



# Manchester United Supporters Club Plymouth Branch

## 2017-18 Annual General Meeting

### Draft Minutes



**Date:** Sunday 29th July 2018  
**Venue:** Plympton Conservative Club  
**Time:** 1930 hours

#### **Attendance**

In attendance were committee members Chris Wyatt, Mark Wyatt, Donella Bone (Treasurer), Dave Price (Secretary), and Krysia Fox plus the following 10 branch members: Kerry Beioley, Mark Birch, Gordon Cheetham, Martin Damerell, Mike Eastel, Aiden Griffiths, Ryan Jane, Ron Layton, Paul Stear and John Symons.

#### **Welcome address**

Krysia Fox opened the meeting and thanked those members for making the effort to attend, expressing the Committee's appreciation for their continued support. Krysia explained to members that Aaron West had resigned as Branch Chairman due to personal issues and thanked him for all his work on behalf of the Branch.

Krysia stated the Branch had successfully completed their 22nd season which had gone reasonably well. She informed members that the new coach company, Citybus, used by the Branch last season had been an improvement over recent years. Chris Wyatt had held discussions with their Manager who recognised there was room for improvement with particular regard to routes to and from Manchester.

She reported on United's previous season and what her hopes and aspirations were for the coming season.

#### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Aaron West and Ambrose Smith.

#### **Acceptance of Minutes of 2017 AGM**

Acceptance of the minutes from the previous AGM held in July 2017 was proposed by Kerry Beioley and seconded by Ron Layton. The minutes were agreed and accepted by the meeting.

## **Secretary's Report**

The Branch Secretary welcomed members in attendance. He then recorded his thanks to other members of the Committee for their assistance during last season, and to Aaron West who has recently stepped down from the Committee and post of Chariman.

### *Ticket allocations and travel 2017-2018*

In total, 69 Branch members applied for and were allocated tickets for the various matches. After several years of gradually increasing, this was a big drop from the peak of 93 the previous year and is of some concern. As has been the usual pattern now for a good number of years, most (70%) members travelled to between one and three games. However, a few stalwarts (10 this year) attended 8 or more games, one of whom went to 21 games. In addition, another 3 of our members who have their own season tickets also travelled with the Branch on 8 or more occasions. For the fifth season in succession, the Branch gave a discounted coach fare for those members who went on more than 5 trips. Originally, the main aim of the discount scheme was to try and encourage more people to travel regularly on coaches. Although this was successful when first introduced, the last three seasons have shown a decline in numbers (see below). However, the Branch intends to continue the discount scheme for the coming season, as described in the *Terms and Conditions of Membership* and the *Ticket and Travel Ordering Procedures*.

Last season the Branch ran 9 coach trips to Old Trafford for Premier League games, which was five fewer than in the previous year. Additionally, various members made use of Branch season tickets to attend a number of the FA Cup and European matches. For a good number of years, the Branch has received a specified number of tickets for "A" games, plus, for practical purposes, an unlimited amount of tickets for the other games. For those latter games, it meant that we were able to guarantee members a ticket provided they applied before deadlines. However, last season for the first time ever, due to exceptional demand, United reduced the allocation to all supporters clubs for the Newcastle match, and we actually received less tickets for Newcastle than we did for Chelsea, Liverpool and Man City.

Unfortunately, last season was the third year in succession that the Branch incurred losses in ticket and travel income. This is not sustainable (unless balanced by income from elsewhere), and, if that trend continues, will eventually impact on how we operate as a Branch. The number of tickets purchased by the Branch in recent years had not altered much until last season. Last season, the number of tickets the Branch sold was only 78% of the average for the preceding 6 seasons, and only 57% of our peak number in the 2010-11 season. What has also changed is the number of individuals with their own tickets who travel with us ("travel onlies"). In the season before last, the Branch had its lowest number of such people for many years. However, in 2017-18, there was a welcome 30% increase over the previous year, but the average number of "travel onlies" for each game was still significantly below that of the previous 5 years.

### *Ticket allocations and travel 2018-2019*

The Secretary informed the meeting that all the ticket and travel details were included in the 2018/2019 membership renewal information issued recently, and that all related documentation, including match application forms, can also be downloaded from the Branch website at [www.plymouthreds.com](http://www.plymouthreds.com).

He made his now annual plea to all members when applying for tickets to (a) apply early (see later), and (b) to ensure that all sections of the form are completed, including the member's preferred coach boarding point. Most of the applications received so far for the new season have been correctly completed, but there are others with missing details. It only takes a couple of minutes to fill out the form, but if completed fully, it save a lot of time and effort chasing up those missing details. It also means that your application for tickets is not delayed. Thanks to all of you who follow the correct procedures – it really does make the Secretary's life a lot easier.

United a short while ago informed us of their ticketing procedures for the 2018-19 season. Broadly, they are similar to recent years but with a couple of amendments for this year. Due to the seemingly ever increasing rise in United members, demand for tickets also increases. Official supporters clubs receive an allocation of tickets for Premier games, and members of these clubs including our Branch still have a better chance of obtaining tickets than independent members who have to apply directly to United. For the "A" games (Spurs, Arsenal, Liverpool, Man City, Chelsea, and Cardiff City), allocations to supporters clubs have been slightly reduced this year, and are based on the number of United members associated with the Branch. This has two consequences for the Branch. First, several of these games are already oversubscribed with applications, and we will apply paragraph 8 of the *Ticket and Travel Ordering Procedures*. Second, as it stands, running a coach to the "A" games is likely to incur a financial loss. The Secretary stated that he envisaged that the Branch would operate a coach for those "A" games played during a weekend, but the financial aspect is something that the new Committee will need to consider.

In view of the Newcastle situation last year, we can no longer guarantee tickets to those other games. The Secretary reported that he had recently spoken directly with United, and been informed that they do not envisage a similar situation occurring this season. However, nothing is certain! We can apply for a maximum of 40 tickets for each of these games, but this has to be done before United's deadlines. The best advice to members is to apply for matches as far in advance as possible. This also benefits the Branch since it enables us to gauge demand for tickets and coach travel. The only reason that we did not run more coach trips last year was because we did not have enough applications from members to justify the cost of a coach for several games.

Ticket prices will once again remain the same for next season, and United have kept the various reduced price bands for juniors, 16-17 year olds, 18-20 year olds, and over 65s. If

we have received applications from United members in the reduced price age categories, we will apply for tickets in their name. If successful, they will then be supplied tickets at the lower prices. We will only apply for tickets for members from whom we have received applications before the deadlines. Occasionally, for late applicants who have missed a deadline, we may have a spare season ticket to use. However, these will be very limited in number. Most are adult tickets and those will be supplied at the adult price, irrespective of age. The message is to apply for games early!

As is now well established (sixth year of operation), match entry will again be via your official United membership cards. These entitle members to sit in a specific seat allocated by United, the location of which they are notified. It is the responsibility of each member to remember to bring their United membership card along to the match. The Branch will not be issuing reminders to members to do this.

For members wanting travel only packages, the Secretary again asked that not only do they apply early, but also that members use the Branch postal application system. Remember to mark your application form "travel only". Using any other means of communication causes a lot of unnecessary extra work for committee members. The Committee needs to make decisions on whether or not it is viable to run a coach to a match, so early applications by all concerned helps the Branch. As mentioned above, there have been several occasions in previous seasons where we have not operated a coach to certain games, because we simply did not receive sufficient applications early enough. Sometimes, we have subsequently received requests for travel from significant numbers of people in the week immediately preceding a game. This is too late - if applications had been received earlier, the numbers would have enabled the Branch to provide coach transport for at least some of those matches.

The Secretary expressed his hope that all members will apply to go to more games this season and enjoy the United experience first hand, especially any newcomers if they have not yet been to Old Trafford. Remember, the more applications we receive from members, the more coach trips we will be able to run.

Coach travel for this season will be subject to review by the Committee, once coach prices are confirmed with the coach company. It is likely that there will be a small increase for adults, although the Secretary said he hoped that the Branch will keep the cost for juniors at the same level as before. In previous seasons, the Branch has been able to keep costs down because of independent United supporters who travel with us. Non-branch members also pay a small premium (£5) for coach travel. As mentioned earlier, in recent seasons there has been a fall in "travel only" supporters on our coaches which has affected our income. Last season there were small signs of a reversal, perhaps due to the superior coaches we used, so let us hope that is a trend which continues this season.

Due to changes in dates to a Friday and Monday, and the lack of applications from members, the Branch will not be running a coach to the first two home games against Leicester and Spurs. We are running a coach for the Wolves game, and there is still time if you are quick to apply for that game. Hopefully, we will receive enough applications from members to run coaches for forthcoming games also. To date, we have had a good number of applications for the Everton game, but fewer for Newcastle and Crystal Palace. Like last season, the Branch will try and provide more information in the *Latest Match News* section of our website. As the ticket deadline for a match approaches, the Committee will consider the number of applications received and the feasibility of running a coach. Once confirmed, that information will be added to the website.

### Player of the Year 2017-18

This is the seventh season now that the Branch has used our present system for electing our Player of the Year. After each game on the coach back to Plymouth members vote for their Man of the Match. These votes are added together and contribute towards the final score. Additionally, each member who renewed their Branch membership for this season by a specified date was entitled to a vote. These two blocks of votes are then combined to produce our winner.

This year, in third place was David de Gea, runner-up was Ashley Young, and the winner was Nemanja Matic who picked up votes in most matches.

### Last season and the next

No trophies last season and some disappointing results against teams where we should have done better. Not a bad season by any means, but I am looking forward to an improvement in the football this season. A few signings made early on, and maybe still more to come in the days before the transfer window closes. Enough to make a difference? Surely, yes.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Donella Bone members that the Branch had made a small loss of £790 last season, but was pleased to report that the Branch's accounts still held a healthy balance of £10,408. This loss was mainly due to unsold tickets for Champions League, FA Cup, Carabao Cup and Premier games.

### **Membership Update**

Mark Wyatt, the Membership Secretary, reported that 2018-19 Branch membership numbers were slightly up compared to this time last season. He reiterated the need for members to get their friends interested in joining the Branch, and to apply early for matches.

### **Election of Committee**

Proposed by Ron Layton and seconded by Kerry Beioley, the current Committee were all re-elected for the coming 2018-19 season, together with a new committee member Ryan Jane. Ryan will manage the Branch Twitter and Instagram accounts.

### **Motion for Discussion**

One motion had been received by the Committee for consideration by the AGM. The motion is proposed by David Price and seconded by Chris Wyatt, and proposes the following amendments to the *Branch Constitution*:

A. In the section on *Administration of General Meeting*, delete item 5 which reads as below:

5. All match tickets allocated to the Branch by Manchester United shall be allocated to Branch members in accordance with the Branch ticket and travel arrangements for the season in question. Unless by prior arrangement when a member is not travelling upon transport provided by the Branch all tickets will normally be distributed to members on the day of travel.

B. In the section *Branch and Branch Committee Responsibilities and Obligations*, add the following:

4. All match tickets allocated to the Branch by Manchester United shall be allocated to individuals in accordance with both (a) Manchester United policies, and (b) the Branch ticket and travel arrangements for the season in question.

David explained the reasons behind the proposal which was then put to a vote. The motion was carried unanimously.

### **Any Other Business**

An enquiry was made by a Branch member on the allocation of spare season tickets for midweek games. After a short discussion, it was agreed Chris Wyatt will be the Branch's contact for the use of any spare tickets for these games.

Krysia Fox closed the AGM, again thanking members for their attendance, and said she was looking forward to their continued support during the coming season.