

CUSG update

16 May 2022

This update is as usual focused on operational matters within the remit of the 1921 Operational Board. I will take any further questions from CUSG groups at the meeting on 16 May.

Issue	Reference/Comments	Status
Fan initiatives		
More memorabilia has been collected and donated by fans.	As CUSG funds allow it – it will be put on display.	Ongoing
Sunset Suite vinyl window wraps design approved by CUSG and are on order awaiting redecoration delivery. It will be repainted thereafter. This will be renamed “The Glass Bar” in honour of Jimmy Glass.	Painting priority has moved from fans initiative to football requirements in the short term.	Target new season start 22/23
Playing shirt amnesty to hand back old shirts for reuse is continuing. Further designs added to the collection (the stolen shirt remains a gap). Donations being handed to charities. Please keep the donations coming.	Ideas for other recipients are most welcome. Donation points are in the Blues Store and East stand upstairs ticket office/reception. https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2021/december/club-donate-your-old-shirts-for-good-causes/	Ongoing
The Legends Game on Sunday 24 April 2022 was a huge success. We were delighted to host it.	Club staff on the day and in preparation worked for nothing and the only club event costs were stewarding, these were underwritten by Story Homes as sponsor. A final reconciliation of income and cost is being completed and an announcement will be made as to what the game generated. Thanks to all who made it possible.	31 May 2022
Owner forums as per EFL Regulation 127 are being scheduled.	These are expected as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 24 May 2022 7pm – public announcement later this week. • Second after the fixtures and preseason commences (WK4 June). 	24 May Before 30 Jun 22
Interested people are being sought to provide host accommodation for Academy scholars.	Enquire here https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2022/march/academy-can-you-help-house-our-young-players/	Information
Retail We are advertising for new shop staff to replace those leaving the club. 22/23 kit design was approved in 2021 and is in manufacture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new retail manager has been appointed to start shortly. • New retail shop assistant appointed. • Kit launch planned for mid-June once delivery is confirmed. • New season will bring new retail initiatives 	Complete Ongoing Mid-June 2022 Ongoing
Catering Post-season review has taken place. First year will be more profitable than previously. New initiatives like Fan Zone, Pizza bar were a success. Lots of learning points. Catering APP use for pre-purchased food and drink in bars and kiosks grew slowly. 22/23 season being planned.	Catering staff to attend CUSG 16/5 meeting to discuss matters including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beer brand offering • Extra capacity in Pioneer and WRE • Foxy’s C&B • Legends 	16 May 2022
Fan Food Zone has proved a major success this season. Other ideas welcome. Get in touch here https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2021/may/fans-how-to-get-in-touch/	Development of Fan Zone has been self-funded via profits from the catering operation. This will continue with a new outside ‘container bar’ being evaluated for 22/23 to increase capacity. New food concession ideas welcome.	Ongoing

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Options for a semi-permanent fan marquee are being progressed with CUOSC.	We hope to increase the size of the Fan Zone as demand grows. This will impact West Stand car parking.	Information																														
Second half-yearly fan catering survey issued. We said another survey will be undertaken at the end of the season	We want to improve and develop to address fan needs and issues. This requires fans to help us and make their voices heard and give feedback. This will be issued in June.	June 2022																														
Tickets																																
End of season review of ticketing IT underway.		Ongoing																														
<p>Average gate for the season was 4970 with 4559 home fans and 411 away</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="145 502 728 678"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="3">Average</th> <th colspan="2">Change</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>21/22</th> <th>19/20</th> <th>18/19</th> <th>vs 19/20</th> <th>vs 18/19</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Home</td> <td>4,559</td> <td>3,792</td> <td>4,369</td> <td>20%</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Away</td> <td>411</td> <td>328</td> <td>343</td> <td>25%</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>4,970</td> <td>4,119</td> <td>4,712</td> <td>21%</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The support of fans at home was higher than recent years. This was the case even before PS arrival and despite home results. Fans stood by the club in real adversity. This was humbling for everyone and made a real difference.</p> <p>Support increased markedly after the arrival of Paul Simpson.</p>		Average			Change			21/22	19/20	18/19	vs 19/20	vs 18/19	Home	4,559	3,792	4,369	20%	4%	Away	411	328	343	25%	20%	Total	4,970	4,119	4,712	21%	5%	<p>Average gates were up +21% on 19/20 (the last season with fans but only 19 games). It is also up +5% on 18/19 the last season unaffected by Covid.</p> <p>4459 is the best home fan average for 5 years (excluding 20/21 with covid limits) an the third best in the last 10 years. This +4% increase is distorted by Barrow in 21/22 and the promo games vs Northampton & Colchester in 21/22 and MK Dons in 18/19. Even excluding those three games, the home average was 4235 in 21/22 vs 4017 in 18/19 a like-for-like +5% increase.</p> <p>Excluding the two promo games and Barrow, the average home fans for the 6 games under Paul Simpson was 4977 compared with 3917 for the 14 before his arrival. An increase of 1000 per game (+27% increase) after he joined.</p> <p>Even at 3917 before PS arrival, this was +3% up on 19/20.</p>	Information
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<p>Season tickets on sale https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/tickets/season-tickets/</p> <p>The initial renewal period has ended.</p>	Sales at the end of the renewal period were 1,691 (end of same period last season was 1,360, but it is always difficult to compare like for like with different dates of sale, length of sales periods, etc – however, this is an extremely encouraging figure). With half-season tickets, last year's total was 1,845.	Ongoing																														
Commercial																																
<p>A successful, sell-out, club awards night held on 8 May at the Halston.</p> <p>A new commercial team is being formed following retirement of Jenny Anderson and Anne-Marie Gardner.</p> <p>The Business Club to be relaunched for 22/23.</p>	<p>https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2022/may/gallery-more-images-from-the-player-awards-evening/</p> <p>https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2022/may/vacancy-commercial-sales-manager/</p> <p>Further details to follow.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>May 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p>																														
22/23 hospitality and sponsorship packages are being worked on.	Launch after the fixtures are released on 23 June.	30 June 2022																														
<p>Bimson Haulage will be taking pride of place as our official shirt sponsor for the 2022/23 campaign.</p> <p>Further commercial deals for 22/23 will be announced in the coming weeks.</p>	<p>https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2022/may/sponsorship-bimson-haulage-take-pride-of-place-for-the-202223-season/</p> <p>Further details to follow.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Ongoing</p>																														

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<p>iFollow numbers at the final were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rochdale (A) 811 • Bristol Rovers (H) 316 • Newport (H) 556 • Rochdale (H) 542 • Port Vale (H) 494 • Mansfield (H) 284 	<p>The piracy of iFollow increased and we can see fans openly discussing and sharing illegal stream information on social media fan sites (especially facebook). This practice is openly going on and those doing it are clearly seen and identifiable. Please don't do it as deprives us of income to reinvest in the club. https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2020/november/efl-campaign-launched-to-discourage-illegal-streaming/</p>	<p>Information</p>
<p>Community</p>		
<p>Bucket collections held for Cumbria Pride at the Mansfield game and for Chrysalis at the Stevenage game .</p>	<p>https://www.cumbriapride.org/ https://www.chrysalis-cumbria.co.uk/about-chrysalis/</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>Paul Simpson was speaker at the Business Breakfast for Carlisle Youth Zone just before the final game of the season.</p>	<p>https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2022/may/event-emotional-introduction-to-the-carlisle-youth-zone/</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>Stadium</p>		
<p>The full electrical rewire of the west stand upstairs area is continuing with Murphy's Bar complete, and finally Legends and McConnell's.</p> <p>Replacement LED lighting on west side is continuing to be installed throughout as the old lighting is life expired.</p>	<p>We continue to spend heavily on unavoidable essential stadium repairs, safety works and critical renewals. Future power costs are likely to increase.</p> <p>Much of this work is invisible, but nevertheless essential, and adds up every month. Car park potholes have been dealt with in early May.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Painting of West stand continues with Legends, McVities and McConnells now completed. New flooring for McConnells is to be installed.</p>	<p>New furniture is required for Legends</p> <p>Sunset painting to follow after requirements of the football department have been satisfied</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>The annual audit by the Safety Advisory Group will take place at the end of May. Full structural survey planned for 22/23.</p>	<p>Detailed safety inspections have started and rectification is being undertaken. Including safety barriers, Fire, structures, CCTV, electricals for example. This is a major project each spring.</p>	<p>May 2022</p>
<p>Stadium pitch and training pitch renovations started on Friday 6 May.</p>	<p>Media will be doing a fly on the wall video explaining the work.</p>	<p>May 2022</p>
<p>Matches</p>		
<p>Pre-season fixtures are currently being finalised.</p>	<p>Schedule is being released in batches. https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2022/may/friendlies-the-first-202223-pre-season-friendlies/</p>	<p>20 May 2022</p>
<p>The club has again achieved the EFL Family Excellence Award for 2021/22. Following two inspections during the season, the club is delighted to have been recognised for its matchday work.</p> <p>SLO team, front line staff and fan zone commended. Catering improvement recognised.</p>	<p>Each year we have two unannounced independent inspection visits and receive feedback, reports and recommendations on how to improve. This latest visit was at the Northampton game on 12 March 2022 which saw over 8,500 fans at the game. Over the season we are ranked 7th of 24 in League Two and 30th of 72 in the EFL with a score of 8.4.</p>	<p>Information</p>
<p>Pleasingly, incidences of fan disorder on match days fell away in the final few games. Fan incidents reported vs Stevenage and away at Bradford.</p> <p>Club has supported the EFL campaign to improve fan behaviour under the headline "FFS... For Football's Sake"</p>	<p>We understand emotions run high, but we appeal to fans not to overstep.</p> <p>A number of fans have contacted us asking us to take action against those chanting at Bradford during the remembrance.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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EFL /FA As I have said before, football is a highly compliance-driven business off-the-field, and that means our operations are constantly being reviewed and inspected. The regulatory regime continues to toughen and increase scrutiny – like Matchday, Safeguarding, EDI, security and safety.		
Club EFL Safeguarding reports continue to be excellent.	Safeguarding is a key area of focus for the club.	Ongoing
British Red Cross will be EFL's Official Charity Partner from the start of the 2022/23 season, until the end of the 2023/24 campaign.	It will be designed specifically to focus on supporting those that may be experiencing social isolation in England and Wales	Information
Club received an FA warning over player behaviour at Bradford . This follows a £1500 FA fine following mass confrontation at the Tranmere game.		Information
L2 clubs have voted to tighten SCMP rules for 22/23. The spending limits are unchanged but some minor areas have been amended. More radical reform is being considered connected to UEFA rule changes.	CUFC supported the changes. They are not significant and will have no material impact on CUFC in 22/23. Future changes are still being developed	Information Ongoing
On Thursday 28 April, the EFL Supporter Services team held the latest Supporter Liaison Officer webinar, which included updates and information for SLO		Information
The FA Play Safe Safeguarding weekend will take place on 17 and 18 September 2022.	CUFC will support	September 2022
The next EFL compliance area is completion of the first stage of the new EFL Green Code .	This will be a major challenge for us.	To start
We are awaiting results of the EFL Diversity Standard Code of Practice submission The EFL is implementing its own EFL EDI strategy in response to the Fan Led Review recommendation E "Football needs to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in clubs with committed EDI Action Plans regularly assessed by IREF."	Initiatives undertaken by the club at Northampton working together with CUSG are part of this initiative. Club currently being independently assessed. This will increase the importance of EDI within clubs.	Ongoing
EFL is offering training for club EDI officers .	We don't have a member of staff fulfilling that role, it is held by a volunteer via CUSG and CUOSC.	Information
EFL Conference is in early June in Chester.	CEO to attend.	
Club staff have received training on Anti-terrorist issues covering Prevent and Protect.		Information
Sir Kier Starmer visited CUFC to discuss the Fan Led Review .	The club and CUOSC detailed the importance of moving quickly and not allowing FLR implementation to be delayed. The need for a fairer distribution of income across the pyramid accompanied by cost control. Intervention to speed the process was critical.	Information
Finances		
Year ending 30 June 2022 Trading In the nine months ended 31 March 2022 overall net profit year-to-date of £0.5m driven by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better than budget match ticket income (especially since PS arrival). Strong iFollow sales for domestically streamed games. Second and final instalment of Premier League support funding received (making £333k received in the year). Player transfer income so far £600k in 21/22. Significant exceptional costs from football department and DoF staff changes. Rising debt interest costs (no cash impact at present). 	At this stage this profit is expected to become an overall estimated full year forecast outturn broadly break-even by the year end. This estimate remains subject to a number of income and costs uncertainties in the final months of the 21/22 year.	31 May 2022

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<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We continue to have received no additional debt funding (last was May 2019). No debt repayments have been made in 21/22 so far, except £40k to the EFL. We still await a response from PurePay to the ideas put forward by the club. No discussions are taking place nor is there any plans currently in place to have any. Interest continues to accrue on the PurePay loan. As said before, it cannot be ruled out that PurePay will require cash repayments in the rest of 21/22 (and beyond) as confirmed in the Audited Financial statements. 	<p>No new external debt funding is planned in the remainder of 21/22 or 22/23.</p> <p>We continue to have no plans to make any other debt repayments in the remainder of 21/22 or 22/23, except £40k to the EFL.</p> <p>The Holdings Board continues to seek a response from PurePay and to hold discussions.</p>	<p>No change</p>
<p>Cash</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As detailed to fans before, we are now experiencing a reduction in cash reserves in the second half of 21/22. This cycle is normal every year (before any unexpected Football Fortune). This usual reduction in cash reserves will be higher this year from the additional spending on players in the January window and the pay-off costs from changing in football management in February and DoF departure. However, new unbudgeted Football Fortune (contingent transfer add-ons) received in Feb & March helps to offset this. 	<p>https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2022/january/chief-exec-club-matters-fan-led-review-and-ownership/</p> <p>We continuing to be in a sound financial position day-to-day, with cash reserves in the bank.</p> <p>Of course, this is vulnerable to unplanned payments and uncertainties, especially any large and short notice demands as detailed in the Audited Financial Statements.</p>	<p>Information</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our trade creditors position remains good with the liabilities being low. All our PAYE and VAT liabilities continue to be paid up in full and on time. 	<p>Our cash position remains sound even after additional spending and pay off commitments in the last quarter.</p>	<p>Information</p>
<p>Year ending 30 June 2023</p> <p>Looking ahead we have no significant further guaranteed transfer receipts to come from historic deals next year.</p> <p>With our self-sufficient funding model and no benefactor, that means our funding requirements in 22/23 must be covered from the cash reserves remaining at 30 June 2022 and new net Business Income or Football Fortune for next season.</p> <p>We need to grow income to cover extra spending and cost inflation.</p>	<p>The 22/23 new season ticket sales will be critical to our plans and what we can afford to spend in 22/23.</p> <p>A positive and optimistic finish to the 21/22 season with excitement for 22/23 is clearly vitally important. This is needed alongside the continuing to conserve cash to fund our normal future day-to-day trading activities and if possible build cash reserves, just in case, to cover unplanned events.</p> <p>We expect and are planning for our costs and spending to increase in 22/23 and beyond. This includes on and off the field.</p>	<p>Information</p>

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Questions		
Q1 Can you confirm when the Forum featuring Owners/Staff will take place?		
A See above - 24 May. Another is provisionally planned for late June after the pre-season commences and after fixture release.		
Q2 Can the Club confirm when the next vote on the format of the EFL Trophy is, and whether they intend to continue to vote 'for' the inclusion of B/Academy teams - In spite of an overwhelming 'No' vote from fans when it was first mooted, and the subsequent drop in Attendances since		
A No proposals put forward to clubs yet, or vote scheduled to take place.		
Q3 How do we pay the debt back, especially if there's no "football fortune" or new owners/investment?		
<p>A It is essential to remember, it is extraordinarily rare for EFL clubs to generate enough cash from their day-to-day trading to pay players without <i>"football fortune"</i> or <i>"new owners/investment"</i> never-mind debt. Almost every EFL club needs new cash each year to keep going. Owners provide it - if it's not Football Fortune, or if Football Fortune is not enough.</p> <p>CUFC currently needs circa £500k of new cash to pay its day-to-day trading costs every year. This is to cover pre 21/22 spending levels on the playing budget (ie no increase - which is unrealistic), before cost inflation (which is actually happening) and before any new investment in the ground or team or football department (as PS says to "rebuild the club"). Any debt repayments (or even interest) means a bigger "cash hole" to start with – with none of that cash going to make the club better either. Bridging that current cash gap is a serious challenge already; day-in, day-out, year-in, year-out. This will be tougher in 22/23 and beyond, even before anything extra on top – like relating to debt.</p> <p>... <i>"if there's no "football fortune" or new owners/investment"</i> ... there is no scope to pay debt from existing club income and cash flows, without making cuts to spending or growing business income significantly and quickly.</p> <p>Given our model with already limited cash for investment on or off the field, and a very low-cost operating model already, to achieve any meaningful new cost reductions on top, to fund debt repayments, would be unrealistic without risking a severe and very fast downward spiral. In my opinion, that is a not a viable approach, while trying to compete on the pitch. As we have seen, cutting football spending is risky, and if you then spend what you do have poorly, it risks catastrophe. Relegation, income collapse and ruin all can come very fast – that doesn't help repay the debt the next season and after.</p> <p>To grow business income by over £500k (net) in a climate of economic problems and a cost of living crisis for businesses and fans, while the club is also suffering rising operating costs (stadium, utilities, insurance, minimum wages, supplies) is possible, but takes time and also needs upfront investment. Winning matches can change things quickly. £500k represents around 50,000 extra home fans buying a walk up match ticket – that's around 2,000 a game – a nearly 50% increase in home fans. But it is worth noting the last 6 home games saw a 1,000 increase.</p> <p>Almost every EFL club cannot borrow and get loans in the first place, except from their owners or closed connected parties who understand it's not an investment to make a return or get back. If debt is provided, repayment is usually linked to guaranteed cash from player sales (like MSD or MacQuarrie), because clubs don't have the trading cash flows to operate, never mind repay historic debt, except with cash from owners or football fortune or new owners coming refinancing to takeover/pay the old debt. Where it is secured, selling a club stadium to get repaid is not like repossessing a house – ask those who lent secured on Gigg Lane or Pride Park.</p> <p>Even the staunchest supporter who is considering "investing" will recognise, providing new cash to pay old debt does little, if anything, to improve or help the club in future. In that case why do it? Better to spend cash on the future not the past – yes?</p> <p>This is very simple and is why those who provide money to clubs in the form of debt, are almost always faced with huge write-offs when the sell or exit (Courtney, Knighton. Story) or they do a commercial deal to share "football fortune" or get repaid over a very, very long time. It is why lending with the expectation of repayment is very rare and fraught with problems.</p> <p>In terms of new "external cash coming in" to pay debt - and I am not advocating or calling for this, I am just explaining in theory - that could be from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • third donations – like fans and other benefactors. • fund raisings (like Tifosi aimed repay or replace it) for the specific purpose (like of sorting 'the debt). This is normally for new projects not to clear up debt from the past • new equity from existing or new shareholders <p>All this means EFL football clubs repaying debt is extraordinarily rare and difficult – it is why it's extraordinarily rare for a lender who is not an owner to loan cash to clubs in the first place, as they see the issues of repayment, even with security. Ask MSD at Derby, trying to recover its debt even while secured on the stadium. That is why anyone who chooses to do so, in those circumstances, deserves full respect and credit for their generosity and support for a community asset.</p>		

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	<p>Alternatively, "Football Fortune" is unexpected and unplanned and therefore is not budgeted for so, when it arrives, there is scope to use it for special purposes – like investment or debt repayment. This is why it's common for owners who sell to often look for a contingent windfall "if you get to the PL or sell players" etc to have the hope of some recovery of old sunk debt in future, after they have sold up. An FA cup tie away against a big 6 PL team can net £1m easily. To achieve that by growing income in L2 or cutting costs is almost impossible.</p> <p>As has been explained before, in our case because we need at least £500k "football fortune" minimum to stand still, to firstly cover the day-to-day trading losses each year, once we get past that we start to have surplus cash that year. But beware if we don't get £500k in a year, we need to have reserves to cover it until we do!</p> <p>All these issues can be dealt with - if they weren't clubs would never change ownership. It just needs a commercial and pragmatic approach.</p>	
Q4	You mentioned it's the most optimistic you've been in your time here? - can you elaborate on this please?	
A	Fan response to Paul Simpson. Changes that have been made off the field.	
Q5	Is there any news re investment/takeover?	
A	<p>While ownership is a Holdings issue the current position is as follows:</p> <p>The plan B investor remains in intermittent contact but is not active.</p> <p>The plan C investor has gone away.</p> <p>No new expressions of interest in taking over or investing in the club have been received in 2022 so far.</p> <p>We have also not been contacted by any potential investor requesting information as a first-step.</p> <p>I have had one new conversation with an "intermediary", to outline the position of the club from already public information. No contact after that.</p>	