

MUSC Plymouth Branch Meeting Minutes

Annual General Meeting

Date: 27th July 2014

Time: 19:30

Location: Plymstock Inn, Plymouth

Committee Members present: J Voaden, D Price, M Wyatt, C Wyatt, A West, K Fox

Committee Members apologies: D Bone

Branch Members present: A Gadd, K Evans, A Nicholson, T Kingdom, G Kingdom, C Harper, M Polley

Branch Members apologies: R Johnson, M Eastell,

Chairman (John Voaden)

JV opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance, praising all members for making the effort to attend the AGM, especially those who had travelled far and everyone for their continued support for the branch. He informed the meeting that this would be his last AGM as chairman and that he was standing down and taking a 'sabbatical', whilst still maintaining a role on the Committee.

Minutes for previous AGM were proposed for acceptance by D Price and seconded by C Harper.

Secretary's Report (Dave Price)

The Branch Secretary recorded his thanks to John Voaden, who has been Branch Chairman for many years for all his hard work over that time, and said he was in no doubt that the Committee and Branch members will give their full support to the incoming person who takes on that important role for the Branch.

Ticket allocations and travel 2013/2014

Last season, the Branch ran 16 coach trips to Old Trafford for Premier League games, an increase of two compared with each of the previous two seasons. Normally, demand for midweek matches (Premier League and Champions League) is low, and so generally the Branch does not run a coach to these games, nor apply for match tickets. However, this season coaches were run for three midweek matches: Chelsea (first home game), Spurs (on New Year's Day), and the derby game against City. Additionally, various members made use of branch season tickets for Champions League and League Cup matches. For a number of those games, transport arrangements were made by our Branch chairman, so thanks were given to JV for that.

In total, 77 members applied for and were allocated tickets for the various matches. After an increase last year on the previous season, this is a drop in demand (minus 9). As has been the usual pattern in recent years, most (71%) members went to between one and four games. However, 8 members attended 10 or more games compared to only 4 the previous season. In addition, another 5 of our members who have their own season tickets also travelled with the Branch on 10 or more

occasions. This was the first year when we have included a reduced coach fare for those members who travel on more than 5 trips.

Ticket allocations and travel 2014/2015

The Secretary informed the meeting that all the ticket and travel information was included in the 2014/2015 membership renewal packs issued recently and that all related documentation, including match application forms, could also be downloaded from the Branch website at www.plymouthreds.com. He then made his now Annual plea to all members when applying for tickets to (a) apply early, and (b) to ensure that all sections of the form are completed, including their preferred coach boarding point.

Approximately half of the applications received so far this year have been incomplete in some way or other. 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 application for tickets is not delayed. He expressed his thanks to those members who follow the correct procedures.

United have informed the Branch of their ticketing procedures for the coming season. Broadly, they are the same as last season when a number of changes were introduced by United. Ticket prices remain the same for next season so once again, there are a number of different price bands for tickets with reduced prices for juniors, 16-17 year olds, 18-20 year olds, and over 65s. The Branch has to apply to United for our ticket allocation several weeks in advance of Premier League games and therefore needs applications from members at least 5 weeks in advance of the game. If the Branch have received applications from people in the reduced price age categories, they will apply for tickets in their name. If successful, they will then be supplied at the lower price. However, any other tickets we apply for will be adult tickets at the adult price. Tickets for late applicants therefore may be supplied at the adult price, irrespective of age.

Last season was the first season that United no longer issued paper tickets, but introduced match entry via official United membership cards. This entitles members to sit in a specific seat, the location of which they are notified. As last season was the first season this new system operated, members were reminded of the fact when receiving their postcards with match details. However, we will not be repeating that this season. It is the member's responsibility to remember to bring their membership card to the match, unless it has been lodged by members with the Branch committee.

At present, the Branch membership numbers are a little down on last season. At the time of the AGM, there are just 4 days left before the cut-off point when our allocation for the "A" games is decided by United for the coming season. Most Branch members are also now registered with United, so the likelihood is that we will receive 1 or 2 tickets less for the "A" games.

The "A" games this season are Chelsea, Liverpool, Man City, and Arsenal. For most of these games, we are already oversubscribed with applications (see Branch website), and Item 7 of the Ticket and Travel Ordering Procedures will apply when allocating branch tickets. Members who have not yet applied for tickets may wish to consider alternative games to those which are oversubscribed. Remember, the Branch can guarantee you a ticket for non-A games provided that you apply in advance of the deadline date.

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.

Using any other means of communication causes a lot of unnecessary extra work for committee members. The Branch need to make decisions on whether or not to run a coach to a match and the size of the coach, so early applications by all concerned helps the Branch. In previous seasons, we have not operated a coach to some games, because we simply did not receive sufficient applications early enough. On a couple of occasions, we have then had requests for travel from significant numbers of people in the week immediately preceding a game. If they had only applied earlier, the numbers would have enabled the Branch to provide coach transport.

The Secretary expressed his hope that all members will apply to go to some games and enjoy the United experience first -hand, especially if they have not yet been to Old Trafford, saying you cannot obtain a ticket is no excuse. As mentioned earlier, for non-A games, tickets can be guaranteed.

Coach travel for this season will be £39 for adults and £29 for juniors (subject to review during the season dependent on fuel prices, etc). This is a very minor increase (£1) for adults this year. The Branch is able to keep costs down because of the non-branch members who also travel with us. They pay a small premium (£5) for this, and for each of the last three seasons, non-members have contributed ~£3,500 which is ~23% of our annual travel costs. Partly as a result of this, last season we were able to introduce a loyalty reward by offering reduced travel for those members who travel regularly with us. The Branch did this in the hope that it would encourage members to go to a few more games than they would otherwise have done.

Player of the Year

This is the fourth season that we have used our revised 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, although only 33 members did so this year. These two blocks of votes are then combined to produce our winner. (We have asked members for their views on alternative systems of voting, but did not receive much of a response.

Results for our 2013-14 Player of the Year are as follows. In third place is Michael Carrick, runner-up is David de Gea, but the clear winner is Wayne Rooney. He received votes for man of the match in 13 out of 16 games, and this is a remarkable fifth time that Wayne has won our Player of the Year award.

Last season and the next

The Branch Secretary usually finishes his report by giving his thoughts on last season and the prospects for the coming season. However, this year he declined to look back, but instead concentrated on the coming season. A new manager, new players signed and possibly more to come, and with the promise of a return to a style of football consistent with United tradition. Who could not be excited?

Financial Report

In the absence of DB, JV talked briefly about the branch accounts which were read by those in attendance. The branch made a profit of £631 for season 13/14 and holds a balance of £13,334.

Financial report acceptance was proposed by C Harper and seconded by K Evans

Committee Election

JV is standing down as chairman , but will remain on the Committee. Proposal to re-elect the committee on block was made by T Nicholson and seconded by M Polley.

Motions for discussion

JV stated he had been made aware that the branch had nothing in its constitution relating to a dissolution of the branch. He stated this was unlikely to ever happen, but that we should have it the constitution (detailed below)

The motion was proposed by JV, seconded by DP and accepted at the meeting and will now be added to the Branch constitution

Dissolution of the Branch

Manchester United Supporters Club Plymouth Branch (the Branch) shall be dissolved and cease to exist in the event of the agreement of 68% of adult branch members at a Special General Meeting.

The branch committee will summon a Special General Meeting to consider dissolution of the Branch if in their opinion the Branch is no longer viable.

In the event of dissolution of the Branch, and after payment of all debts and liabilities, all remaining assets will be distributed to qualifying members of the Branch.

To qualify for a share in any assets, an individual must be an adult Branch member for the current season, and have been a branch member for at least 12 months prior to the commencement of the current branch membership year.

A qualifying Branch member will receive one share of the assets for each full year of membership, excluding the current season, subject to a maximum of three shares per member

AOB

The issues of lift tickets were raised by K Evans due to advance notice needed in order to apply for the pass. It was stated that members requiring a lift pass will be notified of their seat within the ground by UNITED with notice before the game in order for the member to apply for their lift pass. The members were told that if there were any issues then they are to contact the branch and we can inform them of their seat location in advance.

Colin Harper thanked JV for his efforts and dedication to the branch over the years.

JV reiterated that he would still be on the committee albeit in a reduced capacity and would still help to organise travel to midweek games

KF then presented a leaving gift on behalf of the Committee and delivered a brief ode to the outgoing Chairman

An Ode to Vode

Today, some might say....Is a very sad day,
For we say farewell to John
Who has been a stalwart member
since the Plymouth Reds began.

John has warned us for many seasons,
'It is time for new blood',
As usual we ignored him &
Pushed our luck.

He was our main spokesman
The Greeter of old and new
An Oracle on all things United
But alas, time for adieu.

So John we want to say a big thank you,
For all you have done.
The list it is endless
So I'll not go on.
Suffice to say...
Plymouth Reds may never be the same
But we'll look forward to hearing your banter John,
On the next coach to a game.

The meeting was concluded