



Brentford Independent Association of Supporters

Minutes of the 2015 BIAS Annual General Meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015

The following executive members were present:

Richard Merritt (Chair)  
Adam Hobbs (Secretary)  
David Gathergood (Finance Officer)

The following committee members were present:

Kath Richardson  
Darrell Goddard  
Anna Mason  
Phil Marchant  
Sam Bolton  
Lisa O'Brien (arrived 12:30)  
Gemma Teale (arrived 12:30)

There were 22 members in attendance.

- 1) The meeting commenced at 12:06pm, Richard Merritt thanked all those who attended and also thanked the Inverness Club for hosting the meeting.
- 2) The minutes of the 2014 meeting were passed as accurate
- 3) It was agreed for Jim Walsh and David Merritt to continue to audit the accounts for the next year
- 4) David Gathergood provided the following financial update:

Once again I am pleased to report that we have ended the year in a very strong financial position. However as expected there has been a drop in income. I believe there were two reasons for this: Firstly many of the new members who joined two years ago to get priority tickets for cup matches against Chelsea have not renewed. Secondly, some of the members who joined as a result of the publicity regarding the proposed new stadium and the Stadium Action Group's efforts who have not renewed.

However the long term trend in membership continues upwards. The total membership income for the year to 31 May 2015 is £5,366.

This year has been comparatively quiet coming after the hectic previous year. Some of our resources were directed to supporting the Brentford Ladies Football Club and to helping financially with the West Country region's mini bus. In addition we have continued to subscribe to Survey Monkey from which we have gained valuable information.

The balance of our expenditure has been on membership and meeting costs. The net result is that we have ended the year with a surplus of £3,660 resulting in a bank balance of £10,920 which I think you will agree is a very satisfactory position.

Thank you for your ongoing support which enables BIAS to continue as a strong independent voice.

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5) The accounts for the last year were passed as accurate

6) The Chair delivered the following report:

By BIAS standards, last season was, thankfully, rather quiet but the Association has remained strong and has grown in many areas.

There is not just a BIAS committee, for example, there are 18 people who undertake Lead roles that benefit the Association and Brentford supporters, there are 22 Regional Co-ordinators and 8 International co-ordinators who all play a part in Bringing Brentford fans together and of course there are our sub committees, like the Stadium Action Group.

I'm very pleased to say that Gemma Teale, who became our Football Supporters Federation representative just after our Last AGM has recently been elected to Football Supporters Federation National Council which will give us and Brentford fans an even bigger voice.

The BIAS Committee now has regular meetings with the Football Club where both parties, talk openly, honestly and importantly listen to each other. We have also requested and have been granted Fans Forums where Bees fans have been given the opportunity to ask their questions directly.

The BIAS Stadium Action Group has remained active, monitoring events, attending the regular Lionel Road Liaison Group meetings and keeping up to speed of the situation.

Our Regional branches continue to thrive and grow. Just the other week our West Country Branch filled a 15 seater minibus with supporters from Cornwall, Devon and Somerset for a trip to Derby County. We have set aside a pool of money so that when they arrange trips to Griffin Park, those who travel know in advance just how much they will have to pay, weather they are group of 10, 12 or 15.

Our Irish, Dutch, Swiss and German branches continue to bring Bees fans together with increasing visits to Griffin Park.

9 Italian Bees are came over for last season's Wolverhampton Wanderers game and just last week they finished second in a 6 a-side football tournament back home in Italy.

Hey Jude BIAS FC, now under the management of James Wicks, once again completed in Worldnet.

The Griffin Park Jazz Club is still going strong. They now advertise themselves in the local hotels, cementing the bond between the football Club and the Community.

We have also created and set up a team to campaign for the preservation of the Ealing Road terrace and I'm sure we will hear more from them when the Hillsborough Enquiry has been completed.

This season BIAS launched its own manifesto and in doing so made a series of commitments to Brentford fans

The manifesto not only includes the current and ongoing campaigns such as for the new Community stadium at Lionel Road and to improve the Matchday Experience, but it also includes group and individual pledges from BIAS members who have undertaken lead roles that are to the benefit of Brentford supporters

The Manifesto is not set in stone, it is a starting point which will be need to be ratified by every new BIAS committee and amended when the Association undertakes further campaigns or issues that need to addressed



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The manifesto with its mixture of group and individual commitments provides the Association with a good sense of ownership and a sense of direction whilst explaining to Brentford FC supporter's what we as an Independent Association are about and what we want to achieve.

A PDF of the full BIAS manifesto is available on our website

I would like to thank, everybody who has played a part for their support, for their input and for helping to make a difference. In particular I would like to thank Tom Moore, Christopher Ryan and Darrell Goddard who are all standing down from the BIAS committee.

Christopher and Darrell will still remain on the Stadium Action Group and Christopher will continue with the Disabled Supporters Liaison Officer lead role.

I'm pleased to announce that Sam Gibb will pick up the baton of our Membership Benefits officer taking over from Darrell.

I would also like to give a special thank you David Gathergood for keeping our Finances in order and to Kath Richardson and Adam Hobbs for their recent work in improving the layout out of our website.

### 7) The following were nominated as Officers of the Association for the forthcoming year:

Chairman: Richard Merritt

General Secretary: Adam Hobbs

Finance Officer: David Gathergood

No other nominations for office were received within the deadlines laid out in the constitution and all of the above were successfully elected to office without objection.

### 8) The following were nominated as Members of the Executive committee for the forthcoming year:

Sam Bolton

Phil Marchant

Anna Mason

Lisa O'Brien

Kath Richardson

Jan Smith

Gemma Teale

No other nominations for office were received within the deadlines laid out in the constitution and all of the above were confirmed as Members of the Executive Committee without objection

### 9) The following motion was proposed by Richard Merritt:

"To propose to keep the membership fee at £12 per year".

The motion was carried unanimously.

### 10) The following motion was proposed by Gemma Teale:



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“Should a member of the committee stand down, that 7 days notification be given to the membership before a new committee member can be co-opted. This is to allow the membership the opportunity to put themselves forward should they wish. If there is more than one candidate, the committee will vote, unless there are fewer than two meetings scheduled before the next AGM, in which case the candidates will stand for election in the normal way.”

The motion was carried unanimously and the Association’s Constitution will be amended accordingly.

### 11) Any Other Business

- a. An issue regarding the poor refereeing standards in matches was raised by a non-member. The proposer felt that the club was not doing enough in making representations to the Football Association. The Chair acknowledged the comment and said he would raise it with the club at the next quarterly meeting.
- b. A member raised a concern that the BIAS Facebook groups were not being utilised to their maximum potential. The member felt that there was little control or moderation and that there are other groups not run by BIAS which is causing confusion. The Chair concurred with the issue and stated that Jan Smith has agreed to take up responsibility of managing and maintaining the Facebook groups going forward.
- c. There was an item for discussion which was sent in from a member via e-mail ahead of the AGM. This was to raise the point about walk up prices being “over the top” and the unnecessary long windows which applied before prices were raised. As Kurt Pittman from the Football Club was in attendance he was given the opportunity to reply. He stated that following dialogue with BIAS the advanced deadline was reduced initially to 4 days and then to 4pm the day before the kick-off. The Chair agreed to take the issue of walk up prices forward to our next quarterly meeting with the club.
- d. A member raised a concern about how season tickets holder ticket Ticket Access Points are now only credited if you attend each match. There was some discussion amongst attendees, with an explanation being given regarding that this was the fairest way to prioritise amongst Season Ticket holders where there is a low allocation for away matches. QPR away was cited by Kurt Pittman as an example. The Chair agreed to take the forward to our next quarterly meeting with the club.
- e. A question was raised regarding the confirming the actual capacity of Griffin Park. There was a discussion and exact figure was not known but around 12,400 was accepted as being correct.



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- f. Rhys Williams from The Football Club gave an update on Lionel Road with the following key points:
- The club own 80% of the land required for development, the one remaining piece of land is the Capital Court Site
  - Private negotiations had broken down therefore Hounslow Council decided to launch a CPO to acquire the land on behalf of the club
  - A public enquiry into the CPO has recently finished and the Planning Inspector is writing his report.
  - The report will need to be rubber stamped by The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP).
  - The club expect an answer in the New Year, this will lead to a planned start date of Spring 2016.
  - We are still on track for the stadium to be ready for 2018/19 season
  - A series of supporter focus groups were carried out recently to discuss look and feel, facilities and experience. The feedback was useful and will help build the basis of a larger user survey which will be launched soon.
- g. Finally The Chair congratulated Gemma Teale on her election to the National Council of the Football Supporters Federation.

The meeting closed at 12:43pm