

RED IMPS COMMUNITY TRUST (RICT)

Notes of the Board Meeting (BM) held via Zoom at 7.01pm on Wednesday 13th September 2023

1 PRESENT

- a. Rob Bradley (RB) – Chair; Mandi Slater (MS) – Vice-Chair; Steve Tointon (ST) – Treasurer; Ian Hodgson (IH) – Membership Secretary; Gavin Gordon (GG); Kirsty Hackney (KH); Mark Hodds (MH); Rick Lalka (RL); Lincoln City Foundation (LCF), represented by Kate O’Reilly (KOR); Steve Freestone (SF) – Company Secretary; Andy Porter (AP) – Minutes Recorder and (until 7.24pm) Observer David Lowes (DL), the Club’s Fan Engagement Director (FED).
- b. Apologies for absence were received from Chris Baldam (CB), Jonathan Battersby (JB), Stewart Millar (SM) and David Milling (DM).

2 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a. Notes of RICT’s BM on 12/07/23 had been published on RICT’s website.
- b. Notes of RICT’s BM on 09/08/23 would be published on RICT’s website, with their availability being announced via RICT’s social media channels.

3 EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING

- a. Everyone present had enjoyed the latest RICT Bingo Plus Night, held on 04/09/23 at the premises of Tension Twisted Realities, where the next one would be held on 02/10/23.
- b. Details of the proposed joint RICT and Former Players’ Association (FPA) “Evening with the Legends” event were still being finalised.
- c. With the assistance of former Club player Danny Hone, it was hoped that a 5-a-side tournament for supporters could be arranged for the end of the season at Active Arena in Moorland Way.
- d. Commission would be retained on sales from the RICT marquee in the University of Lincoln Fan Village on home matchdays, following publication expected imminently, of copies of the “Tales of an Imp” book.

4 FAN ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

- a. DL was welcomed to the meeting and summarised the FED role, details of which are reproduced in the Appendix to these Notes. The Club was developing a Fan Engagement Strategy and it was suggested that, as it evolved in the medium term, it should reflect the crucial contributions made by volunteers.
- b. News items published on RICT’s website, including those shared with the website of the FPA, continued to attract many views. Departure times and ticket prices for Red Imps Association Travel Section (RIATS) coaches had been updated whenever tickets went on and off sale, with details also being published of the Carabao Cup Second Round tie at Sheffield United. **Action: AP would continue to keep the website updated as the season progressed and liaise with RL for appropriate social media publicity.**
- c. RICT’s marquee continued to be very busy on home matchdays, particularly when sales of teamsheets on behalf of the Club commenced. Discussions were ongoing between RB and Damian Froggatt, the Club’s Director of Operations, about the provision of a portacabin in the Fan Village, for the secure storage and protection during inclement weather of RICT’s stock of old matchday programmes, Club-related publications and “freebie” items.
- d. RICT’s latest monthly column in the Lincolnshire Echo would be published on 14/09/23.
- e. RICT’s social media output continued to generate lots of attention.
- f. Hard copy items of Club memorabilia continued to be displayed at RICT’s marquee on home matchdays. Eight more exhibits had been uploaded to RICT’s virtual museum. **Action: SF would upload to the virtual museum a video recording, provided by Blow by Blow Productions, of the Club’s 1988 GM Vauxhall Conference winning match against Wycombe Wanderers.**

- g. Contact details for the Club's Gold Scheme Members at 12/08/23 had been received from the Club. A welcome message had been circulated on 07/09/23 to all RICT members for whom email addresses were held, save for those who had elected not to receive such messages. Contact details were awaited for the Club's Silver and Bronze Scheme Members, together with its Gold Scheme Members who had joined after 12/08/23, so that welcome messages could be sent to them. **Action: IH would request the necessary information from Rob Noble (RN), the Club's Head of Supporter Services.**
- h. RICT's montage of one of the Club's matchday programmes from each season from 1960 to 2020 had been placed on permanent display in the Red Imp area under the GBM Stand.
- i. The RICT plaque, commemorating the meeting at which the Club had been formed, would be unveiled at 10.30am on 30/09/23 on the site of the Monson Arms Hotel.
- j. The poll for August's Player of the Month Award had been very popular, notwithstanding the switch of host from RICT's Twitter account to RICT's website. Delivery of the trophies for the season was expected imminently, following which the presentation to August's winner would be arranged.

5 STACEY WEST PROJECT

- a. A recent video, showing progress with the building works, would be circulated to bondholders, before being uploaded to the website for RICT's Stacey West Investment Bond. Bondholders would also be offered a tour of the site.
- b. Construction was proceeding well. The benefits that the project would bring to LCF, to the Club and to the community were acknowledged.

6 CHARITY/COMMUNITY ACTIONS

- a. Monetary donations to MIND, RICT's charity partner for 2023, could be made through a collection tin held at RICT's marquee on home matchdays. **Action: RB would ask RN whether a bucket collection could be held at the LNER Stadium before the end of the year to support MIND.**
- b. RICT and LCF would support the match to be played on 08/10/23 at the LNER Stadium between former players of the clubs involved to commemorate the Bradford City Fire. Funds would be raised for the charities (including the Bradford Burns Unit) of the Mayors of Bradford and of Lincoln and for LCF, as the FPA's charity partner.
- c. RICT would assist one of its Small Business Members, Lincoln Fight Factory, which was organising an event in October to raise funds for LCF's "Fighting Fit" programme, supporting people living with or recovering from cancer.
- d. Donations would be accepted at RICT's marquee on home matchdays in support of The Bridge Church's 2023 Pressie Push for children who might not receive any Christmas presents.

7 MEMBERSHIP

- a. Arrangements had been made for the meeting of the John O'Gaunts Club (JOGC) Members on 16/09/23. **Action: MS would liaise with the Media Group to recruit more members to the Club.**
- b. The Joiners Arms had become a new Small Business Member.
- c. IH, SF and AP had met on 01/09/23 to consider the consolidation and modernisation of RICT's membership categories, which had evolved piecemeal over the years. **Action: When input requested from the FPA and from MS had been received, AP would obtain approval of IH and SF to a draft Membership Policy for consideration by RICT's Nominations & Governance Working Group (N&GWG), which would then make recommendations to the RICT Board. When a new Membership Policy had been adopted by the RICT Board, IH, SF and AP would review the documentation required to process membership applications, both online and in hard copy form.**

8 LINCOLN CITY FC/HOLDINGS

- a. The Club's BM on 24/08/23 had been attended by RB (representing RICT Members) and MS (representing the JOGC Members), together with DL and ST (in their own rights). Budgets, funding arrangements and departmental key performance indicators were approved, with committee reports being received and a presentation being given by the Club's Head Coach.
- b. RB, MS (as an Observer), ST and DL had also attended a BM of the Club's holding company on 24/08/23.

9 MULTI-PARTY MEETINGS

- a. The next meeting between representatives of the Club, the FPA, LCF and RICT would be held on 21/09/23.
- b. Chris Ashton of RIATS would discuss with the person who had raised the issue the options for the creation of a buddy system for use by all supporters who travel on their own to away matches via the RIATS coaches.

10 FAN ADVISORY BOARD (FAB)

- a. JB and RL had attended the meeting of the FAB on 26/08/23, at which discussion had taken place on the transition from the Supporters Board to a Shadow Board style structure, as recommended by the Fan Led Review (FLR).
- b. JB and RL would attend the next meeting of the FAB on 30/09/23.

11 FAN LED REVIEW

- a. The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport had issued a Command Paper on 07/09/23, in response to the consultation on the White Paper published on 23/02/23. It focused primarily on the financial sustainability of football clubs, adding very little to the previous proposed standards for fan engagement, which the Club intended to exceed in any event. A commitment was expected to be made in the November King's Speech to bring forward legislation to create an Independent Regulator of English Football.
- b. On 29/08/23, the Club's had announced on its website the action that it intended to take to go beyond the FLR's recommendations for fan engagement. It had been recognised at the Club's BM on 24/08/23 that RICT had taken big strides to ensure that, as the representative of the entire fanbase, it would be a suitable holder of any Golden Share (GS). Preparations for the issue of such a share (to be known as "the Fans' Share") to RICT had therefore been authorised. As the FLR had praised the effectiveness of a GS when Brentford FC (BFC) relocated to its current stadium, RB had obtained copies of the key documents from Bees United, the Supporters' Trust concerned. On 08/09/23, RB and AP had met DL and Richard Parnell (RP), the Club's Director of Legal and Football Administration, to establish whether the Club agreed that the constitutions of the Club and of RICT should follow the approach taken by BFC. The Club's views had also been sought on the provisions that should be made in RICT's constitution for an asset lock and for the age at which members should become eligible to vote on GS issues. General principles had been agreed and further documentation would be drafted by RP. **Action: The N&GWG would consider the documentation when received from RP, following which it would submit recommendations to the RICT Board.**
- c. RB (representing the Club's minority shareholders and bondholders, as well as RICT Members), JB (representing Lincoln City Banter, the Stacey West Podcast, Vital Lincoln City and Lincoln City Fans Player Scheme) and AP (representing RIATS and RICT Members) would attend the next meeting of the Club's FLR Working Group on 16/09/23.

12 GOVERNANCE

- a. KOR was welcomed to the meeting.
- b. Eight Succession Planning & Training Needs Skills Audit Questionnaires had so far been completed. **Action: AP would meet face-to-face individually with the remaining RICT Board Members when they completed their Questionnaires at matches or meetings, following**

which the results would be analysed. All training needs identified would then be addressed by the N&GWG, which would then devise a future planning programme, with an appropriate recruitment campaign.

- c. The updated draft revised RICT constitution was still awaited from the Football Supporters' Association. **Action: On receipt of that updated draft, AP would submit a report and make recommendations to the N&GWG.**
- d. An amended draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Club and RICT had been received from the Club. **Action: RB, SF and AP would meet to recommend to the RICT Board whether to accept the amended draft or whether to suggest further amendments.**
- e. A hard copy of RICT's accounts for the year to 31/12/22 had been signed by RB, ST and SF, following which RICT's Annual Return had been filed with the Financial Conduct Authority.

13 FINANCES

- a. In advance of the BM, ST had sent to all RICT Board Members a financial update for the period from 01/01/23 to 07/09/23, which included the unbanked cash receipts at the RICT marquee on home matchdays, together with the cash payments made from those receipts. The balance of that cash would be banked before the end of the financial year. **Action: ST would pay the money due to the Club from the JOGC Members.**
- b. RICT had a practice of sponsoring Club players, whether from the first team, the youth team or the women's team. **Action: ST would investigate the options and submit a recommendation to the next BM.**
- c. As supporters were increasingly asking about making payments by card, rather than by cash, at RICT's marquee, RICT would acquire a SumUp Solo card reader. **Action: ST would place an order for a card reader.**

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next BM would be held via Zoom at 7pm on Wednesday 11/10/23, apologies for absence being tendered in advance by MS, ST and SM. **Action: All RICT Board Members would consider whether it would be more convenient to hold BMs on the first Wednesday of the month, rather than on the second Wednesday of the month.**

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a. All members of the FAB had signed confidentiality agreements with the Club. RICT's Board Membership & Conduct Policy imposed similar obligations on its Board Members. **Action: The N&GWG would consider the adequacy of RICT's confidentiality obligations and make recommendations to the RICT Board.**
- b. The Club and LCF would host an open meeting (at which there would be a presentation by a representative of Level Playing Field) on 16/09/23 for fans to create a Disabled Supporters Association.
- c. There being no further business, the BM closed at 8.40pm.

APPENDIX

Summary of an article about the Club's FED published on the Club's website on 29/08/23

The Club's Board agreed the appointment of DL as the first holder of the post of the Club's Board-level official responsible for fan engagement, with the intention of rotating the position among the Club's Board Members going forward. That appointment is designed further to advance and demonstrate the Club's commitment to ensuring long term meaningful engagement with fans.

The role objective of the Club's FED is to oversee the Club's fan engagement activities, working closely with the Club's Chief Executive Officer and with its Head of Supporter Services.

The key responsibilities of the FED are:

- steering the FLR working group from recommendation through to implementation;
- liaising with RICT to align strategy and plans as holder of the Fans' Share;
- membership of the FAB with a focus on effectiveness;
- encouraging a culture of fan engagement throughout the Club;
- ensuring true representation of the Club's fanbase in engagement;
- presenting to the Club's Board of an annual Fan Engagement Plan, which should include, but not be limited to:
 - fan survey results & insights;
 - key performance indicators;
 - a fan engagement statement for the Club's Annual Report;
 - details of key fan engagement activities to be completed during the season;
 - details of key roles and responsibilities of Club officials in relation to fan engagement;
 - details of the FAB, such as membership and frequency of meetings and reporting; and
 - details of all the Club's heritage assets requiring fan consultation prior to a material amendment;
- preparing, presenting and communication of an annual Club Board Fan Engagement Report, outlining the engagement activities undertaken and key issues/concerns raised from fans in that season;
- including a summary statement on fan engagement in the Club's Annual Report;
- supporting a communication approach that is transparent, informative, accurate and timely; and
- learning and developing the Club's approach to fan engagement.