

Minutes of the meeting of the Doncaster Rovers Shadow Board
Saturday 16 December 2023

Present: Derek Daniels, Dan Pearson, Mellony Shepard, Len South, Gill Shepherd, Martin O’Hara, Phil Winterman

Club Representatives: Gavin Baldwin, Shaun Lockwood, Adam Grice

Apologies: James Errington

1. Commercial Update from Club Doncaster

- i. Club Doncaster Chief Commercial Officer Jon Warburton provided the members of the Shadow Board with a commercial update on the organisation and Doncaster Rovers.
- ii. JW showed the Shadow Board that the commercial department at the Club has grown and been successful over the last five seasons, including the curtailed season and the behind closed doors season because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also noted that the commercial incomes figures have continued to grow due to the support of local businesses even following the Club’s relegation from League One at the end of the 2021-2022 season.
- iii. JW also provided some clarity to the Shadow Board on the prices which the Club charges for sponsorship as part of the current model and how this compares to other Clubs within League Two and the EFL. The anonymous benchmarking that Clubs have the option to view, providing they respond, is available for Clubs to compare the average revenues achieved for various commercial packages. Doncaster Rovers were performing well against this benchmarking.
- iv. JW ended his presentation by explaining that the partnership model that Doncaster Rovers have in place encourages businesses who are all part of the same model to engage and work with each other.
- v. It was asked if the strict dress code was a factor to why people did not use the Executive Lounge or upgrade their tickets to this area on a match day. GB explained that this is an issue across football and it is not just a problem at Doncaster Rovers. JW added that he is considering the relaxation of the dress code for the Executive Lounge area for the 2024-2025 season to see if this contributes to increasing footfall in this area on a match day.
- vi. LS asked JW whether all Player shirt sponsors from last season are in receipt of the shirts as he was previously aware that some shirts had not been received by the sponsor. JW replied that it was his understanding that all sponsors had received their shorts from last season and where someone had sponsored a player which left the Club in January 2023, they were given the opportunity to sponsor a second player for the second half of the season so they ended up with two shirts. LS added that he feels the lower spending sponsors need to be treated with the same respect as the higher spending sponsors as they get more priority and attention from the Club.
- vii. DD asked whether JW or a member of his commercial team have ever had a proposal refused by the SEO team or the Board of Directors? JW explained that the only

proposal he brought to the Board for discussion was the introduction of LED advertising boards which they did not discuss based on the cost of installation, running and maintaining.

- viii. MO'H suggested that more advertisements are made about the activities in the hospitality areas on a match day in order to try and drive footfall into these areas. He explained that if the Club promoted former players giving talks or engaging with supporters as a pre-match activity in the hospitality area more supporters would be encouraged to upgrade to the hospitality area or buy seats in the hospitality area as it would enhance the package which is currently on offer. Other members of the Shadow Board agreed with this statement.

2. Minutes from the last meeting held on 3 October 2023

- i. The members of the Shadow Board passed the minutes from the previous meeting held on 3 October 2023 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the previous meeting held on 3 October 2023

- i. MO'H stated that he was still not in a position to share the Rules of the Viking Supporters Co-Operative with the members of the members of the Shadow Board as there was confidential details in there. He did agree, however, to redact these and share what he could.

4. Safeguarding

- i. SL explained that the Club is continuing to prepare for the upcoming Barnardo's Safeguarding Audit. A date for this has still not been given by the auditors but they will give the Club 10 days notice.
- ii. GB stated that Chris Wood has a duty to dedicate 17 hours per week towards safeguarding.

5. Health & Safety

- i. SL stated that the Club are expecting a meeting with the local fire authority following the changes which were made to the stadium infrastructure following the structural survey.

6. A.O.B

- i. GB provided a brief update on Matt Evans since he started employment with the Club as the new Finance Director as the replacement for Richard Poole. GB said that he had settled in extremely well and had changed our world with the work he has done so far.
- ii. LS suggested that the Club made it clear to supporters that England and the Football Association take full control of the stadium and we are merely the host venue.
- iii. PW said he has a few points, but many of these will wait for the next meeting, but one of his big bugbears is away games and the attitudes and communication of

stewards to visiting supporters. One issue which has arose recently occurred at Stockport County in October when the home side actually sold tickets to visiting supporters in areas of the stadium which were blocked off due to segregation. MO'H added and stated that he has spoken with members of the Stockport County Supporters Trust regarding these incidents and it quickly became apparent that this was not a standalone case as it had happened numerous times this season and the ticketing system that Stockport County were using was not fit for purpose.

- iv.** MO'H stated that there is a training module being put together in partnership with the FSA and the EFL for member of Shadow Boards.
- v.** GB closed the meeting by acknowledging the work that current Supporter Liaison Officer Dean Medcalf who recently was named SLO of the Year.