

Chester City Supporters Society Ltd

Annual General Meeting

31st May, 2006

Chairman's Report

Once again, another quiet year has passed for the Supporters Trust. In the absence of a life-threatening crisis at the Football Club, activities have been quiet with a hard-core of Trust board members keeping things ticking over. Chester City Supporters Trust is not unique in this situation. Many Supporters Trusts are in a similar situation, where it is hard to motivate supporters to get involved without a crisis threatening the club's immediate existence. Indeed over the last few years, a number of Supporters Trusts have folded completely due to lack of interest.

At Chester City Supporters Trust, we are keen to avoid ending up in a similar situation and I am pleased to advise you that this year we have had a good response to our call for new members to come forward to stand for election on to the board of the Supporters Trust. We sincerely hope that this new injection of blood will act as a springboard in the coming year for increased Trust activities and a higher profile amongst the supporters at large. We need to ensure that we capitalise on the fresh ideas and enthusiasm which our new board members will bring should their election on to the Trust board be ratified this evening.

The issue of our shareholding in Chester City FC has once again dominated the proceedings at Trust board meetings in the past year. You may remember at last year's AGM, we advised members that we were struggling to get the club to correctly register our shareholding in their annual returns, some three years after the purchase had been completed.

We were therefore surprised when out of the blue, the club suddenly approached us and asked that we resolve our shareholding issue as a matter of urgency. This prompted a first in the history of Chester City Supporters Trust. The first Trust board meeting to be held outside of Chester was held in the Wetherspoons pub at Liverpool Street Station, London, about an hour after our 1-0 victory over Leyton Orient, due to a quorum of board members being present in London to attend the match.

The one item on the agenda was Stephen Vaughan's request that the Trust return a pro-rata number of shares to him due to our failure to make a full donation of £27,000. Over the coming weeks, the Trust took legal advice on this matter due to the complex nature our shareholding. The issues are detailed in our AGM letter which was mailed to you recently, however in summary, the legal advice informed us that we require a mandate from our full membership in order to make such a return the shares to Stephen Vaughan.

Having made a donation of £8,600 to the club out of £27,000, the Trust will retain just under one third of its original shareholding should the resolution before the AGM this evening be ratified.

The Trust continues to sponsor and maintain the Club's Official Website. This is one area where great progress has been made this year, with the adoption of a new website platform which allows the site to be maintained and updated far more quickly and easily than was previously possible. The new site also includes built-in e-commerce facilities, allowing club merchandise to be sold on-line for the first time. Furthermore, with Paul Baker installed as a director at the club, the communication of news from the club to the Trust webmasters has improved dramatically, making the site a more prominent source of breaking news than ever before.

Trust board member Kevin Jones has been instrumental this year in pushing the Official Website forwards, with eye-catching graphics and match previews helping greatly to build on the new platform. I would like to thank him sincerely for his hard work on the website over the last year.

Deva TXT, our match day text message service, continues to be one of the main sources of revenue for the Supporters Trust. Unfortunately in the absence of marketing by the Trust, the revenue is down from previous years and this is something we need to address, particularly with increasing competition from services such as live on-line match commentary. However the service will continue, and we are looking forward to a more successful campaign next season with loads more Chester goals being sent out from press boxes around the country.

Once again though, Trust activity has been reasonably quiet over the last year. However there are many areas where there is scope for us to become more active. The recent uncertainty over club training facilities coupled with key players deserting the club for Shrewsbury Town citinig better facilities and management all indicate that there are areas where improvements can be made at the club. A strong Supporters Trust can and should be a catalyst for helping the club to make the necessary improvements in these areas. A strong Supporters Trust can also prepare for any surprises which the future may hold.

We therefore believe that it is right for Chester City Football Club to continue to have a Supporters Trust. However it needs to be a stronger Supporters Trust, becoming more relevant to its members and to the wider community of Chester City Supporters. This should be the priority for the Trust over the coming year.

Before concluding this year's report, I have to announce my own resignation from the board of the Supporters Trust. After more than four and a half years of heavy involvement, I have decided the time is right for me to step down and make way for fresh blood and new enthusiasm. I have enjoyed my time immensely as a Trust board member and I would like to thank all board and Trust members, past and present, who have given me support and encouragement. I will still remain involved with Trust activities however, such as Deva TXT and the club website. It's hard to make a clean break from something which I consider so worthwhile.

Finally, I would like to thank all our members for continuing to share our vision and belief in the Supporters Trust. We remain committed to the ideals of the Supporters Trust movement to have a positive impact in building relationships between the club and the community which it represents, and encouraging prudent management of the club generally. I would like to offer my best wishes and support to the remaining board members as they embark on this mission with your support.