

Wimbledon Independent Supporters Association

Minutes of Ordinary General Meeting

Thursday, 25th September, 2003

Wimbledon Community Centre, St. George's Road, Wimbledon

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Gavin Ainslie, Charlie Bell, Dave Boyle, Rob Dunford, Richard Fraser, Sandra Lowne and Colette Mulchrone.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meetings held –AGM on 1st May and EGM on 8th July – were agreed and there were no matters arising.

3. Election for vacant places on Committee (4)

Nicole Hammond thanked Marc Jones for his tireless work on the WISA Committee and wished him well for the future.

Four candidates stood for election – Charlie Bell for the position of Vice-Chair, which he had been filling on a temporary basis, and Gavin Ainslie, Jo Fotheringham and Richard Fraser for the vacant positions on the General Committee.

There was no contest for the vacant positions, so a single vote was taken to elect all candidates to the vacant positions. The vote was carried and the candidates were welcomed onto the WISA Committee.

4. Results of the WISA Survey

Nicole Hammond introduced this section of the meeting.

Ronan Warde explained how a full set of results were still being compiled by Charlie Bell but that the final results were expected to match the interim results published earlier.

Speakers from the floor expressed their opinion that this was a worthwhile exercise and warranted the expense involved.

5. Proposals for revisions to WISA Constitution.

Sean Fox introduced this section of the meeting and a series of changes to the constitution were discussed. Sean requested that all WISA members think about the amendments outside of the meeting and prepare to discuss them in further detail at the next OGM.

Section 1 – Name and Objectives

Roger Dennis suggested the change to 1.2.2 needed further work regarding the phrase 'ultimate decision making entity'.

Mike O'Shaughnessy asked who 'AFC Wimbledon' were and a general discussion

took place regarding the ownership/control of the various teams (mens, ladies, juniors) etc.

Fran O'Toole asked if 1.2.2 referred to a WISA representative being elected to the board? Nicole Hammond replied that the intention was for 'a elected representative' – not just specifically from WISA.

Nicole Hammond raised the issue of the Club Liaison role, which was a 'strange concept for a fans owned club'. Nicole explained regular meetings with the DT and AFC had been taking place, with various individuals attending on behalf of WISA.

Sean Fox mentioned the possibility of a new FSF Officer role being created.

Nicole Hammond asked the floor if the regular meetings with the DT/AFC, with variable attendees was 'a good way forward'. This was agreed by those in attendance.

6. Progress report

Accounts

Sean Fox gave a short update regarding the WISA accounts – current balance standing at £3709.06p with expected revenue of £2000 coming in from membership renewals.

He stated that WISA were in a healthy financial position, were not insolvent, and did not need administration; much to the amusement of all present.

AFCW Plc Shares

Nicole Hammond explained the application form to purchase shares in AFC Plc had been rejected because WISA is not recognised as a corporate entity. Four executive members (Nicole Hammond, Colette Mulchrone, Sean Fox, Dave Boyle) purchased the shares under the account name 'a/c WISA'. Nicole explained a lawyer would be tasked with drawing up a contract to control the use of the shares and the respective voting rights. The four executive members involved promised not to misuse the shares/voting rights in the meantime.

Mike O'Shaughnessy suggested that a partially completed transfer form should be prepared to cater for all eventualities. This was agreed to be a good idea.

Franchise Watch

It was explained that regarding the forthcoming first fixture of Franchise FC at the National Hockey Stadium against Burnley, the General Committee were unsure how to proceed, and asked for suggestions from the floor.

WISA had stated publicly there was not going to be a formal demo. WISA were aware some individuals had planned to attend, and that additionally some Burnley supporters had expressed an intention to protest. The BNP had published an article and were expected to attend.

WISA gave the advice that if people were going to attend the game, to steer clear of confrontation, and to be careful.

Members from the floor said they were now more interested in AFC.

Nicole explained that WISA still had an anti-franchise mandate and the General Committee had formulated a plan for the day. To obtain an element of surprise, the General Committee asked for permission to continue with the plan without informing the membership, but explained that they would be happy to make public the plan should anyone insist upon it. No requests for details of the plan were made.

Roger Dennis said this approach was reasonable, and that should a protest be arranged, but only 20 individuals turn up, it would look bad, but if no protest was organised, and 20 individuals turned up, it would look good.

Gavin Ainslie suggested WISA make a statement to the fact that any protests on the day were not organised by us to avoid taking the blame for any untoward events. Nicole agreed this was a sensible approach.

A general discussion then took place, with individual members expressing their intention to attend the Burnley game, or not.

Planning

Ian Pollock gave an update on the status of the planning application for the stadium and retail park at Denbigh North. He explained that it was believed the ‘consortium’ consisted of Peter Winkleman and ASDA/Walmart.

No date had been announced for the initial hearing; it was believed this would be in October. A four page objection would be submitted by our planning advisors; Roger Casale would be asked to discuss the issue with Keith Hill MP; and that a write-in campaign to John Prescott requesting that the application be ‘called-in’ would be organised.

7. Current and Future Business

It was discussed if it was appropriate for WISA, as a supporters organisation, to campaign for (a) Season Ticket holders to be automatically registered as DT members (b) for the DT to hold 3 meetings a year and (c) for the right of individual DT members to submit resolutions for AGMs and SGMs

(a) Season Ticket/DT Membership

A lengthy and healthy discussion took place, with various suggestions including opt-in/opt-out clauses, free DT membership, and improved promotion of DT membership. The consensus of the meeting appeared to be in favour of season ticket application forms giving space for three payments – season ticket fee, optional DT membership and optional donation.

(b) DT Meetings

Nicole reminded the attendees of the original purpose of the discussion – and asked are these issues that WISA, as a supporters organisation, should get involved in? Strong feelings were expressed from the floor that ‘WISA need to get involved’ and that attendees were ‘very concerned about the DT’ and that WISA involvement ‘might help things along’. Nicole explained that this was a ‘delicate situation’. Roger Dennis suggested WISA could ‘gently point things out’.

The discussion then returned to the issue of DT meetings and it was agreed that an increase in DT meetings would be beneficial. It was suggested that a mixture of types of meetings would be beneficial, that meetings can be cumbersome and perhaps a flexible twin-track approach was required.

(c) DT Member Proposals

This was then discussed, and the consensus was that this would also benefit the DT members.

8. Venue for WISA Meetings

The question was asked should WISA use Kingsmeadow as a venue for future WISA meetings?

A general discussion took place, with pros and cons pointed out, including issues such as clashes with the DT/AFCW merchandise stall on match days, etc. Kris Stewart pointed out the bar would not be an issue due to the appointment of a 'super new barman' much to the amusement of the attendees and the embarrassment of Ronan Warde. Gavin Ainslie suggested that, due to the historic connection with the Borough of Merton, meetings should continue at St. George's Community Centre.

Nicole proposed that the next meeting should take place on a matchday. A vote was taken, and the motion carried.

9. AFC and DT Issues

Questions from the floor were answered by Kris Stewart – AFCW Plc CEO and WISA member

Kris was asked about the prospects for promotion, and where this would leave AFC Wimbledon due to the proposed restructuring of the leagues. Kris explained as best he could the various possibilities, including the possibility of ending up in a South Western league due to Kingsmeadow being in a vicinity of the Surrey border! He pointed out that promotion out of the league may not actually happen.

Kris was asked about the relationship between Kingstonians and AFC Wimbledon and which team is given priority for use of the ground, including cup games. Kris explained that Kingstonian are given preference due to their higher league position, but that cup games would override that.

Kris was asked if the club was short of volunteers. He confirmed the club was still very short of volunteers, and accepted a full-page advert in the match day programme would be a good idea.

Kris was asked to explain the status of the lease for the perimeter of the ground. Kris outlined the background, explaining how KFC Ltd (now liquidated) were the owners of the lease, and that Kingston Council were now responsible for the lease, but as to the actual owner, he suspected it belonged to the Crown. Kris explained this would not affect the lease or use of the stadium.

Kris was asked if any external board members had been appointed. He stated that no,

no external board members had been appointed and that 2 applications had been received for the positions. Kris confirmed that the FL/FA had not been directly approached for assistance in filling these positions.

Kris was asked had any recent DT board changes taken place and how this would affect the forthcoming DT elections. He replied that some candidates had stepped down, others had been co-opted, all in preparation for the next period. Nomination papers for the next election were expected in October.

Additional questions were asked, answers summarised as follows:

- Share certificates had not yet been sent to subscribers but they would be forthcoming
- The £1m figure had been paid to Mr. Khosla
- No decision had been made regarding loans to cover the outstanding amount and this decision would not be made until the share issue was closed
- Quotes for signs to improve the corporate identity around the ground were being taken but the priority was to pay off the interest on the loan from Mr. Khosla

10. AOB

Attendees were reminded that WISA still operated a table in the back bar on match days, with various books for sale.

The meeting having concluded, many continued the conversation in a local public house.