



**NEWCASTLE FALCONS SUPPORTERS CLUB  
14TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
THURSDAY 10 JUNE 2010  
MINUTES**

**1. Introduction: Appointment of Chairman of the Meeting**

The meeting began at 19.30hrs and Harry Sharp was appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

There were 21 members in attendance.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Lynne Crowe, Jim & Margaret Ord, Martin & Janet Bailey, Pauline & Geoff Swann, Jane Hanley, Terry Horncastle, Emma Peagam, Dan Darbyshire, Nick Tonge, Graham Pilkington, Gerry & Ann Camozzi, Karen Mallender, Theresa Hines, Marian Sharp, Steve Tolfrey.

It was noted that all papers for the meeting, including the Minutes of the Thirteenth AGM, the Chairman's Report, the Treasurers Report, and details of election candidates had been made available to all Supporters Club Members in advance of the meeting, having been posted on the website and members notified by email of their availability. Copies had also been printed and were available at the meeting.

**3. Minutes of the Thirteenth AGM held on 11 June 2009**

The Minutes from the Thirteenth AGM were agreed as accurate by the Members, and signed off.

**4. Chairman's Report for 2009/2010**

Martin Peagam, who had decided after three years as Chairman not to seek re-election to the Committee, presented the Chairman's Report for the 2009/10 season, and responded to questions thereon.

The key points reported were:

**Financial Position:** The main aim for the past three years had been to ensure the financial affairs of the Supporters Club were stable. This had been achieved. An end of season deficit of over £4,000 three years ago had been converted into a small, but significant surplus of nearly £600 as at 31 May 2010, primarily due to getting the costs of away travel under control.



**Membership:** The Chairman noted that the Supporters Club had attracted 336 members in 2009/10, an increase from 207 the previous season, with a corresponding increase in income of nearly £1,000.

**Away Travel:** The Supporters Club had provided coaches to almost every match as long as they had been deemed viable. Coaches had not been provided to three matches, Bath, Cardiff and Wasps. Given the times of these matches, the lack of interest in these trips was understandable, but had the Supporters Club provided coaches the losses incurred would have been in excess of £2,000. The Supporters Club also benefited from the decision of the Chairman of the Falcons to fund coach costs for the Gloucester game.

In total the Supporters Club had provided 14 coaches to take 440 Supporters to 11 matches during 2009/10. Overall a loss of £47.45 had been made (or £3.39 per coach) – a contrast with the loss of nearly £3,000 three seasons ago (or £228.50 per coach).

Away Travel Coordinator, Steve Richardson said that the coaches probably would not have made a loss had everyone who booked, actually turned up to travel. The problem arose when travellers gave their names to travel, a coach for the correct number of passengers is booked and paid for up front by the Supporters Club as the prices are better that way, and then some passengers don't turn up (some with genuine reasons, and some who don't even have the courtesy to let us know) and the SC usually has to cover the cost of their places. Obviously this has a costs implication to the Supporters Club which is unfair, and which is being addressed. Steve is aware of some travellers who will be asked to pay up front if travelling to future away games.

Margaret also confirmed that by using the online booking system in place for away travel, it is less likely that losses would be incurred. The SC were going to try and get everyone to book online for their away travel next season, which should be easier for all concerned. If they payment is taken before the travel and the traveller doesn't turn up, then the seat is paid for in any event thus not making a loss.

A member asked why a deposit was not taken for away games? Steve advised that this was more difficult in practice, as away matches sometimes fell where there was a time constraint to collect deposits.

Steve also wanted to confirm some great news that the Club had committed to give the Supporters Club a large donation at the start of the season for away travel in an effort to support the away travel coaches and the supporters who make the journeys to away matches. This was agreed by all to be a generous gesture from the Club and shows that the SC and the Club are working very closely together for mutual benefit.

The Chairman highlighted that away travel would need careful management in the future: the addition of Exeter to the Premiership and the rising cost of fuel meant that price rises cannot be ruled out.



The Chairman thanked Steve Richardson for his hard work in achieving the turnaround on the coaches, by choosing the correct size coaches for the amount of travellers, and negotiating with the bus companies to get the best price possible for the Supporters Club.

**Social Programme:** The Chairman reported that the Supporters Club had provided an increased number of events for Members this season.

There had been 5 talk ins with players and coaching staff (compared to 2 the previous season):

- The coaching team of Steve Bates, Alan Tait, Stuart Grimes and Andy Smith.
- Players Rob Vickerman, Gcobani Bobo, James Hudson and Jimmy Gopperth
- Players Tom Biggs, Felipo Levi, Josh Afu and Chris Micklewood
- Referees Dave Pearson and Craig Wrightson
- Academy and Community Foundation representatives including Melanie Magee, Mark Laycock, Gavin Beasley and a number of young players.

There had been 7 other social events, a number of which – the Beach Party at Tynemouth, the Christmas Party, and the North vs South Quiz - were becoming annual events, whilst another had involved a very successful party with visiting Cardiff supporters.

The Chairman highlighted the Ladies Night which had not only been very enjoyable for all concerned but had also raised substantial funds for the Community Foundation, and thanked Stef Walter for her organisation of the event.

The Chairman noted that social events (and away travel) had not only allowed the Supporters Club to raise funds, for the Supporters Club and for charity, through raffles, organised by Helen Roberts, but had also allowed the supporters Club to give Members the opportunities to acquire signed memorabilia, match tickets, and other great prizes.

Steve Richardson confirmed that the Club had committed to available players and coaching staff attending every social event that the Supporter Club hold. It was acknowledged that this was a great benefit to the Supporters Club and a welcome gesture.

**Communications:** The Chairman reported that efforts had been made to improve communications with Members.

The re-design of the website last season had been a great success, and the web-site has been further enhanced this season to allow on-line payments for away travel and social events.



The Supporters Club had produced 4 issues of The Review, unfortunately all towards the end of the season, but a format had been developed which would make it easier in future to produce regular issues spread throughout the season.

**Supporting the Players:** The Supporters Club had continued to present Player of the Month Awards, and had been given a sizeable anonymous donation which enabled the Supporters Club to carry on with the Player of the Month and the Annual Awards.

The Supporters Club Sponsored Player Rob Miller was leaving the Club for Sale and there was some discussion as to who, or if, the Supporters Club should sponsor a player next season. It was reported that due to a change in the package offered by the Club, the sponsorship package was not as attractive and Margaret was negotiating with the Club. The AGM agreed that the decision as to whether or not to sponsor a player should be left to the discretion of the Management Committee.

**Charity Activities:** The Chairman reported that thanks to the generosity of Supporters Club Members almost £4,000 had been donated during 2009/10 to various charities, including the L'Aquila Earthquake Fund, Cancer Research and the Community Foundation.

The Chairman noted that he took great personal satisfaction in the fact that whilst getting the Supporters Club own finances under control, the Supporters Club had been able to raise over £6,500 for a variety of good causes over the past four seasons, and expressed a hope that the Supporters Club would continue to engage in such activities.

In response to a question from a Member present, it was noted that suggestions from Members as to causes to be supported were always welcome.

**Thanks:** The Chairman concluded his report by thanking all the Committee members that he had worked with over the past three years, recognising that they were all volunteers, thanking players, officers and staff of the Club for their support, and thanking his family for being so patient with him.

In particular, the Chairman paid tribute to the Secretary, Margaret Smithurst, and Treasurer, Kevin Nergaard, who had provided consistent and invaluable support throughout a difficult period.

As the Chairman was standing down, a Member, Les Milne, paid tribute to Martin for his leadership and hard work on behalf of the Supporters Club.

The Chairman's Report was accepted by the Members present.

## 5. **Treasurer's Report for 2009/2010**



As the Treasurer was delayed attending the meeting, in his absence Martin Peagam presented the Treasurers Report for the year ending 31 May 2010.

The key points highlighted by Martin were:

1. The accounts showed that the Supporters Club had made a surplus of £591.77 compared to a loss of £1,163.62 the previous year.
2. Membership Fee income had increased from £1,512 last year to £2452 this year.
3. Away Travel had made a loss of £47.45 in 2009/10 (£3.39 per coach, compared to £228.50 two years ago).
4. Fund-raising generated a net income of £527.86, whilst Social Activities generated a further net income of £247.
5. A generous, anonymous donation of £400 had been received towards Player of the Month awards.
6. A small profit had been achieved on the sale of merchandise (clappers), and there were plans to make more merchandise available next season.
7. Charity donations during 2009/10 totalled £4,642.72.

The Chairman and Committee Members responded to questions from the meeting:

The Treasurer's Report was accepted by the Members present.

#### **6. Membership Fees**

The meeting was advised that Membership numbers had increased this season.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Committee was proposing that Membership Fees remain unchanged for 2010/11, and explained the rationale for this, given that it would be the second season without an increase.

The meeting approved the proposal that the Membership Fees for 2010/11 remain as in 2009/2010.

#### **7. Election of Committee Members 2009/2010**

The Chairman of the Meeting informed those present that there were only six members wishing to stand for election to the seven available places on the Management Committee, and therefore there was no need to have an election.



The meeting was informed that the Management Committee for 2010/11 would comprise:

Margaret Smithurst  
Kevin Nergaard  
Helen Roberts  
Stef Walter  
Steve Richardson  
Julia Bradley

In response to a question from a Member present, it was confirmed that, in accordance with the Constitution, the Management Committee assigned the roles of key officers at its first meeting, and the rationale for this was explained.

**8. Any Other Business**

There was no other business and therefore, the outgoing committee were thanked for their hard work over the last season and Harry Sharp was thanked for acting as Chairman for the meeting.

**The meeting closed at 20.25hrs.**