

# READING MATTER

£1

Free to STAR Members by arrangement



Spring 2022



## “We’re looking for you!”



- I.T. Support/Manage
- Membership Admin
- Community Liaison

*INSIDE: LATEST ACCOUNTS \* BOARD ELECTIONS \* MORE FAN-LED  
REVIW OF FOOTBALL \* YESTERDAY'S PROGRAMME \* 150TH \**

# STAR Chairman's Notes



This is a difficult report to write. The season has been so disappointing for the reasons we all know about. I am not a 'manager out' person but I felt that it was in Pauno's best interest that he gave up the role of manager as I was really concerned with his mental health for the last few weeks he was in Reading.

We have been told that he was a manager who would have wanted to be very involved with supporters, so it is such a shame that he was in post in times when this was not possible. Pauno did attend a Zoom Fans Forum and was entertaining

but we never got the chance to meet up with him in the Princess Suite.

We have tried to keep contact with the club throughout the season even if we cannot attend meetings in person.

Please go to our website to see the notes of our Operations and Structured Dialogue Meetings. We have tried to make the notes more comprehensive to indicate the type of questions we ask but if we miss anything do let us know what you would like asked. We do not get to question the manager on the team he picks but we do question the management of the club about matchday, strategic and financial matters.

We may not always get the answers we want but we do get answers and have had assurances that the strategic questions are shared with Dai Yongge.

This season we have two new Board members

(Ben Thomas and Sarah Turner) who have been very involved and moved us forward, which is most welcome.

You will see elsewhere in Reading Matter that there are several places available on the Board. Following lockdown, several Board members resigned due to increased work commitments. Consequently, there has been extra pressure on those of us on the Board **so we would really welcome new faces and new ideas.**

Let's get behind the team so that we stay in the Championship rather than end up in the division where we spent the majority of those 150 years as we have got rather used to the success of the last 20 years.

Coincidentally, another anniversary we're celebrating, quietly, is 20 years since STAR was launched, on 18 March 2002.

**Paula Martin**

## From the Editor

Last season was unique, with the almost complete absence of fans as we just missed the play-offs. This season's unique too for different, more fraught, reasons. For the first time in our history, we've suffered a points deduction. That together with a massive injury crisis and financial restrictions on strengthening the squad means we've spent the season in a relegation struggle and Pauno became yet another manager not to make it to a second Fans Forum. Was Adkins the last to achieve that!?

We might have been in the Championship for nine seasons but it's anything but restful. The temperature is rising in football's crisis and the hugely indebted Championship is the focus. It's where the points deductions, stadium sales and 200%+ wage to income ratios abound. It'll take our club the 2022-23 season to work through the problems and suspended points deduction.

You can read more of the detail on the club accounts

on pages 8-10.

STAR has challenged the club about the reasons for our financial problems. It seems obvious to us. We've been paying too much for players who might come from glamorous clubs but don't have what it takes to cut it in the Championship. Meanwhile Brentford and Luton are picking up bargains from the lower divisions. The fine examples here of Laurent, Yiadom and Azeez show what even we can do by shopping locally.

So, 2021-22 has not been the best background to celebrating our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (see pages 15-16 for STAR's main contributions) but these things happen. The club has nearly gone out of business at least seven times in 150 years, sometimes saved by the efforts of a very few individuals.

Things may be about to change with greater and more responsible control of football finances, arising from the Fan Led Re-



view (see page 11).

What that will require in turn, here, is a stronger Supporters Trust. Like RFC, STAR has been down to the bare bones this season! I know we say this every year but we really do need more Board Members and more helpers.

The opportunities that could come from the Fan Led Review are enormous. STAR has the structure and the relationships to take advantage –

**BUT WE REALLY NEED SOME OF YOU TO COME ON BOARD PLEASE** – details of how to on pages 5-6.

**Roger Titford**



## Sarah Turner and Ben Thomas joined STAR Board in 2021



I have had a busy first year with STAR, learning all about the many things we are involved with. I have been to a meeting at Bearwood and met all the 'important' people. I had the chance to put forward all the questions from Reading fans and hear their answers first-hand.

I feel like I have the opportunity to help Reading fans get their frustrations heard by the club. There are plenty of opportunities to improve things for other Reading fans – it is a very open group.

I've also been quite involved in STAR's relatively new online travel service which has been a real benefit to many fans.

If you have an idea you are encouraged to run with it! I want more people to step forward; there is so much more we could do as a group – but we need other people who feel passionately to step forward. I would be happy to answer any questions anyone has about STAR and the role of new board members. *Sarah Turner*

Having joined the board in September, it's been a baptism of fire since then!

We are all aware of the situation the club finds itself in - it's been far from a celebratory season. Any thoughts I had of being "eased in gently" were quickly dashed as STAR were engaged in regular communication with the club at a difficult time for all involved.

I am fully aware of the role STAR must play for all supporters, members or non-members alike, and that work is only just beginning. There is plenty of scope for improvement moving forward, from both the club and the supporters group and I'm fully up for the challenges that driving those improvements bring.

I'm in it for the long haul, to try to make our club better, more accessible and transparent. Are you up for that, too?

*Ben Thomas*

### Your easy steps to join the STAR Board

This year there are 9 vacancies. **We very much welcome STAR members who have not stood before.** We have simplified the nomination process to encourage more people to come forward –see the guidance and form on pages 5-6.

- It can be done entirely online now
- You need only two STAR members to support you
- Your statement can be as brief as 200 words



## BOARD MEMBERSHIP OF STAR

### Co-operative & Community Benefit Societies Act - Board Elections

STAR would welcome members putting themselves forward for election to the Board of Reading Football Supporters' Society Limited (trading as 'STAR'- Supporters' Trust At Reading) at its next Annual General Meeting in September 2022 .

In order to stand for election you need to be a fully paid up member of STAR and be aged 18 or over. You must be proposed and seconded by two other fully paid-up STAR members. No STAR member may propose or second more candidates than the number of positions to be elected.

#### Eligibility

*Please refer to Section 6 of the Election Policy (available on the STAR website). By submitting a nomination, candidates will be deemed to have accepted this Election Policy, the Society's Rules, and any other policies and rules adopted by the Society Board and the membership and agree to be bound by them.*

The completed Nomination Form is to be forwarded to: The Hon. Secretary, STAR, 156 Kidmore End Road, Emmer Green, Reading RG4 8SP.

You can also submit this Nomination Form by email to: [secretary@star-reading.org](mailto:secretary@star-reading.org). Either complete the Nomination Form in full and send as an email attachment, or complete your candidate details and arrange for your proposer and seconder to send separate emails in support of your nomination.

#### Election Statement and photograph

You must also provide an election statement of between 200-1000 words, which should be typewritten, either on a separate sheet of paper or, if your nomination is submitted by email, as a separate attachment. This will give you an opportunity to set out your platform for standing, your interests and ideas you would like to implement if elected. STAR will truncate any statement over 1000 words.

You may also submit a photograph of yourself for publication with your statement. All statements will be made available to STAR members with the voting forms and will be published on the web site.

**Closing date for receipt of nominations will be 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022.**

*Receipt of your nomination form will be acknowledged by email or telephone.*

#### IMPORTANT – DATA PROTECTION

In completing and returning this form, you authorise STAR to process the personal data that you have provided for the sole purpose of administering an election to the Board of STAR in accordance with the rules of the Society. The Data Controllers will ensure that the data you provide is processed and protected in accordance with the STAR Data Protection Policy. The data will only be disclosed to those authorised to receive it for the stated purpose.

**NOMINATION FORM**  
**BOARD MEMBERSHIP OF STAR**

## Nine positions to be elected

I confirm that:

- a. I wish to stand as a Candidate in the STAR Co-operative & Community Benefit Societies Act Board Elections.
- b. I agree to abide by the Society's rules; policies and resolutions (see Section 6.1 of the Election Policy).
- c. I am not disqualified from acting as an officer of the Society under one or more of the conditions outlined in Rule 58 of the Society's rules.
- d. I confirm I personally submitted this form.

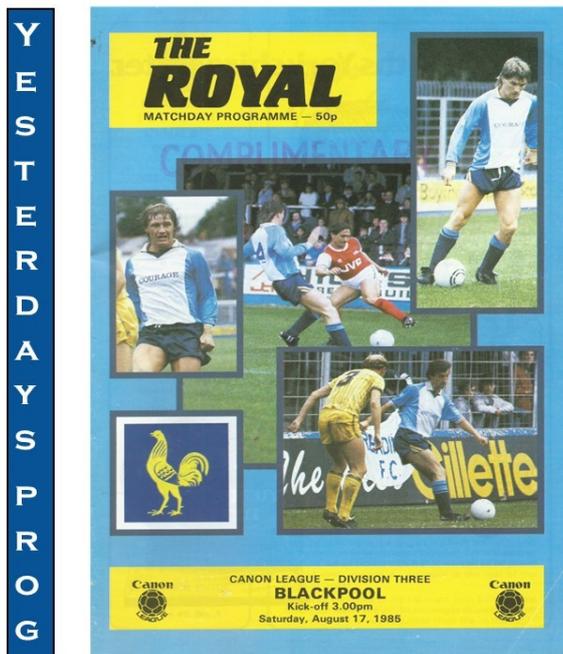
*Closing date for receipt of nominations is 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022*

<b>Full Name:</b>			
<b>STAR Membership No:</b>			
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Post Code:</b>			
<b>E-Mail Address:</b>			
<b>Telephone Number:</b>			
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

We, the undersigned, being fully paid-up STAR Members for the year to 30th June 2022 nominate the person above as a candidate for election. (No STAR member may propose or second more candidates than positions to be elected.)

	<b>PROPOSER</b>	<b>SECONDER</b>
<b>Full Name:</b>		
<b>STAR Membership No:</b>		
<b>Address:</b>		
<b>Post Code:</b>		
<b>Telephone Number:</b>		
<b>Signature:</b>		
<b>Date:</b>		

# Yesterday's Programmes



## 36 YEARS AGO

### - JUST THE START

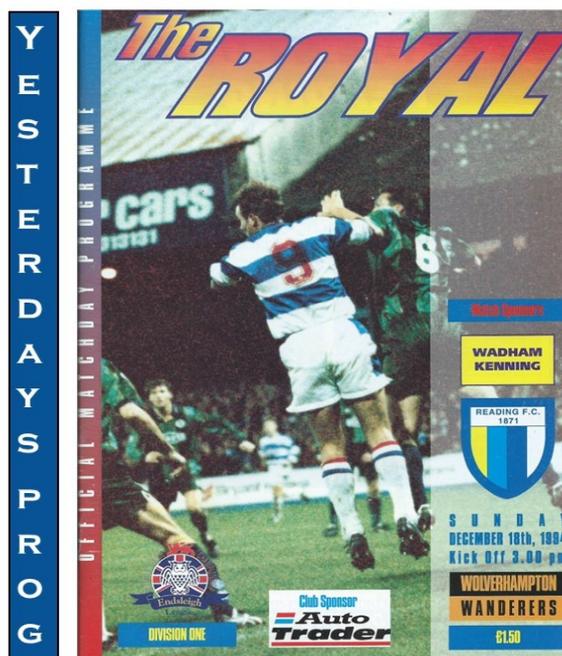
Routine 1-0 win, just 3,000 watching our first game.

Then something amazing happened. We won the next 12 as well! It's still the all-time League record start.



STAR was saddened by the Club's decision on financial grounds to discontinue the match day programme in 2021-22. We did look, as did one of our members, at providing a fan-led alternative but the logistics and copyright issues are more tricky than you might imagine.

So, as a small consolation, every home match day, we've reproduced a historic programme cover from the equivalent day exactly X years ago. Here are two and you can find the rest on our website.



## 27 YEARS AGO

### - DEFIANCE!

The match after McGhee quit. Before ITV cameras, Reading smash Graham 'Turnip' Taylor's Wolves 4-2. The South Bank never sounded louder.

Absolute scenes #FSB



# What's in the latest accounts?

## *The Reading Football Club Limited – year ended 30 June 2021*

When I was asked by STAR Chairman Paula Martin to review the latest accounts and provide a commentary, what was I expecting to see given this is the season most impacted by the COVID pandemic? Well, a loss of revenue, a huge wage bill compared to revenue, big losses (given we already know the Profit & Sustainability (P&S) rules have already been broken) and significant levels of ongoing financial support from Dai Yongge. And these accounts certainly delivered on all those initial thoughts.

But I suppose the good news is that there is nothing unexpected. There have been no major asset sales or large injections of third-party debt. It is important to note that, despite many comments on social media to the contrary, the club is still the owner of the Bearwood training facility through its investment in RFC Bearwood Limited and this has not been “sold off” to the owner (unlike the stadium). The club has now spent over £41m in developing the training ground complex.

There's been little or no progress on the Royal Elm Park development. The club still has a [25%] stake in that entity, alongside the original Thai investors. The only element of surprise for me is that these accounts have been filed well in advance of the statutory deadline of 31 March 2022 with, perhaps, the club not wanting to run any risks with the EFL for late filing of accounts?

The club has had another very poor year financially, making a loss before tax of **£35.7m** compared to £42m loss in 2020. So let's be thankful it's moving in the right direction but it's taking a long time for books to be balanced. Turnover decreased by £4m to £13.8m with the difference being mainly down to a lack of matchday and commercial revenue. So the club really needs to do better on generating additional revenue and it is also noticeable that we received very little (if any) money from player sales. (note the £8m fee for Michael Olise falls beyond this accounting period).

The wage bill reduced from £37.6m to £32.2m but this still means that our wage bill to income ratio is over 200%, 234% to be exact. This clearly reflects having many high earners on the books throughout the period (such as Moore, Puskas, Joao and Swift). It will also reflect payments to Mark Bowen who had his contract terminated in the period. We all know this is unsustainable and to put this into perspective the club needs to reduce the wage bill from £32.2m in 2021, to £21.1m in the current season and £16m next season, as per the agreement with the EFL. Some of the losses are, of course, incurred in running a CAT 1 Academy.

To fund all these losses, borrowings have increased from £86.6m to £100.4m although these loans from Dai Yongge do not bear interest (via Renhe Sports Management Limited, the club's parent company). In addition, the owner has provided a further £30m of funding via equity, which does not have to be paid back, unlike the loans. This additional equity was a debt-to equity conversion.

As has been the case in recent years, the auditors have stated there is a Material Uncertainty relating to the Going Concern of the club. The directors themselves have concluded, “based on cashflow projections prepared by management and through confirmation of continuing support from the group's main shareholders and creditors, have a reasonable expectation that the company and the group have adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future”.

And the club's owner states he continues to strive for promotion to the Premier League without jeop-

ardising the club's financial position. In summary, just from playing football the club lost £28.1m last season compared to £34.4m in 2020. In addition, the club lost £8.3 in player trading which is largely the annual costs associated with players' contracts being expensed over the duration of the player's contract. The club has made a small profit of £0.7m on players that have been sold in the year. Some of this is profit on sale, while others will be additional monies owed due to sell-on clauses for players .

Match day revenues collapsed and were only £0.6m due to COVID, which meant there were only three home games played, with restricted crowds. Similarly, commercial revenues were down from £4.6m to £3.3m. Offsetting these reductions was a £1.2m increase in Media & Broadcasting as more games were televised and there was good uptake in streaming services provided by the club during the pandemic. There is no longer any revenue generated from London Irish tenancy at the Madejski Stadium (SCL).

Since 2019 the staff costs and total number of staff have both decreased. The playing squad is now only 46 players yet it was 63 in 2019. We have, of course, seen the impact of this squad reduction this season when our matchday squads have looked very thin and inexperienced at times.

Directors' salaries were £0.7m, up slightly from the year before with the highest paid director earning a little over £0.5m. It is not possible to name the highest paid director from the accounts.

We also know there's a £1.5m pa charge now to use the stadium itself which was introduced when the stadium was sold around three years ago to one of Dai Yongge's offshore companies.

Also included in total admin expenses of £50.1m is £8.3m of player "amortisation". This is the cost to the club each year as the players' contracts run down. It needs to be remembered how player contracts are accounted for. If a player is bought for £3m on a three year contract, then each year that player "costs" £1m per season in the profit and loss account. This is in addition to the player's wages. Therefore, after two seasons that player is worth £1m in the books of the club (held as an intangible asset on the balance sheet). If the club sells that player for £2.5m at that point in time, then the club makes a profit of £1.5m as the remaining value of that player is only £1m at the time of selling.

As the club has not been able to sign players recently for any significant value, then the value of player amortisation will reduce each year. This will substantially help to reduce the overall losses the club makes each year going forward.

The final thing to mention when considering the club's FFP position (now called Profit & Sustainability rules): of the operating costs a reasonable amount relating to the running of the academy, including the wages of those not in the first team squad, can be deducted. Further deductions were allowed by the EFL in relation to the COVID impacted seasons, thereby reducing the total losses that were assessed by the EFL in its investigation into the club's finances (which ultimately led to the points deductions).

The key Balance Sheet number is the net liabilities of £71.9m. That means the club owes more than it owns. Over the years the club has accumulated losses of £174.3m, which are partly offset by the shareholders having injected over £102m in share capital.

There are almost no tangible assets remaining at the club after the stadium was sold. Fixed assets amount to only £1.3m (down from £4m last year) and an investment of £3.7m into RFC Prop Co Ltd, a company related to the development of Royal Elm Park.

Player contracts (or intangible assets) are valued at £12m, down from £18.1m although the original value of these contracts is £23.7m. As already noted, this reflects that accounting value of the playing squad,

and not the market value (i.e. what the club might receive for them if a player was to be sold). It is interesting to note the value of the contracts of players sold last season was £12.8m (relating to the transfer fees and agents fees fully written off for Aluko, Baldock, Richards, Smith etc so is just an accounting treatment).

Final number to note is debtors of £22.3m which is made up of £16.8m owed by other companies within the group of companies that make up RFC. Very little (only £0.7m) relates to amounts owed by other clubs for players we have previously sold. I believe the £16.8m is mainly owed by RFC Bearwood (£10.9m) for development of the new training ground plus £5.9m owed by the women's football club. **The new training ground is however still owned by the club, via its subsidiary RFC Bearwood**, contrary to other social media reports. The training ground "sold off" related to Hogwood.

On the liabilities side of the balance sheet the stand-out number is the £100m owed to Renhe Sports, the parent company. One point to note is this debt seems to be interest free (or at least very low interest rate) so that's a positive. And during the year, new shares worth £30m were issued to Renhe Sports to help fund the losses. The good thing about share capital is, unlike debt, it doesn't have to be repaid.

Picking up on a further point in the accounts, after the 2020-21 season ended the club sold Michael Olise for £8m and did not sign any new players with a transfer fee attached.

Unlike in other seasons and my previous reviews there has been very little of interest when it relates to payments to and from "other related parties" which were previously undertaken to try to work around some of the Profit and Sustainability regulations.

So, what does this all mean? Fundamentally the club has been run at a significant loss for several seasons with the wage bill far exceeding the income (from match day revenues, TV & broadcasting rights and player sales). This has resulted in our six point deduction (plus six suspended) from the EFL (as previously reported). It also means the club is having to manage its ongoing wage bill very tightly, but it still has certain high wage earners like Moore, Puskas and Joao contracted for next season. Therefore, I think

we will see the club make every effort to further reduce the wage bill in the summer. If it doesn't then a further six point deduction will be heading the club's way.

Even with a much reduced wage bill next season of c. £16m [for the playing squad] the club will still need to do its best to balance the books and keep other costs down (or sell players to reduce the deficit). The club still needs to stick to the £39m loss over three years going forward (or £13m per year). Even with reduced losses the club will be reliant on the owner to continue to fund those losses.

### ***Renhe Sports Management Co Ltd***

Renhe Sports owns 95.4% of Reading Football Club and had a consolidated loss of £39.2m for the year which is the combined results for RFC, RFC Women's, RFC Bearwood. This is down from £45m the previous year. The accounts are relatively clean and benign this year

Again, unsurprisingly the auditors have commented in their audit opinion that there is a material uncertainty around going concern due to loss and net liabilities of £134.7m.

Total fixed assets are £41.5m which is predominantly the value of the Bearwood training ground. The football stadium sits outside of the consolidated group and is owned by Prestige Fortune Asia Ltd, a company owned by Dai Yongge. There is a lease costing the football club £1.5m per annum for use of the SCL stadium. The lease is in place until June 2043.

What is simply staggering is that Renhe owes £212m to Great Shine International Ltd (owned by Dai Yongge). This has funded year after year of losses, where the wage bill is simply too high and previous investments in players has not yielded the dream of Premier League football for Mr. Dai. As a fan I really cannot fault Mr. Dai's financial investment into Reading. Whether it is money well spent is a debate to have over a drink one day, but as a club, we are very reliant on Mr. Dai remaining committed to Reading FC.

**From a senior finance professional / season ticket holder. This analysis was done with the co-operation of the football club. The full article with tables and analysis is available on the STAR website.**

# English Football's Revolution?

Or will it be a damp squib? It's partly in our hands – and yours. This is about the Government's Fan Led Review into how football in England is governed and how it could be improved. Tracey Crouch MP published her report in November 2021 and it was widely welcomed across the political divides and by fan groups, notably the key recommendation of creating an Independent Regulator for football who would sit above the FA, PL, EFL and have a keen eye on financial and ownership issues. STAR first asked for this 11 years ago!

The Premier League and some of its clubs are less keen and have set their lawyers and PR guys to work! But the EFL have largely bought into the key recommendations. Crouch demanded instant action on the contentious issue of parachute payments – and didn't get it. It's all gone quiet at the moment as we anxiously await the decision from Government to include in the May 2022 Queen's Speech proposals for legislation to enact the recommendations – or not.

You can help. Write to your MP, urging them to write to Nadine Dorries, Secretary of State DCMS, to bring forward legislation to enact the full recommendations of the Crouch Report. STAR Board members have done this – but numbers count!

Some clubs (and their supporters' trusts) are already enacting some of the recommendations. Here is Tracey Crouch at Accrington Stanley where they're already getting to work.



We're pressing Reading FC for a formal meeting on the subject before the end of the season, having already raised it at our last Structured Dialogue Meeting.

The first issues we'd like to tackle are the Golden Share, a mechanism for giving fans the veto over changes to club heritage assets (no more Thames Valley Royals nonsense!), and the setting up of a Shadow Board of supporters. It would be consulted regularly over operational issues such ticket pricing, car parking and so on. The next few months are the best opportunity in a generation for a revolutionary shift in the agenda in favour of supporters.

# Coming soon-ish, maybe

## STAR Hall of Fame 2022

*Provisionally* this is scheduled for Sunday 25 September 2022 at 7.30pm in the Princess Suite at the Stadium. With all the Covid issues we have delayed this from March 2022. There are 26 inductees selected this time and the Hall of Fame will then close its doors for a few years. We also hope to have with us previous 'winners' who haven't had the chance to pick up their award in person yet - hopefully a great evening in prospect.

## Green Park Station

The opening of this station is currently running three years late! Drone footage shows the existence of platform buildings on the site. It is currently scheduled to open in Spring 2022 (April-June) - so next football season then for us - and no football specials as we understand.

Meanwhile the Reading connection to **Crossrail** has been pushed back to autumn 2022. It's been renamed the Elizabeth Line and the central London section is due to open in the first half of 2022.



**Royal Elm Park**

**Que sera, sera**

## Royal Elm Park

There's still not much to say on **Royal Elm Park**. The last document uploaded on the council planning website was in December 2018. It's application number 160199. So, no change from last year, again!

STAR's understanding is that a project manager was engaged by the Thais looking to re-start progress with a revised spec which takes into consideration the post-Covid circumstances, international conference centres not quite being the attraction they were in 2015. Again, no work is expected on the site in the next 12 months - and no change in the car park situation.

# What's STAR done in 2021-22?

## Membership numbers and travel

We've hit over a thousand paying members for the season, despite the disappointing team performance and concerns that some fans will understandably have about attending matches and away travel by coach.

We're grateful that supporters have stayed with our mask-wearing directive on coaches and we will review the need for this for next season. The Readibus service has been discontinued and travel for disabled supporters is now offered via our Horsemans coach service

## Social media

We have launched our Instagram channel @star\_rdg and upped our presence on Twitter, even though this is sometimes not a very pleasant or rewarding experience!



## Representing supporters

This continues to be vital work. We represent supporters and members in all these forums:

- **Structured Dialogue** - with senior Club officials / strategic matters
- **Operations Committee** - with Club departmental managers on day-to-day issues (parking, travel, food etc)
- **Safety Advisory Group** - with Club, police, Council
- **Fan Engagement Panel** - with Club / atmosphere and engagement
- **150th Anniversary Group** -with Club, patrons / events programme
- **Football Supporters Association** National Council and Championship Group - governance, ticket prices, fixture scheduling

## And many other things

- **Remembrance Day Service**
- **Monitoring Companies House reports and analysing Club Accounts**
- **Collecting and finding new uses for old progs, videos, scrap books, souvenirs etc**
- **Building links with Borough Council and Reading University**

# STAR Annual General Meeting 2021

## Summary of 19<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

2 September 2021 8pm remotely via Zoom, 38 members present

The Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> AGM held on 3 September 2020 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of that meeting. There were no matters arising.

### Elections to the Board

Five candidates were standing for election: Sarah Turner, Ben Thomas, Johnny Hunt, Roger Titford, Colin Bishop. Peter Matthews, Chairman of the Election Sub-Committee, proposed each candidate in turn and all were duly elected. The Board will now comprise 11 elected Board Members with 4 vacant positions.

### Chair's Report

- Regular representation at meetings with RFC including two Structured Dialogue meetings; Safety Advisory Group meetings; and 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary preparation meetings
- Continued affiliation with the Football Supporters' Association. Roger Titford elected to the FSA National Council.
- STAR submitted evidence to the Government's Fan-led Review of Football Governance.
- 'My piece of memorabilia' feature launched on STAR's website.
- Regular STAR Bulletins sent out; Facebook and Twitter followers continue to increase.
- Collaborations with Reading Museum and the University of Reading

### Treasurer's Report

Vicci Elliot gave her report and presented unaudited accounts for the year ended 30 June 2021. The Treasurer proposed the appointment of Knight Goodhead as the Society's auditor and this was carried.

### Additional Context

- Membership was 971 — significantly down but completely unsurprising given that almost the whole season was played behind closed doors. Membership was free for 2020-21

# Another Reading derby!

The press cutting below is from The Field magazine, reporting on a match played on 16 October 1872. It's the only evidence we have of Reading's first ever win—by 3-0 (Haygarth 3). As part of the club's 150th anniversary celebrations STAR decided to re-stage the match on the original ground and to the original rules (first half only).

Burn, C. Richardson, C. E. Cloke, J. N. Bradshaw, C. Russell, J. F. Child, H. M. Rouquette, W. C. Colan, W. H. Such, E. D. Campbell, N. C. Bailey, H. Chapman, E. Ellis.

## READING CLUB v. READING SCHOOL.

This match was played on Wednesday last, on the ground of the School. The Town were much too strong for their opponents, who played a very spirited losing game for an hour and a quarter, in which the Reading Club scored three goals to none. The Club, having won the toss, started with the wind, and the first point was scored by Wheatley, and the second by Haygarth, from which a goal was kicked. On changing ends, another goal quickly followed, the School being completely penned. The last goal was won after another sharp contest, all three being kicked by Mr Haygarth, whose play at half back, together with that of Mr A. Wheatley, J. Poynder, and A. Palmer (forward), was especially worthy of notice. On the part of the School, Messrs Leslie and Mason played very well. —*Reading Club*: F. W. Albury, B. Haygarth (captain), J. Shrewsbury (half-backs); A. Palmer, C. Holbrook, J. Henderson, J. Poynder, W. J. Martin (forwards); A. Wheatley, J. W. Martin, C. Holmes; J. E. Sydenham, R. Micklem (backs).

## RICHMOND v. RAVENSCOURT PARK.

This the first match of the season on Richmond Green was played last Saturday. The match was kicked off by the Ravenscourt



A crowd of 250 enjoyed the occasion. The Club (represented by the Academy) won, 4-0 this time, and the delightfully retro shirts were all sold off afterwards.



One person on the Board who has been overworked this year is Roger Titford who has been our representative in the 150th Anniversary meetings as his knowledge of club history is by far the best on the Board. He has put so much work into the Museum exhibition and the 1872 rematch with Reading School that he really needs a well-earned rest now (*thanks, Ed*).

If you have not yet visited Reading Museum's 'COLLECTED - 150 years of Reading FC exhibition' then please do try to make time before it closes in August. It's fascinating. It is such a shame that some of the other 150th events planned have not happened as the pandemic took its toll but it is still a matter of pride that we support the oldest professional football club in the south of England. *Paula Martin*



## WHAT IS STAR? WHAT IS READING MATTER?

For the benefit of any non-members or new members reading this, here's a very brief explanation. STAR is Supporters' Trust At Reading, the independent, officially recognised body that represents supporters of Reading FC. It is a democratically accountable Community Benefit Society administered by an elected Board of volunteers. Reading Matter is our annual newsletter. This edition published 8 April 2022