



Brentford Independent Association of Supporters (BIAS)

Annual General Meeting (AGM) Minutes held on 24th November 2018

Held in the Griffin Pub Brentford (14:20) and open to all members of BIAS

1. Attendees and Apologies

- Meeting attended by the following members of the BIAS Executive Committee (Quorum as defined by the BIAS Constitution).
 - Adam Hobbs (AH) - Chairperson
 - Phil Marchant (PM) - Deputy Chairperson
 - David Gathergood (DG) - Finance Officer
 - Anna Mason (AM) - Secretary
 - David Minckley (DM) - Committee Member
 - Apologies: Gemma Teale & Lisa O'Brien

2. Minutes of last meeting

- Minutes republished ahead of the AGM but have been available on the BIAS website for over a year – Minutes passed as accurate

3. Financial Update

- DG presented the BIAS financial Accounts for the year ending 31st May 2018. These have been independently audited by James Walsh and signed by AH as Chairperson for BIAS – Accounts accepted by AGM
- Key Messages: subscriptions / memberships continues to fall slowly. Expenditure has also reduced. Decision taken to discontinue membership of ABeeC as it has now passed its purpose
- AGM confirmed that James Walsh should continue to independently audit the BIAS accounts for the year ending May 2019
- DG confirmed that he was standing down as Finance Officer after 8 years and passed his thanks for the support and assistance he has received during this time

4. Chairpersons Report

- AH confirmed that DG was leaving his post as Finance Officer

- DM has agreed to take over DG responsibilities as Finance Officer going forward. This was formally proposed by AH, seconded by DG and formally agreed by the AGM
- AH also confirmed that AM was leaving her post as BIAS Secretary and will be replaced by Lisa O'Brien (LO). This was formally proposed by AH, seconded by PM and formally agreed by the AGM
- It was also agreed that DM & LO will replace DG & AM as signatories on the BIAS bank account
- AH thanked DG & AM for their support during their tenure on the committee – DG has run the finances for 8 years and AM was initially involved in the Stadium Action Action Group (STaG) for the new stadium – both will be missed
- AH will continue as Chairperson for another term, PM will be deputy chairperson and GT will continue on the Executive Committee – This was agreed at the AGM
- Sam Bolton, Adele Peleshcka and Sean Cudmore have not been re-nominated to the committee this year and AH thanked them for their efforts in this regard
- AH stated that two new members to the committee have put their names forward: Richard Nabarro (RN) and Darren Castle (DC). Both have been nominated by DM and seconded by AH. AGM confirmed their appointment to the BIAS Executive committee
- AH confirmed that BIAS have been heavily involved (GT) with the club on inclusion activities – has taken a lot of work over the past few years but the club is making progress
- BIAS have also been involved with the new Police Independent Advisory Group which has been set up by the Metropolitan Police to discuss and receive feedback on match day policing and safety issues alongside other London clubs – BIAS will look to engage further with our membership to provide feedback to this group
- AH advised that the Football Supporters Federation (FSF) and Supporters Direct (SD) were merging to form a new unified supporters organisation – Unified Football Supporters Organisation (UFSO). New network groups will be established during 2019 – BIAS will be an affiliate member of the Championship Network and will have 2 votes on key decisions at the new UFSO AGM
- AH stated that BIAS usually meets with the club 4 times a year, although they have not been as forthcoming this year. Minimum requirement is two meetings, of which fans forums can count
- Currently waiting on the new CEO to be announced following decision of Mark Devlin (MD) to stand down – BIAS looking to build a stronger relationship with MD successor
- AH states that BIAS continue to busy behind the scenes and apologised for not being more visible to our membership on work done, particularly on issues such as the ticketing system and the new stadium

5. Motions passed at the AGM

- **To remove the annual fee for BIAS membership – Proposed by GT and seconded by DM**
 - Executive committee feels we need to increase membership to have a stronger voice with the club.
 - Discussion centred around concern that members still need to show some commitment, so our membership does not become just a list of email addresses
 - On balance, the need to increase membership outweighed the risk of not having a committed membership, therefore the motion was passed by the AGM and will be reviewed on a regular basis
 - Donations will continue to be sought
 - Executive committee will now focus on a strategy to expand membership to a wider demographic

- **Amend Constitution to better reflect current position of BIAS and Brentford Football Club – Proposed by DM, seconded by AH**
 - Changes published on BIAS website ahead of AGM
 - DM proposed a new bullet point under Membership section; 'Membership to be open to all fans of Brentford Football Club' – this will support our status as an affiliate member of the UFSO
 - Proposed changes to the Constitution agreed at the AGM

- **Adopt new Equality Charter - Proposed by DM, seconded by AH**
 - To be an affiliate member of the UFSO, a Supporters Association must have an equality charter – wording has been supplied by the Football Supporters Federation
 - Proposed equality charter published on BIAS website ahead of AGM
 - Adoption of Equality Charter agreed at the AGM with proviso that reference is made to this within the BIAS Constitution

- **Amend BIAS Manifesto to reflect current focus of our organisation – Proposed by DM, seconded by AH**
 - Changes published on BIAS website ahead of AGM
 - Manifesto to be titled BIAS Manifesto 2019
 - Reference to be added to working closely with Bees United and BCST
 - Manifesto to be updated each year to reflect changing focus of BIAS
 - Proposed changes to the Manifesto agreed at the AGM

- Q – will there be membership cards going forward?
 - AH – haven't done for last 2 years, in 2016 cost £1,000, plus £500 postage, so not cost effective

- Q – what's happening with the focus groups? Last contact with the club (Ryan Murrant) was the club was looking at dates. Whilst construction and fitout decisions will be made already, there is still scope to inform on matchday experience.
 - DM – met a Tottenham fan at a UFSO meeting who is happy to talk to the committee about the process they went through (felt railroaded)

 - Q – Will there be scope in the building for public events (such as the Jazz Club)?
 - AH – In the original plans, there was plenty of space, but in the reduced plans, there is less space. Will probably depend on accessibility – such as whether room can be accessed via a single external access.
 - Committee to engage with the club on what will happen in practice – either in the focus groups or directly
 - Will there be scope to improve the comfort of Stripes? – Club removed the portable stage, which was funded by the Jazz Club and a grant from Hounslow Council – AH to check with new CEO once in situ
 - Would there be room in the BCST offices opposite the stadium to host meetings etc? - AH to check with Lee Doyle (who would have seen the plans)

Meeting closed 3.26pm.