



## **FSSB AGM 2024 – Response to Questions Raised by Members**

Q. Are there any plans to make details of Board meetings and discussions available to members by releasing minutes or otherwise (with appropriate redactions for sensitive info)? This would increase transparency and enable members to have a better understanding of board roles and the challenges and issues the board faces

**R. Yes, we are looking to produce a summary of Board meetings to be shared with members. We will start with the April 2025 Board meeting which will be released in May once the minutes of the April meeting have been approved.**

Q. Will the Board be looking at how to promote the development of a culture that encourages more people to step forward for board level and senior positions? There are currently examples of harassment for those who may be viable candidates which deters people from standing. In my opinion this has prevented as wide and as diverse a candidacy as there could be.

**R. We are absolutely committed to encouraging more people to step forward for board and senior positions, and we recognise the importance of creating an environment where everyone feels safe, respected, and supported in doing so.**

**We acknowledge that there have been concerns raised about harassment, including on social media, which can understandably deter individuals from putting themselves forward. While we cannot police all online content, we take any form of bullying or intimidation very seriously. Our volunteers dedicate their time out of passion for the club, and they have every right to do so without facing hostility or abuse.**

**We currently have a Disciplinary Policy in place and will apply it wherever a Member is deemed by a majority of the FSSB Board to have committed a defined Disciplinary Offence. In addition, we are exploring the introduction of an anti-bullying policy to address all forms of bullying, including verbal, emotional, physical, and cyberbullying.**

**Fostering a respectful and inclusive culture is a priority for the Board, and we will continue to take steps to support and protect those who wish to contribute to the club at all levels.**

Q. Could the Board give an overview of the number of teams and organisations who are now using Gigg Lane on a regular basis. The activity levels appear to be a real success for the club in both revenue and community engagement and it would be positive to have further information.

**R. On a regular basis, we have several junior and adult Bury FC groups and teams training and playing fixtures at Gigg Lane. Alongside this we have established groups for youngsters aged 4-8 playing in a non-team environment (Bury Ballers), a disability group (Comets) and teenage girls (Squad Girls') and walking football. Every week teams from Unsworth JFC, Prestwich, Westbury and Totty Robins use the pitch for their regular training. Also, 3 different private coaching organisations hire the pitch to deliver 1 to 1 and small group sessions. On a non-regular basis, we have had a large number of teams and organisations use the pitch for weekend fixtures from around the Greater Manchester area. As well as FA affiliated junior football clubs, this has seen many private companies and groups book for friendly matches or for fundraising matches.**

Q. FSSB and its associated companies hold high six figures' balances at banks. I cannot see any figures of interest received. Assuming that around 3% interest is currently available for 60-day deposits I would estimate that we could have achieved around £10,000 income in 2023-24?

**R. Bank Balances: As this was the first year back at Gigg Lane it was not known what expenditure would be incurred especially with regard to obtaining a safety certificate. For example we did not know if the fireproofing of the steelwork in the main stand would have to be carried out. It was therefore felt that we should not tie up any of our finances. This proved to be correct when the grant for the new pitch was delayed and we had to use our own reserves for a short time. Interest in FSSB would also be subject to Corporation Tax. Going forward however it is something we will consider.**

Q. FSSB website does not include Policy of Investments and Reserves. Could you please let me have a copy,

**R. Policy re investments and reserves, this is currently under review and will be discussed at a future board meeting of FSSB.**

Q. Clause 46 of FSSB Conflict of Interest Policy states:

*The Society will appoint a suitably qualified individual or committee to carry out an annual audit to ensure this Policy and its processes are being adhered to and the outcome of that audit will be reported to the Society's Board, highlighting any material concerns. Any material concerns must be reported to the Society's members.*

Could you please confirm:

- Name/s of the individual or committee who carried out the annual audit relating either to calendar year 2024 and/or to the accounts year ended 30th June 2024,

- Date of the report submitted to the Society's board.
- Date of the board minute confirming receipt of this report and any accompanying recommendations.
- Whether any material concerns were reported, which should be reported to FSSB members

**R. We take the point regarding conflicts of interest; no formal audit has been carried out however this and other regulatory requirements is something that could come under the remit of a Finance and Audit Committee. We will be asking those members with finance experience for volunteers.**

**The Society reports to the FCA in its Annual Return of any close links which any directors have with any society, company or authority. These include any directorships or senior positions held by directors of the society in other organisations. The Annual Return can be found on the Mutuels Public Register: <https://mutuals.fca.org.uk>.**

**The Society is also subject to a governance audit undertaken by the FSA to make sure all policies are up-to-date.**

**In addition, each Board member has completed a Declaration of Interests Form. From May 2025 “Conflict of Interest” will be a standing agenda at each board meeting to demonstrate ongoing compliance. That way we will be conducting an audit on a monthly basis and ensuring that any changes to a board member’s position are captured and recorded at an early stage.**

**Q. Bury FC Community Sports Trust Limited**

This charity amended its name on 11th June 2024 to include the title Bury FC (which I understand is copyright of Bury FC 2019 Limited) and also changed its registered address to Gigg Lane, Bury.

- Its annual accounts show a loan of £5000. Has this figure been provided by FSSB or any of its associated companies?.
- Please confirm the legal arrangements and any mutual employees between FSSB / associated companies and the Community Sports Trust.

**R. Community Sports Trust: as at 30 June 2024 the company had not commenced trading. To be set up as a charity it had to have £5k in the bank and this was loaned to it from the Shakers Supporters Society now FSSB. This will be repaid in due course. There are no legal arrangements or employees.**

**Q. Finally, could you please confirm, for the record, that there will still be a 2025 AGM before 31st December 2025, in other words that tomorrow's AGM will not be designated as the 2025 version**

**R. The AGM held on the 24<sup>th</sup> March was the re-scheduled 2024 AGM. The ‘2025’ AGM to be timetabled for December this year**

Q. As a Member, I want to have more say in the FSSB. One issue that has called a lot of discern is the allocation of away tickets in mainly Cup Games, but also affected our Play-off Games as well. Can we have the appropriate Bury section within our convoluted organisation to collate a list of options for ticket allocations and put those to a members' vote.

**F. We cannot see any other fair way of allocating away tickets than the one we currently use so we will continue with our standard practice next season when processing tickets to away and Cup Games where the ticket availability is limited. Now we have secured promotion we will be visiting grounds with larger capacities so it is expected that this will be less of an issue.**

However, it is a subject that we will continue to monitor and should it become apparent that a more appropriate system for the allocation of tickets to away fixtures, including Cup matches, could be implemented we would look to put that in place.

Q. For the queries you're gathering...Some additional transparency on what goes into the major account lines would be welcome to provide members / fans a better understanding of what their money is being used for. This transparency also goes for the general workings of the Boards - plural. With new Boards in place, it's the perfect opportunity to build a greater sense of member ownership / involvement / transparency.

**R. The annual accounts provide a detailed breakdown of expenses in the Profit and Loss account. It is not practical and too time consuming to breakdown the monthly accounts. They are designed to be an easy to read and understand summary of the group's affairs each month.**

Q. Whilst revenue is proportional to games played, expenditure (specifically Team Costs) seems to be less so. Does this point to a greater number of our players being contracted than before?

Q. What checks/safeguards are in place to manage the risk of bringing in players on long contracts who don't perform well enough to feature, and potentially have to be loaned out at a loss?

Q. What is the current scale of Team costs for players who are not regularly featuring for the first team?

**In terms of the number of contracted players, and the players to whom contracts are awarded, this is a matter for the manager working with the Football Committee, which includes three members of the FSSB board, within the constraints of the budget that is agreed and set prior to the start of the season. Whether a contracted player sustains an injury, or doesn't perform to the level expected, cannot be foreseen but the Football Committee will strive to ensure that the best possible value is obtained from the budget. In terms of the scale of costs attributable to players not regularly featuring for the first team, this information would not be disclosed outside of the Football**

**Committee to prevent the club from potentially being financially disadvantaged in regard to the retention and recruitment of players**