



COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETY UPDATE – September 2015

It is now just over a month since ownership of the club transferred to the Community Benefit Society and this is a good opportunity to update supporters on progress. Although there is plenty of work that needs to be done a lot has already been achieved by the Interim Board with the help of others.

Firstly apologies for not being around to answer any questions you might have had. Work commitments meant I missed three weeks of games but I was back to enjoy the trip to Larkhall a fortnight ago.

Despite not being around I know that the movement to becoming a supporters' owned club has created a real buzz about the place as we look to build a football club the fans and community can be proud of.

Can I pay particular tribute to all the people who have volunteered to help the club – tidying up the ground, painting the perimeter boards, helping on matchdays – so many people help the club in so many ways and hopefully now feel that their work is fully appreciated and their contribution to our club fully recognised.

Membership and the Community Benefit Society

At time of writing we are almost up to 200 members. This is a great start but we are of course looking for more. We hope that all supporters will back the club through taking out membership which of course in turn gives them a say as to how the club should be run. Our Community Share offer has generated over £10000 of income giving us valuable reserves that we may also use for major projects in the future.

We are in the process of contacting individuals who pledged support but have yet to do so. If that includes you I hope you will support the club as you indicated.

Membership Forms will be available in the clubshop today (19j Sept) and next Saturday, 26th Sept.

It is planned that Community Share Certificates will be available for collection next Saturday from the clubshop and will be distributed to purchasers who do not attend home games after that. Thank you for your patience if you purchased one.

We are still aiming at the first AGM being held in mid November. Further details to follow and of course we will advise members of details in due course.

For any membership queries please contact our hard working brilliant Membership Secretary Mike Seaton, membership@banburyunitedfc.co.uk.

Sponsorship

We were delighted that we could hit the ground running with the announcement of home and away kit sponsors – L Jarvis & Sons and Nicholls respectively. In addition you will be aware that a number of smaller sponsorship deals have been struck. Mark Allitt has done a fantastic job with these. Warren Bartlett has also worked really hard to get every player sponsored – many thanks to supporters who have done this.

Further opportunities still exist for sponsorship – either advertising boards or banners, matchday sponsorship or Red & Gold Club membership, if you think you might be able to persuade your work or a friend to support us please ask at the Boardroom for one of our sponsorship booklets.

Clubhouse

We are incredibly grateful to Stewart Green who has given us the backing to undertake improvements in the clubhouse. The latest work to be concluded is a complete overhaul of the women's toilets – gents you will have to take our word for this but you will come next!

The improvements to the clubhouse will hopefully make it more attractive to hire. If supporters are involved in other organisations looking to hire a hall or if you are looking for a venue for a party or gathering please consider using the clubhouse, it can be hired at very reasonable rates – please see Sharon behind the bar if you would like to discuss a potential booking or contact her 07912 885141, sharonwright14@aol.com.

Saturday 10 October Home vs Mangotsfield

The club have designated this game as a Family Day – it will be free to U16s and it is also Non League Day. Look out for further details as to what will be doing to make the day family-orientated and please help promote the day to your friends and colleagues.

Members' Night – Date for your diary

To celebrate the transfer of ownership the club have organised the first fund raising evening on Friday 30th October. Popular local band "Under the Covers" featuring our very own Mark Allitt on lead vocals will be playing and Puritans Radio's Stewart Green will be DJ-ing. Entry will be free to members and we hope that supporters will come along and enjoy an evening of entertainment.

The "wider" Club

Although the initial focus of the Interim Board has been on the Men's 1st team the long term aims and objectives of the club are far wider than that. We have started the process of engagement with the three other sections that appear under the Banbury United banner – Ladies, Inclusive Disability and Mini Puritans. Representatives have met with the Oxfordshire FA to help identify the challenges the different sections face, how these can be overcome and how we can go about setting up of a Banbury United Football Partnership. This work is in its infancy but it is the start of key engagement with the community and will remain high on the agenda in the coming months. Representatives from all three sections have been invited to join the interim board in their fortnightly meetings.

Supporters Club

With the CBS now up and running the Supporters Club committee believe there is no longer a role for the Supporters Club as a separate entity.

That is not to say that the function of the club, the support of the football club, is not still required. Richard Pickersgill (Wiggy) will continue to run the 100 Club which is a key fundraiser and we hope that supporters will join again for 2015-16. Carolyn has agreed to oversee the shop for this season.

An EGM of the supporters club will be held in October to support a proposal to wind up the club and transfer its assets to the CBS.

The Supporters Club has done a brilliant job over the years, as highlighted in Dave Shadbolt's & Brian Little's book. There have also been some fantastic volunteers - legendary club supporters - who have held office for the club. In proposing to wind the club up we will ensure that this is acknowledged. However this should only be seen as the end of the Supporters Club in name - the role of the supporters has evolved with the development of the CBS and they are now even more central to the success of the club.

Fundraising

It has come as no great surprise to the interim board that it is an expensive business to keep the club up and running. The money from the gate and other matchday income is vital to help towards running costs. All of the sponsorship monies raised are of course also a great help. However despite all this the general costs of running the club means that the budget available to Mike Ford for the squad is probably amongst the lowest in the league.

We know supporters already contribute financially in many different ways. However, we have been asked by a number of supporters if they could also pay a weekly amount to help the players; budget. In response to this we will shortly be launching the Spencer Villa Fund. This fund asks for a weekly contribution from those who can afford it, which will go directly to the players budget and help Mike cover the cost of an additional player or players to strengthen the squad. More details will be available very shortly.

Club Shop

The club shop is looking to purchase home replica shirts. These will replicate the team's playing shirt – ie the club, Jarvis and Nicholls logos will be added. To help us with our ordering please can supporters let us know if they are interested in purchasing one. The final cost will be dependent on our order size but we will be able to give an indication. Please let the club shop know.

As well as looking to supply shirts the club shop stocks the following items – baseball caps, beanies, poloshirts, scarves, mugs, beer glasses, whisky tumblers, metal badges. Do give the shop a visit to purchase any of the above or for a browse along our bargain rail. We are interested to know what other items supporters would like to see in stock. Please let Mark Allitt, commercial@banburyunitedfc.co.uk know any ideas you have.

Volunteers

As mentioned in my opening paragraph, volunteers are key to the success of the club – they are our lifeblood.

We have started the process of meeting existing club volunteers to outline the club's aims and objectives and how volunteers can assist with this. We have developed a volunteer code that outlines what are the club's and individual volunteer's responsibilities.

We could do with more volunteers! The current roles we are looking for assistance with are – Shop Assistant, Volunteers' Coordinator, Matchday Stewards. More roles will be advertised as we roll out our structure. If you are interested in any of these please make contact, as below.

Support

We have been delighted with the support of fans, at home and away. The supporters who have travelled away on the team coach and under their own steam have been great ambassadors for the club, offering passionate support but not crossing the line when this could be viewed as abuse. The club are particularly grateful to supporters for acting in such a level headed way after the incident at the end of the Cinderford game; this matter remains under consideration with the FA.

Community Benefit Society - Interim Steering Group



Left to Right

Ronnie Johnson – Chairman. Responsible for 1st team football matters
Dave Wyatt – Treasurer. Responsible for all financial matters, including clubhouse.
Martin Cantrell – Responsible for Community Development
Mark Allitt – Responsible for commercial matters, including sponsorship.
Nigel Porter- Responsible for Ground & Development
Stephen Barlow – Secretary. Responsible for overseeing running of CBS
Dave Shadbolt – Responsible for Communications

The Board meet as a group on a fortnightly basis to manage club affairs.

Banbury United is a Community Benefit Society. It is registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Registration Number 7135, as Banbury United Community Football Club Ltd.

The aim of the club is to benefit the community by

- i. enhancing the social, cultural and economic value of the Club to its Communities and by acting as a responsible custodian of the club for future generations;
- ii. upholding the mutual ownership of the Club operating democratically, fairly and transparently;
- iii. ensuring the Club operates with financial responsibility enabling the Club to be run for the long term interest of the Community;
- iv. providing sporting facilities and opportunities regardless of age, income, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, religious or moral belief; and
- v. playing at the highest level possible, but always operating in a financially responsible and prudent manner.

Finally.....

If you have got this far, well done! I hope you have found this update useful. If there are any things not covered here please let me know or if you have any suggestions, as a member, on things you think the club could start doing or do differently please let me know.

WE ARE UNITED

Stephen Barlow
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