



**BLACKBURN ROVERS FSA AFFILIATED  
SUPPORTERS TRUST**

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETINGS**

**WE ARE THE ROVERS**

**MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM**

**ON SUNDAY 1st March 2026 continued Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**Present Sunday 1st March**

Peter Ridehalgh PR, Tony Webster TW, Andy Young AY, Jamie Hoyles JH2,  
Roger Langford RL, Linda Chelton LC, Jakob Ward JW

**1. Apologies:**

Duncan Miller DM, Glen Mullan GM , Adam Deshmukh AD, James  
Hamill JH1, Peter Bolton PB

**2. Actions**

Actions from previous meeting(s)

**PR** - to request update of WATR registered address with respect to BRFC  
share certificate – Club secretary Brett Baker has been contacted again –  
no response. The intention was to use a new email address  
( secretary@WATR or similar ) but the new addresses are not yet available.  
Next steps will be to approach Lynsey Talbot who does answer our emails.

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

**DM/JH2/PR** – Need to arrange a meeting with MON regarding website / membership system completion and handover. A meeting was arranged but cancelled at short notice. JH2 now has access to Memberstack and the web site but it appears to be restricted access. It is very important that we have the necessary access to control the website within the group.

**DM** (along with the communications sub committee) to discuss the best way to communicate with the new and existing members after the £1 membership offer.

**GM** - Contact MP, Mr Hussain with respect to the open meeting. Date and Venue to be discussed – GM sent an update indicating that the correspondence from Mr Hussain seems to have dried up but it was noticed that he was present in a corporate hospitality box at the recent match against Preston. Ongoing.

**GM/AY/DM** - Edit / amend the letter to the owners and circulate to board members. Aim, to get this sent soon. – GM sent an update and questioned whether this action should be shelved for now as there is a policy of no communication between the club and WATR and it is unlikely that the owners will respond without consulting the club or, more specifically, Suhail Pasha.

**PR** - Contact John Wareing ( Fans Forum secretary ) with respect to the proposed constitution. Action ongoing. I have contacted John but not received any detailed or useful response as yet. - **Action Complete**. Although John promised to send me a copy of the constitution, it was obtained via FF email. The contents of the constitution may affect the discussions regarding attendance at the Fans Forum.

**DM/GM** - Draft a cover letter and voting options to be put to members regarding our continued attendance / boycott of the fans forum. Ongoing

### **3. Accounts**

PB confirmed via email that the accounts have been with the accountant for some time and should be ready for signing very soon. They may need a

confirmation of the amount of cash being held in PayPal. This information is normally supplied by Marc O'Neill but it was confirmed by DM ( on 5<sup>th</sup> March ) that the account automatically transfers the balance to the Trust bank account when it reaches a certain threshold which is believed to be £250.

The accounts will need to be signed by the club treasurer, secretary and former Chair before they can be uploaded to the FCA website. Officially this should have been done by 31<sup>st</sup> January and the FSA have asked that the actions be undertaken as soon as possible – **Action PB/PR**. It will be conveyed to the FSA that our former treasurer sadly passed away last year and it took a while to obtain access to the Trust's bank account and set up new signatories.

#### **4. FSA correspondence**

The have contacted AY in his capacity of the Trust's FSA liaison officer.

An FSA representative attended the most recent Fans Forum at the invitation of the club and they made some important observations which they were keen to share with WATR. The FSA had questions about the relationship between WATR and the club and were worried that the situation may lead to a total breakdown of trust between the two parties. They made it very clear that WATR, being affiliated to the FSA and under the rules of the FCA, must ensure that the WATR code of conduct is followed at all times. The FSA also made it clear that the Fans Forum, in their view, is not fit for purpose and does not fulfil the fan engagement obligations of the club. The FSA are in favour of a Fan Advisory Board being established that would include WATR. This is something that WATR have been suggesting for many years and which the MoU was intended to be the first step. The action of the club, in abandoning the MoU, has halted any progress recently.

In order for the process to be revisited, the FSA has decided to undertake a full governance review of WATR. This is something that happens on a regular basis but has been brought forward due to the overdue accounts and the feeling by the FSA that a review may be useful at this time after witnessing the Fans Forum.

Since neither of the co-Chairs or the Vice-Chair were present at the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March, a second meeting was scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the next steps. - See discussion below

## **5. Fans Forum attendance going forward**

As mentioned in agenda item 4, WATR attended the last Fans Forum meeting and there was some heated discussion. It was also noted that some aspects of the meeting were discussed in a podcast before the official minutes were released. This has been noted by the FF Chair and is possibly something that worried the FSA and prompted them to remind us of our code of conduct. See discussion below from 5<sup>th</sup> March.

## **6. Comms with new/existing members, newsletter, statements on new hard line approach discussed at the last meeting.**

No time to discuss on 1<sup>st</sup> March. Ongoing

## **7. Membership system / numbers**

The £1.00 membership off was very well received and the membership numbers have increased encouragingly. However, anyone renewing automatically via PayPal is still paying £10. We need to ensure this is put right and also ensure anyone renewing via Stripe is also charged £1. We need to rearrange the meeting with Marc O'Neill as a matter of urgency – **Action PR/DM**

## **8. Mask protest proposal**

Not discussed on 1<sup>st</sup> March – see discussion below

## **9. Open meeting with MP**

## **10. Letter to the owners**

On hold

## **11. Patrons update**

No updates

## **12. AGM**

JW suggested that the AGM be held at Ewood this year. This would be ideal and we have held it there in the past – most noticeably in 2023 when Tim Farron attended. We moved away from Ewood because the price became prohibitive. The 2024 AGM was held at the club’s training ground but it is not easily accessible via public transport. Last year, the AGM was held at the Blackburn Central Library and was seen as a success at a reasonable price. We will look into the price for holding the AGM at Ewood and then review – **Action PR**

Guest speakers were discussed. JW suggested Elliott Bennett and offered to make contact. - **Action JW**

PR offered to make contact with Adam Catterall and ask about availability. Adam showed an interest in attending last year but was unavailable on the date. **Action PR**

## **13. AOB**

No update from the club on the appointment of a new CEO. This is a worrying situation.

### **Discussion held on 5<sup>th</sup> March**

As a result of the upcoming FSA governance audit, the board reconvened on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March. It was acknowledged that the previous meeting had been difficult due to the importance of the subject matter and the lack of any Chair or Vice Chair.

It was announced that, in line with the Trust rules, Dan Worden and Marc O’Neill had been removed from the board as they had not attended any board meetings since the last AGM. They were both informed via email after Sunday’s meeting.

The meeting was preceded by GM requesting that everyone give their opinions honestly and respect other's opinions. The end result is that we need to be prepared the governance audit as a unified board.

LC and AY outlined the content of the FSA correspondence regarding their concerns about our governance and the lateness of the Trust's accounts. The FSA are awaiting our response to the initial questions raised and the formal request for copies of our documentation. LC is handling this and it is expected that a Zoom meeting with the FDSA will be organised to discuss once they have our response.

Concerns were raised by FSA regarding the podcast hosted by JW which could possibly have broken some unwritten rules of the Fans Forum with respect to commenting on the meeting before the minutes are released. It was also suggested by FSA that personal attacks on club employees are not considered to be acceptable in any form. It was not suggested that any board member was specifically guilty of this but FSA were worried that the Fans Forum meeting was possibly getting antagonistic to some degree. We all need to remember that as a Community Benefit Society with paying members and a constitution we must all be very aware of our conduct at all times. We must follow our governance and use diplomacy when interacting with club employees, Trust members and any member of the public. We must always remember that we are representing a group, not just ourselves.

There were some robust conversations about what the FSA were perceiving as problematic situations and also the importance of posting on social media when personal opinions and actions could become misconstrued as representative of WATR. It is a balance that we must all consider. Although WATR is not a protest group, and the need for dialogue with the club is very important, it doesn't mean that WATR cannot show their concern for the way the club is being run by backing protest action in some form or another – that discussion will be continued at another meeting.

There were discussions regarding the future attendance at the Fans Forum meetings. Under the newly proposed FF constitution, WATR will be restricted to a single attendee and the FF chair seems to want to preclude certain individuals. This is not acceptable to WATR but if we want to continue, along with the FSA, to push for a Fan Advisory Board and the reinstatement of the MoU, then attendance at the FF may be useful. It is an ongoing discussion.

It was generally agreed that WATR must keep open avenues of negotiation with the club but it must be on equal terms. There has to be a balance.

The outcome of the meeting was that there are things we can do better, including social media postings and correspondence with our own members. That being said,

the FSA audit offers a very positive opportunity to put any failings right. To get our governance in order and focus on forging ahead with the aims of improving our communication with the club with a view to encouraging and establishing better fan engagement and setting up a Fan Advisory Board. Once we have achieved these aims, the FANS Forum can revert to it's original purpose of giving feedback on match day experience and general concerns that fans may have on a day to day basis.

WATR are a powerful body in that it represents more fans than any other Blackburn Rovers fan group and is affiliated to FSA and we need to represent our members as best we can with great care. We need to be respectful to everyone we come into contact with even if we have a difference of opinion.

The outcome of the meeting was that all board members agreed to attend training refresher courses with particular attention being paid to the code of conduct. All agreed to and think carefully about future conduct. It was agreed that member communication must be increased and that we need to complete the FSA audit and take notice of any recommendations received.

Although the relationship between WATR and the club is not conducive to progress at the moment, we must be ready for any change in that situation. If a new CEO is appointed then the situation may change and useful dialogue may resume. We need to be ready for that possibility. Completing the FAS audit and recognising that we need to be in line with all our own governance and procedures will put us in a strong position. Everything we do should be for the benefit of members of the Trust, ultimately, Blackburn Rovers Football Club.