**Impact of COVID-19 on Professional Football Clubs and Their Communities – Interview Questions**

Introduction – Researcher to explain the aims and objectives of the research. 3 Areas below:

Area 1 - A full financial health appraisal of the English professional football league club that examines overall financial health and the impact of COVID-19

Area 2 - An examination on the impact of COVID-19 on the business models of clubs to include special focus on non-playing staff.

Area 3 - An examination of the wider economic impact to businesses during a time where matches are played behind closed doors with no fans in attendance.

Explain these interviews will inform Area 2 and if possible when the participant is formulating answers could they a point in time when this occurred (i.e. lockdown 1 March: 2020-June 2020, full season behind closed doors: September 2020-May 2021 and return of supporters August 2021 onwards).

**CEO:**

1. **What was your first reaction to COVID-19 and how it was going to impact the operational running of your football club?**

*(prompts – new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **As it was clear COVID-19 was going to a longer-term issue, what approach did your football club take to ensure business survival?**

*(prompts – business strategy, budgeting for worse case scenario, engagement with supporters)*

1. **What support did you receive?**

*(prompts – internal (chairman), external (furlough and governement) and timeline of support)*

1. **We know that football clubs in L1 and L2 rely on revenue generated from spectators more than the Championship and PL. Is that the case for your club?**
2. **What was your approach / strategy did you take to ensure supporters remained engaged with the football club?**

*(prompts – regular communication, refunds for tickets)*

1. **Have you noticed a change in your supporter’s behaviour since they have been allowed back into the stadia?**

*(prompts – large crowds, reduced away fans, lower footfall)*

1. **What is your approach to re-building revenue streams?**
2. **Has COVID-19 fundmentally changed the business operations of your football club?**
3. **Has it impacted on the medium to long-term vision for your football club?**
4. **Overall, what has the impact of COVID-19 been on your football club?**
5. **Would you have done anything differently?**

*(prompts – additonal support from external stakeholders)*

**Head of Retail/Ticketing:**

Introduction

1. **What was your first reaction to COVID-19 and how it was going to impact the operational running of your department?**

*(prompts – new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **As it was clear COVID-19 was going to be long-term, what approach did you take to the operational running of your department?**
2. **In approximate terms, what impact has COVID-19 had on your ticket sales/retail revenue?**

*(prompts – % drop, absolute £££ drop)*

1. **What impact has COVID-19 had on the staff members in your department?**

*(prompts – redunancies, furlough, new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **Have you noticed a change in your supporter’s behaviour since they have been allowed back into stadia?**

*(prompts – large crowds, reduced away fans, lower footfall)*

1. **What is your approach to re-building your ticketing/retail revenue streams?**
2. **Has COVID-19 fundmentally changed how your operate your department?**
3. **Would you have done anything differently?**

*(prompts – additonal support from external stakeholders)*

**Fans Director/Supporter Liasion Officer:**

Introduction

1. **What was your first reaction to COVID-19 and how it was going to impact on your role?**

*(prompts – new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **What was your approach / strategy did you take to ensure supporters remained engaged with the football club?**

*(prompts – regular communication, refunds for tickets, welfare support)*

1. **What impact has COVID-19 had on the staff members in your department?**

*(prompts – redunancies, furlough, new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **Do you believe your role became of even greater importance during the various lockdowns to ensure supporters remained connected and engaged with the football club?**
2. **Has your relationship with the football club changed during COVID-19?**
3. **Have you noticed a change in your supporter’s behaviour since they have been allowed back into stadia?**

*(prompts – large crowds, reduced away fans, lower footfall)*

1. **What is your approach going forward and remaining connected to your supporters?**
2. **Has COVID-19 fundmentally changed your role and how your football club engages with its supporters?**

*(prompts – online provision, more content for “non-local” supporters)*

**Head of Finance:**

Introduction

1. **What was your first reaction to COVID-19 and how it was going to impact the operational running of your football club?**

*(prompts – new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **As it was clear COVID-19 was going to be long-term, what approach did you take to ensure business survival and manage cashflow?**

*(prompts – budgeting for worse case scenario, reducing fixed costs)*

1. **What impact has COVID-19 had on the staff members in your department?**

*(prompts – redunancies, furlough, new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **In approximate terms, what impact has COVID-19 had on the finances of your football club?**
2. **What support did you receive?**

*(prompts – internal (chairman), external (furlough and governement) and timeline of support)*

1. **Did you need to look for alternative options of finance?**
2. **What is your approach going forward to ensure financial stability?**
3. **Has COVID-19 fundmentally changed how your football club will operate?**
4. **Would you have done anything differently?**

*(prompts – additonal support from external stakeholders)*

**Community Trust Manager:**

Introduction

1. **What was your first reaction to COVID-19 and how it was going to impact the running of the community trust?**

*(prompts – new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **As it was clear COVID-19 was going to a longer-term issue, what approach did the Trust take to ensure business survival?**

*(prompts – business strategy, budgeting for worse case scenario)*

1. **What impact has COVID-19 had on the staff members in your department?**

*(prompts – redunancies, furlough, new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **How has COVID-19 impacted on the priorities and vision of the community trust?**
2. **What support did you receive?**

*(prompts – internal (football club), external (furlough and governement) and timeline of support)*

1. **Has your relationship with the football club changed during COVID-19?**
2. **Do you believe the community trust became of even greater importance during the various lockdowns to ensure supporters and community participants remained connected and engaged with the football club?**
3. **Do you believe COVID-19 has changed the football club’s priorities to be more community focused?**
4. **Have you noticed a change in your supporter / community participants behaviour due to COVID-19?**
5. **What is the community trust’s vision going forward post COVID-19?**
6. **Would you have done anything differently?**

*(prompts – additonal support from external stakeholders)*

**Head of Youth Development:**

Introduction

1. **What was your first reaction to COVID-19 and how it was going to impact on your role?**

*(prompts – new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **What impact has COVID-19 had on the staff members in your department?**

*(prompts – redunancies, furlough, new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **How has COVID-19 impacted on the priorities and vision of your department?**
2. **What support did you receive?**

*(prompts – internal (football club), external (furlough and governement) and timeline of support)*

1. **Have you noticed a change in your participants behaviour due to COVID-19?**
2. **What is the vision for your department going forward post COVID-19?**
3. **Would you have done anything differently?**

*(prompts – additonal support from external stakeholders)*

Head of Commercial:

1. **How important is the commercial revenue and operations more widely in the context of the club as a whole?**

*(prompts – what does your day to job include broadly?)*

1. **What was your first reaction to COVID-19 and how it was going to impact the operational running of your role within the football club?**

*(prompts – new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **As it was clear COVID-19 was going to be long-term, what approach did you take to ensure the commercial operations remained as operational as possible?**

*(prompts – budgeting for worse case scenario, managing sponsorship relations)*

1. **What impact has COVID-19 had on the staff members in your department (if you have any other people that work with you)?**

*(prompts – redunancies, furlough, new ways of working, cash flow, what happens next?)*

1. **In approximate terms, what impact has COVID-19 had on the commercial finances of your football club?**
2. **What support did you receive?**

*(prompts – internal (chairman), external (furlough and governement) and timeline of support)*

1. **Did you need to look for alternative options in respect of commercial ac tivity?**

*(prompts – new ways of working, new appraches/strategy)*

1. **What is your approach going forward to ensure commercial sustainability and to grow that side of the business? Do you need any additional support (internal/external) to be able to achieve that?**
2. **Has COVID-19 fundamentally changed how your role within the football club will operate?**
3. **Would you have done anything differently reflecting on the last 18 months?**

*(prompts – additonal support from external stakeholders)*