party Parliamentary Football Group.



Holt told MPs that not enough revenue trickles down the leagues, with the Premier League's solidarity payments to the EFL being received predominantly by Championship clubs with League One and

League Two clubs receiving far smaller amounts. Second tier clubs receive 80% of the cash, League One clubs 12% and League Two clubs 8%.

Read more here www.fsf.org.uk/blog/view/APPG-what-is-the-future-of-lower-league-football

DMJ

Clubs in Trouble

Much has been said about what football clubs mean to their communities and everything possible should be done to secure their futures. I was delighted to see the Oyston family finally removed from any influence at Blackpool ,whose fans have suffered for the best part of a decade at the hands of an owner who seemed to see the club as his own personal plaything and as a way of boosting his personal income. Blackpool fans who love their club boycotted home games for years rather than put money into the pockets of the Oystons – and now they have prevailed. Owners and Directors have to understand that they are temporary guardians of clubs which belong to the fans who will be there long after any particular owner has moved on.



I worry for the fans of Coventry City who are technically homeless and have to explain plans which are not yet in place and for the fans of Notts County. Notts are the league's oldest club and have wonderful fans. They face a winding up order and slipping out of the league. I remember how bleak things were here when our ground was sold under very questionable circumstances and, until the intervention of the Sports Minister, it looked like we might go out of existence. He recognised that it isn't right to penalise an entire community because of the selfish, irresponsible and downright greedy ambitions of those charged with the responsibility of running a football club. They are not just about money or football, they are invested with the dreams and hopes of those who support them. Their rights should always be protected.

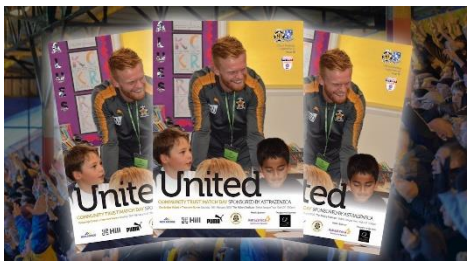
COMMUNITY TRUST NEWS – FEBRUARY

Community Trust Takeover

The Cambridge United fixture against Tranmere Rovers on the 16th February saw the Community Trust take over the Abbey Stadium. Over 100 Community Trust

participants from various initiatives, were invited to the match and were fantastic in supporting the U's in their Sky Bet League Two encounter.

The Trust completely took over the match day programme and used the opportunity to inform supporters about the range of initiatives, campaigns and projects currently taking place in and around Cambridge. Also, before the match started, members of the Trust walked around with donation buckets, handed out leaflets and chatted to supporters. The Ethos Community Heroes of the day, Tracy Hutchison and Paul Beastall, were chosen by the Trust for their work in setting up a parkrun on Coldham's Common and got to present the official match ball to the referee ahead of kick off. Also, at half time, a Pan-Disability game took place on the pitch, showcasing the great work that the Trust does in promoting sport for all.



Cambridge United Community Trust CEO Ben Szreter explained in the matchday programme the importance of the takeover day and the work of the Trust in the local community:

"Today's match is part of a celebration of the work of Cambridge United throughout our community.

Cambridge United Community Trust is the charitable arm of Cambridge United Football Club. We aim to place Cambridge United at the heart of our community using the power of sport to raise aspirations, build communities and improve lives.



The community work of Cambridge United reaches a wide variety of people throughout our community. Among many others this includes senior citizens who attend our monthly lunches or walking football, primary school children participating in AstraZeneca Active Science or Match Report Writing or our other various work in primary school, people with a variety of impairments taking part in one of our eleven weekly disability sport sessions and teenagers engaging in our Mind Your Head Mental Health project or National Citizens Service.

Cambridge is an immensely wealthy city with a thriving economy including innovative businesses with global reach. However, significant inequality exists within Cambridge. Cambridge in 2017 and 2018 was named as the most unequal city in the UK (data was unavailable for 2019). An example of the stark inequality is that life expectancy is up to 9.3 years lower in the poorest areas of the city than the richest.



Indeed Abbey ward, which the Abbey Stadium of course sits in, has some of the highest child poverty rates in the city which are approximately 26.7%. These issues of inequality and deprivation must be tackled and solutions found to improve people's lives. With the correct facilities and support Cambridge United can increasingly be of central importance to strategies to tackle these issues. Our Club relies on establishing and maintaining strong links with our community and we hope that our community can continue to increasingly see Cambridge United as of central importance. We want to be vital to our community's sense of pride and help to raise aspirations by working in partnership with local authorities and local businesses."

Simon Wall

Last Friday, 40 hardy souls gathered to spend the night in the Main Stand. As a sponsored event it was designed to raise money for the homeless and to draw attention to the fact that a wealthy city like ours has a homelessness problem which shames us all.



The Community Trust does great work in schools, with disability football teams and with the elderly. Sport can transform the lives of us all. We live in a cynical age but there is far more good in people than the media allows us to see. We should be very proud of the Community Trust and the fact that this club recognizes that it serves the community where it lives. United means what it says.

ACS

MASTERMIND SPECIALIST- SUBJECT CAMBRIDGE UNITED (OR ARE YOU A CAMBRIDGE UNITED ANORAK?)

1) Can you name the 2 future England managers who played against United in the inaugral 1970-71 season and the teams they represented?
2) Can you name 3 United players who have played first team football for Manchester United?
3) Which future England test cricketer played against United at the Abbey Stadium in the 1972-73 promotion season?



4) Which future England test cricketer played against United(away game) in the 1976-77 promotion season?
5) United appeared as the featured game on Match of the Day 3 times in the 1970s, always as the away team. Can you name the opponents and the aproximate dates?
6) Can you name the first 2 Cambridge born players to represent Cambridge United in football league fixtures?
7) Malcom Webster was presented with an award at half time during the final league game of the season v Oldham in 1983, why?
8) Can you name the player sent off 3 times in a period of 5 games during the 1994-5 season?
9) Can you name the only father and son combination who have both represented United in first team football since 1970?
10) Which United player played in the same schoolboy team as David Beckham?
11) Dion Dublin's father was a member of which 1970s pop group?
12) Colin Calderwood is not the first Calderwood to be involved at United as Jimmy Calderwood was a loan player from Birmingham City in I think 1979 or 1980 but can you list players with the same surname who have represented United in the league era?

William Arnold February 2019

Football According to Coconuts



Psst!

Don't tell a soul, but there *may* still be an opportunity to buy tickets for the 2019 Cambridge United Hall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony.

The organisers have had a few drop-outs from people who have remembered they'd planned to wash their hair that night (Thursday, March 21) and a few who have realised they won't have recovered their senses after St Patrick's Day, four days before.

There have been a few refunds and therefore some places are up for grabs, although they may have gone by the time you read this.



On the other hand, you may be lucky, so head for the CFU online store and be prepared to fork out £25 for Cambridge's social highlight of the year.

Some supporters may have dropped out – more fool them – but none of the players who have arranged to be there have done likewise. Where else would you be likely to find Andy Beattie, Alan Biley, Bryan Boggis, Derrick Christie, Graham Daniels, Terry Eades, Steve Fallon, Tom Finney, Sam Harris, Peter Hobbs, Keith Lockhart and Rodney Slack together in one room?

It’s taking place in the Supporters’ Club this year and the bar will be open from 6.30pm. It would be foolish to miss out.

Cheerio

Harry

Bleating about the Bush

If there’s one thing that gets my goat – apart from the freelance goatherd I hire at certain times of the year – it’s people talking about the one thing that gets their goat.

If you read this column regularly, which I don’t suppose you do because you’ve got a pet hate to cultivate, you’ll have realised that I have little patience for individuals who proclaim their opinions loudly and publicly when it’s obvious they haven’t a clue what they’re talking about.

Exhibit A: ‘If there’s one thing that gets my goat,’ they’ll bluster, ‘it’s all these players who pass the ball backwards.’

Exhibit B: ‘If there’s one thing that gets my goat,’ they’ll rant, ‘it’s that the board don’t realise what a dangerous position we’re in.’

Exhibit C: ‘If there’s one thing that gets my goat, it’s the club not signing players who they can sell for millions a couple of years later.’



A: a backwards pass is very often the best option.

B: oh, yes they do.

C: do you honestly think the club wouldn’t sign any player of that quality if it had any realistic chance of doing so?

I was always told to keep my counsel until I was absolutely sure of the validity of what I would say. That's why it's rare for me to say anything at all.

If you would be so kind, stop getting my goat.

The Terracist



And finally....

"People in love, it is well known, suffer extreme conceptual delusions; the most common of these being that other people find your condition as thrilling and eye-watering as you do yourselves."
Julian Barnes

And still we wait for the results of the independent audit which it is to be hoped will show that the club is now on an even keel and ready to engage with the fans on an honest and realistic level. The Fans Forum was, despite its critics, a successful indicator of what such events could become and I have no doubt that the Fans' Parliament will be a mechanism envied and copied by clubs elsewhere, as it is increasingly realized that a purely business model of clubs is not enough to preserve their existence. Football, like life, has peaks and troughs and planning for them is impossible. What clubs need to do is to make fans feel valued so that they continue to come in bad times as well as in good. Most fans are extremely loyal and don't need that much encouragement to continue traditions and to be part of a journey, however bumpy.

I am sure that there is plenty of work to be done about our finances and it's fairly clear that we will need an injection of finance from elsewhere. Paul Barry can't be expected to shoulder the burden himself. I am confident that there is enough about this club to secure heavy investment. This city of ours is thriving and many companies would be very glad to be associated with it. Traditionally, Barnwell and the football club have been poor relations of the University and the wealthy firms who control so much of what happens here.

When you see how much good the Community Trust does, it is not hard to imagine the impact that a redeveloped stadium, more investment and a successful team could have on the local economy. I know that a lot a work is going on behind the scenes to secure this particular future.

We have acquired a fine manager and must hope that, if he is supported properly to make the right signings during the summer, we can finally think realistically about promotion. It would be doubly sweet after a season like this.

I hope I will see some of you at the CFU AGM on April 8th(DateTBC) in the Supporters' Club. Our role is changing all the time but we are committed to ensuring that we have the kind of club which all fans can be proud of.



Make a difference and join CFU.
Your opinions and contributions are always gratefully received.
acstephen@hotmail.com

[Deadline for next newsletter- March 27th]

United in Endeavour