

MINUTES of BRISA Meeting with John Williams and Tom Finn

Date: 3rd November 2005

Present: John Williams
Tom Finn

BRISA
Stuart Wilkinson
Matt Howard
Ste Birtwell
Neil Thornton
Dennis Gasgarth
Carole Billouin
Clare Nolan
Paul Brooking
Scott Thornton

1. INTRODUCTIONS

John Williams opened the meeting by asking for BRISA's agenda for the night. BRISA responded our view was this was a joint first meeting to begin laying the ground rules, informing the club of progress to date and setting a framework for further meetings.

2. OPENNESS AND PUBLICATION

BRISA explained to the club its commitment to be open with its membership. BRISA stated all discussions would be minuted and published to the membership. John Williams and Tom Finn respect this stance but suggested it might limit the information the club could provide to BRISA. Tom Finn suggested the open policy was a good point from which to begin. It was also suggested the committee might want to discuss its overall policy in this area.

3. LAUNCH AND MEMBERSHIP

BRISA informed the club approximately 100 fans attended the launch and to date 144 have signed up as members. This exceeded BRISA's target for the season of hopefully 100 and being satisfied with 50. BRISA informed the club of the membership profile, age range, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, etc.

4. WHAT DOES THE CLUB CONSIDER BRISA CAN OFFER TO ROVERS?

John Williams explained how the Fans Forum originated. Briefly, the Fans Forum formed through John Williams pushing fans who wrote to him on specific issues together. From here the Fans Forum developed to the present group. The club see the development of the Fans Forum as an opportunity to improve understanding of the support. The Fans Forum is seen as an internal pressure group.

John Williams expanded his views on BRISA and developed the discussion it to wider areas:

- BRISA will be seen as a sounding board
- A good resource to the club for feed back on fans' views
- Effectively BRISA will provide free market research
- Information gained from BRISA could be very valuable
- BRISA could be a sounding board at Premier League level and not simply within BRFCs.
- John Williams cannot conceive the club as not being interested in the fans' view. The club do want to listen but is frustrated when fans' express the feeling the club does not care about them
- The club are concerned to understand all issues surrounding the fall in gates

5. BRISA ISSUES RAISED FROM THE FLOOR AT LAUNCH

BRISA reported the following issues were raised from the floor:

Filling the ground

Communication from the club

Asian Support

Standing at both national and local level

Fans' seat on the board

Local TV issues – illegal Sky

The Walker Trust – view on the club and future plans

- While the BRFC board are responsible to the shareholders, the board also has a duty of care to its stakeholders, the fans. The board while charged with finding new investment would take a view on whether or not new investment in the club would be in the club's best interests.
- Clearly, attendance is a major concern for the club. There is a need to understand why people stop attending. Price is not necessarily the major issue but is the "excuse" used to cover a host of other influences.
- The club has addressed increasing Asian support. The growing ethnic population amongst a static general population means the club must address this issue. The club will discuss with BRISA action to date. The club would be delighted if the BRISA committee included Asian representatives who understood why this group do not attend Ewood in numbers
- The Premier League is addressing illegal Sky. Each club has been directed to report local pubs broadcasting games illegally. The club officially supports this line.

6. FUTURE MEETINGS/MOVING FORWARDS

BRISA and club representatives would meet bi-monthly or quarterly. The next meeting will be 12th January 2006. This will allow BRISA to formulate its main issues, present these as an ongoing agenda. For each meeting, a key issue will be identified for in depth discussion. The January meeting could focus on either Attendances or Asian Support. BRISA might consider these items are too closely linked to be dealt with individually.

Future agendas will be communicated to the club in advance of the meeting. The club will respond with items for inclusion on the agenda.

JW indicated there was no point in focusing on “will not happen” issues. For example salary caps.