

The Football Supporters' Society of Bury Board Members' Report

The Football Supporters' Society of Bury (the 'Society') Board Members (the 'Society Board') submit their report for the year to date together with the accounts for the year ended 30th June 2023.

Guiding principles

The Society's objects are to benefit the community by:

- Being the democratic and representative voice of the supporters of Bury Football Club ('the Club') and strengthening the bonds between the Club and the communities which it serves;
- Achieving the greatest possible supporter and community influence in the running and ownership of the Club;
- Promoting responsible and constructive community engagement by present and future members of the communities served by the Club and encouraging the Club to do the same;
- Operating democratically, fairly, sustainably, transparently and with financial responsibility and encouraging the Club to do the same;
- Being a positive, inclusive and representative organisation, open and accessible to all supporters of the Club regardless of their age, income, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality or religious or moral belief;

Responsibilities of the Board

The Society Board is required to prepare financial statements, for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Society for that year. In preparing those financial statements, the Society Board is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Follow applicable accounting standards, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Society Board is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Society and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

The Society Board is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Society and, hence, for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Business Review and Future Developments

The events of the past twelve months are well known to supporters and members. We will attempt to recap some of the key issues here but this report is heavily focussed on closing off the financial aspects of the previous year, and we hope to spend more time on the future direction of the Society and club in 2024. We have now started to issue more regular updates to members and will not repeat these here. They are all now available at [News - Football Supporters' Society of Bury \(fssb.co.uk\)](https://www.fssb.co.uk).

There was a great deal of work created by the two amalgamation votes, and the process of amalgamating the two societies, its assets and the creation of the new Society. This work is still not complete but much of the immediate work has now been done.

Society Board

The members of the Shakers Community Society Limited Board in the year were:

Name	Elected/Co-opted/Resigned	Appointment Date
Anne Bent	Elected	29/12/2022
David Triggs	Elected	22/12/2021
Ian Pearson	Elected	09/06/2020
John Woodhead	Elected	09/06/2020
Rod Peters (Secretary)	Elected	29/12/2022
Phil Young (Chair)	Elected	09/06/2020
Mike Bailey	Elected	29/12/2022
Darren Bernstein	Elected	22/12/2021
Michael Howarth	Elected	22/12/2021

The members of the Bury Football Club Supporters' Society Limited Board in the year were:

Name	Elected/Co-opted/Resigned	Appointment Date
Alistair Rowe (Chair)	Elected	21/07/2022
Martin Stembridge (Vice Chair)	Elected	21/07/2022
John Liotti	Elected	21/07/2022
Mike Goodier	Elected	21/07/2022
Math Pickup	Elected	21/07/2022
Nikki Waller	Elected	21/07/2022
Ryan Hampson	Elected	Prior to 31/01/2021
Joy Hart	Elected	Prior to 31/01/2021
David Barratt	Elected	Prior to 31/01/2019
Thomas Pickup	Elected	21/07/2022
John Raftery	Elected	21/07/2022
Karl Lee	Co-opted	15/08/2022
Dan Bowerbank (Chair)	Elected	Prior to 31/01/2019
Diana Golding	Co-opted	15/08/2022

The members of the Interim Society board prior to the election were:

Name	Appointment Date
John Woodhead	19/05/2023
Alistair Rowe	19/05/2023
Phil Young	19/05/2023
Martin Stembridge	19/05/2023
David Triggs	19/05/2023
Mike Goodier	19/05/2023
Michael Howarth	19/05/2023
Karl Lee	19/05/2023

Whilst the Society Board election happened after the reporting period, for completeness we have listed the elected board members below:

Name	Elected/Co-opted/Resigned	Appointment Date
Darren Bernstein	Elected	20/10/2023
Mike Goodier	Elected	20/10/2023
Michael Howarth	Elected	20/10/2023
Marcel De Matas	Elected	20/10/2023
Jon Newby	Elected	20/10/2023
Ian Pearson	Elected	20/10/2023
Rod Peters (Secretary)	Elected	20/10/2023
John Woodhead	Elected	20/10/2023
Phil Young (Chair)	Elected	20/10/2023

Membership

The membership has been closed since the election to allow us to re-open memberships into the new Society, using a new membership system and bank account, rather than using the old Society memberships.

This has been soft launched to existing members in December, and there is a plan to gradually migrate existing memberships to the new Society. It will be more aggressively promoted in the New Year.

The combined membership when memberships closed in June stood at 2,410 adult members. It was acknowledged that there were a number of issues about how some memberships were recorded and counted and improvements which could be made in the future.

We do not expect the new membership to reach the same total number as there was some overlap between membership of both societies and a heightened interest in purchasing a membership at a time when voting on critical issues drove membership subscriptions. There was also a notable number of members still on the old Bury FC Supporters' Society £10 pa subscription which have all now expired. We believe 1,500 members is a realistic target given the £5pm/£60pa subscription fee.

Financial Performance

Shakers Community Society Limited and Bury Football Club (2019) Ltd performed broadly in line with expectations as was reported in our monthly management accounts, and similar to the previous year. Those management accounts are consolidated whilst the statutory accounts separate the finances of the two organisations out into separate returns. Both of these organisations started trading in 2020 and with Bury Football Club (2019) Ltd still operating under the groundshare agreement at Radcliffe FC the performance of both was relatively predictable. The main problem was the extreme weather which created a fixture backlog and required a change of home venue to Mossley to complete fixtures. This had a financial implication as well in addition to ending any realistic promotion push once we were required to play three games a week. We were required to pay an exit fee to Radcliffe FC to terminate the groundshare agreement early, as it still had another year to run, and we also began investing in the Gigg Lane stadium just before the end of June. This resulted in a loss of in Bury Football Club (2019) Ltd of £40,714 but the profit of £93,507 in the Shakers Community Society Limited more than compensated for this. The consolidated profit was £52,793 for the year.

The Bury Football Club Company Limited, company which co-owns the Gigg Lane stadium, made an (as yet unaudited) loss of £81, 066 during this period, whilst Bury Football Club Supporters' Society made a £15, 600 profit. This was a consolidated loss of approximately £65, 466. The main activity during this period was rental of the pitch alongside ad hoc events such as exhibition games and a firework display. Work at the ground was limited by the lack of cashflow, and reliant on the efforts of a number of volunteers and just one full time worker. The amalgamation has resolved the cashflow issues as promised, now that senior men's football has returned to Gigg Lane, and we are now in discussions around how to utilise the remaining capital available from local and central government.

The Football Supporters' Society of Bury Limited is required to be formally audited under its rules. It did not trade during the period other than through the Shakers Community Society Limited and Bury FC Supporters' Society. This applies to its subsidiaries, which include Bury Football Club (2019) Ltd and The Bury Football Club Company Limited. Bury Football Club Supporters' Society does not need to be audited under its rules and is instead subject to an Independent Examiner's Report. The audit for The Bury Football Club Company Limited is well progressed but is not yet complete. We would have preferred to issue their audited accounts alongside the other accounts however this has not been possible this year. The Companies House filing date is not yet due so it will be filed in time for the relevant company deadline.

Whilst the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 requires us to produce consolidated accounts to include the subsidiaries Bury Football Club (2019) Limited and The Bury Football Club Company Limited, along with the Football Supporters' Society of Bury Limited as the holding company, we have taken advantage of the exemption which allows us to produce separate accounts for simplicity. This is standard for other fan-owned clubs and as we produce consolidated monthly accounts there is an easy reference point for anyone wishing to view the two together.

The Football Supporters' Society of Bury Limited pays no corporation tax provided it does not trade other than to collect membership fees and donations, and does not need to be VAT registered due to the nature of its activities. As Bury Football Club (2019) Limited and The Bury Football Club Company Limited are VAT registered they bear all allowable costs across the organisations.

We expect this is a pattern which will repeat in the future as we continue to optimise our tax position across each organisation.

It is worth noting that the financial reporting for this year, and potentially next, are complex due to the amalgamation which has created a greater burden of work with five organisations in total now in operation. Whilst this number will be reduced over time we have brought in some part time resource with experience of football clubs to assist us with our financial record keeping.

The draft audited accounts are available [here](#).

Auditors

Sedulo are recommended for re-appointment subject to a value for money assessment by comparing their fees to other audit firms. We have no concerns about their competence or credibility. It is also acknowledged that a number of audit firms are now unwilling to tender for this type of work so the market itself has contracted but these fees, close to £20, 000 in total for all organisations, are now significant given the additional companies which require auditing so we should review them. This review will take place in early 2024.

We are obliged to have our accounts audited under our rules, and believe this is good practice given what happened to the Bury Football Club previously. We would need to pass a member resolution to amend our rules if we did not want to do this in future.

Policies

We brought in a number of policies as part of the amalgamation vote for the Football Supporters' Society of Bury Limited. These were:

- Election Policy
- Nomination Form
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Declaration of Interests Form
- Code of Conduct for Board Members
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

This report was approved by the Society Board on 23rd December 2023.

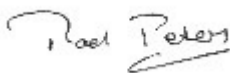
Signed on behalf of the Board:

Name: Phil Young

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Phil Young', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Position: Chair

Name: Rod Peters

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rod Peters', written in a cursive style.

Position: Secretary

Date: 23rd December 2023