

Spartans FC Youth
AGM Minutes Sunday 5th February 2023
On Zoom
Time: 7pm

Present: Les Atkinson, Roger Ashworth, Stuart Gray, Carolyn Embleton, Jim Brydon, Steve Thurlow (On Zoom see attached list)

Apologies: David Wallace.

Les Atkinson (Chairman) declared the meeting open and outlined the Agenda for the AGM:

1. Welcome
2. Annual Accounts Update
3. The Election of Office Bearers & Independent Examiner
4. Club Review
5. Club Evolution & Future Plans
6. AOCB

1. Welcome

Les Atkinson (LA) welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting of The Spartans FC Youth and thanked them for joining. Looking at the attendance tonight it is clear Zoom makes the meeting more accessible as numbers are higher. LA ran through the format for the evening and highlighted that questions were welcome at any point.

2. Annual Accounts

ST gave an overview of the accounts and explained that they are split in two: general funds which come from subscriptions and team funds that are raised individually by teams. In terms of expenditure pitch costs are by far the most significant at £143,000. In terms of team funds, squads have raised £59,000. There's a cash balance of £128,000 at the end of May 22 of which £61K was general funds and £67K team funds. Taking account of creditors and other liabilities the actual net assets in general funds was £102,000 split £36K in general funds and £66K to team funds.

ST highlighted that the club just about breaks even in May 22 and as consequences of that the club took the decision to increase the subs from first of September 22. This was to absorb rising costs and to cover the cost of additional paid positions. ST said he is hopeful that with the increase in the subs and with Gift Aid we should be able to continue to break even.

3. Election of Office Bearers

- Chairperson, Les Atkinson
- Treasurer, Steve Thurlow
- Third trustee, Michele McNab
- Fourth trustee, Roger Ashworth

ST advised that Michelle, our previous Club Manager who has been a trustee for the last couple of years, has decided to resign. Fortunately, Jim Bryden has offered himself as a trustee. Jim has over 20 years involved in Spartans, has a wealth of business experience and a great football knowledge, with contacts in the wider football community. We are really delighted that Jim is willing to put his name forward. Proposed by ST, seconded by Roger Ashworth.

ST asked that any other people in the audience who would be interested in being a trustee to please get in touch with LA, we are always keen to grow the number of trustees to get different experiences on the board to help drive the club forward.

Finally, the last formal part of the AGM is to reappoint our independent examiner, Shaun Millican. Sean is a partner at Johnson Carmichael and has reviewed our accounts for the last few years and is willing to do them again. ST recommended the reappointment of Sean. Proposed by ST, seconded by Stuart Gray.

4. Club Review & Updates

LA made special mention to all the volunteers and coaches for whom the success and progress of the club is a credit to their dedication and hard work, and we are very grateful to them.

SG, Coach Development Officer, explained that Spartans Youth is now a large going concern, with 190 volunteers of which 80 are supporting the boy's teams and 20 supporting the girls teams. There are 660 players, and we are lucky to have a great group of volunteers supporting their development. The club has spent over £4K on funding SFA Coach Education courses for our volunteers, we see this as another success for the club. It's important to recognise the work and support of non-coaches who are equally important to the success of the teams, our secretaries, kit coordinators and so on. In 2022 we had 16 volunteers who collected their Long Service Awards, and 24 players received their 10-year loyalty award.

SG highlighted that success in the form of winning cups/trophies is for us a by-product of the environment and the style of coaching that we aim to create for the players. It's good to celebrate success and in the last season there has been much to celebrate: 2010s won the Edinburgh Cup in their age group, U14 Reilly won the League Cup, U14 Beveridge won the League Plate, Cup Winners U13 Colts, U14 Whites, U17 Locomotives, and League Winners U13 Youth and U19 Reds. There were also numerous teams who reached finals and semi-finals whom we congratulate.

LA added, we are an ambitious club and we do want to do well, achieve trophies, especially national ones but as SG rightly said that isn't the only measure of success. It's about how players progress, it's where they go, it's about facilitating a lifetime love of football and sport.

CE spoke through the highlights from the Girls Academy. In the 2021/22 season, an U16 National Performance Academy team was created and in the 2022/23 season an U14 NAP team will start. In girls football this is equivalent to the pro-youth initiative in boys football, where the teams are competing against the top teams in Scotland, e.g., Rangers, Celtic, Hibs and Hearts etc. This creates a full pathway at NAP level as well as at regional level and is a great achievement for the club and its desire to produce talent for the SWPL squad. This season saw the biggest sponsorship deal which the club has ever had, with FNZ sponsoring the Women and girls kit.

CE discussed a highlight of 2022 being the Club Photo and Match Day in June. It was very well attended and supported by the adult teams who also took part. From our youngest to our oldest teams, it was fantastic to see everyone altogether. CE asked if anyone had any ideas for a future event, to please get in touch.

CE advised that August 22 saw the introduction of a new match kit, in the club's 2-year kit replacement programme. The new match top is environmentally friendly having been made of 13 plastic bottles. Whilst our players may have grown out of their old kit, many of it is still in good condition which allowed us to donate it to charities in Malawi, Nigeria and Rwanda. The youth section has been working closely with adult teams to build bonds and relationships between our young players and first team players through mascot days and first team ambassadors.

LA talked through the support which the Youth Section has been able to give in the local community. During COVID restrictions many families continued to pay their monthly subs. These funds were ring fenced and used to support activities in the local community. LA highlighted this as another success for the club which is only

achievable through the generosity of our parents and guardians. Most recently these funds were used to support Granton, Pirniehall and St David's Primary Schools with the provision of essential items including clothing, footwear, and warm gloves, rugs etc. In addition, we supplied a match strip to Broughton High School for their new girl's football team.

Moving on to the evolution of the club, LA highlighted current challenges. With 650 players, 200 volunteers, and a £300k turnover, it's a lot for a few people to oversee. As a result, the committee has recognised that it needs to expand to have the resources and expertise to continue to push the club forward. LA talked through the new roles being added and how the new look committee fits together to achieve the club's goals and aims.

LA concluded that in the expansion of the committee and the identification and recruitment of these roles you can see how the club is trying to future proof the club. It is an exciting time, with the new energy and opportunities which these positions bring. LA advised that the committee plans a face-to-face session before the end of this season to set out in more detail the committee's vision going forward.

6. AOCB

1. Nigel Miller asked how the move to Macron as a kit supplier had gone and if it saved the club any money. ST advised that the cost of training kit is less than Nike, but the club does not purchase that, the match kit is much the same price. CE advised the real benefit is the order turnaround time which is significantly better than Nike.

2. Gordon Daly asked when specialist goalkeeper training will return. SG advised that there had been some turnover in coaching which had resulted in the break in provision. However, a new coach is currently working through a trial period and SG hopes to be able to expand this trail and put goalkeeper coaching back in place. More details to follow in due course.

3. Walter Drummond Murray asked for advice on best practise for handling payments when gathering money for team activities in the space before it is deposited in the club account. ST advised that team funds have exploded in recent years, previously amounts were very small but with significant fundraising the picture has changed. ST to review and come back.

4. Terry Manning asked about views on expanding the use of Veo or other player analysis tools for teams. Currently it is the Lowland League team and U20s who make use of tracking analytics but the club will always review where other technology could be of benefit. SG confirmed that there are plans to provide a workshop in best practise in the use and analysis of Veo.

LA closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their contributions and for all their efforts throughout the year.