

QUESTIONS BROUGHT TO CUSG MEETING ON MON 16 DECEMBER 2019 BY THE USERS OF THECUMBRIANS.NET FORUM

- No Group is made/forced to answer any question and does so at their own behest.
- Some Groups have answered both their own specific questions and the ones that were marked 'All in attendance', others have answered just their own specific questions.
- If a Group hasn't answered their questions, a simple 'No answer received' has been written. This is in the interests of clarity within the CUSG Group.
- TheCumbrians.net would like to thank all those who replied on behalf of those who submitted questions.

QUESTIONS FOR CUFC: NOTE – ANSWERS PROVIDED BY NIGEL CLIBBENS – MEDIA ANSWERS BY ANDY HALL.

BOARDROOM BUSINESS:

Q1 We understand Phillip Day is taking the shares in the club. How long will it take?

I have no information on that point.

Q2 According to Michael Knighton, Andrew Jenkins would never accept an offer for the club if it meant him leaving. According to Kirdi, "Mr Jenkins will never leave". According to the Trust, Andrew Jenkins said to Fred Story that Robin Browns consortium were trying to take the club from him and spoil his christmas that year. Admittedly not all are creditable people but the theme remains the same - therefore is it correct Mr Jenkins would never give up a director role in Carlisle United if an appropriate offer came in?

No - it is not correct to say that.

My reasons for disagreeing (not including your own statement "not all are creditable people") are:

1 Two of your three quotes do not actually support the claim at all. They are not about a director role - as I explain below. The other quote needs to be stretched to support your claim and then actually becomes evidence of a willingness to accept an offer, not block it! (I explain below); so, from your own evidence, it doesn't support your claim and, if anything, is evidence of a willingness to leave.

2 The quotes 1 and 2 you cite contradict each other.

3 In all my dealings and discussions in all my time at the club , never has a 'director role' for AJ ever been mentioned as a condition of an acceptable offer. In the discussions with Kirdi it wasn't discussed; I think AL planned to keep AJ as director.

Finally, you hit the nail on the head, the key issue is always to receive an "acceptable offer." The first step is to receive an offer.

Q3 Why is John Nixon, the only one on both boards?

Holdings' shareholders decide who goes on the Holdings and the 1921 board by virtue of the powers they ultimately have, plus any other legal agreements in place.

John is a shareholder, so is on the Holdings board, the same as all other Holding shareholders.

John has EFL, FA, EFL Trust roles which impact on operational matters in the club, so is on the 1921 board.

Q4 Is this a requirement for his EFL/FA roles?

Yes.

See Q2 November

Q5 Why if he says he does very little, is he on both boards?

See Q3 above

Q6 Why isn't Nigel Clibbens on both boards?

He is not a shareholder or funder representative, so not on Holdings board.

His role is operational, so only on the 1921 board. Holdings shareholders decide who goes on the Holdings and the 1921 boards by the powers they ultimately have, plus any other legal agreements in place.

Q7 As well as being a director on both boards, Mr Nixon is also the company secretary for both companies. Is this not an unfair burden on a man in his 70s who has many other commitments with the FA and EFL and receives no remuneration from the club and even has to put money into the club now on a regular basis?

The Company secretary role, whilst important from compliance point of view, in no way can be described as a "burden" given what is required.

Q8 Has any director mentioned they would like to leave/resign recently?

Not that I'm aware of.

Q9 The EFL rules State: "114 Club Contracts

114.1 No Club shall enter into a contract which enables any other party to that contract to acquire the ability materially to influence its policies or the performance of its teams in League Matches or matches in any other recognised competition."

Does our agreement with Mr Day not influence our policies (seems transfer policies and engagement policies have been influenced)?

No. (Also a matter of accuracy, the agreement is with EWM).

The 1921 and Holdings boards set the club's policies and make decisions, the directors implement those board decisions and make other executive decisions in line with their roles, powers and responsibilities.

Q10a Will Nixon, Jenkins and Pattinson be attending the next fans forum,

They have attended them on each occasion when they have been held in the past so I see no reason why they wouldn't attend in future. At the CUSG meeting we discussed potential future forums possibly in the New Year. When I confirmed this week with JN he said would and also AJ said his door is open for anyone who wants to meet him as well.

Q10b so we can actually ask what is going on with EWM ? EFL rules require at least Jenkins to be their:" as majority shareholder.

As far as "whats going on with EWM"... the answers at a forum would be the same as now, and in the past, because there is nothing new on the situation at present. Only if circumstances change can and will the answers change. It will not be a different answer just because it's put to a different person, or in a forum, or through another route – because the position and facts are unchanged.

I agree its different to a substitute for face-to-face question– but for fans interested in getting ongoing, up to date information and more detailed insight about the club, IMO these monthly questions and answers providing far more of that. However, I do understand for some fans they want something different (which they get from a forum) and also its not the best way for all questions to be dealt with.

By taking questions by this Q&A route fans can get full, detailed answers in writing. Every question is answered carefully and in a considered fashion, and a far larger and wider number of questions and topics can be covered, which are of a broader interest to all fans than just a "hot/personal" topic. These questions are submitted six to eight times a year (over 50 separate questions this month after 30 questions last month, and more than 20 in October – many more if you include sub-questions).

"18 Supporter Engagement

118.1 Clubs shall hold at least two meetings/fans forums per Season to which its supporters (or representatives) are to be invited in order to discuss significant issues relating to the Club. The framework for these meetings shall be documented in the Club's customer charter, but are subject to the following minimum criteria:

118.1.1 Clubs must be represented by the Club's majority owner, board director(s) or other senior executive(s)"

I supported it when it was brought in by EFL and still do.

Supporter engagement is part of our plan, within the Strategic Objective of "Working together"... "This means the Club and its fans and community coming closer and having a common purpose. Providing fans with more and detailed information about the club is important."

The Carlisle United Charter ("Charter") brings together the club's principal aims, commitments and policies, including those relating to supporter engagement.

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/siteassets/documents/190630-club-charter-june-2019.pdf>

Forums are one element, they are not sufficient.

Q11a Why is Kevin Dobinson seen at the club? What does he do, decisions he makes? Why does he not have an official title?

Kevin is a respected local businessman who helps the club with advice and commercially. He works closely with the commercial team day-to-day to help us maximise commercial opportunities (see Q35). He does this in his free time, free of charge, and therefore does not have an official title. The club is grateful for his assistance, and he is making an impact in my view. It is a good example of someone going beyond “offering help”, but then doing the hard but crucial part and actually giving “help” to increase the commercial income.

Q11b What role does Kevin Dobinson have at the club?

See Q11a above.

POSSIBLE TAKEOVERS:

Q12 There's vague rumours that 2 serious offers have come in from Hanergy Holding Group, is this Internet talk or were there offer, interest, rebuffed etc?

No contact that I'm aware of from anyone of that name.

Q13 Has the sports company (sorry name has alluded me) that looked into Bury been in touch with looking at a takeover/investment?

No contact that I'm aware of from anyone fitting that description.

Q14 Can we have the procedure required for an initial approach of takeover/investment, how the club would like the proposal given, people to speak to etc. I.E What is the standard formal process?

In the AJ/EWM statement on 22 November 2019 the procedure was given:

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2019/november/club-comment-22-nov-19/>

AJ said: “The standard formal process needs to be followed closely.”

“It is critical to have the full details in a comprehensive proposal document so that they can be considered carefully and closely.”

“... and we can conduct all required due diligence, such as ensuring compliance with the EFL rules. These details need to be shared through the formal channels for consideration by the board of directors, who can then make a recommendation.”

EWM said: “These approaches need to be made through the formal channels – which cannot be bypassed – at the club, with us being kept up to date.”

To be clear this is standard practice – nothing special, new or different for us either, and also is nothing a credible investor would not do.

“people to speak to etc”

It depends on what the nature of ‘help’ really means.

Just like anyone who wants to help the club commercially would speak to the commercial team, those who want get involved and help with IT support would speak to the operations people. It's the same for any takeover / investment approach.

Interested parties who want to do anything relating to the shares in the club – which clearly covers any ownership change / takeover / investment (like buying some or all the existing shares, or buying some new ones)/ working alongside existing shareholders quite obviously need to deal with those who own and control the shares (the three shareholders and CUOSC) – not speak to the IT or commercial team.

They would need to speak directly or to those authorised and capable of dealing with the proposal / enquiry / takeover / investment approach.

The first call could arrive to anyone at the club, an email or via a contact, but once you get past the first call, the interest would be passed on to me. That is what has happened since the day I joined, and with all of the approaches that have been made to the club.

That way the potential investor is talking to someone with the correct information, knowledge, skill, authority to deal with the interest and questions. In addition, I will always manage the process properly in the interest of the club.

As I have explained in previous answers, I get calls and enquiries regularly where basic club/investor information is shared – it's a two way process – to filter and test the interested party at the start to make sure they are genuine, and to make sure that what they are saying is bona-fide and that it's worthwhile progressing. For example, if the basic idea of the 'investor' doesn't fit with the club view of what it might accept, then everyone's time is not wasted and decisions can be made quickly.

Because conducting business investment deals is a specialist area, I would expect any representative / intermediary / deal broker/ front-man who is speaking for the investor(s) to be credible. The team / people an investor puts together is important. Investors understand that and the successful ones select their people accordingly. It's why after saying they have the money, the next thing deal makers do is tell you about the successful deals they have completed to give evidence as to why they should be taken seriously.

For illustration of the general point, if you want to buy a house you appoint a solicitor, a specialist on house deals, to act on your behalf - not a solicitor who does criminal law, or a builder who is a specialist on building the house, or someone you are connected with but knows little about buying a house but has lived in one, and will move in with you after you have bought it.

“Standard formal process “

Initially building and then maintaining trust is crucial (as I explained in Q13 in November). Before any interested party gets to the point of being able to submit a comprehensive proposal they will need to do what they feel is required to prepare one (the objective being to get the deal done). That may include making external enquires, talking to other stakeholders and contacting the club for access to more private information or to answer questions. In Q11 in November I explained what a proposal would look like and what the club would want answers on.

To do that they need to be speaking to the right people to get the detail they need, but they also need to know what questions to ask so they don't make incorrect presumptions which mean their proposal doesn't work. All the shareholders and EWM need to be kept up to date.

After gathering their information, the investor (or their representative) then need to put their comprehensive takeover / investment proposal in black and white to the shareholders, so it can be considered properly by them.

We don't have one shareholder, so there is not one person to decide and approve a deal – so any proposal has to go to all of them. It has to have the key shareholders on side with it – hence management of the process and communication with everyone is important.

The proposal will then be referred to the Holdings board – where all shareholders are represented (along with EWM), who would consider it and decide what to do. That is what happened with Kirdi – when the written proposal finally came in and was considered by the shareholders.

As has been said: “These details need to be shared through the formal channels for consideration by the board of directors, who can then make a recommendation.”

Q15 Who wrote the statement that was released on the 22/11/19?

EWM and club.

The EWM part was provided to us by them. The AJ part was from us, approved by AJ.

Q16a Regarding the statement on the 22nd November - What does compliance with the EFL rules mean, with regards putting in a proposal.

The key EFL compliance relates to:

1 Owners & Directors Test

Before a person joins the club board they must submit to the Owners & Directors Test (as per EFL Regulations Appendix 3). This is not a test of whether someone is fit and proper to run a club. The board and shareholders have to test that.

It is simple management and planning to deal with this early.

What if you wait until contracts are in place and a “deal done” and then the investor fails to pass?

Future Financial Information

Since 2010 the EFL has required Championship clubs to submit “Future Financial Information” (FFI) in advance of a transaction where individuals acquire ‘Control’ of the club. With effect from 6 June 2014, those provisions have applied to all clubs. In June 2017 the Regulation was further updated to

clarify the right of the EFL to impose conditions following the conclusion of any changes in control. FFI means a monthly phased profit and loss account, cash flow statement and balance sheet forecasts through to the end of the next following season. The forecasts should also include details of key assumptions. The FFI must be approved in writing by the board of the club. The regulation contains further detail. The EFL will also require up to date management accounts commencing from the date of the last set of audited / reviewed accounts (interim or full).

2 Source and sufficiency of funds

The EFL has the power to require individuals acquiring ‘Control’ to appear before it and provide evidence of the source and sufficiency of any funds they propose to invest in, or otherwise make available to the club. Anticipated funding requirements after the change of control must be fully set out in the FFI submission, and when assessing this the EFL will also look at the proposed acquisition and will require sight of any sale and purchase agreement, or equivalent documents, to understand the scale of the transaction and impact on available funding.

In this context, the EFL will look both at the value of the transaction as well as the proposed new investment. The EFL will look at both equity and debt funding arrangements.

A proposal therefore needs to be comprehensive to get EFL approval. As I explained, any representative of an investor would be familiar and comfortable with this.

Q16b Speaking to the EFL, they only get involved once a proposal/contracts have been in place?

No, that is not correct.

The EFL will get involved when they are requested by a club. If not requested, they will get involved as and when its rules and regulations require and gives them powers to do so.

This is where knowing how to manage the process and having relations with the EFL and the right people in the EFL is important.

By engaging and working with the EFL early in the process (as you would with any regulator that must sanction a deal) it reduces cost, reduces time and maximises the chances of a smooth deal. IMO early engagement should help the EFL to gain the comfort it needs to support a deal getting done. Questions can be dealt with early and paperwork prepared right first time in the required form.

Q17a Regarding the statement on the 22nd November - "We would welcome being joined by other passionate financial supporters" - thats not true is it?!

I disagree.

I say that because of evidence of the past (before my time at the club), and from my experience since my arrival, what has been said and done.

If you look at what has happened in the past – in the AL case, the approach was very much “welcomed”.

At the start, from what I have seen and from those I have spoken to, and the reviewing the paperwork and correspondence in the files and looking back at the media report, there was an undeniable welcome in my view.

In the Kirdi case again, IMO, it’s true the approach was “welcomed.” It’s a matter of record about the immediate positive and welcoming response he received when he approached the club. Much of the fans criticism towards the club was for the enthusiasm of the welcome.

In both cases, the issue was not a case of the club not “welcoming” interest.

In my time here other expressions of interest have been welcomed.

i. The club released a disgusting statement about Andrew Lapping when he was trying to help

I’m not commenting further on the statement, it’s in the past, I gave my thoughts some years ago. I have nothing new to add on that.

In terms of it supporting your opinion, it does not in my view. The statement came at the end of the process, it was not about “welcoming being joined by....”.

ii. and ridiculed Robin Browns attempts at just trying to help

I don't know about the details of that deal, so can't comment.

iii. and are putting on the blockers on this latest Lumsdon attempt? –

I don't know what you mean by “putting blockers on” – you haven't given any reasons for saying that.

The club has not received any proposal (I haven't seen anyone claim it has), or done anything that can be described as “putting the blockers” IMO.

On the contrary, I think for anyone looking with a balanced view, a roadmap has been given showing the way. The statement makes clear:

- the door to knock on ... “these approaches need to be made through the formal channels – which cannot be bypassed – at the club”
 - door is open ... “It's essential that we consider all proposals seriously and go into things with an open, positive attitude” ... “would welcome being joined by other passionate financial supporters,” etc.
 - what to do when you walk through the door ... “have the full details in a comprehensive proposal document.”
 - what would happen next if you go through the door ... “so that they can be considered carefully and closely ... we may develop our own view, but it would always be driven by protecting the long-term interests of the club and its central role in the community. That is our priority ... we consider all proposals seriously and go into things with an open, positive attitude.”
- Isn't that anything but giving a step-by-step guide for anyone wanting to help?

Even more so when coupled with what I said about the contents of a proposal last month (Q11)

Q17b Why would a respected person want to help?

Everyone is different. Football attracts a lot of “respected persons” - I have seen examples of all types first-hand – I am sure fans have too looking from the outside.

To answer the question there are two things to consider – “why” and what is meant by “help.”

Why?

When almost every club in the EFL loses money (moderated by unpredictable football fortune) and the success (going up the pyramid) is associated for most clubs with losing even more money at an accelerating rate the higher you go, volunteering to be an “investor” in a club means motivation is critical. It affects everything from day one, in good times and bad and overtime.

“why”... in my experience, people have their own very personal motivations for wanting to “help”, some examples :

- Selflessness – this is the most difficult for fans to understand and leads to the most questions. Its nothing more than a wish do the right thing and make a positive difference, they're able to and

have a genuine desire to. When normally we are all used to people in life wanting something tangible in return for anything, it's hard to accept – it always raises the question, “too good to be true... what's the catch?” Especially in football where often people appearing to have this motivation have been found to come up short. This can tar others, so sadly in this case its often accompanied by unfair scepticism rather than open mindedness.

- Builders – people who thrive on creating and achieving things and winning – in a super competitive industry, football is very attractive.
 - Ego – the opposite selflessness. They want to own a club / any club – to have the kudos from being part of the game.
 - Dreamers - “live the dream” – the fan coming from the terrace with new cash to spend.
 - Use someone else's money to get inside and get a job, be part of it (to then live the dream etc), and carry little or no personal risk, but get high upside rewards.
 - Finance driven - take control of a club to make money – limited underlying interest in the football or club which is seen as not much different to any other business for profit
 - Short term opportunists - they see a club as an undervalued “asset” maybe with “weak sellers” that give an opportunity or exploit a situation by buying / taking over cheap (distressed clubs - or take advantage of owner goodwill, who give it away). Once these opportunists see there is no bargain and they can't force / hoodwink, they move on.
 - Use the club vehicle to improve another personal business or businesses – share costs and facilities to make money and personally gain.
 - Huge personal belief that they have the magic formula to do what others cannot and are desperate to show it (often bordering on deluded and irrational– these people are the most dangerous in my view and can cause mayhem – often they are the best “talkers”).
- Lots of these characteristics play a part in the mix and why they want to help.

Help?

A statement offering “Help” means absolutely nothing in isolation, except as a positive “signal” (help is a good thing) – it could represent anything and is certainly seen as different things to different people. Only with more information can you assess and judge what it actually means. It's the detail that counts.

For illustration to use the recent instance – and therefore be real life example.

To be crystal clear and double underline, – its not to judge or comment on the merit of the “offer of help” or say anything about what's been said, debated, reported or commented on.

My point is about the principle, Its to show how help and motivation are connected and the detail is crucial, so every proposal can be different.

An “offer of Help” has been described as:

“offer of help the club”... no details provided,
... the “offer of help” could mean anything just based on that. In the absence of anything else as I said it's a positive “signal” (help is a good thing)

“not coming in and stating we wanted to take over the club” ...
... the “offer of help” was described as not a takeover, so that removes one possibility of all the range of possibilities – it is a crucial possibility when the aim is succession

"IF we found out about what would happen to existing debt and shares, then we could propose the takeover" ...

... the "offer of help" could be a takeover

"No one knows what the approach entails" ...

... as no-one knows what "the offer of help" entails all the possibilities are open

"Firstly, this was not a takeover, this was a chat asking what the current situation is at Carlisle United." ...

... "the offer of help" was not a takeover, but described as a chat and asking questions.

"it could have been to come into the club, alongside PD, create a new board, new commercial department and bring in some much needed revenue." ...

... "the offer of help" could have been help commercially, to increase revenue and change the board. Which board... we have two? the operational 1921 board – CEO/FD/CUOSC/JN or the Holdings shareholder board who own the club AJ/JN/SP/CUOSC/Lord Clark/EWM?

"Also putting much needed work into getting community involved whether it be football, youth, the unemployed, elderly, be a hub" ...

... "the offer of help" includes putting work into community

"no one is going to take it on in its current state, compromise is essential" ... "we needed to know what the status was with shares / debt before we finalised our plan" ...

... "the offer of help" depends on the status of shares and debt.

"to say we just wanted to help, was to get in the door" ...

... finally "the offer of help" was a means to achieve something else, "get in the door before someone started making it hard for us."

As can be seen from above these descriptions show how "help" can be different things and change; chat and questions ... a new board ... not a takeover ... nothing heavy ... possibly a takeover ... a way of getting in the door ... simply: can we help? ... commercial help ... to work with PD or him take it on himself ... much needed work into getting community.

Put together "offer of help" ... has been described as

"simply: can we help?"..."not coming in and stating we wanted to take over the club"..."needed to know what the status was with shares / debt before we finalised our plan"..."IF we found out about what would happen to existing debt and shares, then we could propose the takeover" ... "to say we just wanted to help, was to get in the door" ...

Again, to be clear – that is not disputing any quote or claim or explanation or judging the motivation at all. It is not making any judgement on what is said either. It is to illustrate, the key issues are that "help" can mean many things to many people and can so it is crucial to be clear what it is and who it is being offered to.

Q17c who see the world in the same way as we do" thats the problem isn't it - it must be up to the boards standards.. what gives them the right to say this?

Please consider this:

Would you be happy for the board to hand the club over to anybody?

For the existing shareholders to just go?

Does it matter who comes in, as long as there is change?

Do you want any fan ownership or not?

Does it matter what the "motivation" is or the "help" offered is? or whether the plan is credible/reasonable?

This is the heart of the issue.

If not then, no comprehensive plan is needed, its just a matter of someone offering "help" to be given the keys.

It is the responsibility of the board to ensure any ownership succession leaves the club in a better place to prosper than it would otherwise be. If not, why do it? Unless risking making things worse is worthwhile just to get change. We have a duty to the club – the directors take it seriously.

If the board don't do all they can to try make sure the next generation will make it better, who will?

It is not the responsibility of the EFL or FA, and they have no powers to do it either (you may think they should, but they don't at present). The EFL job is to protect the competition to ensure the club fulfils its fixtures and abides by its rules. Their role is in no way comparable with passing the club over to someone who will make it better and prosper.

(who I might add have ran the club disgracefully and are useless/without plan)

I wont comment on the opinion part of your comment except to disagree.

On the factual part, it is not correct to say "ran the club ... without a plan". For example it can be seen:

It's in the Financial Accounts in 2017, from April 2018 and ...

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/siteassets/documents/cufc-1921-accounts-2017.pdf>

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/siteassets/documents/cufc-1921-signed-abbreviated-accounts-june-2018.pdf>

It's in the Club Charter ...

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/siteassets/documents/190630-club-charter-june-2019.pdf>

Q17d What exactly is "Seeing the world the same way as the owners" - because anyone who see the world the same as the owners - i'd say the supporters don't want involved - more years of misery.

Firstly, the statement doesn't say "Seeing the world the same way as the owners". Secondly, I don't see how you can say what "the supporters want". You are saying what your opinion is which you have the right to say. The statement is from the EWM part, it's what they are saying, it's not what the owners are saying.

The statement means if you want to work with EWM you need to get on with us and share the same view.

IMO, I know from experience, unless there is unity of purpose between shareholders and stakeholders, and round the boardroom table, you will get into trouble. So, if there is no unity before you start the prospects of success are reduced.

Q18 When, at some point in the future, PD takes over, will you push for Jenkins, Nixon and Pattison to get life bans from the boardroom for the damage they have inflicted on CUFC

No.

Q19 Can you give us an answer, in detail and in normal understandable English, why the recent approach was discarded almost without discussion/ consultation etc

As I said and explained in Q17a I think for anyone looking with a balanced view, the club gave a roadmap showing the way.

The club has not received any proposal (I haven't seen anyone claim it has) or done anything that can be described as "discarded". No proposal has been put to the shareholders AJ, JN, SP, CUOSC, no meetings have been held with them or requests for meeting with them (I haven't seen anyone claim there has) Without having received anything, met anyone or been asked to meet anyone or consider anything there is no approach for them discard.

and why was it so secretive?

If the shareholders haven't received a proposal, or had any talks, how can they say anything beyond what has been said?

Q20 Also, what would it actually take for the club to welcome new investment? It seems wealthy local people and fans aren't wanted or needed nor fantasy billionaires.

See Q14 this month. See Q11 and Q13 last month.

Q21 Why will the Custodians of the football club and EWM not talk to interested parties wanting take the club forward?

It is not correct to say that. The opposite is true.

The Club would talk to interested parties who want to take the club forward. See Q17a. I reiterate it every time the issue is raised. EWM would be kept up to date and form its view as per the statement.

Q22a If I was to win euro millions this Friday (hopefully) and came to you on Saturday to buy CUFC how much would I be required to pay?

I explained what a proposal and offer would need to cover in Q11 last month.

Q22b Would the current owners be happy to walk away for their guarantees covered with EWM)

I don't understand your point. Addressing historic obligations in any deal are referred to in Q11 2e last month.

I will explain simply how a guarantee works.

A financial guarantee is a contractual obligation (similar to guarantee say on a washing machine) on the person making the promise, to do something (eg replace) for a future period, in certain specific circumstances (eg if it's faulty). Once it's given, the promise it is something you "can't walk away" from (as you asked) even you want to. Only those involved in any guarantee can change it, they all have to agree between themselves – no third part can interfere with it.

EWM/PHILLIP DAY:

Q23 Which leads on to - what are the plans of EWM and Day?

In its recent statement, EWM said:

"We're supporters of the club because we're passionate about the role it plays in the local community; we need a flourishing club at the heart of Carlisle ... always be driven by protecting the long-term interests of the club and its central role in the community. That is our priority."

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2019/november/club-comment-22-nov-19/>

We have no new information to add - see Q27.

Q24 Does nobody at the club see how depressed the fans are and how depressing the match day experience is?

From CUOSC, CUSG, emails, meeting fans and feedback at games we understand the issues fans have with the match experience.

Q25 Has Phil Day been to Brunton park in the last few months ?

No.

Q26 Have you ever met Day ?

No.

Q27 Yourself, Nixon & Jenkins have all previously said any investor must have a plan etc., well what is EWM's plan ?

Yes.

I explained in detail in Q11 last month. The supporters I speak to always tell me they think it's important a new investor has a plan for the club.

EWM is not an investor, so it is not in its role to have a plan for the club. It's supports us, which is different to being an "investor".

NIGEL CLIBBENS:

During your time at the club you've built up a positive reputation, even among your critics, for the way you respond to criticism. We feel confident that we can take any concerns to you and that we will be treated with respect, you will listen to us and respond.

Q28a We don't feel confident that the other directors will treat us with respect if we take our criticism to them.

In my experience when fans have met and questioned the other directors it has been worthwhile for all concerned. I have taken part in every fan forum and every fan meeting for the last three-and-a-half years. Fans have said what they think, directors have listened and given their opinions. Not all have agreed with everything said, but all have been listened with respect,

At the same time, we need to recognise there have been times with passions and emotions on all sides because it means so much to everyone. IMO I don't think anything has crossed the line.

Football is an emotional game and it means a lot, not just to fans but the directors too. Yes, on occasion things get heated. That doesn't mean there is disrespect.

Q28b Do you feel this is something the other directors need to work on improving that relationship with supporters

We are constantly trying to improve relations with better fan engagement, communication and information. but it is a challenge for a number of reasons.

IMO, mistakes have been made, the directors would admit to them, and do – but we can't turn the clock back.

I recognised very early after coming into the club the importance past events play at this club, the effect they have on almost everything that takes place today, as compared with the more recent events, and what is actually happening now. Projecting past history to now – I call it "Now-srty" – to justify and evidence some view or opinion. I have said many times IMO it's the future that matters.

I have also said before that every word counts at CUFC (put under the magnifying glass for inconsistencies – sometimes taken so far to be as to become "Hair-splitting"). I understand what the directors in the club have said and decisions made over the years have been filed and are brought out in evidence (now-stry), so to speak. To be clear that is not criticising or complaining it is actually accepting it as a reality.

I think, events that have happened in the club (off the pitch - I'm sure every fan could list some) and the journey the club has been on (on the pitch), plus developments in the wider pro-game, have all come together and played a part in relations. In my view, this cocktail of issues plus the passage of time means it's inevitable that the relationship would suffer in the eyes of some fans.

Nobody can turn back the clock, people make mistakes, everyone is human, for me it's the future that matters, and dwelling in the past is not energy well spent. Others may not share my opinion and it may suit them to look back, so we can differ.

Q28c and in your opinion how best can they do that?

I think that relations can improve by the directors:

- continuing do all we can to put the interests of the club first – and show that in what we do
- engaging and talking to fans directly (we have forums, and will continue to, and the door is always open for anyone to come in and chat face to face); like a fans forum in the New Year

- sharing more information openly and honestly – I think the club has changed in my time here on this, it has been uncomfortable at times, but I believe it's worthwhile.
 - demonstrating good stewardship of the club – making decisions in the interests of the club.
 - Answering questions like this
- More importantly is how fans think directors can best do that? Because it's fans minds that have to be changed and, us doing things that don't / won't help do that, is not going to help.

Perhaps the forum could be a route to get views. I will certainly make sure CUSG and CUOSC are asked.

Q29 You must have the patience of a Saint. Why don't you just tell Mullen to {censored} off?

I am very patient (to a point 😊). I can see it's a tongue-in-cheek question, but it actually raises important issues – as important as many faced by the club.

Mullen103 asks some excellent questions, which I am sure other fans welcome answers to. I am happy to answer them as it helps fans sort "wrong facts" from what's real, rather than having to rely on gossip, "talk" and "sources" (which almost always unreliable and/or biased in my experience).

Firstly, the reality of football is that it is very, very partisan and opinionated. There is very little "grey". Fans have opinions and beliefs on everything, everyone and every issue, big or small – as the forum demonstrates and when you talk football to anyone.

Initial views can be very strong, long-lasting and, in my experience, seldom change much even in the face of overwhelming new information, or the old information proving to be plain wrong.

With the growth of social media this is even more the case. Fan views have always been easily and quickly formed; it's not wrong, it's the game – it's why we love it.

The difference between subjective opinions and the objective facts is clearly crucial but with more and more "noise" (amplified and dispersed by social media) it's easy to for noise to become fact. In football, because it's a complex business with lots of uncertainty, variability and volatility, it's often difficult to distinguish truth and fiction or cause and effect.

It's hard to think of any other "business" where so many people are paid to simply "talk" and give opinions, guess and speculate (with no consequences if its wrong) - there is a whole industry for this..

When does anyone ever say ...
 "I don't know so I wont speculate" ...
 ... it's the exact opposite, people say ...
 "I don't know but I will speculate anyway, I think ..."
 That's the game so it's what is required.

It can be a case of ...
 "I heard that ... (a claim that fits with a subjective opinion) ... so that proves my point". In the past this happened ... (Now-stry again – lets look backwards) so that also proves my point again about now and the future.

That “talk” refuels the “opinion” in the football world (by the way, who ever goes back and checks “you said this, it was wrong” which is why I say there is no penalty). That means it’s a licence to speculate and make claims, especially if it creates interest – clicks, likes, views, comments, etc.

The beauty of football is anyone can have an opinion and argue about it. Anyone can make a claim and it can be picked up and be transformed to become “truth.” But who provides the facts, balance and independent alternative view? If we as a club don’t, who will? We have a responsibility, to the club and fans, and it’s in our own interests to do it.

This is not criticism of anyone or a moan, it’s just making it clear that this is what happens and the world we operate in.

All that is as much part of being a club or a fan as anything else now. In a football world dominated by opinions, where there is uncertainty and an industry built to speculate and create noise, it is inevitable there are questions. It’s also inevitable they never end and even if you answer every one, there is always another on the way.

Yes, it’s miles removed from even 10 years ago, but it’s the game today and that’s in part what makes football all things to everyone. It’s part and parcel.

That’s why we as a club must deal with that reality of the modern football world, and fan expectations on communication and engagement. That is why answering questions is not about patience, it’s about doing what’s right and necessary for the good of the club and fans. It’s why fan questions must be answered.

That is why IMO engaging directly with fans is therefore not only right but also it a club’s interest. So why its done.

Interestingly, questions are aimed increasingly at getting a comment or responses to facts or issues (like Q3-6,1-11,14-19 etc) – and fewer about confirming/denying rumours or claims (Q40). All questions are welcome.

I’m also realistic, I know (as explained above) opinions seldom change much and for some fans they will believe fellow fans and other “sources” they “trust” regardless. However, over time I see this changing.

So it’s still far better for the club to answer with facts directly rather than leave a void. That doesn’t mean fans have a “right” to know everything, or can be told everything nor does it mean we will respond to every claim/rumour. What is best for the club comes first. So, where there is a conflict, the club interest wins, and I will say so and explain why when I answer.

What I will do is point out information, claims and assumptions that are factually wrong, and explain why.

It’s also worth noting that “wrong facts” are almost always negative.

It’s obvious, but if rumours are unbiased, over the long term, you would see wrong positive “claims” as often as wrong negative “claims” – you’d get both good and bad claims that are fake evenly. Do we?... for example, ever heard something like:

- “I’m informed it’s better than you thought” not its worse?

- “I just heard something positive has happened” rather than something negative?
 - “I understand the club has received all the transfer money” rather than none?
- And that positive “rumour”/ “story” then turns out to be wrong? Rarely?

So it’s the case that hidden biases from whatever source can be revealed by comparing the frequency of their negative and positive fakes (not the true ones).

Of course as a club we can see that instantly, but for fans unless the true facts are known its difficult. So the more we communicate the better for all.

Answering questions allows the club to give some balance and a different viewpoint direct to fans into the discussions that take place, and provides the facts, balance and alternative view, which may not otherwise be there.

I believe over time this approach will make a positive difference. This engagement has been recognised outside the club, more fans are seeing it and getting something positive from it, and it may be changing some views on some things.

DIRECTOR OF FOOTBALL:

Q30a Was there a proper recruitment process for David Holdsworth’s Director of Football position?

There was no open recruitment process of advert, interviews, short lists etc. It was a direct appointment made by the Holdings Board.

Q30b How many others applied?

Not applicable.

Q30c If there wasn't, why not and who recommended him and picked him?

It was a direct appointment made by the Holdings Board.

Q30d Why is Holdsworth still with the club as he must share the blame for the situation we are currently in?

See answer to Q14 in November “Why is David Holdsworth still at the club?”

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2019/november/club-answers-to-recent-fan-questions/>

STEVEN PRESSLEY:

Q31 On SP. Why on earth was he offered a contract in the summer when, under his guidance after sheridan, the team played awful football and dropped like a stone in the league ?

At that point SP had been in the job just over four months and the club felt continuation was the right decision. The club said then:

“Steven has a very calm, diligent and methodical managerial style and he has demonstrated an excellent work ethic since joining us in January.

“He’s enjoying working at the club and he really has taken Carlisle United and Cumbria to his heart. When talking to him you can see instantly that he’s desperate to bring the success he feels the club deserves.

“We’ve watched him closely over the past few months and we’ve seen a manager who has a clear vision of what he wants to achieve. He’s already faced some difficult challenges but, despite that, he’s kept a level head and a real focus on where he feels things can be improved.”

CHRIS BEECH:

Q32 Jenkins said: “He has a proven track record in the identification and recruitment of players [note - Dale Stephens, David Worrall, Will Buckley, Scott Hogan, Jamie Allen and Andy Cannon £25 million]” how much did Rochdale actually receive, struggle to identify beyond £5 million going to Rochdale, how much of a thought did this play in the selection process?

Those sorts of detailed footballing questions are ideal for the football forum where Chris can explain himself about his career.

Q33 On the appointment of Beech do you not think it would of been professional to hear from our director of football on the matter ?

I am sure David will talk about it in future.

CUSG/MEDIA:

Q34a The CUSG meeting minutes were delayed last meeting, could you please answer the following on them please?

Q34b The CUSG minutes are produced by CUSG and were with the club Friday at 11.30am in their final draft, why then were they not published?

Answered together:

I’ll start by laying out the facts, then go into more detail:

+ The draft minutes were sent to all attendees at 4.34pm on Wednesday 6 November. The normal timetable is ‘any edits/additions back to Alastair (who drafts and collates the amendments) by Friday morning, with the aim for the minutes to then be published at noon that day.

+ At 5.30pm on Wednesday 6 November I raised a concern with all CUSG members about the release time, due to the London meeting which had only been convened that day – we had no prior knowledge that the meeting was going to be held.

+ At 5.50pm Cumbrian.net fed back, raising concerns about what some fans might think if the minutes were delayed.

+ The CUSG chair texted me to get my thoughts and I explained the situation that had arisen. At 6.44pm on Wednesday 6 December the CUSG chairman informed the CUSG members:

“Unfortunately we didn't think through the publication timing. Friday being a match day and a televised one at that, leaves the media team with an extremely hectic schedule, so we will need to publish on Sunday.”

+ I followed this up at 12.40pm on Thursday with an email to all CUSG members saying: “The media team will be setting off to London at around 6am on Friday morning and we have broadcast meetings with the FA and BBC in the afternoon,” and I explained the reasoning why I couldn’t action the minutes on the Friday.

+ At 11.36am on Friday 8 November the final minutes were circulated to the CUSG members by Alastair.

+ At 12pm on Friday 8 November I emailed the CUSG members and said again: "I see no reason for you all not to publish on your own channels on this occasion."

More details:

On Friday 8 November the media team had set off at 6am to get to London for the FA Cup first round game against Dulwich. The early set-off time was due to a broadcaster meeting being convened – which was only notified to us on the Wednesday 6 November (after the CUSG meeting) – with the broadcast partners, which was due to take place at 2pm on Friday.

Unfortunately traffic on the roads meant we didn't make the meeting. As it turned out, we dealt with everything that came our way anyway, but there was information we would have got from the meeting which would have been useful, so it would have been good to get there - for example, there were actually three different live broadcast networks on the night, not just the BBC, all with their own live requirements. That would have been good to know but, as I say, we cracked on with it all regardless.

We got stuck in traffic north of London at about 1pm. This almost proved to be fatal because it took a further two hours (possibly longer), after having stopped for a break, to get through London to Dulwich. We arrived at something like 4.30pm.

On arrival at the ground we met with the BBC and were then introduced to the other live broadcasters – one of which (an overseas network supplier) ended up supplying us with their match footage, which was fantastic, as we wouldn't otherwise have it.

As expected, it was full on from that moment, in terms of getting the manager to the required live interview positions and preparing our own coverage of the game.

After the game we were again at the mercy of the media and press, with players and manager needed by everybody – I estimate something like 15 to 20 different interviews were facilitated. Very enjoyable and challenging for myself and Amy to coordinate.

From there it was back to the car and back to Carlisle, where we docked at Brunton Park at 5.10am. That made it a 23-hour day, there or thereabouts.

Some points to note:

+ We were notified of the meeting with the broadcaster on Wednesday, and it was confirmed Thursday morning (just 36 hours before the game). There's nothing wrong with that, all of the press involved at the game were actually fantastic with us, but we would have benefitted massively had we actually been able to make it on time to the meeting. We worked out our travel needs (which, it turned out, we got wrong due to the traffic) and I then informed CUSG at 12.40 on Thursday 7 December by email that we were going to really struggle to even look at the minutes on the Friday (having already sent a warning email saying much the same thing the night before)..

+ In addition, I will never launch the minutes without the answered questions. The answers, in many cases, are more important than the minutes. Dan is very good at trying to get them across to me by midday on the agreed Friday, but it has been later than that on occasions. **(Note by DM: The only times they've been after midday Friday is when still waiting for Answers to come in.)**

+ Nigel sent the answers to the forum questions to me for info on Friday 7 December at 12.22pm. I wasn't able review them for the same reasons, as mentioned above. There were of over 40 questions and 19 pages. He sent them to Dan at 16.31pm on Saturday 9 November.

+ All other CUSG members received the answers from Dan at 7.45pm on Saturday 9 December. This was in-line with the Sunday deadline proposed by Alastair, which was agreed by all.

+ It was a 19-page document. Having got to sleep at around 7am on Saturday morning, I got up at 12 and did as much post-match stuff as I could. That took me through the afternoon. When Dan's email arrived at 7.45pm, I was actually beyond extremely tired. However, I felt that it would be better to get all of the work done that Saturday night rather than have to get up on Sunday morning and deal with it.

+ With absolutely no disrespect intended to anyone, those questions always arrive in a very rough format. Dan, I think, will confirm that he doesn't edit them. He simply copies and pastes the replies he gets into a document and sends it over ([Note by DM: Correct. It wouldn't be right for myself to interfere with other people's answers. I simply collate it all as received into a readable document.](#)). With 19 pages of solid writing, there is a heck of a lot of editing to do. It took 90 minutes to go through every page and remove the typos, edit the grammar and alter the flow (all requiring an edit without altering the meaning intended in the reply). From there I stuck it into the website editor.

+ At this point, it was somewhere just before midnight on the Saturday, and I decided just to launch it. The reason – we have a glitch which is EFL wide on launching articles. Titles, sub-titles and opening paragraphs are all housed in their own blocks. For some reason, as yet undiscovered, these blocks drop letters and words on the most inappropriate of occasions when the auto-launch function is used. If that happened and I had auto-launched, and was in bed, I would not be able to sort it. Rather than take that risk I launched it early, as I saw no harm in doing that.

Q34c What was the itinerary of the media team, on the day of the Dulwich match, these are the people that publish the minutes and were reported to not be at the ground until 5pm, that was despite members within CUSG being told they were busy at the ground all day?

See above. We planned the timings knowing that whatever we did, it was going to be busy. With the delay we experienced on the road - all that meant was that an already busy day became even more challenging.

Q34d Why were the minutes published late on Saturday night, could that not have been done Friday night?

See above.

Q34e If the club can't fulfil their obligations, should you be looking at another media person?

No, this was an unusual and unexpected set of circumstances.

We have never worked live with the Beeb before, but I think they are really comfortable that we are a good club to deal with now that we've had this game.

At the Monday CUSG meeting there was no hint that we'd be leaving at 6am on Friday. That only developed later in the week, and we reacted accordingly.

Q34f Could someone from CUSG not have a site login to publish them?

We cannot allow others onto the club website. The risk to them and us of something going wrong is too high. The IT Content Management System takes experience to use and the accidental click of just one button could be catastrophic and time consuming to fix. In addition, there are numerous data security considerations. We do not give log-ins to anyone other than myself and Amy - if new users were given any access they would have to be extremely CMS aware and tightly supervised, even in that case.

Q34g Who decided they'd be delayed, was a vote taken?

See above. I let everyone know it was going to be impossible as soon as the situation developed as it did from the Wednesday onwards. It was simply a decision based on the changing needs and circumstances of a hugely important and intense match day for the media department. The CUSG chairman showed complete understanding and informed the other members as soon as he could.

Q34h Could it not be planned better, so they could of been released before Friday?

Not without being able to predict that there would be a meeting scheduled on match day – we didn't know about that until the Wednesday, and it was the driving force behind everything else that happened thereafter. We could have rescheduled the CUSG meeting after the game was moved to the Friday, but had it been a normal travel day the minutes could have been dealt with, so there was no reason to change the actual meeting date.

Q34i Was there an increase in website traffic on the Friday of the Dulwich game?

The increase in traffic was for BBC2 on match day. The post-match video and written stuff on Saturday was our big website increase. This is entirely understandable as everyone was watching it on TV and devices on Friday night - they were then ready to read reports, look at match pics and watch our post-match vid content the following day. Televised games always take website traffic away, but interestingly it has little to no impact on the live social media work we do during the game, which is encouraging.

Almost finally – I made it explicitly clear to all of the CUSG members that if they felt strongly that their deadline should be met, then they could and probably should publish these minutes on their own channels at 12pm on the Friday.

One final thing – if things happened this way again in the future, I'd do the same. I think it would be unfair on everyone to ask them to submit minutes or answers early on Thursday. Whatever criticism CUSG receives, providing full and frank responses to the questions raised has become something I think everyone can feel pleased with.

That's why my advice would always be to go the other way – delay publication; don't compromise the need to give full answers to hit a deadline that is already tight by making it even tighter. I fully understand this isn't palatable for some, but the vast majority of fans I have spoken to, and I have deliberately asked the question, feel this was handled in a satisfactory way. Obviously there will be those who will never agree with that. Isn't that why we love this club!!!

COMMERCIAL:

Q35a Do the club intend to employ a sales/marketing/commercial manager anytime in the near future?

No.

We already employ a commercial manager (who leads the commercial sales and the retail). We have no plans at present to recruit a marketing manager – marketing would be a very different role to selling.

Q35b Who is filling the role at the present time?

Jenny Anderson.

Jenny is our commercial manager and has been in that position since July 2018, since she added that role to her retail manager role after commercial director Phil King left in March 2018, as we reorganised.

Jenny is a highly experienced and respected member of club staff and has worked at the club for over 15 years. She is well known by fans and has a strong understanding of the club and our commercial offering. She was in commercial from 2003-2012 before going into retail. Jenny was joined by Anne-Marie Gardiner in October 2018, after Katie Mitchell moved into the ticket office. Kevin Dobinson has been increasingly involved day-to-day. Between them they have many contacts in the city, built up over many years. These relationships play a key part for us.

Q35c Are the club happy that they are maximising their revenue potential in this department at present?

We are always striving to do better – as we are in all areas.

Growing commercial contribution (profit not just increasing sales) is an important element in increasing the long-term sustainability of the club, and reducing its reliance on external funding and football fortune.

It is a difficult market and a challenge for us to make commercial sales and profit for a number of reasons.

The commercial team work really hard to maximise the commercial income and have had a number of successes in securing new business sponsors this season, which is encouraging. Our match day hospitality in Foxy's receives excellent feedback and goes from strength to strength. There are always new commercial opportunities coming up, so there is always scope to do better (the latest being the scoreboard).

Q35d What are the club doing to boost commercial revenue (sponsorship, merchandise sale etc) additionally events?

In the middle part of 2018 the Holdings Board adopted a different approach. This meant Phil King, our commercial director, was not replaced and the commercial assistant moved into the ticket office. A whole new team was put in place. A new commercial manager and assistant were put in post from within the club and they were given hands on external support.

Since then the new team have led a number of initiatives and investments have taken place, including:

- Change of Kit Supplier to Errea.
- Revamp of United for Business club – our business club.

- Link up with Carlisle Business Support Network.
 - Renewal of Cumberland and EWM branding, new Warwick sponsorship with Armstrong Watson
 - New matchday programme (back to traditional format) in 2019/20.
 - Scoreboard recently installed – well documented elsewhere.
 - Improvements in Foxy's – change of food offer to highly popular carvery, improved main room and décor (new carpet in the last month).
 - Heavy selling effort focused on matchday hospitality and sponsorships.
- These will continue.

TEAM:

Q36a Can you confirm the budget has been a bottom 4 budget for the last 2 seasons?

That is not correct based on the EFL Summer data.

Jenkins says this season is same as last year while Presley said it is in the bottom 4. What is the truth?

The Chairman was correct at the time he said that.

There are lots of “claims” and “reports” about player wages.

There are all kinds of problems:

- What does the budget include? It means different things to different people, there is no standard consistent measure.
- Except for their own data, the only reliable data on other clubs' player budgets and football costs I have ever seen is from the EFL, which comes direct from clubs.

That data goes to very few people in each club and it is anonymous – who clubs share it with internally is different for every club. Club's know their own rank 1-24 but not the rank of other clubs (unless they share data). Around 60% of clubs share with each other (we do).

Claims on budgets are usually biased as a result of having unreliable data – hence I only refer to EFL data.

There are a huge number of variables that go into winning any game and over a season. Variability, complexity, uncertainty, volatility, unpredictability, randomness (especially at L2) mean that it would be more surprising if there was a cause and effect between wages and league position.

Similarly, if money dominates so much, why do football departments spend so much time and money not on player wages and on other things? It's a flawed argument to simplify a complex mix down to money.

In both the 18/19 EFL Summer data and the Winter data, our L2 ranking was the same. We finished 11th in L2 above our data rank. (In 17/18 when we finished 10th which was below our data ranking) In each case our data rank was higher than the 4th bottom referred to.

This season, after the 19/20 summer window, we also ranked in the same place as 18/19, so again higher than that claim.

Q36b Will the team budget improve after Christmas and was SP right that it is in the bottom 5 in the division?

See above Q36a and Q41.

Q37 Will Chris Beech be given any meaningful money in the January transfer window to replace the dross currently occupying the blue shirts?

See Q41.

Q38 Will Andrew Jenkins be chucking some more Money in the January to fix his mess again (as previously happened) or will EWM make this available or will we just be continuing with arguably the worst squad in our history?

See answer Q41.

Q39 Have the relevant discussions began with players over proposed contract extensions?

Discussions have started over the January window and future deals. Contract considerations are going on internally all the time. I'm not going to be drawn into where we are with players, but David and Chris will comment when/if there are developments.

TRANSFERS:

Q40a Have the club put pressure on Leeds to cough up for McCarron and Galloway?

No.

1. Our funding is in place for this year, put in place in the knowledge of those two deals being done and our forecast trading.
2. We are actually ahead of trading and cash flow forecasts due to cup fortune (not those player sales).
3. I explained in Q20 last month our cash position

There has been no need for extra unplanned funding to be sought from LUFC, so there has certainly been no "pressure Leeds to cough up".

Deferred payment is normal practice in football and very, very basic financial management.

Without boring fans with a lesson in credit, I'll try to explain – otherwise ignore:

In principle, money today generally has a higher value than money in future (for many reasons). So it's rational to prefer to get the money now. But what if you are offered £1,000 today or £1,100 in a year instead?

It can make perfect sense to agree to delay getting the money if you are compensated for waiting, by receiving more money later (the extra £100). If the rate of return you get by delaying is higher than the interest rate you pay on any borrowing you have.

In this case we will get more money from LUFC because we agreed to a later deferred payment. We could have got it earlier and got less. We could have agreed to deferred payment and gone to a bank to still get the money now (its common in football – WBA did so this week)

Usually people, especially football clubs, demand cash now because ...

- they need the cash urgently (for bills) or
- the extra cash is not enough to cover the risk of waiting (of the payer defaulting) or
- they pay higher interest on borrowings – so having cash to pay debt saves money

In our case:

- we didn't and don't need the cash now for bills (I explained last month about our positive cash flows over the last six months, and above) and funding is in place.
- we have had no discussions about using windfalls to repay debt as explained last month (Q23)
- the default risk is low
- interest we pay is far less than the extra gain we get from a deferred payment

Q40b We understand nothing has been paid yet.

I don't know where that understanding has come from, but it is 100% wrong (is suppose this is a classic example of the issue in Q29)

We have had money; the money we negotiated to be received, on time, when we negotiated to receive it. The "understanding" is not true, another example of negative "wrong fact"

In Q24 last month I specifically explained about the McCarron and Galloway money, again after I answered about it in August.

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2019/november/club-answers-to-recent-fan-questions/>

I said in August CUSG minutes Q6 ... "Some of the unexpected funds from the sale will inevitably need to be used to re-roof A stand. I explained in the past that the club needed to rebalance its spending priorities to invest both in the club for the future and also in player wages for the team now. We continue to do that."

"The McCarron money has not been received in full. The part we have got so far has been retained in the club, some for its day-to-day activities, some for A stand and the rest has gone into increasing the football player budget for this season.

"We have not received any cash in respect of the Galloway sale so far. We will decide what to do with the Galloway money and the rest of the McCarron money in the future. This a welcome future windfall that again makes us stronger."

It's an example of the challenges we have to face (Q29).

Which is why I think it beneficial to ask questions direct and get answers direct.

Q40c Why agree to "sell" these young players if no money is forthcoming?

The reasons for the transfers were explained.

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2019/july/breaking-young-midfielder-makes-move-to-championship-club/>

<https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/sport/football/leeds-united/latest-leeds-united-news/carlisle-united-boss-steven-pressley-disappointed-josh-galloways-decision-join-leeds-united-ried-talk-him-out-it-gel630405>

Q41 If the rumoured transfers do happen, for players with sell on clauses and Branthwaite, will the club be spending this on the first team, if so with the figures touted about will it be a case of promotion is a must next season?

As you say its "rumoured", so hypothetical at this point.

Should that arise, we will assess it in line with the established principles in our stated plans.

In the recent past when the club had significant windfalls (like 15/16 with £1.25m of Football Fortune) this was committed immediately and almost exclusively to football player deals (£400k extra spent on Total Football Expenditure in 15/16 then an extra £700k in 16/17 on deals which also extended into 17/18 at an extra cost of £500k).

I have explained at length previously why this approach was not sustainable and needed to change.

The overall approach now has been explained before. and is as follows (I also explained in Q24 last month) ... plus as I detailed above:

"It is part of our strategy to increase the value of our players by developing their talent, to improve the team and sell them for profit to then reinvest;

"... in the past the club needed to rebalance its spending priorities to invest both in the club for the future and also in player wages for the team now. We continue to do that.

"requires balancing our short and long-term objectives for both football and the wider club, weighing all their needs and demands."

Whatever we get as Football Fortune, we will follow these stated principles and use any profit to reinvest; weight the short and long-term, for club and wider football, and invest both for the future and also in player wages for now.

How that balance ends up will depend on the specific circumstances we face at the time. The Holdings board will decide.

Q42 Can the club confirm 100% we have sell on clause on Cosgrove? The Aberdeen manager says no.

If the player is sold the club will comment at that point. I have seen the CUOSC comment and have nothing to add.

EFL TROPHY:

Q43a We're now 4 Season's into the 'revamped' EFL Trophy. We've played 9 Home games with a combined attendance of 9616, which gives an average of 1068.

These 'crowds' have seen our 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 12th and 19th lowest attendances in the club's history. As a comparison, in the first half of this decade (Season 2010/11 onwards) we played 5 Home games in the Trophy with a combined attendance of 14742, which gives an average of 2948 - That's a difference of 1880.

Chief Exec NC said "We hope to see the competition thrive" when the revised Format was announced in the summer of 2016 - www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2016/july/efl-trophy-confirmed/

What I said is a matter of record. In the history books.

That is what I hoped at the time. My hopes haven't changed.

It was obvious though that the circumstances of the changes to the rules and the confusion over the "Whole Game Solution" and fan fears of the competition being a "trojan horse" for "B" teams to join the EFL, meant the competition was already facing major challenges before a ball was kicked.

Chairman AJ also said "I appeal to you to support your club at these games. If you don't, and you stay away, it does have an effect on the club financially. We completely understand that fans are sceptical, but it is a trial and we always need your support, whatever the circumstance." prior to the start of the revamped games in 2016 -

<http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/sport/football/car...sle-united-chairman/>

Do the club now think that the decision to vote for the inclusion of B/U23/U21 against the wishes of fans following consultation was a mistake, and that in doing so they helped contribute to the destruction of what was once a good competition for the lower League's?

As a matter of principal, it's flawed to look back with hindsight and using new facts / information that was simply not available, to evaluate whether "now" the original decision was right. Also, with the passage of time, it dulls the memory of the competition at that time.

However, that said, even without hindsight, just from the information that was available at the time of the decision, it's no surprise whatsoever to me to see the actual attendances we have had since, and the wider impact on fan relations following the path taken by the board. That risk was known at the time. The impact on fan sentiment for me has always been the central issue to balance with the money. Also, at the same time, our own support made no actual impact to the inclusion of teams anyway.

My personal view at the time (which hasn't changed now) was having gone through the consultation, that with the fans' views so massively overwhelmingly clear, not to reflect them in our club vote would lead to adverse consequences at our own club level. We debated this point, but the overall board view was, on balance, the benefits would outweigh.

I strongly believe in trying things which have a big opportunity, if they work (often you only "know" by trying), and small impact if they fail. The competition has brought benefits to the wider game, but at our particular club, they have been small so far compared with the adverse consequences.

On a purely football basis, we have seen some good games since the change and Jarrad scoring his first-ever goal and making a breakthrough will live long in my memory and was a special moment for him. Those opportunities are positive.

As I said above, I don't think what we did made any significant difference to the wider competition.

I say that because, logically, our decision to vote for the changes could only have "helped contribute to the destruction of what was once a good competition for the lower League's" if the "destruction" would have actually been reduced, if we had voted not to support inclusion.

But what if we as a club had voted not to support inclusion (in line with the fan view)? What could have then changed to reduce the “devastation”?

1. Would the new rules not have been accepted? No, because the overall majority of other clubs were still sufficient to get it through – changing our single club would not have made difference to the outcome.

2. Would our fans then have said ...

“We are absolutely vehemently against inclusion of B/U23/U21 teams (as the feedback made crystal clear), but because the club has now voted in line with our wishes, against it, we will now put all those feelings against the competition to one side and now support the new competition anyway ... “ ... and then come to games? Maybe some fans would despite the opinions on the format, I don’t know.

I do know, I haven’t had any single fan say to me “if the club had voted no, like we wished, we would have supported the competition because it’s not the inclusion of B/U23/U21 we are against it’s your vote that really made the difference to us not coming.”

3. Would the overall competition be seen as less “devastated” because CUFC voted against development teams? I don’t think our single voice saying something different would have changed things

Q43b Following CCU’s comments above, do the club admit that by choosing to go against nearly all the fans wishes, the vote to back the EFL Trophy format was a mistake? Isn't this a great opportunity now to admit a terrible mistake and start building bridges with the fans?

I think that is a question best dealt with at a forum, because it’s about individual views and all the directors and shareholders may have different views. To try to express each one in this Q&A route is a case where it isn’t the best way (see Q10b).

GENERAL:

Q44a Scoreboard delayed, disabled facilities delayed, door locks delayed, fixtures sign left for days, stand roof works delayed, CUSG minutes delayed and many other examples –

I can understand the frustration, we share it. There are many things we would like to do, things we would like to achieve quicker and do in different ways. Ideas and desire to better is not something the staff are short off.

I have explained in detail the issues we face so fans can get a better understanding of those issues and challenges. I will continue to do that.

Q44b Can you understand why certain supporters feel the club is lazy, not bothered, can't plan anything and can't be arsed.

I can understand why fans get upset, of course.

All staff see those reports and comments. It can be in stark contrast to what fans say when they deal with them as individuals.

I will strongly stand up for all the staff at the club against those sorts of charges because they are not fair. I’m proud of them and their effort, they still give everything.

When I see staff working when they should be off, working countless hours of overtime unpaid, many on close to or minimum wage, doing jobs and work (in their own time) they are not paid to do, because they know things need doing and it's the only way to try make an improvement, for them to then face those accusations is really tough – but the staff are very resilient and tight knit and they love the club. We are a small team of very dedicated and loyal people trying our very best.

Q44c I'm sure this might not be the case, but on the outside you must agree this doesn't look good?

Claims don't look good - but as you said "it may not be the case" (see Q29) .

When we make mistakes it's to be expected that we get criticism. Sometimes the immediate reaction is to presume something without many / any, or the full facts.

We communicate (and in ways like this we are getting better) and explain to give the facts and help fans understand what they may be thinking, or concluded, may actually be incorrect.

Also, to help fans understand that when we make mistakes and fall short we look at what happened and why.

To be crystal clear that is not in any way to avoid responsibility or make excuses, it's just open and honest engagement – which I think most fans want and respect.

Q45 The official attendance at the home match to Cambridge was 4,041. Does this include any free tickets which are given away to schools and other groups? If it does, can you tell us what the attendance for that match was minus any free tickets issued?

Yes.

The reported figure comprises all tickets issued for the game. It is not the figure for those actually entering the ground. It includes complimentary tickets issued under the Community Ticket Scheme and Play on the Pitch. The numbers and information is already published and available:

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2019/november/community-five-local-groups-joined-us-on-saturday/>

<https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2019/november/community-a-brunton-park-match-to-remember-for-two-local-teams/>

Circa 200 in total across both initiatives.

Q46 Tuesday night was arguably one of the lowest points under the current ownership, (that attendance was abysmal). FYI we got 2357 (88 away fans) v Gillingham in 2017 (even after the game was delayed 24 hours).

You say "arguably one of the lowest points under the current ownership."

I respect your opinion but, you don't actually give any specific reasons. The only reference point you offer is "that attendance was abysmal" and the attendance replay vs Gillingham.

So, it is impossible for me to respond to anything specific, except the attendance.

The attendance on the night was disappointing. I think the weather played a part, and the opposition and our recent form. Every person has their own specific reason. You can see from the forum that some fans were put off by the weather. It played some part in that.

I totally disagree with your overall view.

There are overwhelming factual reasons why IMO it was not “arguably one of the lowest points under the current ownership.”

Those simple and obvious reasons are:

- A new person, Chris Beech, was embarking on his first head coach job and got his first ever win as a head coach.
- Our new head coach got his first win for us and we went three games unbeaten.
- The team won the match.
- The club reached the third-round of the FA Cup with an exciting trip to Cardiff City next up.
- We beat a team who is third in League 2, ranked second in L2 away from home and that had let in only 7 goals in L2 this season.
- A young player who is trying to forge a career and has been given an opportunity (Hayden) scored his first goal for the club.
- We kept a clean sheet.

I don't believe the attendance in poor weather conditions outweighs all that.

To argue, all that counts for so little, yet the low attendance in terrible conditions counts for so much, that weighing them means it was still “one of the lowest points under the current ownership” is out of proportion in my view.

Q47 This isn't good enough, but rather than asking for an explanation, I want to know what the clubs doing to address this... as the falling attendances can't continue.

I commented on attendances in Q18 last month.

Q48 Bradford on Boxing Day will mark the last home game at Brunton Park of the Decade, bar a trip to Wembley in a completion which is now a joke, and a botched playoff attempt, we've had absolutely nothing to cheer about, why should I keep going the next decade?

Every fan has their own very very personal motivation for why they support any team. What that support means to them is not something I can ever guess – it's from within, from personal experience over a life and maybe generations, it's a personal story. I don't know you, I don't even know your name, never-mind what makes CUFC special to you or why you have supported the club in the decade (or even before) despite having absolutely nothing to cheer about (your own words) bar a couple of things. Equally I cannot predict the next decade, so I cannot predict or promise on field success.

I would appreciate meeting you to listen to you and what you want and need from us.

What I do know is this:

The club needs you and fellow fans like you ... why? Because I believe a club is at its most basic level simply a group of people with a common bond and purpose, a connection, a shared emotional bond, a tribal feeling which brings people together and brings joy and happiness to them and as a group. Anyone who has been in a the "crowd" knows that feeling. It's so special.

With every fan that goes away, that is eroded, individually it may not be noticed but eventually - where is the club? We all have a part to play in having the grit and determination not to allow that.

The club wants your support. The more fans that back the players, team and staff, and club, the more chance we have of success. Atmosphere and attendance helps winning. Every fan counts, because football is tribal, more fans draws more fans, people want to be part of it – it breeds success and creates a virtuous circle, so everyone benefits.

We cannot succeed without you and other fans. We are all in this together. We cannot get better without your support and your fellow fans need you standing with them.

The club will continue to engage and communicate and show by our actions we are doing all we can to deserve that support. Where we fall short we will admit and make good and learn. We will put the club first.

I believe things can change very quickly and single events can be a catalyst that shift momentum. If we can all come together, work together, be united and forward looking, the future will be brighter. In that case, I can see real grounds for optimism and lots to cheer about.

Q49 Can we have some clear, short and medium term objectives to get behind and believe in? (Can we make these achievable too, rather than Nixon's claims about local players being developed 1-10 spiel which we were given at the start of the decade)

See Q22 last month.

Q50a Beech appointment statement mentions actually nothing about promotion footballing ambitions,

Everyone within the club continues to be ambitious to improve and progress on and off the field, but we must do so in a way that does not risk the future of the club. Our key priority remains achieving progress up the football pyramid, starting with promotion to League 1.

In Q22 last I restated:

"Our ambition remains ... all working together, building a sustainable and successful club that we are proud of ... strive to be successful on the pitch – this is our top priority – promotion to L1 is the immediate target. After that, to be established in L1 and challenge at the top for promotion to Tier 2."

Q50b is this the direction the current custodians want to go in (I.e just selling players and making money)?

Every club sells players. The issues are timing, value and replacement.

The club's approach to selling players is simple and established. It's very similar to other clubs in L1 and L2, and some in the Championship.

The balance between player trading and on-the-field improvement and success is always a difficult one, but it plays a key part in the sustainability and viability of the club.

It is part of our strategy to increase the value of our players by developing their talent, to improve the team and sell them for profit to then reinvest. Crucial to this is the Academy, where its objectives include:

“to develop elite professional footballers to play in our first team (in League 2 and be capable of playing higher in the league pyramid). This is the Academy’s top priority, players who add significant value to the first team squad for future sale.”

See <https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/siteassets/documents/cufc-1921-signed-abbreviated-accounts-june-2018.pdf> pages 1, 3, 8 in particular for full details.

It is crucial the head coach is committed and plays his part and works together to make that happen. That is why there is reference to those areas.

Q51 What’s the status with Nathan Rooney, are the rumours true? If so www.newsandstar.co.uk/sport/17786958.ext...oss-steven-pressley/ have we been misinformed again?

I don’t know what you are referring to as the “rumour” - you don’t actually say what it is, so I can’t comment.

I can’t see anything in that report that is misinformation.

Q52 What will happen to any football fortune?

See Q41.

Q53 What has been the overall feedback towards the retro shirt display on the east stand staircase?

The resounding feedback is the fans like the shirts being on display. Really positive.

They are a talking point and very well received.

They haven’t been seen together before and they want to see more of them.

There have been no strong preferences for how they are displayed. There have definitely not been strong views to say they don’t like them being hung. Like all things which are personal, preferences of different people differ. The CUSG minutes give more detail. It is at the first stage and there is more work to do.

Q54 Can you ask who signs this off (The Shirt display) and thinks it looks good at the club meeting please?

It is a CUSG initiative – see CUSG minutes.

Q55 Have the nets for behind the warm up goals been ordered? The mighty Morecambe will have a contact if not.

Not yet – see CUSG minutes

QUESTIONS FOR CUOSC:

Why did it take the best part of 3 months to announce your Chairman had stood down?

Why were the members of CUOSC not informed of the proposal which was made to us (CUOSC) which made John Kukuc resign? As members (some of us) we have a right to be informed.

Answered together:

We tried hard to persuade John to change his mind. We talked to him about the possibility on more than one occasion. It was only when we were convinced he wouldn't that we revealed he had stood down.

We are always working behind the scenes in the best interests of supporters and the club. When and if there is anything concrete to report we will inform members.

Has CUOSC been asked to dilute its shares at any point this season, and would they ever do that without consultation with their members?

Going right back to the Andrew Lapping and then the Kirdi interest, our position has been that we would consider dilution. The details of what we would agree to do always depend on the specific proposal. We have made our position clear in the past and it has not changed for a long time.

See: <https://www.thecumbrians.net/cufc-forum/main-forum/9589-cuosc-would-consider-share-dilution-to-attract-investment>

It would not be in the interests of the club for CUOSC to stand in the way and block succession, when we believe succession is in the interests of the club, the fans want it and we have said we want it as well.

Any decision to dilute could only be agreed to if we thought it was in the best interest of the club, which is why the circumstances of the proposal matters so much.

We have also always told the other shareholders any proposal for change should be agreed by all the shareholders together and any attempt to railroad us or do it behind our back would be resisted strongly.

So has CUOSC been asked to dilute its shares at any point this season?

Yes, but it has been happening for years every time anyone approaches or enquires. All enquires coming into the club, including those this season, have always asked if we would dilute, and how far? (It's one of the first questions!). Every time we have said the same, basically, "it depends" and "potentially". Which, as explained, has been our position for some time.

You mentioned to a supporter the club was in talks with someone re investment/succession - Can we have your side of this as the club has said nothing is happening or nothings live?

See also the answer above. A solution to the succession of ownership issue in the board room needs to be found to allow the club to move forward. We are always talking to people but there is nothing concrete to report as yet.

You say that you represent the fans voice. Most fans have no confidence in the BOD and want them gone. Will you issue a statement to reflect this feeling among fans, and say that CUOSC has no confidence in the current regime? If not, please explain why you are refusing to represent the fans voice.

We speak to many fans. No one is happy with our start to the season and they also want to see change in the board room. However many point out the great service chairman Andrew Jenkins has given the club. He has been involved for 60 years, put in a considerable amount of money and some believe that without him the club would not exist today. Our recent members' survey showed a range of opinions about the BOD that were very mixed.

We have on a number of occasions stated publicly that we want succession at the club (see answer above where we have done once again), and are currently working hard to achieve that with the other owners, who also want succession. We voice all supporter concerns put to us, to the club, as this is our remit as the vehicle for the fans to get their messages across to the boardroom at CUFC.

What do you do to represent the fans?

CUOSC (all supporters) have a stake holding in the club and have representatives on both of the club's boards. We are the voice of the fans and would welcome the opinions and concerns of any supporter and will ensure they are passed on to the Board of Directors at CUFC.

It's now over 5yrs since you launched your '5 Year Plan' - www.cuosc.org.uk/downloads/fyppresentation.pdf - Would you agree that it's been a failure, as many of the aims have simply not been reached? Is it still a 'live' document, and if so, will you publish an updated version?

The document above dates from the 2014 AGM. At the time we floated a draft 5-year-plan in front of members which was ambitious, based on a (perhaps optimistic?) belief that the club was about to get a major new investment and/or new ownership. In light of the fact that that never happened, we re-visited the plan a year or so later and adopted a less ambitious one which is outlined here : <http://www.cuosc.org.uk/downloads/fypbrochure.pdf>.

This has been reviewed several times since we adopted it and we believe we have achieved many, if not all, of the objectives. It's fair to say with 'succession' very much a hot topic again, we will review the plan and are currently reviewing our roles and responsibilities as a board. If succession can be achieved we will be re-energised as an organisation with a fresh mission statement and targets for the future.

You have a Board of 8, plus a Secretary. Of these 8, two are listed as 'Project Lead - Corporates' and another two are listed as 'Commercial & Marketing'. Both are areas in which many deem CUOSC to have made the impact of a chocolate teapot. I believe (Apologies if I'm wrong!) that CUOSC are also Members of the CUFC Business Club. Why is there such a top heavy approach to Business when your primary duty should be to the every day fans? Surely Membership of the Business Club is a waste of what little funds you have, and the money used could be better utilised elsewhere?

We don't believe we have a 'top heavy' approach to business. We have had business members in the early days, when their support was important to us, and more recently they helped out enormously with the welcome pack and new membership cards for the re-branded CUOSC. More recently still we attempted to re-launch our business membership scheme, but with little success (despite talking to a lot of potential business members). Succession is clearly an issue that is holding back business support for both ourselves and the football club. Our emphasis and time is still devoted on the whole to our individual members and this is why we hold a regular Saturday surgery, update them with a weekly email briefing and are attempting now to establish regular members' meetings to complement these. Most successful trusts do need some business backing, however.

Our membership of 'United for Business' provides funding for the club and also allows us to stay in contact with businesses that are backing the club. It is regularly reviewed but we continue to remain a member as it has benefits for us as an organisation and helps us to demonstrate our continued financial support.

Your communication output is poor at best. The weekly Newsletter is a positive, but your website (Appreciate this is close to relaunching), social media output and general approach to comms is below par. What steps do you intend to take in future to improve this area?

We send a regular weekly email briefing to members, we have a weekly column in the News and Star and we use social media. We can be contacted by email and we hold a supporters' surgery before every Saturday home game. And, as you say, we have plans to relaunch our web-site.

Given the sum total of the above three questions, do you agree that the Board of CUOSC are possibly stale, given it's been the same faces for many years now? Would you be prepared to all stand for re-election if it encouraged new blood to stand against you and get involved?

No answer received.

Who gave you the right to call yourselves the Official Supporters Club? You no more represent the majority of supporters than I do.

The club. It was then discussed with other supporters at a series of consultation meetings and we launched it via a series of roadshows that the club also attended- in 2015. Also see previous answer regarding supporter representation. We are an organisation that is there for supporters to use as a vehicle to communicate to and from the club – please use us. That is why the organisation exists.

Were CUOSC consulted and part of the decision making regarding the sacking of Steven Pressley, if not when did they find out about his sacking?

Yes. It was a decision made by the Holdings Board, which we have a representative on.

QUESTIONS FOR THECUMBRIANS.NET:

Can we have your opinion on the meeting minutes being delayed, for the last meeting?

Whilst it wasn't ideal, indeed we did suggest some people may get upset by a later publication, given the unique set of circumstances around that week with the live TV game on a Friday, we feel

it was a case of 'it can't be helped'. A late publication down to good exposure for the club from a live FA Cup game is a decent enough reason?

There was some discussion within CUSG on how to proceed (Detailed in AH's replies) and we were happy to go with any majority and/or Chairman decision.