



Wessex Blues

105th Meeting Minutes

Started 13th July 2023 19:25

Closed 13th July 2023 20:35

Location: The Royal British Legion, Ferndown

1. Welcome and Introduction

In the absence of Robbie, Rich thanked and welcomed members to our new venue for our meeting (21 members were present, plus 4 new potential members for this season). Rich went on to thank Dave for making this venue a possibility and if you have any complaints, please pass them on to Dave. Paul said in a joking way 'turn the music off, I prefer The Cricketers'.

Rich went on to say that as he was not at the last meeting as he was working from home in Italy, he transcribed the last minutes for Robbie from the meeting in May....so Rich asked were people happy with the minutes? Marilyn and Dave approved the previous minutes from May.

Apologies received – Martin (J), Robbie (J), Steve, Craig, Riette and Alan B.

Andy P asked Rich he had heard from Jamie. Rich said that he had heard from Jamie about a month ago, and due to change in day from a Monday to a Thursday he may only be able to make three meetings in a season, so was not sure if he would return. Andy P said he may become a member of the A34, with Rich confirming that from his home it would be about the same distance to go to the A34 or us in Ferndown.

2. Agenda Items

Manchester City v Real Madrid (4-0) – 17th May
Manchester City v Chelsea (1-0) – 21st May
Brighton & Hove Albion v Manchester City (1-1) – 24th May
Brentford v Manchester City (1-0) – 28th May
Manchester City v Manchester United (2-1) – 3rd June
Manchester City v Inter Milan (1-0) – 10th June

Many members including Graham stated that the Real Madrid game 'was the best game ever', 'bloody brilliant' was Mark's comment, 'best first half I have ever seen' was Andy H's view. Bill commented that the Chelsea game 'was a bit of a damp squid' as City had already won the league earlier in the week due to Arsenal losing against Notts Forest. Many members including Mike

commented on how good the Brighton goal was with many City fans applauding the goal behind the goalmouth. The meeting moved on swiftly with no comments when the Brentford match was mentioned. With respect to Manchester United, many members missed the goal, with Rich stating that he only just saw it through people standing up. Paul stated that it was not fun anymore as we are always winning even though it was beating Manchester United but it was only the FA Cup. Gavin disagreed as it thought the game was more important than the Champions League Final. Andy P saw some trouble after the game within the Underground at Wembley Park, while Rich stated that he saw no trouble at all, if any some Manchester United fans were quite complementary that we certainly deserved to win while on the train platform. The match against Inter Milan in Istanbul raised numerous comments. Graham stated 'great result, but not exactly the best game', 'the game was tense' commented Michael, with 'everything around it was pure crap'. Michael continued to moan about the Fun Park, including no UEFA representatives, with people unable to speak English in the Information Section. Michael further said that he was unable to get the free pass on the UEFA app so had to get on the Metro, plus the mayhem of the buses getting back to Istanbul after the game, but on the bright side I was happy by this point so it did not matter. Rich commented that he went straight back to the airport after the game as his flight was one of the first flights out of Istanbul that morning and only go back to the airport with just under two hours to spare. Andy P was happy that he got into the ground three hours early and was pleased to experience the build up of the game. Dave commented that queuing for food and drinks was terrible plus many venues were closed and the number of mobile toilets were only around forty. Gavin also commented on how bad the queues were for food etc. Andy H stated 'at least we won, just think how bad would it have been if we lost'....Gavin also stated that the city and culture of Istanbul was great, Michael agreed that the city was great and would recommend going back for a city visit. Graham and Rich spoke to numerous Inter Milan fans as Rich sat next to one on the flight from London and all of them expected City to win and was not holding out much hope.

Comments regarding forthcoming games in late July and early August

Yokohama F. Marinos, Bayern Munich, Atletico Madrid, and Arsenal

No significant comments, except that to watch them via City + had gone up to £4.99 per month or £30 per year. Michael commented it would be interesting how many people would be going to the Arsenal game based on the time and day. Andy H asked Rich how many members had applied to the Community Shield....nine was Rich's response.

Current membership – 43, so currently not the smallest supporters club in the country. Richard was asked earlier if this was the largest membership that the Wessex Blues had ever had....Richard confirmed that the highest was 45, and this was expected to be surpassed shortly with Mete, Andy H and his kids not yet members.

New Members – Tony Thornton, Deanne Parkin, Pat Reid, Liam Barrett, Lukas Waszczyszyn, Steve Davie, Helen Speller, Gracie Speller, Danny Speller, Craig Jevons, Kylie Jess, Janet Connor, Lindsey Sturman, Caroline Brooks, and Oliver Sturman

Only Caroline Brooks of the new members were present. Caroline mentioned that she supported three clubs due to her grandchildren but after watching Manchester City play Tottenham at White Hart Lane around 12-13 years ago, decided to be a Manchester City fan. Caroline confirmed she originates from Bournemouth.

Chris Barker (not on the above list) also turned up to be a future member and commented that he was a City fan due to his dad who took him to Maine Road from the age of six via a coach and was a member of the original Wessex Blues in the 1970s and 1980s. Originally from Poole and being a Poole lad at twelve, his dad jokingly stated that he should support Bournemouth, but by this point the damage had been done and had remained a City fan ever since.

Neil Milward (not on the above list) also turned up and commented that he is an armchair City fan and was born in Manchester and did not realise that this supporter club existed. His parents moved to Dorset when he was four.

Andy P asked which members besides Jamie were not likely to return...Rich confirmed that the members so far that had not reapplied are Paul Hughes, Dave Logan and of course Joe Kelly who want be returning as his university course had finished.

Returning Members – Joe Price. Everybody who knew Joe from previous seasons ago was pleased to see him return...Joe explained that he had fallen off the radar, had not been to many games, then Covid hit and only been to a few games in the south since but was pleased to be back as he had fallen out of love with the game. Joe is also a Weymouth Blue member but has not attended to date. Paul asked are you allowed to be a member of more than one branch at the same time. Richard confirmed that this was possible as Rich had checked this question out with the Membership Secretary from the club. Rich confirmed that you can be a member of as many branches as you wish, but certain branches may reject you due to distance especially if an alternative branch is nearer to your home and/or out of their allocated club area. This is a branch rule not a club rule. You are only allowed however to apply for tickets from one club only as Joe explained that he had already applied for tickets from games for August and September via Weymouth.

Andy P asked if he could put forward a proposal based on current numbers of ~45 could be capped at 50 as we have doubled members overnight and based on the last 12 months' we may get 70 or 80 members and when it gets to a decent game, we may not get our full allocation so if we do not get a ticket then the member may turn round and state what is the point in coming. Rich stated that this was a fair and good point and Rich asked members what their view was on this matter. Dave commented on this but due to the music, his comments were not entirely clear but based on certain words heard on the recording he was not generally in agreement with a cap not going to happen and gave Bournemouth as an example of not getting the full allocation of tickets based on our old membership numbers as membership numbers is not relevant as a branch would not only be given a certain percentage of allocation based on requests likewise from other supporter clubs, with no favouritism given due to the games location. Andy P from a selfish perspective only that he may not be able to go to as many matches as he currently does if membership significantly increases. Rich reminded Andy P that obtaining a ticket via the supporters' club is a bonus and will never be a guarantee on membership status. Gavin stated that another option to this is to look at the ticket allocation on how many times a member has applied in a season for away tickets based on how many times they have missed out. Andy P commented that he was more concerned about going to a FA Cup game for example if we had a higher number of members, then fewer tickets would be allocated. Paul's view was that we should encourage more members as we have always struggled to just achieve enough members for the branch to survive. Rich pointed out that every time people have applied for a FA Cup game or League Cup game, to date, we have always obtained full allocation of tickets but of course this is based on a membership of 20-30. Gavin was concerned that having a higher number of members would affect certain games especially if he missed out on a big game and being a season ticket holder as well that he would feel harsh if he missed out on

the Champions League game for example. In the last season, Rich pointed out that we only had to make an allocation last season on three occasions. Phil reminded everybody that Andy P would not need to worry in the short term as members would still need to attend five meetings before he was affected with a 5/5 allocation, as new members would be in the short term be at the back of the queue. Michael stated the same view using Janet as an example. Mark pointed out that besides the 5/5 meeting view should we also consider longevity based on long in years a member has been a part of the supporter branch. With this additional criterion, people like Andy P, Rich etc would also be at the top of this list as we have been members since the branch generally reformed. Gavin thinks this would block people out so would be unfair, likewise season tickets holders like Andy P, Gavin, Rich etc. as discussed on previous times being season ticket holders should have a higher priority over ticket allocation than other members. Again, this would be unfair as season ticket holders should not be viewed as better fans than someone without a season ticket holder as it only means they have the funds for a ticket or the time to go to the match as family matters does not restrict them etc. Rich finally concluded that we would keep an open mind on the subject and would speak to Robbie on his view and discuss it again at the next meeting.

Any other news about new Members (from other members etc.) - None

Ticket Payments/Delivery Options for 2023/2024.....Rich mentioned the email sent earlier this month from Kevin concerning this about the changes concerning payments, members applying for tickets then not paying for them....so going forward all tickets will be sent to members directly by post, email, mobile phone etc and members will be given 48 hours to pay for their ticket, otherwise the ticket will become void and passed on to another supporter on a waiting list etc. Applying for tickets via email sent out by Rich will remain the same.

Dave asked if the emails for ticket requests could be sent out in a more spacious manner so to avoid requesting tickets for the incorrect game etc. Rich agreed where possible based on a 4-day window for deadlines etc, that the emails would be spread out over a 1–2-day period. Bill asked if the deadline date and time in the email could be blue rather than red going forward. Rich confirmed that the text would change to blue going forward.

3. General Secretary Update

Ticket requests made between late May and early July for the following games:

Inter Milan (N) – (11) – Andy P, Andy M, Rich, Robbie, Joe, Graham, Dave, Gavin, Jamie, Michael, Phil M

Arsenal (N) – (9) – Bill, Hayden, Mason, Liam, Margaret, Andy M, Penny, Alan J, Rich

Burnley (A) – (1) – Graham

Seville (N) – (2) – Rich, Andy M

Birthday wishes: - Alan (18th)

4. Treasurer Update

Current Bank balance and recent transactions - £1,235.08 (as of 13th July)

5. Any Other Business (AOB)

Dave asked on some occasions that the price on the ticket may not be the same as what we paid into the branch. Rich explained with the best of this knowledge that it had noticed this as well on some occasions; and explained that the price on the ticket is likely the general sale price, however depending on the game and the competition (especially European games) the price paid may be slightly different if the member is on a cup scheme and/or a season card holder and/or sometimes purchased through the supporter branch themselves, special discounts (loyalty bonus) on the odd occasion etc. have applied. Other possibilities have included where an adult ticket has been sent out with an adult price, but it was issued for a Senior age group member which normally but not always gets a discount on the adult ticket price being an OAP (again game and competition dependant)...or at worst case it was a MCFC accounting error. Rich gave the example of a ticket purchased for Mark recently for the Real Madrid game, where Rich used his season ticket number instead and obtained a noticeable discount on the ticket price, giving Mark over £30 discount on two tickets priced at £65 each.

Paul asked as he paid £2 short on his membership, would cash be ok...Rich explained he was not taking cash payments this season and asked Paul if he could pay a further BACS payment that would be appreciated. Rich explained that all OSC and Wessex Blues payments need to be paid into the Wessex Blues account, and that Rich would then after 3 months pay the OSC funds directly by BACS to the club. Richard explained to Graham, that Rich has to confirm the membership numbers to the club, time times a year (normally around September/October, then in January and finally in April). Any members joining within any three-month period, OSC funds associated with this then gets sent to the club, with the first payment (September/October) always the largest financial amount of the three. Any member applying for membership after April, gets informed that the membership is closed for this season and will reopen in June/July for the new season, where they will be contacted to join.

Dave asked if anybody would like to become a member of the Royal British Legion then he would provide details if required as members were being taken. Paul asked if the music could be stopped during the meeting...Dave said no as I can hear Rich, however Dave would try at the next meeting to get the music turned down.

Arthur commented on obtaining a ticket through the Wessex Blues for the Bayern Munich game at the Etihad which was located unfortunately up in the gods and he explained he had a dodgy hip to the club. He contacted Ferran Soriano and within 24 hours, Arthur explained he was called by their Executive Sales Team and they were able to relocate his ticket to the north-west part of the stadium where lifts are available and they were also able to reallocate his grandson's ticket so were able to sit together and have some free hospitality. Rich explained to Arthur that the only problem with getting a ticket through the supporters' club is that you normally have no choice where your seat or stand you will be offered. Joe asked if away tickets were still capped at £30...Rich confirmed that he had not heard anything that this price would change.

Ryan asked Rich about his email that the last batch of emails he had missed for games in September. Rich received ticket request for West Ham from Gavin. Alan confirmed that he is unable to go to the Community Shield and his ticket was allocated to our new member Tony Thornton. Ryan asked if he could apply for a Wolves ticket.

Next Meeting – 10th August 2023 at 19:15 (Ferndown British Legion)

Footnote: After the meeting, Paul mentioned the passing of former member Steve Hayhurst (Wessex Blues Treasurer September 2012 – March 2014) was mentioned on Facebook in early June.