



MINUTES OF THE FSSB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 24 March 2025, 7.00 PM (via Zoom Conference)

Presenters: John Woodhead (JW) and Rod Peters (RP)

Opening of Meeting

RP opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

He reminded members to use the chat function to record any questions. These would be collated and answered following the AGM.

RP also reminded attendees of the resolutions subject to a vote:

1. To approve the minutes of the AGM held on 28 December 2023
2. To receive and adopt the Society and its subsidiaries' accounts to 30 June 2024
3. To approve the appointment or re-appointment of auditors, subject to a value-for-money assessment
4. To consider resolutions proposed by members

RP explained that the first three items had been subject to an online poll running from 10 March to 24 March 2025.

Results of Board Resolutions

JW announced the results:

Approve the FSSB 2023 AGM Minutes

- 97.71% in favour
- 512 for, 12 against, 35 abstentions
- Total votes: 524

Approve the Bury Football Club (2019) Ltd Accounts to 30 June 2024

- 97.35% in favour
- 515 for, 14 against, 30 abstentions
- Total votes: 529

Approve the Football Supporters' Society of Bury Ltd Accounts to 30 June 2024

- 97.72% in favour
- 515 for, 12 against, 32 abstentions
- Total votes: 527

Approve the Bury Football Club Company Ltd Accounts to 30 June 2024

- 97.92% in favour
- 517 for, 11 against, 31 abstentions
- Total votes: 528

Approve the re-appointment of auditors (Sedulo), subject to fair value assessment of cost

- 96.92% in favour
- 503 for, 16 against, 40 abstentions
- Total votes: 519

Resolutions Proposed by Members

RP confirmed that the AGM would vote on three resolutions—one from Jeremy Clegg (JC) and two from John Waddington (JWD).

As JWD's first resolution was similar to JC's, both agreed that the vote should be taken on JC's resolution, though JWD was invited to speak to it.

Standing Orders

RP reminded the meeting that the Society operates within FSSB Standing Orders for General Meetings, referring to paragraph 5.1.

Voting Arrangements

RP explained that:

- Voting would be via the Zoom polling tool.
- In cases where two members were sharing one device/laptop, each resolution would be voted on twice to allow both to participate. Members were reminded to vote only once per person.
- The results from both polls would be combined.
- Each vote would be open for 30–45 seconds.

Proxy Declaration

RP declared that he had been nominated as a proxy by a member and would vote accordingly, in addition to his own vote.

Resolution 1

Proposed by: Jeremy Clegg

Seconded by: Barry Roth

“This meeting requests that in convening general meetings under Society Rule 29, the FSSB Society Board shall favourably consider holding future FSSB members' general meetings in public, with video link also provided, if possible, to enable inclusion of members unable to attend.”

Discussion:

JC proposed a resolution calling for all future Society AGMs to be convened in a *hybrid format*—with members able to attend in person if they wish, while also retaining online streaming for those unable to be present.

He noted that the superb facilities at Gigg Lane provide no logistical barrier to hosting a physical AGM. On the contrary, such events could even create a modest revenue stream through bar sales before and after the meeting.

JC emphasised that AGMs are the most important event in the Society's calendar, offering members the chance to meet, engage in open discussion, and debate with their elected representatives. Likewise, they provide a vital forum for the Board to outline its policies and strategic direction.

He argued that the current policy of *only* holding virtual AGMs excludes members without internet access, or those uncomfortable with digital platforms. This approach, he said, is not only undemocratic but also inconsistent with the Society's own **Rule 29**, which requires that general meetings be made accessible in order to encourage the widest possible member participation.

JC also stressed that while the formal business of an AGM can be concluded in 10–15 minutes, the real value lies in the open questions and discussion that follow. Since the first FSSB Board was appointed on **20th October 2023**, members have not had the opportunity to meet and question their elected Board in an open and unconstrained environment. He argued that a physical AGM is the most effective way of fulfilling this responsibility of accountability and engagement.

JC urged the current Board not to turn away from meaningful interaction with members.

In conclusion, he asked members to vote in favour of the resolution, seeing it as a step toward greater engagement, openness, and democracy—principles at the heart of the Society's guiding rules.

John Waddington (JWD) spoke in support of the resolution. He explained that the main reason for putting forward three resolutions was to meet the FSSB objectives set out in **Rule 4** of the Society, namely: to achieve the greatest possible supporter and community influence in the running and ownership of the club, and to operate democratically and fairly.

On this resolution, JWD set out several principles:

1. **Standard practice** – JWD said it was accepted practice in the business world, underpinned by legislation, that meetings should be held in person. Since COVID, however, it has also become accepted practice to offer virtual facilities in parallel, to allow members who cannot attend physically to still participate. In his view, the FSSB's current practice of only holding virtual meetings was outdated. He argued that the best approach, serving the whole membership, was to provide face-to-face meetings with virtual facilities alongside—arrangements he believed volunteers could help facilitate.
2. **Member expectations** – JWD said members are equal stakeholders in the Community Benefit Society and, through FSSB, in Bury FC. He felt there was an expectation that members should be able to physically attend meetings, meet Directors, and engage directly with club employees.
3. **FSSB objectives** – JWD questioned whether the Society's current approach of not holding physical meetings met its objectives of operating democratically, fairly, transparently, and responsibly. In his opinion, only face-to-face meetings could fully achieve these aims.
4. **Society rules** – JWD acknowledged that the FSSB Board has the authority and responsibility to convene annual and other general meetings, and that the resolution could not override this power. However, he stressed that the motion sought to *encourage* the Board to hold meetings in person.

In conclusion, JWD said the resolution was intended to request that future meetings be held face-to-face, with the option of online access alongside.

John Woodhead (JW) responded on behalf of the FSSB Board.

JW acknowledged that in-person meetings do increase member engagement, by allowing direct interaction with Board members and the opportunity to voice concerns, ask questions, and vote in person (e.g. by a show of hands). He accepted there were benefits to in-person meetings, but also outlined difficulties.

- **Logistics** – JW said the Society now has over 2,000 members, while capacity at Gigg Lane's Starkies lounge is limited to 100–110. As such, very few members could physically attend.
- **Accessibility** – JW noted many members live outside the local area, or may be unable to travel for work or personal reasons. Online meetings are more convenient and accessible for them.
- **Safety and cost** – JW raised concerns about the need for security at in-person meetings, and the additional costs this would bring.
- **Legislative direction** – JW referred to a Law Commission consultation paper titled **Review of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014**, which recommended that societies without provisions for virtual meetings should be permitted to hold them online. He said this suggested the wider “direction of travel” was towards enabling more online meetings, not fewer.

JW concluded that the Board's position was that online meetings are more cost-effective, quicker to arrange, and more inclusive overall, especially for members who would otherwise be excluded.

Further responses

- **JWD** replied that the additional costs of face-to-face meetings should not outweigh the benefits. He believed the size of membership justified the expense and that alternative venues across the Borough could be explored if Gigg Lane was not suitable.
- **Barry Roth (BR)** supported JWD, recalling that previous meetings held at the Elizabethan Suite had been full to capacity, unlike those at the club. He said that if Starkies was full, then so be it, but the option of running Zoom (or equivalent) alongside would ensure wider participation.
- **Hybrid model** – When asked about a hybrid model by a member, JW said this could be considered. He noted that local council meetings used such a system, but added that issues around venue, security, technology, and equipment would need to be addressed before it could be implemented.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Resolution 2

Proposed by: John Waddington

Seconded by: Nick Sharples

“This meeting requests the FSSB Society Board to allow members attending future FSSB members' general meetings the right to speak at such meetings, in line with Standing Orders guidance provided by the Football Supporters Association.”

Discussion:

JWD noted that his submission would be much abbreviated. He explained that the same principles behind the first motion/resolution applied equally here. Rather than repeat the summaries and standard business practices, he stressed the importance of encouraging stakeholders to ask questions, provide feedback, and share their concerns at meetings. He highlighted that members rightly expect to be allowed to speak and contribute.

JWD further stated that the Society's rules confirm that general meetings should be accessible and encourage active participation from members. He also pointed out that the Football Supporters Association provides standard standing orders to support member contributions during meetings. On this basis, JWD promoted the resolution.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Resolution 3

Proposed by: John Waddington

Seconded by: Nick Sharples

“This meeting requests the FSSB Society Board to allow voting by members attending future FSSB members' general meetings on each motion on the agenda. Such voting to take place once time has been allowed for appropriate debate, in line with Standing Orders guidance provided by the Football Supporters Association.”

Discussion:

JWD was invited to propose the resolution but had nothing further to add, other than noting that proxy votes would continue to be available and valid, as they were at the AGM.

In response, JW explained that from a Board perspective, there are general meetings where no debate or member contributions are required. For example, at the recent SGM, the only purpose was to announce the results of the three newly elected Board members. Similarly, there are short AGMs where resolutions—such as those dealt with at the start of the meeting—are simply approved without the need for discussion. JW concluded by noting that there are several instances where debate or member contributions are unnecessary.

JWD accepted this as a fair point, clarifying that such an approach is appropriate where statements are merely being presented and no voting is involved. However, JWD stressed that when a motion is put forward, members should reasonably expect the opportunity to hear the debate and then cast their votes at the conclusion of that discussion.

Vote: Carried unanimously.

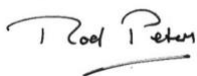
Conclusion of Meeting

JW thanked members for their support and encouraged them to get behind manager Dave McNabb and the team for the remainder of the season.

RP closed the meeting with thanks to all attendees.

Attendance: 107 members of the Football Supporters' Society of Bury Ltd.

Rod Peters



FSSB Secretary

