



Manchester United Supporters Club Plymouth Branch

2018-19 Annual General Meeting

Draft Minutes



Date: Sunday 14th July 2019
Venue: Plympton Conservative Club
Time: 19:30

Attendance

In attendance were committee members Krysia Fox (Chair), Donella Bone (Treasurer), Dave Price (Secretary), Mark Wyatt (Membership Secretary), Chris Wyatt and Ryan Jane, plus the following 12 branch members: A Bullard, C Hurrell, R Johnson, K Evans, G Taylor, S Mason, C Marshall, R Marshall, M Damerell, G Cheetham, D Attwater, and P Stear.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from A Smith, R Layton, A Griffiths, and K Beioley.

Welcome address

Krysia Fox (Chairwoman) welcomed attendees to the meeting and gave her thanks for them taking their time to attend. She reflected on the past season and of the great start to Ole's campaign in charge. Krysia went on to inform the meeting that it would be her last attendance as Chairwoman and Committee member. She went on to thank the Committee for their hard work in ensuring the Branch continues to run smoothly.

Acceptance of Minutes of 2018 AGM

Acceptance of 2018 AGM minutes was proposed by K Evans and seconded by M Damerell. The minutes were agreed and accepted by the meeting.

Secretary's Report

The Branch Secretary added his welcome to members in attendance. He then recorded his thanks to other members of the Committee for their assistance during last season, and to Krysia Fox who is stepping down from the Committee and post of Chairwoman.

Ticket allocations and travel 2018-2019

In total, 80 Branch members applied for and received tickets for the various matches. This was a welcome increase of 16% over the previous year, but still below our peak figure of 93 in 2016-17. Another change last season was in the number of games that people attended. For many years, the percentage of members who attend between one and three games has remained steady at 70%. Last season, that figure fell to 60%, with 34% going to

4-9 games, and 6% attending 10 or more. The Secretary expressed his wish that this increased demand would continue into the new season.

For the sixth season in succession, the Branch gave a discounted coach fare for those members who went on more than five coach trips. The main aim of the discount scheme was to encourage more people to travel regularly on coaches. This has not been successful. 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 11 coach trips to Old Trafford for Premier League games, which was two more than in the previous year. Additionally, various members made use of Branch season tickets to attend a number of the 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 Premier League games. For those latter games, it meant that we were able to guarantee members a ticket provided they applied before deadlines. Last season, for these other games, all our applications were 100% successful.

Unfortunately, last season was the fourth year in succession that the Branch incurred significant losses in ticket and travel income. As I mentioned in my report last year, this is not sustainable (unless balanced by income from elsewhere), and, if that trend continues, it will have an impact on how we operate as a Branch. The number of tickets purchased by the Branch in recent years had not altered much until two years ago. In 2017-18, the number of tickets the Branch sold was only 78% of the average for the preceding 6 seasons. Last season, there were some signs of improvement, and we sold 13% more tickets than the previous year. However, the number of people on our coaches with their own tickets ("travel only") did not increase from the low figure of the previous season, and, per trip, showed a further decline.

Ticket allocations and travel 2019-2020

The Secretary informed the meeting that all the ticket and travel details were included in the 2019/2020 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.

As is usual, the Secretary made his 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 their preferred coach boarding point. Most of the applications received so far for the new season have been completed correctly, but there are a few with missing details. Another important detail this season is that cheques must be made payable exactly as

specified in the Branch documentation. Our bank will not accept any deviation from this. It only takes a couple of minutes to fill out the form, but if completed fully, it saves a lot of time and effort chasing up those missing details. It also means that your applications for tickets are processed promptly and 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 2019-20 season. 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. However, there are a number of significant changes this season. The number tickets available for members (versus season ticket holders) is relatively small, and the increase in membership numbers means that demand for these is increased. There is still a Branch allocation, but this depends upon (a) membership numbers, and, possibly (b) the number of tickets we have applied for in previous games. For the “A” games, the ratio of members to tickets has increased *i.e.* we need more members to obtain the same number of tickets as last season. Furthermore, we now have to apply for tickets 12 weeks before the match. Members will no doubt be aware that, in most cases, deadlines will be before TV selections are made and dates confirmed.

Most of the “A” games are already oversubscribed with applications (see updates on our website), and we will apply paragraph 8 of the *Ticket and Travel Ordering Procedures*. Running a coach to the “A” games is likely to incur a financial loss. I envisage that the Branch will run a coach at least to those “A” games played during a weekend, but the financial aspect is something that the new Committee will need to consider.

For the other games, we are able to apply for a maximum of 40 tickets for each of these games, but this has to be completed before United’s deadlines. Deadlines are published on our website, but we would encourage members to apply for matches as far in advance as possible. This enables us to determine demand for tickets and the feasibility of coach travel. The Secretary would encourage members to apply for the non-“A” games. Members can be confident about obtaining tickets, and these games give the Branch an opportunity to run coaches at a profit to offset losses elsewhere.

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, and will normally be supplied at the adult price, irrespective of age. The message is to apply for games early!

As is now well established, 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 (including the travel only people) helps the Branch. As mentioned before, 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 live, 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, but we anticipate 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 and this has affected our income. Members will be aware that last season we had a superior coach on several occasions. The new committee will no doubt consider how we can use this to our advantage to attract more independent ticket holders to travel with the Branch.

We are running a coach for the first game against Chelsea, and all tickets have been sold. Due to the early deadlines, and the lack of applications from members, the Branch will not be running a coach to the early home games against Crystal Palace and Leicester City. Like last season, we will try to 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 updated on the website. As mentioned before, with the earlier deadlines imposed by United for the new season, we need your applications now.

Player of the Year 2018-19

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 Player of the Year.

This year, in third place was Luke Shaw, runner-up was Chris Smalling, and the winner was Victor Lindelof who picked up votes in most matches.

Last season and the next

No trophies last season, a change of manager, and some disappointing football and results against teams where we should have done better. A bright start under Ole, which then faded away. Two encouraging signings made so far, and a decent enough performance in our first pre-season tour match. Looking forward to a better brand of football this season!

Treasurer's Report

Donella Bone provided the end of year accounts to the meeting, explaining the various aspects of the report, and offered to take questions from the attendees. She informed the meeting of a case, whereby a member was still owing outstanding monies to the Branch, but that the Branch were in the process of recovering this money. The Issue arose as the member concerned was to pay by cash on the day and then did not turn up to the games he had requested and for which the branch has ordered his tickets, therefore owing money to the Branch. Various options were discussed by the Committee, including going to the small claims court, but the member then decided to start repaying by instalments, and these payments continue with all monies hopefully recovered in the coming weeks.

Membership Update

Mark Wyatt (Membership Secretary) reported that 2019-20 Branch membership numbers were slightly up, compared to this time last season, but that more were needed to get them to the totals previously enjoyed by the Branch. He reiterated the need for members to get their families and friends interested in joining the Branch, and endorsed the Secretary's request for members to apply early for matches. He then went on to add his appreciation to the work of K Fox (Chairwoman), who was standing down, for her work on the Committee.

Election of Committee

Proposed by K Evans and seconded by R Johnson, the current Committee (with the exception of Krysia Fox) were all re-elected for the coming 2019-20 season, together with a new Committee member Alex Bullard.

Motion for Discussion

There were no motions for discussion.

Any Other Business

A member enquired whether Spurs home in December was ticket only, but was told that the Branch intends to run a coach to that game.

Discussion also arose regarding the need for the Branch to apply for tickets 12 weeks in advance for fixtures and of the impact that has upon members applying for tickets, but more significantly on the Branch Secretary's workload to achieve these deadlines.

Krysia Fox (Chairwoman) again thanked members for their attendance, and the AGM meeting was then concluded.