



LIVIFORLIFE SUPPORTERS TRUST

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF LIVINGSTON FC

OPEN MEETING – 2pm Sunday 5th April 2009, The Atrium, St Margaret’s Academy, Livingston

Don Paul, LiviforLife Chairman, opened the meeting by outlining the recent history of the club since administration and the subsequent formation of the Trust.

The present meeting was called in the light of continuing negative publicity regarding unpaid debts at LFC in order to present the Trust’s plans for a community football club. This could then be put into operation in the event of a repeat of the administration scenario.

A working group has been in operation since the start of the year and have put together a plan the objective of which is to run the club on a sustainable basis. Those present would have an opportunity to ask questions after the formal presentation.

The presentation was delivered by David Wilson. He informed that Trust members had seen this presentation at the earlier AGM and had backed it unanimously. A series of frequently asked questions formed part of the presentation and were answered by several working group members at the top table. There was an emphasis on balancing expenditure with income. It was stressed that the Trust is not in a position to put the club into administration and that this can only be done by creditors.

QUESTIONS ASKED

Question

Does the Trust have an agenda against the present owners?

Answer

There is not an agenda against the present or past owners. We want to see the club run on a sustainable basis and with maximum community involvement. The work being done is part of the ongoing commitment on the part of the LFL Trust, as shareholders, to ensure that the club is run with financial prudence and with honesty.

Question

How will the Trust put the plan into existence? Are we waiting for administration or are we hoping that our plans will accelerate it?

Answer

We wish to have something in place in the event of administration rather than be caught out as happened in 2004. It is important for people to know that there is an alternative. Things may be turned round and we indeed hope that this happens.

Question

If there is a major difference in the amount of income and expenditure what about player contracts?

Answer

It would not be prudent to give long contracts that might not be sustainable. The basic tenet is that you spend no more than your income.

Question

The current owners have put money into the club but why have we got into this situation again? The questioner stated that he does not like misinformation and that supporters need the truth.

Answer

The current owner says that there is no problem and we have to take his word for that. It was pointed out that the Clyde Board has publicly stated that there are financial problems there and are asking for help. It was further stated that if there are debts that cannot be met today then things are only likely to get worse.

Comment

It was the view of a member of the audience that in the present financial climate the club would be supported by those who cannot afford to follow bigger clubs. A Board member pointed out that there has been continuing disillusionment among fans and that we have a core support which would probably not fall in the event of dropping a league.

Question

Do we have any firm facts regarding the current debt situation?

Answer

There are confidentiality issues but Ged Nixon stated that he knows people who are awaiting payment of bills.

The owners of the security company previously used by the club stated that there was outstanding payment in spite of the club owner having publicly stated the opposite on a BBC Radio Scotland programme. He further stated that he is now speaking to the club re a payment plan.

Question

What funding sources exist?

Answer

There are several community based projects which attract matched funding. These could be tapped into. The Trust have a business plan incorporating a commercial portfolio which will require a restructure of the business and better use of the facilities.

Question

Would the Trust be able to renegotiate stadium rent with West Lothian Council?

Answer

Because there is a current owner and sitting tenant it is not possible to speak to the Council on this matter. Trust Board members have visited councillor surgeries and in the main have had favourable responses.

Comment

Ideally there should not be a "them and us" scenario. There should be cooperation between the Trust and the club regarding the Community Club idea.

Question

Has the present Trust Board spoken to the club?

Answer

The two parties met formally 3 weeks ago and have agreed to meet on a regular basis.

Question

Mr Massone was asked if he shared the vision of a Community Club, and if so, did he see a way forward for the club in the current situation.

Answer

Mr Massone agreed with the vision and stated that he wanted a good relationship with the community. He explained that there is a more aggressive business mentality in Italy where creditors are expected to wait. He wants a new start so that we can go forward together. He informed that the Trust had been invited to look at the club accounts but had not done so.

Comment

Don Paul countered that an excel spreadsheet with figures would not be an ideal way to examine the accounts. Mr Massone invited a full examination of the accounts of the club if required.

Comment To Mr Massone

Mentioning differences in Italian culture is not acceptable. Business is business and he should know that employees and bills have to be paid. *(This comment was followed by audience applause)*

Mr Massone's Answer

He understands and agrees but LFC is not yet ready to pay everything. He pointed out that without him there would be no jobs.

Various Comments to Mr Massone

- Creditors usually agree to extend credit if discussion takes place. Going to court is not good policy.
- It is normal business practice that the payroll is sacrosanct and paid in full on time.

- A former employee asked why he does not pay staff on time
- Pointed out that there were several people in the room who have not been paid for goods and services supplied to the club.
- Appreciation that he has put money into the club but that the Trust model incorporates the wage bill being covered by income rather than an owner using personal money

Mr Massone's Responses

- He agrees with comments re wages and bills
- Pointed out that he has paid wages with his own money
- He does not respect people who speak to the press
- He wants LFC to survive and to restart
- Commented on people who have stayed at home today

At this point the Chairman Don Paul asked those present for a vote of confidence in the Trusts plans for the future. The question put was –

“Do you (the supporters of Livingston FC) support in principle the LFL Trust Community Club business model presented here as a viable way forward should the Trust be required to intervene with a rescue package for the Club.”

57 votes were recorded in favour of the plan with one abstention and no dissenters. The plan was therefore approved by a clear majority.

Don Paul brought the meeting to a close by encouraging those not already members of the Trust to join and support it in sustaining the club.

He thanked all members of the audience for attending today.

MEETING CLOSED 3.45