

The meeting was chaired by Andy Roberts and attended by 8 current members of NTFC Supporters Ltd. A total of 18 proxy forms had been received via the chair.

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Ian Atkins, Paul Clarke, John Morgan, David Roderick and Robert Souster.

### **2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting – 20 February 2025**

Bob Clarke proposed that these be adopted, the proposal was seconded by Derek Krajewski and carried 26 against 0.

### **3. Matters Arising**

There were none.

### **4. Chairman's Report**

Trust Chair Andy Roberts summarised from this report that had been previously been sent to members:-

The bonkers football economics of the Premier League, the dominance of television schedules which marginalise fans and the introduction of the game's new Independent Football Regulator, as part of a football reform package, see the game at a crossroads where the path to sustainability is unclear. Clubs like the Cobblers face financial challenges like never before.

Dubai-based retired lawyer David Bower has owned the Cobblers for more than ten years now, having agreed to take on a club clear of major debt in 2015. But, as at 30 June 2024, the football club owed his company, Belle De Jour Ltd, and Nigel Le Quesne's Sole Intention Ltd circa £11.5 million. Eighteen months on, that figure will have risen markedly.

On the East Stand, club chairman Kelvin Thomas is always quick to point out that its completion was delayed by the actions of the Supporters Trust in invoking the Asset of Community Value and bidding on the old athletics track land in August 2022 in order to protect a club asset.

The offer for the land was withdrawn at the end of January 2023, at which time the legal proceedings for a judicial review were already underway.

He also cites this as a delaying factor – for the record this had nothing to do with the Trust, this was a matter between the council and a private developer which was also interested in purchasing land around Sixfields.

The pandemic of course also created a delay, not forgetting the tensions between the club and the then Northampton Borough Council between 2015 and 2018 and the club's refusal to build the stand from the summer of 2018 onwards when the council had given them a clear green light to do so. So delays stretch back to day one of the ownership. As always a little context is a wonderful thing!

Our questions to the club are always asked in the context of future plans and investment. Beyond the sale of a land asset for a warehouse development which, if approved, will hopefully pay off the club's existing debt, there is no long-term plan for the club that we are aware of. And that is a big worry going forward.

On football reform, it is worth reminding members that the role of a Supporters Trust is different to that of a Fan Advisory Board. The latter clearly has its place but all recognised supporter groups at a club should have a seat at the table – FAB members should be elected, its chair should be independent from the club, meetings should have an open agenda and decisions/outcomes should be formally recorded and published.

On our Infrastructure Foundation proposals, these continue to be refined in the light of the prevailing financial and governance challenges facing the game and the document will be released to members when it is appropriate to do so.

#### **A few headlines this year:-**

- **Together with several other Supporters Trusts, we lobbied Government hard to recognise primacy for Supporters Trusts and other democratically-elected supporter organisations. The office of the Independent Football Regulator has indicated that Fan Advisory Boards should have Trust representation, at clubs where Trusts exist.**
- **We raised objections to West Northamptonshire Council about the club's warehouse development planning application for Sixfields, on the basis that future investment benefit for the club and car parking arrangements post development have not been made clear.**
- **We have recognised Bill Dodgin's 1975/76 promotion winners in this the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season – the Trust has awarded honorary membership to those who played in that campaign.**

#### **5. Secretary's Report**

Andy Roberts, on behalf of secretary John Morgan, reported:-

I can confirm that during the last annual reporting period, between 1 September 2024 and 31 August 2025, there were 9 board meetings of the Supporters Trust and all of these meetings were held on Zoom.

Attendance at Board meetings remained steady throughout the year, with the average attendance being 79 per cent.

The Board welcomed two visitors over the course of the 9 meetings.

There were two board member resignations during the last annual reporting period – Andy Cooper and Michael Walker.

I have continued to assist the Trust board in their work on the campaign around aspects of the Football Governance Bill, also on reviewing the Trust's Model Rules and governance.

I represented the Trust at the Football Supporters Association AGM and, with the support of 19 other Supporters Trusts, lobbied for Trusts to have primacy in the new legislation.

The motion, presented by us and seconded by Birmingham City, was unsuccessful but the FSA subsequently provided reassurances that Trusts would be properly recognised and valued in the realm of fan engagement.

We are still lacking email addresses for Trust members who receive our updates by post.

Please message 'opt in' to [ntfctrust1992@gmail.com](mailto:ntfctrust1992@gmail.com) to enable us to send you monthly updates about what the Trust has been doing.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Bob Clarke reported:-

Income and expenditure and other general information regarding the Trust business was submitted to Crouchers Independent Reporting Accountants. Linda Bradley had moved to Crouchers and prepared the accounts for review by James Morris, Client Manager. I am happy to recommend that we continue to use their services for this purpose.

We have seven board members plus a Secretary who is our legal advisor.

Income and expenditure remained modest and in control. Income was £4,274 was up from £3,902 last year. Expenditure £2,781 was up marginally from £2,587 so overall the surplus £1,493 was up from £1,315.

Income came mainly from Club 500 at £3,445. Expenditure was modest with accountancy fees remaining at £960 and printing, postage, and stationery £617.

Trust Travel started up by partnering with Earls Barton Cobblers and this will continue managed by former Trust chairman Roger Averill. Full details are disclosed on page 3 of the accounts.

Meetings of the Trust Board continued to be held mainly on Zoom which is a successful way of ensuring attendance and that meetings are quorate.

Our balance sheet remains healthy at £155,559, including £71,954 shown as fixed assets investment which is Shares of £1 in NTFC held at cost.

Our cash held at the Co-op Bank and in the two NatWest accounts is £84,565, up from £83,069 last year.

Our called-up share capital was £670, down from £687 last year and £721 in 2023. This represents a reduction in membership over the two years.

Please continue to support the team home or away as we fight to stay in league 1.

## **7. Membership Report**

Keith Buckby reported:-

As at year end, 31 August 2025, Trust membership stood at 670. Membership renewals are currently in process.

The vast majority of Trust members are life members and there are also a number of honorary memberships.

Some members remain listed but without either updated postal or email contact details.

The Trust is no longer offering life memberships – renewals can be made at the start of each calendar year by individuals (£10) and corporate members (£100).

## **8. Cobblers Travel Club/Earls Barton Cobblers**

Bob Clarke reported:-

The travel club has continued to operate for selected away matches this season. The coaches are organised by Roger Averill and run in partnership with Earls Barton Cobblers. The preferred coach company is Country Lion and we will look to maintain this service into next season.

The travel club looks to offer something different to the other existing travel club, in respect of:-

- Discounts for Trust members
- Cheap travel for accompanied U16s
- Pick up points in Wellingborough, Earls Barton and Northampton
- Loyalty bonuses
- City centre shopping on selected trips

## **9. Adoption of accounts, appointment of auditors and vote for shortened accounts**

Bob Clarke proposed the adoption of the accounts, seconded by Kevin Simons, and the proposal was carried 26 votes against 0.

Bob Clarke proposed that Crouchers were appointed as auditors for a further 12 months - the proposal was seconded by Andy Roberts and was carried 26 votes against 0.

Andy Roberts proposed that the Supporters Trust be authorised not to undertake a full professional audit of the accounts for the period ending 31 August 2024. This was seconded by Bob Clarke and was carried 26 votes against 0.

## **10. Board resolutions**

There were none.

## **11. Appointment of Board Members**

Andy Roberts informed the meeting that the Board had been carrying zero vacancies up until two resignations during July.

At the AGM, 2 board members were required to stand for re-election. This meant there were 4 vacancies to fill. Nominations had been received from the following:-

- Bob Clarke
- Kevin Simons

Since the number of members putting themselves forward was below the number of vacancies, all were elected unopposed.

## **12. Any Other Business**

The floor opened to a general informal discussion but with two West Northamptonshire councillors present at the meeting – Councillor Phil Bignell and Councillor John East, the Trust's WNC liaison representative – discussion concentrated on the imminent planning application for warehouses to be built on club land, due to be determined at the council's Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 25 February.

Councillor East said, as representative for residents in the Sixfields area, that he would be speaking against the planning application for blanket warehousing but stressed that the committee could only consider the application on material planning grounds.

Councillor Bignell, the vice chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, said the matter was recommended for approval by the planning officers and that it was expected to pass at the meeting later that week.

Andy Roberts said that Trust secretary John Morgan would be attending and addressing the Strategic Planning Committee meeting.

He re-iterated the Trust's clear understanding that the land behind the East Stand would be sold to a developer and that profits from the sale of that land, together with the wider land at Sixfields, would be used to clear all or part of the club debt.

It still remains to be seen whether the owners will recover all the money they have loaned to the club or whether some money will be used on an investment basis to help the club progress in future years.

Chris Payne asked about the Trust's resignation from the Football Supporters' Association and was that down to the FSA being compromised by funding from the Premier League.

Andy Roberts said it was one of the reasons the felt uncomfortable as affiliate members but it was far from the only reason – the board came to the conclusion late last year that, following a number of disappointing outcomes, there was little value or point in remaining members.

Kevin Simons led a discussion regarding Northampton Town FC Ventures board member Nigel Le Quesne who had loaned money to the club's holding company to enable the East Stand to be completed.

It is also believed he financially supported the recruitment of players in the summer of 2024 but it appears he has not been as engaged in recent months and we await with interest to see if, and how, his association with the football club goes forward.

He added that the Trust should formally record its appreciation for the work done by the late Barry Collins in the early days of the Supporters Trust back in 1992, helping to navigate the Cobblers out of choppy financial waters which threatened the club's existence. This was agreed by all present.