

The meeting was chaired by Andy Roberts and attended by 9 current members of NTFC Supporters Ltd. A total of 26 proxy forms had been received via the chair.

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ian Atkins, Roger Averill, Anthony Collett, Andy Cooper, Neil Crook, Neil Fearn, Colin Holdway, Catherine Jarman, Bob Payne, Chris Payne, Kevin Simons and Michael Walker.

### 2. Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting

A copy was made available for those present and Bob Clarke proposed that these be adopted, the proposal was seconded by Bob Souster, and carried 35 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 Supporters Trust enjoyed a productive year – while the relationship with the owners of the football club remain at an impasse, in spite of an intervention by the Football Supporters Association, good progress was made in a number of other areas last year.*

**A few headlines, the Supporters Trust has...**

- **successfully renewed its application for Sixfields Stadium to be classified as an Asset of Community Value**
- **led a campaign, supported by 14 other Supporters Trusts, to ensure due recognition for Trusts and other democratic supporter bodies in the primary legislation within the developing Football Governance Bill**
- **canvassed members and Cobblers fans more widely around desirable improvements for Sixfields**
- **produced a blueprint vision which includes a model for infrastructure improvement at the stadium**

The progress on the East Stand development is extremely welcome but we will continue to challenge the owners with questions as they arise and continue to press the case for development behind the stand which will guarantee ongoing and long-term investment benefit to the football club, in the interests of a progressive and sustainable club.

Contrary to what club chairman Kelvin Thomas might say in interviews, there is no conspiracy-led vendetta against the club. If that is his perception of the Trust reasonably questioning the club's governance and development plans, then it is an absurd overreaction and the questions will continue until we receive satisfactory answers.

The chairman has also repeatedly said that the Trust are rival bidders to the club. To be clear, two years ago we were rival bidders for land behind the East Stand which we were looking to secure as a club asset, generating investment benefit. We took this very difficult decision in the absence of any guarantees from the club that the land in question wouldn't be sold off, so depriving the club of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

It was something that, as a community group, we were perfectly entitled to do under the Localism Act and as part of the Asset of Community Value bid process and we did so in accordance with the Supporters Trust's long-held mission statement to protect professional football in Northampton for the long-term. We did so believing, naively it would appear, the one thing the club's owners and the Supporters Trust actually have in common is the safeguarding of the football club.

In 2015, with the club in crisis, we supported the club financially and several board members attended a council meeting three years ago to urge the council to back the club's plans for the East Stand. This is hardly the behaviour of an organisation that is anti-club.

Thank you for your continuing support and please support our Club 500 lottery and Cobblers Travel if you do not already do so.

We have never walked away from the football club. And we never will. Our town, our club and your Supporters Trust.

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

Secretary John Morgan reported:-

I can confirm that during the last annual reporting period, between 1 September 2023 and 31 August 2024, 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 78 per cent.

The Board welcomed one visitor over the course of the 9 meetings.

Since our last AGM, the Board has agreed to reduce the maximum number of board members from 12 to 9.

There have been no board member resignations during the last 12 month calendar year period.

I have assisted the Trust board in their work around securing an Asset of Community Value for Sixfields stadium and on the campaign around aspects of the Football Governance Bill which is likely to pass into law later this year.

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. Rest assured that your email will only be used for this purpose and will not be circulated to other parties.

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

Treasurer Bob Clarke reported:-

*Income and expenditure and other general information regarding the Trust was submitted to Clifford Towers our Accountants who are adept at producing our accounts and I am happy to recommend that we continue to use their services for this purpose.*

*We reported four resignations during the year to August 2024, all of whom had been appointed the previous year.*

*It was a quieter financial year with income £3,902 down from £6,501. Most of the income, £3,583, came from Club 500.*

*Expenditure £2,587 was also lower down from £5,907 so our net surplus increased to £1,315 from £594. We spent only £116 on merchandise compared to £2,000 the previous year. Accountancy fees remain at £960.*

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

*We did not sponsor, except a gazebo for DJ Maty (Matthew Amos) who plays outside Carr's bar on match days.*

*Our balance sheet remains healthy at £154,083, 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 two NatWest accounts is £83,069, up from £81,808 last year. Our called-up Share Capital was £687, down for £721.*

*Up the Cobblers!*

## **7. Membership Report**

*As at year end, 31 August 2024, Trust membership stood at 687. 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**

*The travel club has continued to operate for selected away matches this season. Some coaches have made a profit and others a loss, it is for the board to determine how the travel club moves forward from next season.*

*The coaches are organised by Roger Averill and run in partnership with Earls Barton Cobblers. The preferred coach company is Country Lion. 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 Souster proposed the adoption of the accounts, seconded by Derek Krajewski, and the proposal was carried 35 votes against 0.

Bob Clarke proposed that Clifford Towers were appointed as auditors for a further 12 months - the proposal was seconded by Andy Roberts and was carried 35 votes against 0.

John Morgan 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 35 votes against 0.

## **10. Board resolutions**

There were none.

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

*John Morgan informed the meeting that, until 12 December 2024, the Board had been carrying five vacancies during the past year with no resignations.*

*At a board meeting on 12 December 2024, directors voted to reduce the maximum size of the board to nine.*

*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 people.*

- *Keith Buckby*
- *Andy Cooper*
- *Derek Krajewski*
- *Michael Walker*

*Since the number of members putting themselves forward equals the number of vacancies, all are elected unopposed.*

*A very warm welcome to our two new board members, Andy Cooper and Michael Walker.*

## **12. Any Other Business**

The floor opened to a general informal discussion on various issues.

The most popular topics were the land development behind the East Stand, and what that is likely to be, and also possible club ownership changes later this year.

Following a question from John Mulcahy, Andy Roberts told the meeting that the clear understanding, for many years, was 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 club debt.

At the NTFC AGM last year, attendees were told that the club debt would likely rise to £16 million once the stand build (circa £5.8 million) and the purchase of the freehold of the land at Sixfields (£2.05 million) had been added to the existing debt.

It 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.

In a radio interview on 7 November, club chairman Kelvin Thomas had intimated that the club might look to develop the land themselves but no further detail around that suggestion has been forthcoming.

Andy Roberts confirmed that the Trust's Vision 2030 report, including the concept of an Infrastructure Foundation for NTFC, would be presented to members at the end of the season.

With the relationship between Trust and club owners and executive at an impasse, he said it was nevertheless important that the Trust positioned itself with a constructive plan for the football club having consulted with members and the wider fanbase.

He hoped this football conversation, in time, would be a positive way forward and help bring together all parties committed to safeguarding and improving the club, especially within any new engagement framework introduced by the Football Governance Bill.

Alan Gregory questioned how many life members the Trust has – it is around 500 are life members, dating back to the Trust's formation in 1992 when fans were keen to commit life membership subscriptions to help the club which was in crisis at the time.

The meeting agreed that this does not help with future income streams although life members have from time to time made donations to the Trust and supported initiatives.

For this reason, life memberships were discontinued a few years ago – annual subscriptions are now on a two-tier basis, £10 for individual membership and £100 for corporate membership.

Lee Walters asked how many new members had joined the Trust in the last year – after researching this there were 10 new members during this period of time, with 44 lapsed memberships.