

Chair's statement

Engagement with Nottingham Forest

Despite the restrictions imposed by the ongoing covid pandemic, formal meetings with NFFC have continued throughout the year. The main areas of focus for these have, as always, been dictated by the trust membership. In 2021 these included strategic direction of the club; City Ground redevelopment and community engagement issues including supporting foodbank collections, promoting the interests of fans with disability and the My City My Shirt initiative designed to celebrate the diversity amongst the club's fanbase.

In March, we were delighted to conduct an extensive Q&A with the Forest Chairman, Nicholas Randall QC. The questions put were submitted by trust members as well as other fans. This was distributed in three instalments on the club's YouTube channel and recorded very high levels of engagement.

A first meeting was held with the new CEO, Dane Murphy shortly after his appointment, underlining the ongoing strong relationship the trust has established with the club.

Support for Nottingham Forest Women FC

The trust has continued its historic support for NFWFC including sponsorship of Grace Walters for the 4th season running.

Options for wider involvement in support have been explored at meetings with NFFC. The impact of the pandemic has resulted in delays to these plans, but it is expected that these can be rekindled in the coming year.

My City My Shirt initiative

Working in partnership with Fans for Diversity and Forest, the trust's involvement with the My City my Shirt has been one of the most successful initiatives we have been involved with. The project celebrates diversity of all kinds among football fans, including those not immediately apparent, the intention being to show that all are welcome at our football club. A diverse fanbase more accurately represents the wider community and so results in a stronger support.

Engagement with fan organisations

The trust has engaged regularly with the Football Supporters Association (FSA), Debs Dilworth from the FSA attended the November board meeting in person. Members of the trust board have attended FSA meetings, representing our interests and views.

Governance

The trust has undertaken work to improve our systems so make sure that we comply with the regulations required of a community benefit society and to better manage our activities. We have set up a partnership with Nottingham agency, Key Principles, to upgrade all core marketing and data technology platforms. The membership database has been overhauled and plans have been put in place to upgrade the trust website.

Media and communications

Members have been regularly updated by means of regular (at least monthly) emails detailing latest trust activities. The trust also regularly communicates via our social media channels which continue to enjoy healthy growth and where we enjoy high levels of engagement relative to comparable trusts. In addition, communication has been entered into with individual fans via email, calls and on occasion face-to-face.

Membership

Current membership is approximately 700 which represents a decline during 2021. It became clear that the very high majority of this has been caused by registered payment cards expiring and a lack of functionality on our database to send out prompts to update ahead of the expiry. The upgrades we have made to the database have included reminder functionality and a portal to update payment details, this has addressed the problem. We plan to attract new members by enhancing the advantages of membership and making a better job at communicating these.

Future priorities

Planned activities for the coming year include contributing to the Fan-Led Review by representing the fans' views in discussion with the club; continuing to build closer links with the Community Trust and collaborating on various initiatives with them; undertaking further exhibitions and promotion around My City My Shirt; input on the development of the Peter Taylor stand as and when planning permission is received and providing support to explorations ongoing about the possible establishment of a Forest Disabled Supporters Association.