

Supporters Board Meeting Minutes – 4th November 2020 – 7pm

Chair's Notes

The Supporters Board were pleased to welcome Kieran Maguire (Price of Football Podcast & Book) & Kevin Rye (Fan Engagement Index & Football Insights) to our latest virtual meeting on Wednesday 4th November and I'd like to thank both of our invited guests for their interesting and highly valued views on the challenges currently being faced by all EFL clubs.

By viewing the minutes of the meeting shown below you will see that we discussed in detail how the pandemic has adversely affected financially both the football club, and the city's business community. We also heard the passionate views of Club Chairman Clive Nates as to why Project Big Picture would not be beneficial for Lincoln City FC, the EFL or football in general.

In these difficult times for us all, it is reassuring to know that our club remains in the good hands of people on the Club Board who are doing their utmost to ensure that Lincoln City FC comes through the pandemic in reasonably good shape whilst continuing to communicate with our fanbase in their usual open and transparent manner.

With a revised rescue package for League One and Two currently being considered by EFL clubs and government discussions taking place recently regarding the long awaited safe return of fans to stadiums, there may be grounds for us all to be cautiously optimistic looking ahead.

It was great to hear further positive news regarding the Stacey West and 3G Development and the benefits which this project will provide for both the club and local community.

We hope all Imps fans keep well and continue enjoying from home the team's excellent start to the season.

Tony Smith
Chair of the Supporters Board

Attendees

- Andrew Helgesen, Tony Smith, Liam Scully, Jake Longworth, Jon Clack, Jackie Atkins, Dan Rawson, Julian Burley, Jane Chamberlain, Marcus Burton, Nick Procter, Gary Hutchinson, Sam Kendall, Jonathan Battersby.

In Attendance

- Kevin Rye (Fan Engagement Index), Kieran Maguire (Price of Football)

Apologies

- Jay Wright, Karl McCartney

Financial Impact of Covid-19

- From our recently published Economic Impact Report, we know the High Street sees 40% - 300% increase in trade when Lincoln City FC played at home. We are conscious that the loss of our match days, with fans, doesn't just impact the football club.
- Match day, commercial and retail revenue have all significantly decreased since football was suspended in March.
- Club managed to make significant cuts in operational costs plus a 40% reduction in pro department funds.
- Overall, the club is projected to make a £1,500,000 net loss.
- Club's debt only in bonds which are c£600,000 with £115,000 of this payable in the next two years.
- Our cashflow/forecast looks okay until February but the reality is that the club is to some extent living on borrowed funds by way of advanced money from future core funding.
- Mr Maguire added that December is his perceived tipping point for a lot of EFL clubs and a bailout is very much needed sooner rather than later.

Project Big Picture (Clive Nates)

- There is a lot to be unhappy about in this package with some aspects of it not picked up in the media (or by fellow clubs).
- EFL clubs were told by Rick Parry in July that a rescue package was imminent but that did not materialise.
- The £250m rescue package in PBP is a loan to be repaid from future income.
- This is a power grab from the big six who would effectively have control over English football in the future.
- Football existed prior to 1992 and there are clubs with 100+ years of history. Why give all this power forever to the big six clubs at a point in time?
- The big six would even have a veto on who could own more than 10% of another PL club.
- The projected revenue numbers are in our opinion wildly optimistic.
- The proposal to allow clubs to sell matches directly to international viewers could decimate revenue from international broadcasters which is very different from the projected 10% increase in international revenue in the document.
- There would be no specific academy funding to EFL clubs and no requirement for L1 and L2 clubs to even have an academy.
- If a manager left an EFL club, all of the players on loan could be recalled.
- The proposal offered a short-term solution with significant threats for the future of English football.
- Although change is necessary fans can play a part to ensure that football in England only changes for the better and they should be questioning of their clubs and the football authorities.
- It's concerning that clubs were asked to support a proposal despite not being given sufficient information to properly assess the consequences.

UEFA – 48 Hour Blackout

- This prevents live football taking place and protects the 3pm kick off.
- There is a current suspension of this rule to allow streaming
- The re-instatement of this rule will be a future discussion item as it is likely there will be calls from certain clubs to not reinstate the rule. We need to form a club view on this.

Stacey West Project/3G Development

- Received a £950,000 grant from Football Foundation.
- Phase 1 - 3G regeneration which will provide a much-needed fit for purpose green space - scheduled for completion in February 2021.
- Stacey West Stand will increase in size (3,400 capacity) and will become the new home for Lincoln City Foundation featuring education and community space along with providing matchday concessions.
- It is a £2.8m project which will create jobs and add significant value to the local economy.

2021/22 Kit Design

- Working group has been formed to be part of this selection process.
- The working will include representatives from the Trust and the Supporters Board

Live Streaming

- We speak to the EFL regularly about continued issues with iFollow.
- Digital Working Group (Liam Scully, David Lowes, Jake Longworth) are also in contact with the EFL about improvements to the service generally.
- The reality is that we'd be in a far worse place without iFollow however the club acknowledge that aspects of this should be improved as a minority are still having persistent issues.
- Illegal streams continue to harm the clubs revenue and must be clamped down on.

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- 16th December 2020 at 7pm