



SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS CLUB TRUST LIAISON MEETING AUGUST 20th 2003

1 Present

Geoffrey King (GK), Derek Wilshire (DW), Paul FitzGerald (PF), Dave Scriven (DS) and Terry Jeffreys (TJ) were present.

2 Apologies

None

3 Matters arising

It was noted that PF would chair the meeting and TJ would take the minutes.

Exeter and Fossetts Farm

GK said that there was no further news.

Steve Wignall and the Trust

As the Trust had not given Steve Wignall any dates to consider it was agreed that he gave a Q&A session at the Shrimpers Trust AGM on 22nd October.

Blues Lottery

GK said that a lot more money was coming in now.

Shrimpers Bar

TJ said that he had a good relationship with Brian Dear about the running of the Shrimpers. Although the Trust realise that little money would be spent on the place, it was the little things that were being noticed and needed doing such as soap in the dispenser and a lock on the toilet door.

Kevin Lloyd

GK said that Kevin had a problem, which could be Tourets Syndrome. However Kevin had been warned with regard to his future behaviour.

4 Security

PF asked if the security at the club had been improved since the current spate of burglaries. GK said that the culprit had been arrested but was an under age youth. He was seeking redress from the parents. As a result of these burglaries the insurance premium had increased. At present the club were investigating the installation of nigh-time security cameras and some of the expense could be recouped from the Football Grounds Trust.

PF raised the subject of the club security guards. GK said that the match-day security staff were there to protect the fans who came to watch the football and gave an insight to the behaviour of some of the fans at the Colchester friendly. He said that he had no sympathy with people who came to the ground to cause trouble and that he was not prepared to accept people there who wanted to spoil the enjoyment of others. He added that the police had requested that all those who had been arrested, be subject to a temporary banning order until the cases come to court on the 5th September. Should those people be convicted they will be subject to a full banning order. He said that should those subject to the temporary banning order wish to discuss the matter with the club, they were welcome to do so. He went on to say that alcohol fuels the problem and any one under the influence of alcohol in a club bar would be refused service and entry to the ground.

5 Programmes and general matchday experience

PF said that he had noted that the price of the programme had increased. GK said that they had made the programme bigger. He said that the club lost £21K on programmes last year. He added that they work on the presumption that a third of the attendance will buy a programme but have cut it down to providing programmes for a quarter of the perceived attendance. He would rather sell out than make a loss.

PF said that it had been suggested that the club directors see the match day experience through the eyes of the normal fan. He invited the directors to be the guests of the Trust and join fans in the stands to sample the match day experience from their perspective. GK said that he would raise that at the next Board meeting.

6 Health and Safety

GK said that there had been a recent Fire Brigade inspection due to complaints by fans of a locked fire door. He said the inspection had been passed.

PF said that he felt that smoking in the East Stand was dangerous due to its wooden construction. GK said that whilst he would like to ban smoking in that stand, he couldn't limit it to that stand only and would have to ban it everywhere and felt that would be unpopular. PF said that the banning of smoking in public places was becoming more widespread and felt that fans could "hold out" during a game of football.

DS said that he had heard from a steward that the club are providing less stewards than the number of stewards to fans ratio as required by legislation. GK asked that DS provide him with the legislation that provided a number of stewards to fans ratio.

DS said that the new sound system was too loud. GK said that the system had been set up by an experienced company. The equipment had limiters to ensure that levels did not exceed specified levels. TJ said that it had been reported to him by Trust members in South Upper that the system levels were so loud and distorted that they couldn't hear the numbers for the "shoot for a car competition." He suggested that was the reason why the prizes hadn't been claimed against Cheltenham He had been told that fans weren't buying tickets until the problems were resolved.

7 Sammy the Shrimp

DS said that he had noted that the shirts of the club mascots did not show the name of the Trust on them which was part of our sponsorship deal. He requested that the shirts have "Shrimpers Trust" on them instead of "SUSCT."

8 Quid A Goal

PF said that he had only to collect money from one more director to complete the scheme for last season. He said that the number of people participating in the scheme was increasing. TJ said that the situation with the players contribution had still not been resolved. GK said that he felt that the scheme had been poorly put to Carl Emberson and a misunderstanding had arisen. PF said that a positive response from the players could help market the scheme more.

GK asked if the sponsorship money resulting from the scheme for John Stannard could be paid earlier instead of the end of the season. PF said that it would be discussed at the next Trust Committee meeting.

9 Family Stand

TJ said that there were many problems with the new arrangements on the first match of the season and hoped that they were only teething troubles. GK said that he was aware of those problems and hoped that would now be resolved. He added that the new arrangements in the family stand had resulted in 50 people being found to be using the facilities fraudulently. He said that the majority had accepted the conditions and paid the full price for adult season tickets.

10 Shrimpers Trust AGM

GK said that he may be on holiday on the 22nd October. It was confirmed that Ron Martin, Steve Wignall and John Stannard would take part in a Q&A at the AGM.

11 Any Other Business

PF said that some members of the Trust had been invited to meet Colin Wagman at his London Office and had attended the meeting. GK said that they had been informed about the meeting and received feedback. PF said that it had been an informative meeting and it was apparent that the holding company had two different aims. He felt that Ron Martin wished to stay involved with the club whilst Colin Wagman didn't. He added that attendance at matches was key to the situation to ensure more revenue for the club. GK said that the club needed 6000 fans on match days to survive without the commercial department input.

GK said that to raise awareness in the club, it, with the help of EC funding, was having a film made by South Essex College on Football in the Community which would be shown to all the local schools. Two football teachers would also visit the schools to talk about football related issues.

12 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on the 24th September 2003 at 1600.