



MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

WE ARE THE ROVERS

MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM

ON SUNDAY 6th July 2025

Present:

Peter Ridehalgh PR, Duncan Miller, DM
Adam Deshmukh AD, Andy Young AY, Roger Langford RL,
Linda Chelton LC, Tony Webster TW, Glen Mullan GM, Jakob Ward JW,
James Hamill JH1, Jamie Hoyles JH2,

1. Apologies:

Peter Bolton PB, Marc O'Neil MON, Dan Worden DW

2. Actions

Actions from previous meeting(s)

PR - to request update of WATR registered address with respect to BRFC share certificate – I have contacted Bret Baker again by email. I asked for confirmation that he is the right person to help us with this, if not could he point me in the right direction. No reply. – further to this, I contacted Steve Waggott who passed the request on to Matt Wright in the legal department but no reply so far from him either.

Ongoing

DM – to provide process map for membership recruitment drive – this action will need **to be revisited**.

PR – Obtain passwords / access to all membership systems and website to avoid 'single point of failure' issues and possible access difficulties in the future similar to the problems accessing the bank account.

3. Election of New Chair

Before the election process, our appreciation and respect for the former Chair, Mike Graham, was expressed. Mike presided over the board for two years putting in a lot of hard work and making some significant progress in a number of important areas. Mike was constantly thinking of ways to move the Trust forwards and we will endeavour to continue his good work.

Appreciation was also expressed to Steve Williams, our heritage lead, who has also decided to stand down. Steve has done an excellent job over the last two years and it will be difficult to replace his vast knowledge and experience. Steve has kindly offered to remain available for advice on heritage matters if required.

Nominations were received for Duncan Miller and Glen Mullen (DM proposed by PR, seconded by AY, GM proposed by JH1 and seconded by JH2). Both candidates presented their hopes and aspirations for the Trust going forward. After lengthy discussions, and with both candidates confirming that they would be happy to support each other, it was proposed that responsibilities could be shared and both members were appointed as joint-Chairs.

Adam Deshmukh was elected as Vice Chair (proposed by PR, seconded by AY). The position was vacated by DM becoming joint-Chair.

All board members agreed that the new board should make increased membership a priority. As the official FSA affiliated and EFL recognised Rovers' fan group, WATR will be stronger and more influential with more members behind us.

4. Welcome to new board members

WATR offer a warm welcome to the 5 new board members – GM, JW, DW, JH1 and JH2. They bring fresh wave of ideas and experience to the board. All board members will be assigned a broad role within the board – to be agreed with the Chairs.

5. AGM

Feedback from the AGM has been very positive. All speakers are to be congratulated on the passion that they displayed in addition to the excellent contents of the presentations. Although the number of attendees could be increased, there were 750 views of the YouTube video as of 6/7/2025. Looking towards next year, it may be an idea to push for higher attendance by plugging the event more on social media.

JH1 proposed some ideas for next year in terms of slicker presentation methods and use of available IT. The use of the library as a venue seemed to be successful despite some IT issues. We will consider whether to use the venue again next year.

It is believed that members of the club hierarchy have seen footage of the meeting but there has been no official comment.

6. MoU situation

As reported in the minutes of our meeting in May, the situation regarding the MoU is extremely concerning.

Following Steve Williams communication with the club COO requesting some clarity, a response was received from Lynsey Talbot stating that the club would like to limit fan engagement to a single group which would be the Fans Forum. This is in contradiction to the documented Fan Engagement Plan which was submitted to the EFL and to the plans outlined by former CEO Steve Waggott who had committed to reinstating fan consultation meetings from February 2025.

PR, on behalf of WATR, has since contacted Suhail and Lynsey on two occasions to point out that the club has not followed through on their fan engagement promises and requested either a recommencement of MoU meetings or an explanation as to why this is not possible. No replies have been received.

We will wait and see if the appointment of a new CEO will change the situation at all.

It was agreed that, in terms of fan engagement, the club don't do enough, especially outside the boundaries of Blackburn with Darwen. The Ewood Express project is the one positive, and it is hoped that we can build on that. If possible, it could be used as a barometer for future fan 'recruitment'. It is difficult to gauge how many children introduced to the club via the Ewood Express become long term fans. Data is not available from the club or the schools involved for privacy reasons but the idea behind Ewood Express could be expanded and improved.

7. FSA AGM and WATR meeting with FSA

TW attended the FSA AGM and reported back that Martyn Henderson, the new Interim COO for the Football Independent Regulator was prepared to meet fan groups. This is something WATR will look into. It was agreed that TW will be available to assist AY with any FSA initiatives. T is also keen to attend FSA courses and stand for the National Council.

WATR (AY, SW) held a meeting with the FSA in June. The FSA were particularly interested in the situation with the reduction in funding for the Rovers' women's team. A discussion was also had regarding the managed decline of the club. The FAS has agreed to arrange a meeting between WATR and the EFL

8. Social Media planning for 25/26

RL gave a superb presentation on social media planning, WATR branding and future strategy. We are lucky to have a number of board members with social media knowhow and we have the opportunity to utilise this to increase WATR visibility and interaction.

RL has forwarded a copy of his presentation to all board members and it is hoped to put together a subcommittee in order to take these ideas forward. Thanks Roger.

9. 150th Anniversary preparations

SW attended the latest 150th committee meeting on behalf of WATR. Progress is slow and is likely to be hindered further by the departure of Steve Waggott. It appears that Robert Coar is now running the committee but there has been little or no progress.

It has been confirmed that there will be no concert at Ewood due to logistical difficulties.

The 150th celebration game will be at home against Derby on Saturday 8th November but there is always a chance that the game could be moved for TV. Also, this is the designated Remembrance Day match so any celebrations will need to be tempered a little in consideration of this. The only confirmed event so far will be a firework display at some point. SW has since resigned from the 150th committee.

10. Blackburn Rovers YouTube channel opportunities

JW gave a talk on the possibilities of promoting WATR via the Blackburn Rovers YouTube channel. This is an opportunity for exposure to a vast number of subscribers who have an interest in the club. This could be a big step in promoting the WATR brand but would come at a cost which will need careful consideration given that our income comes solely from membership fees. Would the exposure cover the costs by increased membership? Further discussion required.

11. Accounts

Accounts for the year ending 30th June 2024 were completed prior to the AGM and presented to members during the meeting. Thanks to PB for all the hard work that went into obtaining access to the bank account and for liaising with the accountants.

Approximately £12,500 in the account as of June 2025.

12. AOB

Before the meeting, MON announced his desire to stand down from active board activities but offered to continue with IT support. A discussion was had regarding the logistics of this and whether it could create a single point of failure. PR and DM to look into the possibility of spreading the IT knowledge and access to a number of

board members. Ideally, we would like some documentation and instruction from MON to help with the transition. **ACTION PR/DM.**

Dates for upcoming board meetings were discussed. It will always be difficult to get a time when everyone is available, but Sunday evenings seem popular. PR to distribute a set of dates for the next 6 months to aid planning. **ACTION PR**

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