

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

INTRODUCTION

This is the third annual report of CF10 Arms Park Rugby Trust for the period up to 30 September 2019.

The organisation was formally established on 19 May 2016 as 'Cardiff Blues Rugby Supporters Society Limited' but trades under the name CF10. It is a legal entity established under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 as a Community Benefit Society (number 7342), sponsored initially by Supporters Direct.

Its purpose is to be the vehicle through which a healthy, balanced and constructive relationship between the Club and its associate sides, its supporters and the communities it serves is encouraged and developed. The business of the Society is to be conducted for the benefit of the community served by the Club and not for the profit of its members.

Each member of CF10 holds one share for their period of membership. The Model Rules approved by Supporters Direct act as the organisation's constitution along with the Board's Standing Orders.

PREVIOUS AGMs

Copies of previous AGM minutes are available on the website (<https://cf10rugbytrust.org/>) along with approved minutes of each Board meeting.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The following individuals have been elected as Directors by the members of CF10:

- Chair: David Allen (for 3 years until March 2021)
- Secretary: Huw Jones (for 3 years until March 2022)
- Treasurer: Derek Redwood (for 3 years until March 2020)
- Board Members:
 - Simon Baker (for 3 years until March 2020)
 - Sally Carter (for 3 years until March 2020)
 - Fred Davies (for 3 years until March 2022; resigned 16 July 2019)
 - Andrew Collins (for 3 years until March 2020)
 - Lynn Glaister (for 3 years until March 2020)

The directors are supplemented by a number of invited observers who also attend Board meetings and contribute to the organisation's various working groups. The Directors believe that this model strengthens the Trust by involving and utilising a wide range of skills in its work. In addition, the board is very aware that its skillset needs to be kept under continuous review and is very open to supplementing it on a regular basis.

MISSION STATEMENT

CF10 is a democratic and representative forum open to all supporters of Cardiff rugby. The Board has established a mission statement for its work. This was developed in consultation with members and approved at the AGM in 2017:

- ensure that the voice of all supporters is clearly heard whenever major decisions are being made at Cardiff Arms Park.
- encourage the involvement of supporters, including younger supporters, in the activities of the trust.
- achieve the greatest possible supporter influence in the running and ownership of the club.
- provide a means of organising small shareholder involvement in order to maximise its impact.
- act as a critical friend to Cardiff Blues Ltd. and its associate sides, supporting innovation when appropriate and challenging views and opinions when these conflict with the views of members.
- ensure that the heritage of Cardiff rugby is accurately and carefully preserved and that the collection of heritage materials is a continuous and valued process from here on.
- ensure that the future developments at the Arms Park fully reflect the heritage of the club including the retention of 'Cardiff' in the professional team name and to resist any attempts to dilute its prominence.
- ensure that the future Arms Park remains first and foremost a rugby stadium and that the experience of attending rugby at Cardiff is something that all supporters value. (While appreciating the necessary commercial drivers).
- work with other supporter organisations for the betterment of Cardiff rugby.

GOVERNANCE

Complementing our Standing Orders the Board has established a Director's Handbook, both of which are available online (<https://cf10rugbytrust.org/documents>). We believe strongly in the principles of openness and transparency. We also update our Governance Action Plan at every meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

Up to 30 September 2019 we had 714 members. We have an ambition to recruit 1000 members - the more members we have, the more influence we will have. The '1000 members' Campaign comprises a number of initiatives and the Board will monitor and review its progress.

Contrary to some beliefs, members don't have to live within the City walls to join. Our members come from across the region and other parts of Wales and the UK. Internationally we have members as far afield as Austria and Australia, Spain and New Zealand.

Last year's AGM agreed that the membership fee should be reduced to £1. There's no excuse for even those fans with the deepest of pockets not to sign up.

Summerfest proved to be a strong recruiting ground and we had a presence at most matches throughout the year at CAP.

SHARES

The Trust (and therefore each member) owns 200 shares in Cardiff Blues Ltd. More importantly,

CF10 ARMS PARK RUGBY TRUST

members who are shareholders have signed proxy forms to CF10 for over 36,000 shares, meaning that we can vote en bloc if we need to and have greater influence on the club. This means that we're the 8th largest shareholder in the company, which has made people take note.

Cardiff Blues Limited (CBL) has not held its AGM for over two years but has issued a notification that one will be held – 31 December 2019. It should prove to be an interesting occasion.

CARDIFF BLUES

The Welsh Rugby Union's Project Reset continued. As part of the governance reform of Cardiff Blues Limited (CBL), Alun Jones was appointed as the new Chair from 1 January 2019. CF10 was delighted to meet with him just before Christmas 2018. Alun was already pretty clued up about the Trust, but the meeting was also an opportunity to explain members' ambitions and to hear about Alun's.

Our thanks are also due to Peter Thomas, whose fantastic support over many years has really ensured that there is still top-class rugby at Cardiff. Although stepping down as Chair, Peter is continuing on the Board as a Director for the time being.

After a period of relative silence, Project Reset hit the headlines in February with statement and counter-statement appearing at least daily at one point about mergers, conflicts of interest and lack of honesty. Like the rest of Cardiff, we held our counsel for most of this time and took time to publish our more considered thoughts in a blog.

In March 2019, following CF10's last AGM, Alun Jones, Martyn Ryan (Board member and Company Secretary) and Richard Holland (Chief Executive) met with supporters to make a presentation and answer questions. Alun said that the Board and the Executive were striving to set out a clear vision and purpose for CBL. They were planning for success both on the field and off the field; fail to plan, plan to fail was the message. Some activities were short term which helped to set the pathway for the long term.

There was significant concern from supporters about the lack of communication both from CBL about its activities and also the WRU and Professional Rugby Board (PRB) about Project Reset. CBL emphasised that the key to PRB was 5 independent companies operating in an inter-dependent way.

Another season came and went without the seismic changes that Project Reset was meant to introduce. Cardiff Blues finished a disappointing fifth in Conference A of Pro 14. After a brief return to the Champions Cup, 2019/20 therefore, sees the team compete once more in the Challenge Cup where we face Leicester, Pau and Calvisano. We also have a revamped conference structure in the Pro 14 where we join Edinburgh, Munster, Connacht, Scarlets, Benetton and Southern Kings.

Despite our unwavering optimism, we live in turbulent times and realise that a World Cup year is going to prove particularly difficult for us to manage. CF10 continued its meetings with Richard Holland. Communication and lack of information to supporters continued to be a theme. The meeting notes were emailed to members.

Regarding the Professional Rugby Strategy (aka Project Reset) there was nothing specific to report for the remainder of the summer as detailed behind the scenes discussions continued between the five parties. Standstill funding had been agreed for 2019/20 at a very late stage and supporters were told that PRB was concentrating on collective options for income generation especially from 2020/21 onwards.

CARDIFF ARMS PARK REDEVELOPMENT

As always, there is a great deal going on behind the scenes in an effort to secure a redevelopment of CAP that benefits all key stakeholders. Over the years joint venture plans, joint management proposals and probably a number of other options have been considered but without success. At the time of writing it appears that the proposals will be led by Cardiff Athletic Club (CAC) alone but with input from CBL on their requirements. It also appears that CF10's concerns, as set out in the Mission Statement are being taken into account.

However, with the CBL lease expiring in 2022, this leaves little time for discussion and development.

The continuing lack of communication not just from CBL but also from CAC led CF10 to issue an Open Letter to both organisations expressing significant concern not just about communication but also the relationship between the parties. This was doing immeasurable reputational damage to Cardiff rugby and was a major factor in the club's fall from grace in the rugby world.

Each side blamed the other but the fact of the matter is that both sides have to take responsibility for the poor relationship which exists between them. Each continues to ignore, and fails to communicate with, their principal stakeholders: their shareholders, members and supporters. The voice of spectators has been ignored for far too long and there has been a lack of respect shown to stakeholders by both parties.

There appears to be a belief that the Boards and Management Committees are only accountable to themselves and not to those they are meant to serve. As a result, there is currently a complete lack of confidence that the challenges facing Cardiff rugby can be effectively solved.

We were delighted to have arranged a joint meeting to discuss the proposed redevelopment of Cardiff Arms Park with CBL/CAC, the two of the key players involved. It was hugely disappointing to then to have this cancelled late in the day. We made our displeasure with the situation clearly known when we met with Richard Holland.

In the 3 months since issuing the letter CF10 has continued to press the concerns of supporters.

SUPPORTER DIRECTOR

In September 2018 we wrote formally to the Cardiff Blues Board asking that they consider appointing a Supporter Director as part of their planned governance changes; we also made the case in a detailed blog. In our letter, we specifically stated that:

'It is the creation of a Supporter Director that is our objective per se, and we obviously have no right or expectation that we should fill such a position. Indeed, it is our view that to have any credibility the position would need to be advertised and filled by election through a transparent process'.

The Board responded positively, though not in a way that we had anticipated. It stated that 'The Cardiff Blues Board would like to encourage CF10 Trust, should it wish to do so, to nominate a candidate to formally apply (via the external recruitment company managing the process) for one of the Non-Executive Director positions'.

The CF10 Board considered this response and, though it was not the outcome that we sought, on balance decided to submit a nomination as suggested. Unfortunately, we heard nothing about the application.

CF10 ARMS PARK RUGBY TRUST

The Cardiff Blues Board underwent a number of structural changes over the summer. Sir Gareth Edwards and Paul Bailey stood down while Andrew Williams and Hayley Parsons were appointed as Non-Executive Directors with Sam Warburton and Martyn Williams as advisory members.

Having completed these significant changes, it would seem an ideal time to appoint a supporter representative. Crys16, the Scarlets' Supporters Trust, are full members of the Board and, as Scarlets Chair, Nigel Short made clear in a recent interview, they regard having 'the biggest emotional stakeholders in the business help us make the right decisions' as a real asset.

We continue to campaign for the same representation at Cardiff and have recently submitted further thoughts to the Cardiff Blues Board on how they can take a similarly positive step. At the time of writing, they have announced that they are considering a supporter representative on the Board and are investigating how this could be undertaken. This is a very positive step and the culmination of three year's work on CF10's part.

STRONGER TOGETHER: MEETINGS WITH CITY POLITICIANS

During the year, we have engaged in a number of meetings with local politicians. Our stated aim is to keep rugby at the Arms Park and with the name of Cardiff being used by the teams playing there. We believe that it is imperative that local decision makers are made aware of CF10's aims and we feel this is best achieved by talking to as many key influencers as possible. We met with the Leader of Cardiff Council, the Council Cabinet Member for Sport, many local Councillors, all 4 of the City's MPs and an Assembly Member. We went to the meetings with the intention of pointing out the importance of the club to the economic and social life of Cardiff. We were very pleased with the response as there is no doubt how much Cardiff rugby means to them. A number have subsequently joined CF10.

CARDIFF RUGBY HERITAGE

We continue to work as part of the Heritage Group with Cardiff RFC and Cardiff Blues to preserve the history of Cardiff Rugby, both through the care and documentation of the existing collection and the photographing and recording of memorabilia held in private hands. There are close to 1500 objects on the Online Museum, which is becoming a very rich source of information about Cardiff rugby. Thanks to all who have donated material, or loaned objects to photograph. It all adds to the rich tapestry of the Cardiff rugby story. The museum now has its own Twitter account (@cardiffrugbymus).

A second batch of team photographs has now been digitised, including all the team photographs from the Gareth Edwards Lounge and a selection from the Trophy Room. The high-resolution copies have uncovered early attempts at Photoshop, with people being scratched off the glass negatives and heads stuck on at later dates. One unfortunate cricketer in the background was mostly removed but they forgot his legs which remain unattached in amongst the players. It is planned to get a third batch of photographs completed before the end of the year.

An oral history project has been developed and some fantastic interviews have been undertaken with Alun Priday, John Scott and Sir Gareth Edwards. These will be available on the Museum web site.

CARDIFF RFC

It was a pleasure to congratulate the RFC Committee and the team on its superb season and achievement in winning the Welsh Cup and coming second in the Premiership. Both were fantastic feats and achieved playing a great style of rugby under the leadership of Steve Law, something that was recognised via the Chairman's Award at the club dinner at the (Coal) Exchange on 14 June.

The highlight of a fabulous evening was the induction of Steve Ford into the Hall of Fame by fellow Cardiff legend Terry Holmes. Steve spoke emotionally about his time at the club and of the important role that Cardiff Arms Park had played in his life. It was very powerful. We were pleased to play a role in the evening by putting together a film of some of Steve's great moments on the field and writing a brief note on his career for the dinner menu. Our thanks are due to Viv Jones for allowing us to use his brilliant photographs of the dinner.

CF10 continues to sponsor a CRFC player (Thomas Davies).

ACCESSIBLE STADIUM

One of our responsibilities under our Model Rules is '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.' This, of course includes ALL members of the community regardless of age, income, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality or religious or moral belief.

We wanted to ensure that any design plans cater for everyone, especially people with disabilities. As a consequence, we submitted a paper to CAC setting out both their legal and moral responsibilities.

Architects rely on the Accessible Stadia Guide and the follow-up Supplementary Guidance. The former concerns itself primarily with wheelchair access but the latter recognises unseen disabilities such as partially sighted and blind spectators; hard of hearing and deaf spectators; learning or intellectually disabled spectators; spectators with mental health conditions; assistance and guide dogs. In recent years some football clubs such as Watford have recognised the importance of providing a Sensory Room, especially for people with autism.

We have encouraged CAC to work with Level Playing Field (LPF) the supporters association which represents disabled fans. CF10 will continue to keep in touch with LPF.

CARDIFF BLUES SUPPORTERS CLUB (CBSC)

We continue to liaise with our friends at CBSC and they have an open invitation to attend our board meetings and receive our papers. They recently elected a new committee and James Lewis has taken over as Interim Chair. Our Secretary, Huw Jones, met with James in order to establish contact and to build on our current relationship. In this regard we also met with them to discuss the possible role description of a Supporter Director on the Board of Cardiff Blues Ltd.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We have continued to develop a series of blogs (<https://cf10rugbytrust.org/blog>) on the strategic and political issues that currently face the club. These sit alongside match previews and reviews for every Cardiff Blues game. We are fortunate to have such a talented set of writers at our disposal. We have continued to have a strong presence on social media but this is an on-going challenge with a limited number of volunteers available. We would welcome new members to join this team.

CARDIFF BLUES WEBSITE

We were delighted to have our own page on the recently re-launched CBL website and to have collaborated in the production of the page entitled 'Our story', which for the first time acknowledges the evolution of Cardiff rugby from Cardiff RFC to the Cardiff Blues. Our thanks are due to Mike Brown, Head of Communications and Marketing at CBL for the opportunity to do so.

MEDIA

We've continued to develop relationships with a number of media contacts and this has proved really helpful at key times - though this may not always be apparent. There was significant coverage of the Open Letter to CBL/CAC.

SUPPORTERS DIRECT

Last year we reported that the Trust continues to be a member of the national body, Supporters Direct (SD). However, the amalgamation of SD with the Football Supporters Federation into one body means that the exclusive focus of the new company will be on football. The proposal will mean that any non-football organisation will only have associate membership at best and be unable to vote and elect representatives. Given the constitution of the new body, the CF10 Board decided not to join the new organisation.

WELSH LANGUAGE

Over the last year we have been pressing Cardiff Blues to make greater use of the Welsh language. To their credit they have been listening. We don't expect to see total bilingualism especially given the costs of this and the lack of funding available. Moreover, there is no legal requirement on them to do so.

They have recognised the benefits of increasing use of the language. This is evident when signs are being replaced; tannoy announcements at matches; social media communications etc. It was suggested to CBL at a recent meeting we had with them that there would be benefit in them documenting these commitments and including them in a future newsletter.

We're going to be moving towards making the CF10 website fully bi-lingual as reported last year but the constraints on volunteers has meant a delay in progressing the project. This is taking a time to achieve, but hopefully everything will be in place to allow this to happen soon.

LOOKING BACK AND FORWARD

Last year the Board identified a number of key areas that we planned to focus on:

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- Contributing to shaping the future vision for Cardiff Blues and Cardiff Arms Park - our biggest concern;
- Seeking to further increase our membership numbers and shareholding;
- Establishing broader engagement with members, especially our younger and older supporters, people with disabilities who want to attend CAP, the local and regional communities;
- Building resilience at board level.

Board members have continued to spend a great deal of time on behalf of the membership working behind the scenes and sometimes being very vocal publicly when we feel it's necessary, seeking to influence CBL and CAC. The Open Letter and especially the agreement of CBL to actively consider appointing a Supporter Director are examples of this.

In September 2018 we reported a membership of 663. This increased to 714 by September 2019 and at Christmas 2019 it stands at 765. Consequently we are well on the road to achieving our aim of 1000 members.

Our engagement with members has been mixed. We have produced and distributed quarterly newsletters and also distributed notes of our meetings with CBL management. However, we didn't hold an open meeting in September/October 2019 as we had hoped. The plan was to hold a joint meeting with CBL but due to circumstances beyond our control this did not happen. We will learn from this experience. Despite our efforts we have not been able to engage with younger supporters and encourage a younger representative to join the Board. This will be a continuing challenge.

In March 2020, we have a 5 Board members due for re-election/retirement. There will be 6 vacancies. We are keen to see people join the Board or the wider working group. Please don't be shy in putting your name forward as we're a welcoming group. In particular, we are looking for members with skills in the following areas:

- Social media
- Marketing

You don't have to be brilliant at any of these, just enthusiastic to contribute. If you think you can make a contribution to any of the above, please get in touch-we'd be delighted to hear from you.

If you have any issues that you'd like us to raise regarding Cardiff rugby, then feel free to get in touch here: <https://cf10rugbytrust.org/contact-us> - we're always keen to hear your views.