

Heart of Midlothian plc

Minutes of the 112th Annual General Meeting

Gorgie Suite, Tynecastle Stadium – 11am

18 December 2018

1. Welcome & Introduction

Chair & Chief Executive Ann Budge welcomed those present to the 112th Annual General Meeting and delivered her Chairman's Statement.

The formal part of the AGM was then progressed.

2. Ordinary Resolutions

In accordance with the Notice of the AGM the following resolutions were considered and passed:

1. The Company's annual accounts and directors' and auditors' reports for the year ended 30 June 2018 were approved.
2. Thomas Eric Hogg was reappointed as a director of the Company.
3. Craig William Levein was reappointed as a director of the Company.
4. Johnston Carmichael was reappointed as auditors of the Company.
5. The directors were given the authorisation to determine the remuneration of the auditors.

This concluded the formal part of the meeting.

3. Q & A Session

The following questions were raised from the floor and answered accordingly:

Q1	Are there any strings attached to the benefactor donations?
A1	Ann Budge No there are no strings attached to the monies received from our benefactors. The only thing the benefactors have requested is a relaxation of our dress code in the Directors Box, should they visit us on match-day!
Q2	The Scottish Cup match against Livingston is coming up, can season ticket holders have their seat reserved allowing them the opportunity to buy their own seat?
A2	Ann Budge In Season 15/16 season ticket holders were given the opportunity to buy a three year 'seat freeze' for £100 – this enabled them, amongst other things, to purchase their seat for cup matches. The 3-year 'seat freeze' window is still valid. Therefore, there can be no seat guarantee for season ticket holders unless they have purchased the 'seat freeze' package.
Q3	Every time I call Tynecastle I get no response - no-one appears to answer calls?
A3	Ann Budge

	This will be checked as this should not be the case. Lesley Blair, Central Services Director will follow this up.
Q4	Whilst I fully support the Club's stance regarding sectarian behaviour from our own fans, is it not time that we make a stand against Rangers / Celtic regarding their behaviour? Should we not cut their allocation?
A4	<p>Ann Budge</p> <p>This is a difficult problem, not least because of the commercial implications. We do try to deal with Away fans behaviour as Jonathan Tink, Operations Director, will explain. This issue is discussed at Club and SPFL level and it is something we are actively reviewing. We do share your concerns.</p> <p>Jonathan Tink</p> <p>Prior to every match we have a Pre-Ops Meeting, involving Police Scotland, visiting teams etc. We discuss potential issues and how we intend to deal with them. During matches we will review CCTV footage to try to identify those individuals engaging in unacceptable conduct and work with the visiting team's Safety & Security Manager to seek out those responsible. It is however, very difficult, particularly in the context of sectarian singing to identify specific individuals.</p>
Q5	I strongly believe there is a section of our own supporters whose behaviour is embarrassing. When traveling on trains I note that there are notices offering a text number should anyone identify anti-social behaviour. Can we not do something similar?
A5	<p>Ann Budge</p> <p>We actually introduced a text system last year for our home matches. Given that you are unaware of this we will communicate this again.</p>
Q6	Can we use the text number for Away matches?
A6	<p>Ann Budge / Jonathan Tink</p> <p>Yes, we can extend the usage of the text number to away matches as well as home matches and will do so.</p>
Q7	Whilst understanding the financial implications of limiting the Old Firm's allocation, there could be financial benefits from so doing as it will encourage our own fans to come along to these matches, when currently, many of them stay away. Everything possible should be done to stop sectarianism. What are the Police doing to assist?
A7	<p>Ann Budge</p> <p>We have done this in the past, where we limited the Old Firm allocation. This decision was made simpler because we knew there was demand from our own fans for additional tickets. We are, however, prepared to consider reducing allocations next season.</p> <p>In terms of our own supporters, we are trying to address all kinds of unacceptable behaviour pro-actively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have written to the season ticket holders in the sections of the ground where we have the most issues, explaining that we will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour or the breaching of our ground rules, and stress this is an all-seated stadium. - As a last resort we will consider closing these sections if unacceptable behaviour persists. - We are also looking at other ways of identifying the trouble-makers (e.g. upgrading our CCTV etc). We will go as far as banning individuals who are clearly identified as behaving in an unacceptable manner.

	The Police support the stewards when an offence has or has the potential to occur.
Q8	I work in Youth Football in West Lothian and I note that no-one has been contacted by Hearts to develop any relationship between the Club and this part of Scotland. We have been contacted by Celtic & Rangers but never Hearts – why is this the case?
A8	Craig Levein I am surprised to hear this because we do have scouting and community representatives in the area. Please come and talk to me at the end of the AGM and we can discuss further.
Q9	I have recently attended the funeral of 2 former Hearts players and noted no representation from the Club and no wreaths. This is not good enough.
A9	Ann Budge We will look into these two situations and try to do better. We try to do our best to keep a good relationship with our former players and Gary Locke, our Club Ambassador, will generally attend such events, where possible.
Q10	I am aware that at a recent Old Firm game, 2 players were assaulted and some of our ball boys and kiosk staff were subjected to abuse. If we cannot protect our staff then we should be banning the Old Firm. Have we written to the Clubs regarding their behaviour?
A10	Jonathan Tink We do try to protect our players and staff. We now have no ball attendants positioned in front of the Roseburn stand. In addition, we are looking to cordon off the first 2 rows of the Roseburn stand to protect all players. Our kiosk staff have extra stewards in attendance if there is any indication of a problem. We also ensure that the Safety and Security Manager from the visiting club is given evidence of any problems. We make the visiting Club very aware of what is going on. Ann Budge After the recent Rangers match I spoke to the Rangers Chief Exec directly. Similarly, when some of our supporters damaged the seats at Motherwell recently, I again contacted the CEO directly to apologise and discuss the situation. The issue is that all Clubs have the same problem, sometimes with a small minority of their supporters and Clubs tend to take a pragmatic approach to dealing with these issues. If, however, the damage is extensive then Clubs will look to be reimbursed. There are also processes within the SPFL that deal with bad behaviour. For me, maintaining a good relationship with other Clubs is imperative in order that we can work together to try to stamp out bad behaviour, as far as possible.
Q11	This is a question for Craig – can we get an update on football? Where are we? Plans for the future?
A11	Ann Budge An update was given as part of the Chief Executive’s Report, including current plans. However, I will pass things over to Craig for a direct Q&A session on footballing matters.
Q12	Craig – explain the debacle last Friday?
A12	Craig Levein It is a difficult one to explain. There was a lack of application. We need to work harder than other teams and we simply did not. We totally lost focus, particularly after the penalty and the sending off. It was embarrassing. Confidence is a big thing with the players and clearly our list of injuries does not help.
Q13	Have we only got a 39 year old player available in defence?

A13	Craig Levein On Friday, with Clevid's injury the answer was basically yes. I do not want to talk about individual players however.
Q14	If Naismith is not on the park there is no ambition from the team. You play a very defensive system and are too negative. You clearly played for a draw on Friday.
A14	Craig Levein We did not go to Livingston for a draw – absolutely not. We worked very hard during pre-season, on getting the ball forward as quickly as possible, utilising Uche, Maclean and Naismith. As we have lost strikers, this becomes more difficult to do. I am looking for a system that suits the players we have. Fundamentally we need to win, even if it's not good football. We can look forward however, to some stability and hopefully better overall performances when some of our key players return from injury.
Q15	What about our Academy players? Can we play them?
A15	Craig Levein Of course we will play our Academy players when we can. However, I do not want to put pressure on players when they are not ready for it. This can easily happen and then their confidence goes.
Q16	I would like to say I am delighted that your health issues have now been sorted out and I am very pleased to see you here today,
A16	Craig Levein Many thanks.
Q17	Going back to Friday, Livingston were hungry – we haven't been hungry for a while. We need to work better with what we have.
A17	Craig Levein I totally agree – Livingston worked harder and were more focussed than us. We must maintain hunger, drive and a positive attitude. We must also remember that players are human beings too – there can be good days as well as bad days and they can suffer from a lack of confidence.
Q18	Given the number of injuries arising from training and matches, rather than from harsh tackles – is there anything in our training regime that is effecting this?
A18	Craig Levein We examine every situation very carefully to ensure this is not the case. The injuries we have experienced of late are rare. They are very unusual and difficult injuries. We have a good medical team who are aiding recovery.
Q19	You have been very honest today Craig, how can you convey similar messages to disgruntled supporters who do not attend the AGM?
A19	Craig Levein This is a difficult one as clearly I feel more able to speak freely at the AGM. For obvious reasons we don't want to be telling our opposition everything! It's a frustrating time definitely, however we have Naismith coming back soon and we have Vanacek joining us in January. This keeps us positive.
Q20	Are you looking forward to your date with the SPFL (re your comments about referees)?

A20	Craig Levein I do not like having a go at officials. However, if things are very wrong, I feel I need to say something.
Q21	We were sadly lacking in midfield on Friday – where is Harry Cochrane?
A21	Craig Levein Harry has picked up an injury in his last 3 games. He missed all of pre-season so has been playing catch-up. He was injured again yesterday. He will be back with us very soon and of course I intend playing him – I think he is one of the best central midfield players that we have.
Q22	Can we look forward to a full team after the Winter break?
A22	Craig Levein Yes.

The meeting was formally closed at 12.45pm.