

Responses from Alan Hardy unless otherwise stated.

What have been your biggest challenges and successes since becoming owner of the club?

One of the successes has been the way the club has improved relations with supporters, helped by the recruitment of fan engagement executive, Sarah Gooding, who has previous experience in a similar role at Oxford United. Of course, it helps that the team are top of the league!

Finances have been adversely affected by transfer dealings and work on Meadow Lane which hadn't been budgeted for, however it's encouraging that average attendances are up by 57% on any point during the past five years.

The Burnley chairman recently said on radio that the biggest challenge is to appoint the right manager - and that has been a success for us. We went out on a limb appointing someone untried and untested in Kevin Nolan but thankfully the risk is paying off.

What are the end dates for Jorge Grant and Ryan Yates' loan deals?

Both players are on loan until the end of the season and, while recall clauses are in place, we are confident they will stay with us for the season.

Can there be a ticket bundle for shift workers?

We have to make sure we don't devalue season tickets by providing too many special offers during the season.

Last season's six-pack offer could be considered and, as there is clearly a market for it, it will be raised at the next heads of department meeting, along with the subject of half-season tickets.

Would it be possible to bring back paying at the gate?

The club must move with the times. People aren't expected to carry cash for much longer in an age when goods can be bought using a mobile phone or a watch.

There are plans in place to have contactless payments at food kiosks within the stadium to quicken the transaction process.

Could you please outline the responsibilities of the current board members?

The chairman explained the structure of his board reflects his other businesses, offering balance and ensuring his views are challenged.

He admitted board meetings can sometimes become "spicy", but that is part of the "positive abrasion" he wants within that environment.

He also acknowledged he is in his infancy as a chairman and needs "to learn as much as possible and accept challenge from others to grow as a person."

What is the club's scouting policy?

It's non-existent after being scaled back, understandably, by the previous regime due to costs. The current chief scout goes to games to provide reports on upcoming opposition.

The club are trying to establish the correct scouting process before taking this further, with academy manager Jon Goodman looking at the end-to-end journey of a player joining the club as an eight-year-old and progressing to the first team.

How long can you keep Kevin Nolan?

It would take tangible success - i.e. a league title or two - for a highly-ranked club to take a risk on Kevin, as Notts did last January.

He has taken us from second bottom to top and his stock has risen. He's on people's radar but he hasn't won anything yet.

He is a good person who works hard - and that's what creates success.

How is the training ground progressing?

The club currently have a rolling 12-month contract with Basford United, who have bent over backwards to help. The pitch is tended to by a full-time Notts groundsman and there is also a 3G pitch, an academy area and a goalkeeping area. However, the ambitions are to have a training ground the club can call its own.

Three offers of varying quality have been made to the club by the council. Two have been master planned, the other discounted. One of the plans includes a 3G pitch, a full first-team pitch, an under 21s pitch and pitches for five, seven and nine-a-side matches.

In addition, a dome will be constructed to allow the academy to train indoor during the winter, which is part of the club's journey towards becoming a category two academy.

It was hoped we would have a training facility by the beginning of next season but that may be a little optimistic given the timescale.

Show of hands: Safe standing – yes or no?

The chairman explained his belief that the atmosphere in football stadiums is diminishing, partly due to the lack of standing.

He asked for a show of hands from those who would approve the introduction of safe standing at Meadow Lane and the room was overwhelmingly in favour.

One supporter did however state that, depending on the cost of implementation, they would sooner see the money invested in football.

Show of hands: New PA system or new scoreboard?

The chairman thanked guests who identified themselves as Lifeline members and canvassed opinion on whether they would prefer to see funds go towards a new PA system or scoreboard.

The former proved by far the most popular option – although some joked they would like both!

Is there any chance of adopting the multi-ball system to help keep play moving?

The chairman asked Sarah Gooding to arrange a meeting with Kevin Nolan to establish his philosophy on how many ball boys the club use, stressing the importance of establishing a clear directive on the issue.

If I'm unable to attend a game due to work, am I able to lend my season ticket to my friend?

No, you can't.

The conversation then moved on to the issue of additional ticket checks at the recent match against Newport, with supporters sharing their own experiences.

The chairman confirmed the operation took place due to 'serious intelligence' obtained by the club, and that it had been successful.

Can the flush system be changed in the Family Stand toilet to make it easier for youngsters to push the button?

The chairman asked Sarah Gooding to investigate.

Now you've settled in, where do you see the club in five years' time?

The five-year plan is for the club to be playing Championship football.

Once the club has stabilised at that level, it would probably be time to make way for someone with 'far more wealth available to them' to help the club push on.

There is lots to put in place. We haven't got the fanbase at the moment. Our aim over the next three-four years is to regularly achieve crowds of 15,000 to make Championship football sustainable.

The chairman also revealed that he had an offer for the club in the summer and had been asked to stay on as chairman. He rejected the approach as he didn't feel he was 'experienced enough as the chairman of a football club' to handle someone else's money in that role.

Why the steep increase in season ticket prices for 18-21-year-olds to adults?

The chairman explained his view that, generally, those over the age of 21 should be standing on their own two feet having left further education.

He also pointed out most other clubs have the same policy.

What can we do to get the EFL to have full-time officials, potentially ex-players?

The chairman explained his concern over the length of time it takes to qualify as a referee, citing his own experiences as a board member of the Young Elizabethan League.

He believes the steps to become a referee must be condensed to get more people involved, preventing a knock-on effect at the top.

The chairman was congratulated for hosting a forum and asked if similar events were planned for the future.

He responded by saying he would be willing to hold similar events on a quarterly basis if welcomed.

Would you allow supporters' groups to conduct fundraisers for Notts County?

Any help is welcome to assist the club with various projects.

Pat Akers, from the official supporters' association, provided an update on their fundraising for a van to help the club transport training equipment and food to Basford. The chairman thanked them for their efforts and the project will now move forward.

A supporter questioned a tweet from Alan which they read to suggest he didn't want to add a centre back or striker in January, saying they were the positions they would like to see improve.

Alan responded by saying his tweets must be read in context and provided statistics to back up his intended point – that he's happy with the squad at this stage of the season.

He went on to explain that plans are already being put in place for the January transfer window.

The chairman was asked if he was always confident of eventually signing Liam Noble, to which he replied 'no' as he had signed a three-year contract with Forest Green Rovers.

He went on to explain that he believed Kevin Nolan's man management skills would help the club get the best out of Noble.

Why do we change strips away from home, even when there's no colour clash?

The chairman explained that he's a firm believer in wearing the away kit at away games.

He believes the black and white should be reserved for matches at Meadow Lane which, due to players not being permitted to use the new dressing room on non-matchdays, is becoming a special place to play.

He went on to praise the club's commercial team for selling £255,000's worth of shirt sponsorship this season – the highest in leagues One and Two – and explained the importance of ensuring the club's away shirt sponsors receive their fair share of exposure.

Roughly what percentage is players' salaries against total turnover?

50%

Are clubs still governed by salary cost protocol regulations?

Yes

In broad strokes, how is the £1.6million deficit made up?

Mainly salaries and bonuses. It's people-related.

Is your perception of running Notts the same as when you took over, or has it dramatically changed?

It's substantially harder and more complex than I thought. I'm being told 'no' every day in terms of what I can say and do. There are so many rules and regulations passed on to clubs by governing bodies.

Will the club be looking to convert the girls' academy into an FA-approved Regional Talent Centre?

The women's FA are looking into allowing all compliant professional clubs to run an RTC, rather than limiting it to one per region.

The current licence for Nottingham runs for another two years but the club will make a concerted effort to win it when it becomes available.

Were Notts invited to the recent meeting organised by Andy Holt to discuss the TV money split?

The chairman explained that he was invited but, while he doesn't agree with the split, he found the idea disingenuous and therefore declined.

He would have preferred to have seen Shaun Harvey (EFL chief executive) invited to listen to what was said, as opposed to the meeting being 'behind closed doors'.

What role does the supporter liaison officer team play?

Sarah Gooding admitted there is no real structure to the SLO role at present and explained that the team have been working over the past six months to create relationships with the supporter groups, leading to Alan meeting with them all prior to the forum.

She added that the SLO team are now in a position to seek fans' input on how the SLO role is structured as, in effect, they work for them. She encouraged supporters to send their views to sarah.gooding@nottscountyfc.co.uk.

Alan explained the importance of supporter feedback and encouraged fans to use the SLO team as a vehicle to communicate with the club.

He then went on to stress the need for all fans, no matter which group they associate themselves with, to move together as 'one unit' for the benefit of the club.