

Leyton Orient Fans' Forum

23 October 2014

Present:

Leyton Orient FC: Alessandro Angelieri, CEO (AA); Mauro Milanese, Sporting Director (MM); Johnny Davies, Media & Communication Manager (JD)

Supporters: Doug Harper, Chairman, Leyton Orient Fans' Trust (DH); Jim Nichols, Editor, Leyton Orient fanzine (JN); Tony Roome, Leyton Orient Supporters Club (TR); Mat Roper, Editor, Pandamonium fanzine (MR); Keren Harrison, International Fan Liaison (KH).

Supporter Liaison Officer (SLO)

The Supporters presented a paper on the role and responsibilities of the SLO. TR introduced the paper by outlining the requirements of UEFA and the Football League and emphasising that the SLO should be a well-known fan, capable of representing the views of the club to the fans and *vice versa*. He also stressed the importance the Supporters attached to this post.

MM recognised the importance of the job but explained that there were practical problems in appointing an additional person to the club staff - a lack of office space for example. AA and MM proposed Jonny Davies for the job. He is well-known to the supporters and is at all the club's games. The Supporters recognised that JD does a good job, but also noted that he is at his busiest on matchdays, dealing with the press and photographers etc.

TR stressed the Supporters' belief that the SLO should be a well-known fan who was available to be amongst the fans on both home and away matchdays, and could devote the time needed for the job on non-matchdays. The Supporters proposed that Keren Harrison be appointed to the job.

MM stated that he saw value in both the candidates and that he and AA would discuss the matter and perhaps find a role for both of them.

It was agreed that once the SLO position had been settled, then there would be a further discussion about the future structure of the Fans' Forum, though it was agreed to invite one person from each of the three podcasts to the future meetings.

Communications

DH explained that when fans had been asked to put forward issues for the Forum, the main questions had all been around communications. In particular, supporters felt that there had been an unfortunate silence from the club over the departure of the previous manager and the appointment of his successor.

MM provided a detailed explanation of what had happened, and stressed that the club had always wanted Kevin Nugent to remain as manager, but that his appointment on a permanent basis would be dependent on results. The President has faith in Kevin Nugent and wants him to stay at the club for the long-term in an appropriate post.

MM recognised that there had been periods during the above process where the club could have made a public statement on the matter. However, the President felt it best to wait to make a statement until the position was clear.

Both AA and MM stressed their desire to ensure that supporters were kept informed of developments at the club on a routine basis. They are willing to attend supporters meetings and answer questions. DH offered to make time at the LOFT AGM in late November for them to speak, and MM agreed that he, probably accompanied by AA, would attend. DH and MM will liaise to set an appropriate date.

MM said the club's commitment to keeping fans informed would be demonstrated by their continued involvement at Fans' Forums, which they would like to see on a regular – perhaps monthly – basis, supplemented by short meetings (proposed by either club or supporters) to discuss particular items of interest when required.

Supporters' Representative on the Board

This had been discussed at a previous Forum and AA had undertaken to ascertain the views of the President. Mr Becchetti had considered the issue and decided against appointing a Supporters' representative to the Board at this time. The Supporters noted this decision with disappointment.

Continuation of the 'Voluntary AGM'

Supporters had asked that this annual meeting be continued. AA understood the request and undertook to discuss the matter with the President.

Plans for the Stadium

The Supporters asked if there were any plans for stadium development or moves. MM explained that planning was in hand for some minor refurbishment of the stadium and perhaps some changes to the administrative areas of the stadium. There is likely to be a name change for the stadium at some point – possibly to the Agon Stadium (that being the name of Mr Becchetti's TV channel). Though if other naming sponsors were identified then they would also be considered.

Club Management Structure

In response to a question, MM explained that the club organisational structure remained unchanged except for his addition as Sporting Director. He explained that he felt he had a good working relationship with the Interim Manager and had a very limited role in the coaching side, mainly consisting of discussing his experiences as a defender with some of the players.

East Stand Tickets

AA explained that the distribution of free East Stand tickets was being considered for school children and other specific groups. He asked for the supporters views on this. The Supporters expressed their broad support for the proposal as we would be clearly aiming at the next generation of supporters. The Supporters also expressed backing for the last major East Stand initiative which saw the free distribution of season tickets to young people and students in the area.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm.