**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday 4th August 2022 at 6pm at the EMG Inspire Stadium Clubhouse**

1. **Attendees**

Chelmsford City Football Club (FC) – Steve Shore (SS), Robbie Simpson (RS), Phil Crowe (PC) and Paul Bailey (PB)

Chelmsford City Supporter’s Club (SC) – Jordan McManus (JM), Richard Macey (RM) and Will O’Donnell (WOD/minute taker only)

1. **Apologies**

SC – Richie Bethell (RB)

1. **Updates on discussions with interested parties**

See Chairman’s Report.

1. **SC Statement of No Confidence & Clarets4Change (C4C) Petition.**

* SS accepts that the numbers on the petition are significant, and it is a concern if these are all regular supporters, as action is being taken on the points raised, so he is not sure how to respond – a number of things were asked for, these were actioned, but there is still a protest.
* JM stated that within the first hour of the petition being created more than 200 had signed and this was before it was publicly circulated by C4C.
* SS accepted that this is a cause for concern but the protest seemed to have evolved from “we want action in these areas”, to which the club has responded, to “we want Shore & Holmes out”
* JM reminded the room that he is there to represent the SC membership and the letter of No Confidence is what the members unanimously voted for at the last EGM.
* SS feels that the 6 aims are being addressed; with his thoughts on progress are set out in the Chairman’s Report. JM commented that this was helpful and would provide supporters with more information than they previous had which would help them understand the action being taken.
* SS explained that the reality is that himself and John Holmes (JH) are not going anywhere at this time and added that the whole narrative about the club being for sale was a mistake as it had created unnecessary concern and instability. JM agreed and felt that clarification of the current position would be helpful to Supporters.
* SS felt that the potential takeover parties offered no real valuation of the FC, confirming that no formal offers were ever received.
* SS feels that there is no real alternative to the current regime at this time.
* SS stated that they had the support of a number of sponsors who had insisted that their sponsorship agreements contained clauses that enable them to withdraw if there is a change of control.
* SS feels that if himself and JH walk away at this time then the club would be in difficulty.
* SS wants to organise a meeting with C4C to find out what it is they now want; other than new owners.
* PC added that it was his understanding that that it was JH hadwho actually saved the club.

1. **Chairman’s Update**

* See attached Chairman’s Report **(Appendix 1)**
* SC Reps JM and RM were asked what their opinions were on the progress being made. Both said that PC is to be thanked on the work he has done so far but the general consensus amongst the SC membership was that it took the SC getting to the table for things to occur. Having now seen the progress on paper in the Chairman’s report they feel more positive and hope progress continues.
* RS asked the Reps if they did feel that there was positive progress as they had stated in the meeting then perhaps they could share that on social media ahead of the first game as this could really help the atmosphere and with it the players.
* It was agreed that the Chairman’s Report would be sent out with the minutes.

1. **First Team Manager’s Update.**

* RS feels the team is in a good place.
* RS feels the squad is stronger than last year.
* The budget has been increased from last year and RS hopes the first team can overachieve this.
* The link with Hullbridge will help accelerate bringing through our own in a ‘ready’ state.

1. **General Manager’s Update**

* PC was disappointed to learn that his Q&A had been secretly recorded by someone as he had expressly requested it was not and as such it broke a little bit of trust. JM stated that PC made him aware of the allegation at the Millwall friendly and was looking into it but agreed that it should not have happened.
* PC feels that it is unfair on Supporters to attack the club as due to Covid and league restructuring as the club has been unable to move forward as quickly as some may have wanted.
* Wants C4C to be clearer with what they want.
* The Pitch had a very small window to have been worked on. More work is to take place. Both PC and RS are happy with the progress on the pitch and thank the groundsman for his work so far.
* The new Dugouts will arrive on 2nd September. Some of the broken wheels have been replaced on the current Dugouts.
* The Camera in the Main Stand is scheduled to be repositioned.
* Cro Ro Trolly has been repaired.
* New member of staff to be joining PC. New member of staff held previous position in the commercial department at Barnet FC.
* Early talks are underway about a site for the youth/academy.
* General Manager’s Report to be shared with the minutes **(Appendix 2)**.

1. **Review of Clarets10 Vision**

See Chairman’s Report.

SS proposed the establishment of a working party to ensure the continued validity of the vision and to work on an action plan.

1. **CCFC medium-term & long-term targets and priorities.**

* To be reviewed as part of Clarets10 Vision review
* SS explained that if the club is to gain promotion it needs to increase spectator numbers. With the likes of Southend regularly attract crowds of around 5,500, along with Wrexham, Notts County and others at the step above, to compete Chelmsford needs to attract and retain bigger crowds. As such he felt that a key priority for 2022/23 season off-field should be to attract more regular supporters.

1. **AOB**

None

1. **Date of Next Meeting**

Provisionally 8th September 2022, but final date to be agreed by all parties.

**Appendix 1: Chairman’s Report from SS**

**Chelmsford City Football Club**

**Board Meeting – 4th August 2022**

**Chairman’s Report**

***Overview***

* The club is in a strong position to start the new season with a strengthening of the first team squad and some positive pre-season results to build upon.
* The finances are in a good position with the current owners continuing to inject monies required to meet the costs of running the club. The main outstanding creditor is Chelmsford City Council, whose debt it is hoped to be clear in the next couple of weeks once the season starts.
* Refurbishments are ongoing with the new carpet installed this week, new dugouts on order and a new tunnel being designed. The camera is scheduled to be fixed by 19th August.
* There is currently no intention to sell the club by the current owners nor have they received any formal offers for its purchase.
* It is understood that Clarets4Change is organising a protest on Saturday. A list of action points were raised by Clarets4Change at the end of last season all of which are being actioned, Clarets4Change has made no attempts to engage with the club and seem to want to continue to protest through the media. The club does not believe this is an appropriate approach and will be approaching Clarets4change to arrange a meeting to discuss their current objections.

***Clarets10 Vision***

The vision as set out three years ago, needs to be reviewed and refreshed.

A working group will be established to examine the vision and ensure it remains fit for purpose given the ever-changing landscape.

Representatives of all relevant parties will be asked to provide participants in the working group.

***Football***

* Robbie and the team have done an excellent job in retaining old, and attracting new, players to Chelmsford City and we look forward to an exciting season.
* The league looks tough again this year with a number of clubs putting significant resources to play in attempts to secure promotion.
* The club has agreed a collaboration with Hullbridge Sports FC to complete the pathway from Academy to first team such that the following ladder now exists:
  + **Step 2**: Chelmsford City Football Club
  + **Step 4**: Hullbridge Sports FC
  + **Step 7**: Chelmsford City Football Club Reserves
  + Chelmsford City Football Club Academy
* It is expected that some players will sign dual registrations for the coming season with Chelmsford City & Hullbridge Sports. In addition, Reserve games will be played at Hullbridge Sports Ground.
* Academy recruitment has gone well and we expect a full complement to start at Moulsham in September; Academy players will be attending all home games to help them develop their understanding of how the team, and their position, play.
* Mickey Spillane, Head of the Academy, has been interviewing to replace Elliott Ward and has a proposal he will be presenting to myself over the next few days.
* A meeting is scheduled for 5th August with representatives of the Women’s & Girls teams to discuss closer collaboration and support. With the success of the Lionesses and the growth in girls football it is key that the club takes this opportunity to develop in this area with a key objective to be the establishment of a Girls Academy at Moulsham for the start of the 2023/24 Academic year.

***Finance***

* The club is pleased to have Ascend Broking as its new main sponsor which not only brings with it financial benefit but also a working partnership to support the clubs growth.
* In addition, of the clubs main sponsors, Laser Electrical have continued their sponsorship along with Gards and Clive Emson. Phil Crowe is following up with EMG as to their continued involvement.
* Accounts for the year to 30th June 2022 will be prepared over the next few weeks and tabled as appropriate along with the budgets for the coming season and subsequently an AGM organised for the wider shareholder group.
* The free shares that were offered follow the takeover were issued in March however the accountants have yet to distribute the share certificates. They will be delivered over the next few weeks and the club is open to other parties taking an interest in the club. More details to be provided on the website in due course.

***Operations & Infrastructure***

* In order for Chelmsford City Football Club to progress it needs to enhance it’s facilities and potentially find a new stadium:
* Capacity is limited at Melbourne Park and to meet the ground-grading requirements of the National League it would need to increase capacity to 4,000 and have the plans in place to increase this to 5,000. This seems impractical in its current location and format.
* National League clubs are required to play midweek games on Tuesday evenings; something which is not currently possible at Melbourne Park.
* As costs rise many clubs in the National League South and below have reverted to synthetic pitches to generate the significant income streams these bring (estimated £150k-£200k per annum). This influx of monies would significantly help the club in its drive for sustainability.
* Architects have been engaged to look at the options for the club and these will be shared in due course

***Clarets4Change***

This movement seems to have gained traction in recent weeks with its petition for the removal of myself and John Holmes from the club and the protest planned for Saturday.

Having reviewed the six points raised at the end of last season, it is becoming increasingly difficult to understand what the issue is. In summary the points were, and the clubs actions taken as a result are:

1. ***Supporter representation on the board***

This meeting today includes 2/3 representatives of The Supporters Club.

1. ***Expand the board***

This is proving more difficult than expected, with a number of those approached not wishing to take on the challenges being created by Clarets4Change. Progress is being made and new Directors are planned. In the meantime by creating this operating Board the club has effectively ensured an appropriate voice of the supporters whilst the formalities of new Board Directors are progressed.

1. ***Investment/improvement of facilities***

A new carpet has been laid, outside bar set-up, toilets repaired and a general clean-up undertaken. More decorating is planned and brightening up to make the clubhouse more welcoming.

Outside, new dugouts have been ordered, a new tunnel is being designed and the camera is scheduled to be fixed by 20th August. These were all subject to a grant application back in March which was only confirmed last month and hence the delay in actioning these items.

1. ***Communication with Supporters Club***

Regular meetings now in place with The Supporters Club and Phil Crowe did a Q&A session with The Supporters Club. If more is required then the club is happy to support the appropriate forums to improve communication.

With respect to a replacement for Andrew Haynes. The club is relative unique in employing full-time media and communications team with other club’s being more reliant on volunteers. Interviews have been held to secure a replacement for Andrew and the position is being considered

1. ***Commercial activity to increase funding and match day experience***

Ascend is already on board as a new sponsor and several others have extended their support. The team is working to develop its commercial activity supported by its new sponsors and will continue to report as these come on Board.

Emma Rushen continues to work with the club introducing new sponsors and two individuals have approached the club to offer their services in this area; these are being followed up by Phil Crowe.

1. ***Convert the 10 year vision***

We are now three years into the Vision which has been significantly impacted by Covid19. As set out above, a working party is to be formed to review this and take it forward.

A meeting will be sought with representatives of Clarets4Change to discuss progress to date, how they believe the current incumbents are damaging the club and what further action they are seeking that ensures the clubs future and supports its growth.

***Letter of no confidence***

As per the list outlined above, as the actions requested are being taken forward it is difficult to know what else supporters wish the club to do that it is not already doing. Hopefully The Supporters Club representatives can provide more insight to this at the meeting

***Steve Shore***

***4th August 2022***

**Appendix 2: General Manager’s Report from PC**

**General**

I am very disappointed that my request for the Q&A no to be recorded was ignored, which is in fact against the law.

The date for the Q&A was offered to Jordan following an email on the Friday, to which Jordan then agreed to Monday, the date then got a huge amount of criticism being too soon on forums and social media, not at any time did Jordan ask me to move the date back or comment it wasn’t suitable.

Jordan did not put anything out to calm the situation, which could have been done very easily.

**Pitch**

Considerable work has been done on the pitch, it was disappointing to have to switch the Colchester game, however, with such a small window due to the Athletics season and lack of rain it was necessary. The pitch is now in a good state, there is still work ongoing and we aim to continue improvement over the coming months. Thanks to Adam for his hard work.

**Dugouts**

New dugouts have been ordered and are due to arrive on 2nd September.

**Carpet**

The carpet has been replaced upstairs and as you can see is downstairs too.

**Camera**

The main stand camera is being repaired on 18th Aug.

**Cro-Ro’s**

The trolley that the volunteers use to move the Cro-Ro’s has been repaired with all rams refurbished and hoses replaced.

**Next Steps**

Further improvements to the facilities are planned and I look forward to updating you on the progress soon.

**Negative Comments**

I am very disappointed by the continued negative comments from the SC and their support for C4C.

**New member of staff**

Will be joining in a commercial capacity, previous football experience at Barnet FC.