

AGM Summation by Steve Allinson, Everton Shareholders Association

It's been a long time, possibly not since 1984, that we've held a General Meeting with such a sense of optimism on the pitch.

I want to pay particular tribute to our Chairman Bill Kenwright for the appointment of a manager that is frankly working miracles – David Moyes.

Also, and critically, for taking the key step of returning, as promised, the control of Everton Football Club to where it rightfully belongs – this room.

The Association has worked long and hard to this end. Make no mistake, for Bill to relinquish his leveraged control (through True Blue Holdings) back to Everton Shareholders is a mark of courage and vision befitting a real True Blue.

But he's not alone. I also want to pay tribute to Paul Gregg, for it takes a special brand of courage to set aside personal friendships and blow the whistle. And just how much, after the City game at the end of last season, did we need the whistle blowing? True Blue Holdings had failed us, and it had to go.

Now it's up to us all to move forward. We have an absolute duty to follow David Moyes' example with the players and staff: to set aside personal differences and work together for the future of this Club. You can buy players, but you can never buy team spirit.

I'd like to thank Keith Wyness for his hopes and plans for the future. The Association members are already fully aware of how far this Club has fallen behind on all performance benchmarks, and I know he will have all of our support as he strives to achieve those plans. But the key word is achievement, Keith.

Communication was the backbone of your presentation, and that's precisely the area we need immediate improvement. 800,000 Everton fans? THEY are the key resource that we need to engage. You've heard criticism tonight in this area and it's valid. We expect you to fully and openly review the Club's communication performance and develop a structure and personnel that will command the confidence of not just this room, but all Everton supporters.

Do that, and it will be your first major step in establishing the trust and respect of the entire Everton community. We'll be with you all the way.

It's my duty to highlight three issues that we can take away with us this evening.

1. The appointment of Terry Leahy in an advisory capacity – and I'm surprised more hasn't been made of this.

This has the potential to be a huge boost for Everton Football Club, and we'll be watching carefully for the development of this role. We have acquired the services of one of the most high profile Evertonians running the most successful business in Britain, and I know I'm not alone in pondering the comparisons with the Littlewoods' influence of fifty years ago. Listen to him. Do everything you can to make him central to the immediate progress of our Club, and above all capitalise on everything he can bring to the table

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2. The development of further supporter involvement – and we will be expecting urgent work on this.

We've heard so much talk, but surely the ideal opportunity for this is in the development of the youth academy / training facilities. Work with the Association to establish an Academy second to none – a true 'School of Science' independent of the current Club structure and financed by the whole Everton community. What more fitting home for the David France collection? At a stroke this could free up millions from the sale of Bellefield and provide facilities we can all share and take pride in.

Act on this. Now. Make it work for the academy, and we've proved a possible model for financing Stadium development – plan 'B' if you like. It might just become plan 'A'.

3. The sale of Everton Football Club to Chris Samuelson's Fortress Fund

I'd like to thank Chris Samuelson for taking the time to share his proposals with us, but I've news for him. He's no longer dealing with True Blue – he's now dealing with Everton Football Club Co Ltd.. We've worked long and hard to bring the control of this Club back to Merseyside, and I'll remind him that he'll require a Special Resolution – persuade 75% of this room, these shareholders, to take it back with him offshore to Switzerland.

Frankly, given our experience of absentee control, I thought he'd give us a little more credit than just tell us he's a Blue and is doing it out of the goodness of his heart.

12 odd million pounds for nearly a third of Everton Football Club? Nine wins from the next 22 games, so the press keep telling us, could see us get at least that from next year's European Championship revenues alone.

THAT'S the reality. THAT'S what we should be working for. TOGETHER.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'll settle for the first of those nine against a mid-table side on Saturday.

I commend this Board.

Steve Allinson
Chairman, Everton Shareholders Association