

Minutes of meeting of Doncaster Rovers Shadow Board

January 13, 2024

Present: James Errington, Derek Daniels, Mellony Shepard, Len South, Gill Shepherd, Phil Winterman

Club representatives: Gavin Baldwin, Shaun Lockwood, Liam Hoden

Apologies: Patrick Queen, Dan Pearson, Martin O'Hara

1. Membership of the Shadow Board
 - a. Updates were provided as to membership of the Shadow Board, with two individuals on the SB having not yet met the requirements asked by the Shadow Board.
 - b. A discussion was had on how to progress moving forward should that situation continue.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting
 - a. The minutes were accepted as a true record
 - b. Matters arising
 - i. PW said he had been in contact with GB and SL away from the meeting regarding commercial matters and had been pleased with the responses over his concerns.
 - ii. DP asked via email if the club could explore the possibility of installing LED advertising boards. GB said chief commercial officer Jon Warburton is exploring the possibility. JE gives figures for the number of clubs using LED boards in League One and League Two. JE believes the use of LED boards would take commercial growth to the next level.

3. Safeguarding, health & safety, EDI
 - a. SL discussed a situation the club is currently dealing with regarding the Bradford City away fixture.
 - b. SL said the annual review of the stadium safety certificate will take place on April 17.
 - c. SL raised an EDI complaint that had been made following the Bradford City home fixture on December 22 with away supporters congregating at the front of the north stand and blocking the view of disabled supporters.
 - d. GB confirmed that SL's role at the club would be changing with responsibility for operations passing to Chris Wood. SL's focus would be on the club's role in the community and fan engagement along with marketing and media.

- e. GB said the club is currently recruiting a new head of HR and safeguarding following Kirsty Cavanagh's decision to leave the organisation.

4. Position of chairman at Doncaster Rovers

- a. DD noted that a Shadow Board meeting would have been called following the change of chairman but it was not possible due to the timing of the change so close to Christmas.
- b. DD opened up the meeting for questions regarding the change of chair.
 - i. LS said Terry Bramall had expressed a wish to get to know the supporters' groups much better following the Meet The Owners event
 - ii. GS asked if there would be a greater presence in communications from the new chairman. GB discussions were ongoing to formalise that matter.

5. Season tickets for the 2024/25 season

- a. SL noted that the Black Friday offer had seen season tickets launched earlier than normal. The offer had been well received and taken up.
- b. SL said prices will be frozen at the previous season's introductory levels when season tickets go back on sale at the end of the month. Bolt-ons and incentives would remain at the previous prices also.
- c. SL confirmed the club wished to reintroduce a pricing band for 14 to 17-year-olds. Category A season tickets would be priced as follows:
 - i. 13 & under £35
 - ii. 14 to 17-year-olds £75
 - iii. 17 to 24-year-olds £149
- d. SL said a £200 bolt-on would be offered which would give supporters five matches in hospitality, including a two-course meal, car parking and a padded seat. The price would be a reduction on individual match hospitality pricing.
- e. SL said he would send the full season ticket proposal to Shadow Board members following the meeting
- f. MS asked if the new bolt-ons would be made available to those who purchased the Black Friday offer. SL confirmed they would.

6. Wider communications of the Shadow Board

- a. PW asked how does the Shadow Board communicate more
 - i. DD said the Twitter account needs to be publicised better and suggested asking the players to promote it. SL suggested holding a Q&A with a player on the account.
 - ii. DD agreed that the Shadow Board needs to publicise more of what they do and the positive impact they have had.

- iii. SL said there should be a raising of the profile of individual members.
- iv. It was suggested that the agenda for meetings is published in advance with supporters asked if they had anything to contribute on specific matters. This would allow members to deal directly with supporters.
- v. PW said he feels the majority of supporters do not know the Shadow Board exists. JE added he feels that leads to misconceptions among supporters.
- vi. PW asked if other members actively canvas other supporters. He said most of the points he raises come from other supporters. MS said fans approach her and LS on away supporter coaches with issues.
- vii. JE said it is the responsibility of members to look at areas where they can positively impact the club and filter through those items in meetings and surgeries with club officials.

7. AOB

- a. Feedback on the priority points ticketing system
 - i. SL said feedback had been positive following the trial for the Harrogate away fixture. There was some initial negativity on launch but SL felt that was down to misunderstanding.
 - ii. SL said the issue of supporters attending away matches in hospitality offerings had been raised at Meet The Owners and that including those supporters in points tallies would be explored.
 - iii. SL said supporters buying iFollow passes had also been raised by someone who felt they should also receive points. SL said he felt that it would be difficult to quantify the difference between attending the game and buying an iFollow pass, plus iFollow will not exist beyond the end of the season.
 - 1. SL explained the end of EFL Digital and the tender process that is ongoing for a replacement, both as a potential collective among EFL clubs and for Rovers only.
 - iv. SL explained that a manual method had been used for the first trial of the points system and would be repeated again to ensure any issues were ironed out before the order to upgrade the ticketing system was implemented.
- b. Available allocations for home cup matches
 - i. PW raised a question from a supporter who had attempted to buy tickets for the Carabao Cup tie against Everton. At that stage, as a season ticket holder, the supporter had been able to purchase just one ticket. At the general sale stage, supporters were able to buy four tickets. The supporter suggested that

season ticket holders should be able to buy more than one ticket during their period of exclusivity.

1. SL explained that the club has 4,500 season ticket holders. Therefore there would be a possibility of season ticket holders being able to purchase one additional ticket. It could not be three as there was a possibility the entire home allocation would be bought up before all season ticket holders had the opportunity to purchase.
 2. GS suggested that season ticket holders be given a short window to purchase additional tickets following the end of the exclusivity period and start of general sale.
 3. SL said it would need to be assessed whether the current sales procedure was hampering season ticket holders before determining whether changes should be made but the club would be open to a review.
 4. SL said the focus would always be on protecting priority for season ticket holders.
 5. DD suggests members take the issue away and think about options ahead of the next meeting.
 6. LS suggests an option for season ticket holders to reserve additional seats for non-season ticket holders should they be available at the general sale period.
- c. Feedback on the Meet The Owners event
- i. JE said the Q&A and presentation from the Foundation was enjoyable but he felt the event required a stronger focus on some key issues for supporters. A particular note was ensuring that details shared in the meeting matched those that have been released to the public previously as mixed language creates confusion.
 1. GB discussed how this would be addressed in the future.

Meeting closed