

MEMBERS' HANDBOOK



GLOUCESTER CITY SUPPORTERS' TRUST

Introduction

The Gloucester City Supporters' Trust was set up in 2001 as a vehicle for supporters of Gloucester City AFC to come together democratically and represent the interests of Gloucester City supporters and benefit the community which the club serves.

The Trust's objects are to benefit the community by:

- being the democratic and representative voice of the supporters of GCAFC and strengthening the bonds between GCAFC and the communities it serves;
- achieving the greatest possible supporter and community influence in the running and ownership of GCAFC;
- promoting responsible and constructive community engagement by present and future members of the communities served by GCAFC and encouraging GCAFC to do the same;
- operating democratically, fairly, sustainably, transparently and with financial responsibility and encouraging GCAFC to do the same;
- being a positive, inclusive and representative organisation, open and accessible to all supporters of the Club regardless of their age, income, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality or religious or moral belief.

Powers

The Trust:

- may acquire an interest in or ownership of GCAFC;
- secure democratic and accountable representation on GCAFC's Board;
- take any other steps in relation to GCAFC which enable it to exercise the greatest possible influence in the ownership, governance and management of GCAFC

Structure

What is a Supporters' Trust and who is in charge?

A Supporters' Trust is a democratic, not-for-profit organisation of supporters, committed to strengthening the voice for supporters in the decision-making process at a club, and strengthening the links between the club and the community it serves.

Supporters' Trusts are constituted as Community Benefit Societies (CBS), a form of Co-operative that operate under a one-member one-vote principle and are governed by a strict set of rules.

CBSs are registered with the Financial Conduct Authority and as such have a number of legislative requirements to fulfil such as holding an Annual General Meeting and submitting annual accounts.

The members own all assets and liabilities collectively, and any profit made is either kept as reserves or reinvested to meet the society's objects.

The Trust Board is elected by members. Any members of the Trust over the age of 16 have the opportunity to stand for election to the Trust Board.

Members' Requirements

How ordinary members can work to achieve the Trust's goals

There are lots of ways that ordinary Trust members can help the Trust achieve its goals. Specialist projects which the Trust undertakes might require large sub-committees to oversee the progress and input relevant skills, and regular members' meetings will allow ordinary members to bring a whole host of ideas and skills to the table.

Engagement is the main way ordinary members can help. Increasing Trust numbers strengthens the credibility and effectiveness of the Trust.

The Supporters' Trust is all inclusive. Social media and digital communications will play a big role, so it won't matter where you live or whether you attend the meetings. Being a member, for example, in the USA who can't attend any meetings will give you the same voice and voting rights as a local member who can attend all the meetings.

If you have any questions or concerns you want to raise at an upcoming meeting this can be done via the website.

Meetings & Motions

Regularity of meetings, types of meeting and how to raise a motion
The Trust Board will meet formally every two months and provide members with a written update after each meeting of items discussed and decisions made.

Motions to be formally raised at a Trust Board meeting by Board members must be submitted to the Trust Secretary seven days before the meeting in order for the motion to be added to the agenda.

Trust members are entitled to attend Board meetings, providing they email at least seven days in advance. Any questions to Board members should be submitted at the same time.

The Trust will hold an Annual General Meeting where members will be asked to vote upon a number of motions including the acceptance of the previous year's accounts.

All Trust events and meetings will be announced on our website along with notifications sent by email to members and through our social media channels.

Elections

How to stand for election to the Trust Board

Each year members will have the opportunity to stand for election to the Trust Board.

Board members serve a set term of three years.

Prior to the elections the Trust Board will advise members of how many board seats are up for election and invite nominations.

If there are more nominations than the number of available seats a formal election will take place.

Candidates will be asked to provide a candidate's statement laying out their strengths and what skills they could contribute to the Trust Board and members will be invited to vote for the candidates whom they would like to fill the available seats.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Board is a group of people elected by Trust members and co-opted onto the Board to carry out strategic management of the Trust.

Board members have a legal duty to act in good faith and in the pursuit of the best interests of the Trust.

Some of the Trust Board roles carry unique responsibilities as detailed below.

Secretary

The secretary is responsible for the efficient administration of the society, particularly regarding ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and for ensuring the board's decisions are implemented. They need to remind the board of the rules to protect members' interests.

It is recommended practice that the secretary be appointed rather than elected to the board.

Treasurer

The treasurer deals with all aspects of finance and funding, although some aspects of the work may be delegated to a bookkeeper or finance sub-committee.

The treasurer will have a general financial oversight, advising the board on all aspects of finance.

Chair

The chair is an important role, providing leadership to the board for the overall governance and strategic direction of the society.

The chair may also be the external face of the society liaising with partners and stakeholders.

Rules

What are the rules and where to find them?

The Trust will have a registered set of rules or constitution which lays out how the society should operate.

These rules are registered with the FCA and any changes to them have to be agreed at a general meeting with the FCA informed and accepting of any alterations before they can be enacted.

All members are bound by these rules.

A summary of the rules can be found on our website [here](#).

Complaints Procedure

If a member has a complaint to raise in the first instance, they should put the complaint in writing to the Trust Secretary for consideration by the Board.

If it gets to a point where the complaint cannot be resolved, and the dispute needs to be escalated there is a provision within the society rules as detailed below. This action should only be used as a last option when all other avenues for resolution have been exhausted. Every unresolved dispute which arises out of these rules between the Trust and:

- a member; or
- any person aggrieved who has ceased to be a member within the six months prior to the date of the dispute; or
- any person claiming through such member or person aggrieved; or
- any person bringing a claim under the Rules of the Society; or
- an officer of the Society

is to be submitted to an arbitrator agreed by the parties or nominated by the Chief Executive (or equivalent) of the FSA. The arbitrator's decision will be binding and conclusive on all parties.

Any person bringing a dispute must deposit with the Trust the sum of £500 or such other reasonable sum as the Trust Board shall decide. The arbitrator will decide how the costs of the arbitration will be paid and what should be done with the deposit.

Get in Touch

Website: <https://gcafcsupporters.co.uk>

Twitter: @GCAFCSupporters

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GCAFCSupporters>

General: admin@gcafcsupporters.co.uk