

LOFT AGM 241114

Chair's Report

Bullet points

- Welcome
- ACV
- FC Ownership
- Relations with Club
- Sponsorship
- SD/FSF
- Comms

Welcome to the 2014 AGM of Leyton Orient Fans Trust, and I'm sure you are all hoping we can wrap up the LOFT formalities quickly so that we can get onto our question & answer session with our guest speakers this evening, so I'll keep this brief. We've returned to our traditional late autumn date again, and even though it's only 7 months since the last AGM, if there are any key issues or contributions from the floor about LOFT's activities, please make sure to take this opportunity to air them, or speak to one of the committee members if you prefer.

Many of you will have seen the news last week that LOFT's application to have Brisbane Road listed as an Asset Of Community Value with the local council was successfully approved. Although this is of largely symbolic value at the moment, it would give us a window to save the ground for the club in worst case scenarios.

Don't think it's possible things will come to that? Well, tell that to the supporters trusts of Wimbledon, Exeter, Pompey and many others who faced up to the nightmare situation of losing their Club, heroically rallied the fans and community, raised the cash to save them, and ensured their future existence.

On the pitch, it obviously hasn't exactly been great since the play-off final heartache. And off the pitch, it's been all change with Barry Hearn selling his 90% majority stake to Francesco Becchetti in the summer. No doubt our new Chairman has been as disappointed as us fans with the lacklustre start to the campaign despite the yet to be clarified investment he has obviously made to both buy Barry's shares and cover the purchases of new players on rumoured higher wages than we're used to at "Little Leyton Orient".

I'm sure LOFT is no different than all Orient fans when we say we'd clearly like to hear more regularly from our new owner as we proceed through a period of uncertainty and change. We realise he probably won't be as high profile or media-savvy as Mr Hearn was, but we'd remind him that he is simply the new Custodian of the Club which is held very close to our hearts by us fans. And we need to hear his views, plans and ambitions on a more regular basis in order to trust his judgement and provide our input for safeguarding our future. To this end, LOFT will continue to lobby the Club to at least hold its traditional AGM with other shareholders - who still control 10% of the equity that were excluded from the deal - so that Finances and other administration matters can be properly reviewed and scrutinised.

After a summer hiatus because of the ownership changes, the Fans Forums started up again in September, and this was greatly welcomed by LOFT. It gives us, along with other supporter representatives, a regular place to present ideas and criticisms from fans to Orient's key staff, as well as hear what's happening at the Club and report back to the wider supporter base. We still very much consider ourselves critical friends at the moment, and are pleased that both Mauro Milenese and Alessandro Angelieri have embraced the Forum with constructive enthusiasm.

With the very experienced Matt Porter's enforced withdrawal from the Club's boardroom, this also affected his previous role as Supporter Liaison Officer - which LOFT regrets as happening far too

soon - we are pleased to see club employees and fans reps. working together to fill his SLO shoes, and we welcome the official announcement that was made in the programme on Saturday that Keren Harrison will be the new SLO working closely with Jonny Davies and the club . A decision that LOFT welcomes whole heartedly.

LOFT continues to sponsor Theo's Gang. - indeed that's our largest expense by far - and is very much involved in other community initiatives, anti-discrimination campaigns and national supporters groups. Sadly, the LOFT FC disappeared from the Sunday League's almost as quickly as it was formed, but we keep an eye on Birkbeck Orient's results - and of course listen out for how many goals the Orientear team has shipped every week. That always cheers us up!

We had attendees at all the FSF/Supporters Direct event sessions at Wembley in the summer again, and try to turn up to some other meetings held in the South East. As ever, we pass on details of both organisations campaigns and press releases through our website and other social media outlets like Twitter and Facebook, which all continue to see increased interest and traffic.

We'll probably seriously consider closing our yahoo email group, though, as it's rarely used for discussion any more. However, we are intending to survey our members again to canvass updated views on the major issues and campaigns in the coming months, so that the committee continues to reflect the consensus of our members' priorities and concerns.

As promised, we did have a rep at the ground for the early season games to grab new members and rejoiners who don't prefer to use the online facilities. Sign-ups were brisk initially, but dropped off after a few matches, so we'll only do this very occasionally for the rest of the season unless there's a pressing need to have a more regular physical presence.

That just about wraps up the Chair's report this year.

As ever, thanks to the supporters club for letting us hold our meetings here and for manning (and ladying) the pumps

Thanks for turning up and listening. Unless there's any questions we'll move on to the next Agenda item.