

QUESTIONS FOR CUSG MEETING ON MON 19th JULY 2021 FROM USERS OF THECUMBRIANS.NET FORUM:

QUESTIONS FOR THE CLUB – ANSWERS FROM NIGEL CLIBBENS UNLESS STATED:

1: You mentioned that the transfer of shares/takeover failed twice due to EFL regulations, is it possible to tell us more about this?

Specifically:

We will not go into further specific details about this because, as JN confirmed at the Forum, the interest remains active.

It is worth recapping on what was explained at the Forum [all on youtube].

John Nixon detailed the timeline [35 minutes in] of events. He said a there was “backwards and forwards between legal teams” but the legal part “was not quite there”.

JN said the deal was then “ready to go” apart from this legal part being finally resolved with the EFL, which would have allowed a deal to be transacted. JN also added Coronavirus then began [from January 2020] and EWM became under pressure, and everything was then on hold again. Then EWM went into Administration [November 2020].

Jim Mitchell added: “there were suggested variations made to the succession plan which we [CUOSC] had some concerns about.”

Billy Atkinson said there were “some suggestion of a change of what we agreed initially”[amalgamations of A&B shares].

All these factors impacted on the transfer of the shares.

Generally:

Depending on the specific deal terms for a transfer of shares in a club, different EFL regulations apply. These set the “legal parts” that need to be dealt with by the EFL and the investor.

The key is “control” of a club.

If you take “control” of a club then the EFL regulations that apply over the “Source & Sufficiency of funding” are significantly greater for the new “controlling” party, than if you have a new shareholder with a small shareholding or an “association” with a club – eg, all the 7% of individual shareholders in Holdings are not subject to the same EFL regulations as a “controlling” shareholder.

A deal can be “ready to go” as JN said (with shareholders and investor in agreement in principle) but it still cannot be transacted until EFL approval is first sought and then received (even if the shareholders are happy (see Rochdale <https://www.efl.com/news/2021/july/efl-statement-rochdale-afc/> and Swindon).

This process means regardless of the shareholders being “ready to go” to transfer shares, information has to be submitted in advance by any new investor to the EFL. The EFL then review it [in detail] and ask questions and seek more information around “control” so it can then deal with “source and sufficiency” of funds. The questions are then answered and the process continues until the EFL has all the information it needs to ensure its regulations that apply are all satisfied. As JN referred to at the forum “dotting the I’s and crossing the t’s.”

Until the EFL requirements are met the deal cannot be completed.

It may be the legal parts/terms/changes may be required by the EFL. The interested party and the EFL discuss them and the existing shareholders also need to agree them if they affect their agreement. This was referred to by aBA, JM and JN. All normal - it is the EFL fulfilling its role as regulator. The EFL is actually seeking to protect its member clubs and the competition.

Also, as we have seen following Bury and Wigan [as the EFL looks to respond to the risks clubs face with ownership changes], new requirements arise all the time – if a deal takes time while regulations and approach are also moving or changes being considered, it complicates matters.

The role of the EFL as a “safeguard” for clubs is an important one - where fans and fan organisations have wanted more intervention and a tougher approach by the EFL. We have seen this since Bury and the fan led review may further increase the scrutiny deals are put under.

2: You mentioned that it’s up to the current shareholders what they do with their shares - doesn’t this confirm that they will do what’s best for their own futures rather than what’s best for the club?

Absolutely not.

You have failed to say the answer I provided at the same time specifically addressed that exact point when I said:

“...the individual shareholders at CUFC have always made those choices based on what they believe is in the best interests of the club. They have taken their responsibilities very seriously and still do. They have been prepared to make some unpopular choices in the eyes of some fans, in exercising that responsibility – pursuing some deals and not others.”

3: You wouldn't mention the details regarding the financial interest/additions to the EWM loan. That's fine but can you understand some supporters unease at this and the fact the loan is increasing without anything being paid?

I understand those concerns. However, I have always said there are some things I cannot disclose and when that is the case, I will say so and explain.

The Loan Agreement terms for interest are confidential and we must abide by that agreement with Purepay.

You can see from the filed accounts the loan balances and therefore the additions to the loan [interest only] and therefore I have always be happy to disclose them, as they will always be in the public domain.

The club has to look at the overall financial structure of the club when considering debt repayments and financing.

By not repaying debt or paying the accruing interest, the club has more cash reserves and liquidity to operate day-to-day. A football club's biggest risk is lack of cash [when combined with and big fixed payments to pay every month (wages)]. We are always very mindful of that. In the case of the Purepay debt – paying for example the interest or even say £200k of capital back, makes absolutely no material difference to the overall position and issues faced by the club whatsoever – except we have less cash.

At the same time, if the board chose to repay debt/interest at this time, as opposed to retaining cash during the very uncertain Covid crisis, or spending that cash within the club [especially if restricting team spending] it would no doubt be heavily criticised by some fans. Finally, there is no guarantee in football that if a debt is paid, you can borrow again if you need to.

It is always a choice and we have decided there is more benefit in not paying down debt at this time.

4: Is it possible to pass questions onto John Jackson through this means and if that isn't possible could you explain why.

Answered by NC because:

- JJ role is very specific and limited role [detailed below].
- The other directors with specific club responsibility are best placed to answer the club issues raised.
- These are a club Q&A, not about Purepay.

If it is could the following be answered by him and him alone

- What's your role at the club?

Answered by NC.

This has previously been answered in detail at least twice before in Feb 2020 Q34, and recently in April 2021, and it is unchanged.

It is a specific and limited role. As a director of Holdings John Jackson has one vote on that board alongside five other directors. Holdings is not involved in day-to-day decisions.

In terms of running the club, JJ does not attend games or the club (has not attended any games during his tenure and would not be expected to, given his role). He is not involved in operational matters or football. His involvement is remote, with a very light touch. His role is focused mainly on simply high-level monitoring of our finances and, if required, to consider material contracts we enter into. He is the link with Purepay on matters impacting the commercial funding agreement, and things of direct impact on Purepay, when required. This allows Purepay to more easily understand the club and assess issues under the commercial funding agreement, if called upon.

- Is there any interest in the company you now represent on taking the club on fully?

The debt funding and "taking the club on fully" ie share ownership and "control" are separate.

Purepay's role with the club is as the organisation acting as a commercial funder providing secured debt facilities.

There have been no discussions about PPL having any interest in "taking on the club" – that is not its role or function. As debt funder it is not party to the "investment programme" which JN referred to at the forum.

- Why should supporters feel comfortable with having you as financial controller when you performed this position for EWM they went into administration albeit Covid could be blamed?

The statement is wrong.

The club does not have JJ "as financial controller" as explained above in the answer about his role. The rest of the question is therefore not applicable.

It is worth noting, EWM was a very highly profitable and successful group before CV19, as evidenced in its published financial statements. Its insolvency was entirely due to the closure of the high street following lockdowns and disappearance of its shop trade almost overnight, along with a large fixed cost base.

- What experience of football finance did you have prior to being on the holdings board?

None – JJ background is in retail, hence his role, and in EWM finance and director role at Purepay. His involvement in CUFC comes solely from his role with EWM, and now Purepay, and their role as debt provider, not from a football finance perspective. This expertise is reflected in his role and involvement with the club (again as detailed above).

As explained above his role is specific on the Holdings board, not about football specialism.

- Do you like football/who do you support?

Not relevant to the role of JJ at the club, therefore not answered.

- Why has there been silence from yourself and the company you represent in terms of progression of the football club?

As purely a provider of debt funding through a commercial arrangement, the progression of the club is not a matter for Purepay (or previously EWM).

Progression of the football club is a matter for Holdings directors and its board and the shareholders (not a debt funder).

Specific questions on the “progression of the club” are answered by other directors.

5: Andrew Jenkins uses the excuse that he doesn't like large groups in order to be excused from fans forums. However Andrew Jenkins was at the business club at the fixtures release therefore:

That is not a correct representation of the position.

At the forum JN explained AJ is uncomfortable in forums and happy to meet fans in smaller groups.

This is not a phobia, AJ feels it is more productive and effective to meet supporters in that way and has done so whenever asked. If any fans wish to meet AJ, I am happy to arrange [subject to Covid safeguards].

- Is he cured now of his large group phobia?

He has no large group phobia.

- Should we expect him at the next forum?

No.

- Was the large group refusal just an excuse to avoid criticism at the forum?

No – small group meeting can criticise too if they wish.

- Does he understand, regardless of age and ability that he is still the largest shareholder and should be expected to attend these things?

He understands and is aware of the views of some fans. He knows it's important to speak to fans and continues to be willing to speak to any fans who wish to talk to him – either individually or in small groups.

- Does he understand that by attending these business events, where he is surrounded by friends is a kick in the teeth to supporters who he won't engage with in the same situation?
It is clearly not the "same situation". It is in no way a relevant or fair comparison.

- The business event was not a forum. It was not a Q&A session.
- The business event was not one where AJ participated in any way.
- AJ did not play any role other than by being present.
- He did not answer questions.
- They were not all "friends" either.

- Is Andrew Jenkins therefore a hypocrite?
No - for reasons detailed above.

6: If you have a blue light card and you are disabled enough to have a free carer ticket are you able to take advantage of the scheme and still get your free carer ticket?
Yes.

As below – you will need to provide the DLA/PIP details and Blue light card details.

7: Is the free disabled ticket still at the same levels of DLA/PIP previously.
We don't provide a free disabled ticket. The disabled person pays the correct ticket rate but we then offer a free carer ticket where their DLA/PIP meets the club criteria level.

Yes - the levels are the same and unchanged.

Do you require all those that have previously gave their evidence to you to provide it again for the new season?

Because some of the DLA/PIP can change periodically and we have had up to 18 months since some fans came, we are asking all fans to re-submit this season.

Is it possible this could be scanned and emailed in?

Yes it can be scanned and emailed in.

As always, if you have any queries at all, please just call the ticket office who will be happy to help and make it as easy as possible.

8: You said at the fans forum that social media companies should do more to tackle abuse. In the Euros we all saw the disgusting barrage of racist abuse towards Rashford, Saka, and Sancho when England lost on penalties. Could you go into detail of what specific things, or measures, or steps, you think social media companies should do to address this issue?

Some personal thoughts....

- Abandoning online anonymity and implementing ID when setting up accounts. Real name accounts only no Fake ID or anonymous ID.
- More suspension/bans - doesn't need UK law - it's their platforms they can do it.
- Beefing up automatic detection systems such as scanning for offensive words or phrases (they are sophisticated enough to target advertising so it can be done - with a will).
- Changing how social media works, such as restricting comments and messages. Or if it is to be a total free for all - create far simpler laws and systems to allow perpetrators to be charged, convicted and punished.
- Tools – Easier reporting tools leading to immediate intervention.
- Pre-post warnings, eg “this post is highlighted as potentially racist - read why before you post” – “do you still want to post?” Defer posting for a period to allow pre-checking as above.
- Increasing human moderation by employing more people to check/remove offensive content.
- More transparency about who is doing it – countries, name and shame?
- Making social media sites more accountable - treat them like newspapers ... would papers publish overtly racist comments eg in “what the fans think” pieces? Eg when N&S ask for fan comments on a game if they got a racist comment tweeted as a reply would they publish? No – they apply moderation – if they did publish the comment in the paper they would be open to sanction. Why not social media?

9: The 19/20 accounts state that £170,000 VAT payment to HMRC due 31/3/20 was deferred by agreement to March 2021. Has this now been paid?

This was in respect of VAT due for payment in quarter ended 31 March 2020. The club took advantage of the government scheme <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/deferral-of-vat-payments-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19> The initial deferral was for a year but this was relaxed as the pandemic continued.

We joined the online payment scheme before 21 June 2021 to spread payments of deferred VAT over smaller, interest free instalments. Instalments have commenced as agreed but a balance remains unpaid [as agreed]. This liability is being paid monthly and will now be repaid by February 2022, as agreed with HMRC. Because the arrangement is all agreed and being adhered to and we continue to pay all other HMRC obligations in full and on time, although we have a debt we are not subject to EFL embargo. It is a helpful scheme with no adverse consequences to us and the Government deserve credit for it.

10: Does Mr Clibbens stand by his comments at the fans forum that the snooping into a fans business affairs was "nonsense" and "nothing to see here" and generally belittling the accuser (me), and what investigations had he carried out at that stage to allow him to make these statements.

As I responded in a very similar question last month, the matter was discussed very briefly when the initial accusation was made on the forum.

As I said previously Andy Hall texted to alert me. I confirmed that I didn't know who the poster was and I had no information about the claim whatsoever. The very brief exchange ended at that point. AH confirmed in his post on the forum what he knew.

There was no "investigation ... carried out" because there was no complaint made to the club.

11: Does the club employ the same car park attendants now as it did before the pandemic? All previous match day staff were invited to return.

12: Are these attendants employed directly by the club?
Yes.

13: Why did the Club base this Season's Kit on the 74/75 again, instead of saving it for the 50th anniversary in 2024/25,

The approach was simply to take some popular aspects of the design not used for a while. It incorporates a similar design to 74/75 but is in no means a replica retro copy or aimed at being one.

The current design does not mean a copy is ruled out for three years' time either.

does nobody ever keep an eye on special dates?
Yes.

For instance, in 1961/62 we achieved our first ever promotion in a blue and white hooped kit, why not use this design on what is the 60th anniversary. It would be radical, a talking point and a celebration all in one!

I agree anniversaries can be talking points where they catch the imagination and have broad appeal. Shirt designs are very personal as shown by previous feedback. They are always talking points and generate lots of different opinions. We have had positive feedback for this year but appreciate that what we have done doesn't please everyone.

14: From looking on the Social Media outlets of the Park View Academy it appears that the link with ourselves has ended. Can the club confirm this, and if so, what was the reason behind it?

The arrangement has come to an end. We parted on good terms as they wished to go down another route.

15: For Media - Is there going to be any marketing/promotional material for the first game of the season? You should photoshop some of those "Your country needs YOU!" posters, but put Nigel's face on it and change the text to "Your club needs YOU!" It would be a bit of a novelty, grab people's attention, and get people speaking about the club again.

NC - Interesting idea – our view is that fans are inspired to get behind their team by many things but there are more effective ways than a call to action by putting me on a poster.

We will be promoting the game, the best promotion is always by all fans spreading the word through all their social networks – it amplifies the message and increases the reach and power. Thousands of voices are better than just one.

AH – We are, of course, looking forward to welcoming fans back for the Colchester game. Over the course of the coming days and weeks leading up to the fixture we will be launching more details about what fans can expect to see. Tickets have gone on sale this week, with the pricing structure very well received.

16: For Media - Impressed with this last season. Are we expecting any new things from you for the coming season?

AH – Yes, as a club we have decided to give the match programme another go – so a 48-page publication will be produced for each fixture. This takes up a chunk of time to put together each week, but we want to see if we encourage advertisers to back it and fans to buy it.

With social media we are looking to enhance our profile on all platforms, and you'll have seen evidence of this already with the volume of posts over the summer period. We have a group of players who are fully supportive, which makes a huge difference, so that should lead to us seeing more from them (not just the standard 'how did the game go for you' type stuff.

The goal celebration gifs were extremely popular, so they will continue, and more 'off the wall' style video snippets are in the pipeline. We're also in the initial stages of looking at a magazine style 'chat' programme which will allow club officials to cover a lot of issues fans raise with a more informal, but still very direct, method of delivery.

Numbers wise the social media channels registered 2 million+ interactions and engagements over two consecutive 28-day periods recently. This shows the desire people have for news, views and daft stuff from their club. We're working hard to keep those numbers high.

Overall we are very pleased with the course we are taking, and the positive feedback we have received, but if anyone has any suggestions about what they would like to see, please let us know – media@carlisleunited.co.uk – and we will see what we can do.

Post-match I read with interest the reaction to the interviews we do. Some people make very valid comments, and that includes negative responses to what can be perceived as a 'weak club interview.' I like to think that the media team's relationship with the manager and players means that we actually get all of the salient points across during the interviews, even after a run of games where results haven't gone our way. Please do keep criticising and commenting, it helps to shape the coverage we present and it is never taken personally.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CLUB AND FORUM MOD'S:

1: Were there any questions from the last forum that were directed to John Jackson and if there were these passed on?

NC - Not that we are aware of – all questions put to the club by the collators [independent of the club] were answered. Nobody has come forward to say they had submitted one which was unanswered

TCN – From memory the only actually Question involving JJ directly was a query as to why he wasn't present? This was answered by the panel on the evening.

QUESTIONS FOR CUOSC:

1: Several questions were not answered at the last Q and A, was this deliberate or another reason?

2: By being supposed “champions of diversity” can you see that not providing answers to so called difficult questions can be hypocritical?

Answers to questions 1 and 2 have been combined.

This was certainly not deliberate, in fact quite the contrary. We sought to answer a number of these questions in advance and held an informal meeting a few days beforehand to discuss these. Apologies, we missed them, hopefully we will be able to answer all of your questions to a satisfactory standard. Members can also email questions to: info@cuosc.org.uk

Regarding question two there was no intention to avoid answering these, it is worth however pointing out that at times there are confidential items we are unable to share – having said that, CUOSC Board members Billy Atkinson and Jim Mitchell always strive to get as much information as possible published to fans.

3: The reunited fund was advertised as helping the club through Coronavirus and would be ring-fenced for that purpose only. Can you explain how using that fund on a bar refurbishment meets that criteria.

6: Did the trust panic from the question by Dan and thought they had to start spending the reunited fund to avoid criticism but have in fact created more by spending it this way?

Answers to questions 3 and 6 have been combined.

We did indeed promote this, what we actually said was: ‘CUOSC are launching a significant initiative to support the club through the current crisis with a view to maximising revenues and encouraging all supporters to return to Brunton Park once it is safe to do so. This supporters’ initiative is aimed at helping to ensure the survival, sustainability and future success of our football club. <http://cuosc.org.uk/carlisle-reunited/>

The first thing we agreed to purchase was a Nordbord for season 20/21 and 21/22. The total cost of this item will be nearly 7,000.00 which will help to hopefully reduce injuries across the season. This was a purchase that proved to be very useful for the football department with the difficult preseason and congestion of games caused by Covid-19.

Billy and Jim were in constant dialogue with other Carlisle United board members about how the ReUnited fund could be used to support the club and were quite clear this wouldn't be used to pay any debt off etc. Nothing else was forthcoming during last season and we were then approached by the club about contributing to the bar refurbishment which we agreed to support, as members had previously raised issues with the catering. This was certainly not a panic approach, and we did not feel pressured from the comments of any individual.

It is also worth noting that now the catering at Brunton Park will be in house, all catering profits will go to CUFC. This further helps our aim of 'maximising revenues and encouraging all supporters to return to Brunton Park'.

4: If people aren't happy that they have been misled over the reunited fund and spending it this way, can they claim the money back?

Please see the answers to 3 and 6. We have spent the money as we said we would.

5: Two weeks ago the reunited fund was standing at £13,750. In last weeks briefing it stated it was £12,500 but in your latest briefing it is stated again at £13,750. Which is it and why the discrepancy?

The 12,500 refers to CUOSC's bank balance and not the ReUnited fund, although it does contain some of the ReUnited fund.

7: Are the trust working against CUSG by trying to take the limelight away from those people that initially started work on the bar refurbishment?

Not in any way. We believe in working together with all CUSG members in order to provide a more unified and coherent fan representation. In April 2021, we were asked by Nigel Clibbens if we would be interested in donating to the bar refurbishment.

We've really enjoyed working with the supporter groups when CUSG started, and we're looking forward to continuing to work together

8: Are the trust trying to take control of CUSG or are you unhappy in the way CUSG is going?

Not in any way are we trying to take control. We think all members of CUSG should be proud of the results which have been delivered so far and we hope this continues. As stated above, we believe in working in partnership with other CUSG groups in order to have a coherent and unified fan base for the benefit of all Carlisle supporters.

9: Are you unhappy with the criticism you have been getting on all sorts of things lately?

Criticism is an expected factor in any supporter organisation. Where constructive and put forward in a respectful manner, criticism can only help us to grow and consider our actions, so we hopefully emerge a better and more representative organisation. We always try to be as transparent as possible with each question and hopefully work to put together a suitable action plan to help restore member's trust. However, we cannot act on criticism if it isn't brought to our attention, so we welcome feedback via fan forums, supporter surgeries (when they return) and via email info@cuosc.org.uk

As an organisation with 25.4 % shareholding in the club, we have the ability to put all fan's views to the top of the Carlisle United hierarchy. We would encourage everyone to join and share their feedback on everything Carlisle United, that way we can achieve more!

10. Nigel Davidson mentioned that issues with the trust are in the past. IMO this is utter rubbish as listed below:

- Pizza-gate
- Secretly trying to get own person as CUSG chair.
- Not admitting to speaking to John Kukuc.
- Not having regular meetings.

There's loads more I can't be bothered to write. Is it therefore possible Nigel Davidson could get his head out of a bag and realise that the issues with the trust are very much here and now along with the past incidents?

When Nigel referred to this, it was in the context of moving past any consistent disagreements from years ago so that all of us, as a group of Carlisle United supporters, can work together and create beneficial and meaningful progress. As volunteers that is our aim.

Pizzagate has been dealt with publicly and privately, we will not comment further, and the matter is closed. We did not try to secretly appoint any person as CUSG chair. Every member of the CUSG group had the opportunity to put forward a nomination of their choice, we however only informed an individual that that post was available. Some of the other items raised will be answered in other questions.

11: After the last members meeting at Brunton park it was stated these meetings would be regular. Then you had one online due to Covid and said again they would've regular. They never were! Why is this? Why do you lie each time by saying they'd be regular but never are? Why does your briefing still state the may members meeting is cancelled? Why was it cancelled?

We held a Members' Meeting in the early part of last season via Zoom, we had a variety of feedback about that format, some positive and some negative. Unfortunately, these were fundamentally limited by the Covid-19 pandemic. We sought to initially delay the February / March meeting when it looked like restrictions could have been lifted in the hope we

would have been able to host these at Brunton Park. We will be hosting an open Q&A at the AGM, and fingers crossed the easing of restrictions will allow a minimum of 3 meetings, including next year's AGM, all to be held in person.

The return of fans to Brunton Park will mean our surgeries return on Saturday matchdays, which will allow members to come and ask any questions Face to Face (restrictions pending).

Whatever format the questions are in when they are put to us, we only ask for properly constructive questions that are asked in a respectful way, and which are designed to produce a meaningful response. Please remember we are volunteers who can't always produce instant answers.

We also appreciate the current climate may see some reluctant to attend face to face or open meetings, and will happily take questions from members via info@cuosc.org.uk

We certainly did not lie. Simply, our intentions were side-tracked by Covid and the other events over the past 18 months. Our board members are volunteers and like everybody, the past 17 months has impacted their lives too which has meant we have not been able to fulfil as many of our ambitions.

12: Why did the trust secretly go for John Kukuc to be CUSG chair without going through the other CUSG groups?

Please see the answer to question 10.

13: Why did Nigel Davidson and Billy Atkinson not admit to speaking with John Kukuc when initially asked and only doing so when it became obvious they did.

The only record we have of this issue being raised is after the election of CUSG chair in accordance with the CUSG constitution, and we answered at that time. Although we informed him the position was available and we knew if John was going to volunteer it would be in an independent capacity, we in fact did not know for certain that John was going to stand, prior to the election.

14: You mentioned you do not monitor the messageboard, however it's well known you cancelled someone's membership because of it. Which is it?

15: As i make myself known and have the username mullen103 on the messageboard, if I made a racist comment on there would my trust membership cease! (Hypothetical as I've no intention of making that type of comment)

16: What would happen if I made a racist comment on the news and stars Facebook page, for instance. Would I expect the same treatment?

[In answer to 14 + 16.](#)

Firstly, we can't comment on any specific instances due to GDPR. However, we don't have a policy of monitoring the message board, although some of us do read the board because ultimately, we are Carlisle United fans before anything else!

To answer 15

If you were to make a racist comment on the messageboard, we would not be monitoring this, and only if somebody took offence to that comment and then reported it to CUOSC (knowing that you were a CUOSC member) then we would follow the CUSG/EDI Policy which is agreed by all CUSG groups and investigate this.

Our policy towards any form of discrimination matches that of Kick it Out, which is education rather than punishment. As such we would first likely offer you an education course delivered by the FSA/Kick it Out, rather than suspend you from CUOSC

17: Your weekly briefing emails are becoming a bit pathetic lately. They are very short and just full of regurgitated copy and paste stuff that's already in the public domain. There's absolutely nothing new on them apart from when you have a meeting and the content is very limited anyway. Therefore - Can you add more content to say what each board member is up too? Add information that isn't regurgitated rubbish?

Where we endeavour to bring you the latest news, over the past year, there simply hasn't been much to update on, mostly due to covid and the ongoing EWM issues which have had no movement. We do try to bring you news where possible, such as ND's involvement in Fans for Diversity Guidance Groups as well as ND's and MM's participation in Fair Game.

Again, as many of us are volunteers, like everyone, the pandemic has affected our lives too.

18: Why won't you accept PayPal payments anymore for membership and instead recommending standing order?

We have a problem with our PayPal account which makes it temporarily unavailable, but we are working to get it fully restored. In the meantime, we continue to recommend a standing order as the easiest way to maintain memberships as the money is transferred to us automatically. It is also the case that PayPal takes a small cut of any transaction, so paying via bank is preferable.

19: I personally will not be renewing my membership when it's next due. I understand membership is until 31st July. Therefore can you confirm that all members paid until the 31st July will be able to attend the AGM and vote as it's prior to this date? If not why not?
Yes.

20: Trust board members, in shops and via electronic communications have mentioned that "supporters would be outraged if they knew some of the parties involved in the running of the club or associated with it" and poop would hit the fan, therefore:

- Who are these parties you are alluding too?

- Why aren't you mentioning the parties involved/associated with the club in your briefings?
- Why do you feel these parties are dodgy?

Since the last CUSG meeting, Kyle has collated the CUSG questions (<https://thecumbrians.net/cufc-forum/cusg-meeting-mon-19th-july-2021>) to allow us to answer in a timely manner.

In order to answer the above question, we sought a meeting with Richard, to try and move beyond the "he" said "she" said approach and to try and develop the question to allow us to answer.

This meeting occurred on the 14th of July at 9:30pm, we discussed the issue in hand and notified Richard we would have to go back to our board to discuss potential answers, at which point Richard agreed to share the evidence which he had.

Richard shared a snippet of what we presume is a text as well as saying an individual had relayed a conversation which they had had with Billy Atkinson. As a board, we felt we couldn't comment on what at present is circumstantial evidence, however, we were keen to help answer Richard's question.

Jack contacted Richard on the 15th of July to ask for more evidence in an attempt to provide an honest answer, after we sat down to discuss all remaining questions. Richard again replied however did not provide any evidence.

Soon after, Richard, posted his comments on the Message board. As a board we are keen to answer this question and would be open to Richard and or other individuals providing more information or evidence to support his claim. Unfortunately, until that happens however we can't act or answer on speculation.

With regards to answering the question as best we can with the information at present. There is currently no new parties in discussion with Carlisle United, as such we are unsure where the unscrupulous parties comment comes from in the question. As such we aren't aware of this, so haven't mentioned in our briefings

21: Do you believe the entity formally known as EWM is still the right fit for the club? Has your opinion changed recently, if so why? I think supporters should know what the trust thinks by a more than a simple yes or no answer.

EWM provided financial support to the club between early 2017 and May 2019. Since May 2019 the club has been able to stand on its own two feet thanks to various streams of football fortune income, support from the EFL, EPL and government furlough scheme and thus hasn't called on EWM or the current holder of the loan, PurePay. If PurePay is able to offer further financial backing if and when the club needs it, then they will continue to be a valuable supporter of the club. However it has always been our contention that the club should seek to be much more self-sustaining so we hope the future direction continues towards investing in the academy and developing more young talent such as McCarron,

Galloway and Branthwaite so we can continue to pay our own way rather than being reliant totally on external backers.

22: In meetings with trust board members, not recently, I have been told "I can't say but", "don't repeat this" and "I shouldn't be saying this". This has tended to be in group discussions as well including surgeries. It hasn't been any confidential information but little snippets of info that isn't in the public domain yet. Therefore what repercussions would there be if the person or I did mention what was said in these meetings/discussions/one to one meet ups. Why are the club able to get away with mentioning little snippets with no issues but it would be for the trust? What repercussions would there be for the trust or specific member if they did say something that was confidential? (This isn't an allegation it's just a hypothetical question)

Without any indication as to what prompted people to say 'I can't say but...', 'don't repeat this...' or 'I shouldn't be saying this....' we find it hard to make any comment on that part. CUOSC continue to respect confidentiality and are happy to maintain that as part of our relationship with the club as a major shareholder. We can only be held responsible for our actions in that regard and won't comment on others treatment of the same. We would expect a negative reaction if we didn't stick to our side of the bargain, naturally.

23: Have you ever asked the mods on TheCumbrians.net to delete or disable a users account and remove their posts? If so, which user(s) and why? You didn't provide an answer for this last time, so I am asking it again.

No.

Re: last time, we did provide an answer, the following answers were given in June:

Have any discussions been had privately or publicly with other groups or your own group in relation to the banning of a user from the Cumbrians.net messageboard?

Answer: No.

Have the trust tried to get a [Cumbrians.net](#) user banned from their site?

Answer: CUOSC has not tried to get any member of another group banned from that group.

24: Do you actually care about diversity or are you just virtue signalling? You are saying all the right things, but I can't really see anything specific that you've actually done to meaningfully address and tackle issues like discrimination, racism, inequality.

Yes, we are currently working on a project which will be unveiled within the coming weeks specifically focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion in football.

CUOSC Board Member, Nigel Davidson regularly attends Fans for Diversity guidance groups meetings which are a joint initiative between the FSA and Kick it Out.

Additionally, we have recently, at the request of CUSG, facilitated an Awareness session to help the understanding on EDI for all CUSG reps and CUOSC Board Members.

25: What gives the Trust the right to call themselves the "official supporters club" when they represent only a small proportion of the support and are in pockets of the owners? Surely a Supporters Club should be independent of the club owners?

We are 'Official' as Carlisle United recognise us as an organisation. The choice of name was conscious to be an all-inclusive, all-encompassing body that is more than just part-ownership. Our membership is roughly 10% of the average home gate. Compared with other trusts, this is on the high end. Of course, we would welcome many more supporters as members.

We are also an owner of the club, so we cannot get in our own pockets.

26: Questions for Nigel Davidson - What is the point of asking for questions when you don't have the manners or decency to answer them? If you don't want to answer questions have you thought of standing down to let someone else on who will? Is there a particular reason you seem to have blocked several CUFC fans on Twitter (including a representative of one the CUSG groups) because speaking to other fans it's for no apparent reason, aren't you supposed to represent equality, diversity and inclusion?

We are prepared to answer questions put to us as a group but not questions aimed squarely at individuals, especially when it concerns their own personal social media accounts. CUOSC is not responsible for the content or actions of anyone on their own account.

27: Why do you appear to never advertise for folk to put their name forward to stand at your yearly AGM? Instead we are simply offered the chance to vote for the same old faces. Is it any wonder you receive constant criticism when this happens?

At this year's AGM there is one 'old face' in Frank Beattie, standing for election after indicating this will probably be his last year on the Board. Alongside him is a very 'new face' in Mark Middling. Last year both Jack Oddie and Kyle Sproat were 'new' faces to be elected to the Board. Therefore we have a good recent record of introducing new faces and are always on the look out for new people. Anyone may stand at the AGM for a place on the board, however take up of such positions is usually very low. The rules state anyone who wishes to stand needs only two other CUOSC members to act as supporters, so the process for standing is not a difficult or arduous one. However it has long been CUOSC's preferred policy to attract new board members via co-optation initially, so they can get a gentle introduction to the Board and decide whether the role is for them long-term. They can then choose to stand at the following AGM if they wish to make the transition to a permanent board member (terms of office for elected directors are 3 years). This has worked well for us in the past and continues to do so. If anyone wants to join as a co-opted member they just need to email us at our info@cuosc.org.uk address, giving us an indication of their background, skills and experience. Even if we don't have a vacancy on the board, we are always open to involving people in non-Board roles where we may need some outside support.

QUESTION FOR CUOSC & THECUMBRIANS.NET:

1: Pizza-gate as it's been known caused a moderator to make an official complaint. I believe this is now resolved according to the trust, unsure about the aggrieved. With both involved

members attending CUSG meetings, how does this affect the group, is there any friction and if so how do you hope to resolve it for the Benefit of the club and group?

CUOSC – See our earlier answer re: ‘pizzagate’. We consider the matter closed and we see no reason why it should impact in any way on the operation of the CUSG.

TCN – We attend CUSG on behalf of our Users. We don’t let any outside issues away from the Group itself affect this.

QUESTION FOR THECUMBRIANS.NET:

1: At the last meeting you said you hadn't received any request from "the groups who attend CUSG" to delete and/or disable a users account/posts. Have you ever received such a request from an individual or organisation that does not attend CUSG?

This was answered in the last round of Q's. We said “We have occasionally had users of our forum contact us, asking us to delete another user, usually due to a difference of opinion or strong views on a particular subject. To date we haven’t banned any user following such a complaint.”