



SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS SOCIETY LIMITED LIAISON MEETING



Thursday, 19th January 2017

1. Present and Apologies

Those in attendance were Ron Martin (RM), Chairman of SUFC; Patrick Van der Waag (PvW), Head of Finance for SUFC; Paul FitzGerald (PF), Trust Chairman; Paul Yeomanson (PY), Trust Vice-Chairman; Shane Chapman (SC), Trust Liaison Officer and Kay Fogg (KF), Junior Blues Co-ordinator. Apologies from Danny Macklin, who had been called away urgently.

This being our first Liaison Meeting since Steve Kavanagh's departure, PF explained a little about the background to the Meetings, and that the Trust representatives would normally number two or three from the four in attendance. The Agenda is normally prepared by the Trust and the Minutes are recorded and circulated by the Trust, once they have been approved.

RM said that he would like to keep to the same kind of format, and frequency and that both PvW and DM would be taking more responsibility as a point of contact for matters which the Trust may wish to bring to the forefront. All three of them would collectively cover many of the roles previously under the remit of the CEO. RM advised that it is possible that Geoffrey King (GK) may resume responsibility for Liaison Meetings in the future.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on

Follow up on actions:

- **Fairfax Drive entrance** – DM had reported, and KF confirmed, that this entrance is now open wherever possible, unless otherwise advised by the Police. This makes the car park much more easily managed after games. Stadium Manager David Jobson (DJ) now asks the away team coach driver not to pull forward too early.
- **Shrimpers Bar exterior lighting** – all confirmed this now seems to be working satisfactorily.
- **Local Promotions** – the action on the Trust is to be held over for further investigation.
ACTION – Trust to discuss at next Board Meeting
- **West Stand Toilets** – on Agenda as separate item.
- **Shrimpers Bar Wifi/CI-connect** – DM advised that the Football League which, now no longer intend to install in stadia Wifi however the Club is looking into installing Wifi, at least in the hospitality and bar areas of the ground.
ACTION – DM to update further next Meeting.
- **Shrimpers Bar improvements** – PY to re-send the details of those suppliers who helped with the refurbishments to Rhys.
- **Reciprocal Car Parking** – PY and SC reported that this seems to be working well.

3. Club Finances

RM reported that all wages are up to date and HMRC have been paid. The latest petition issued by HMRC against us had been issued when our payment was just one day late. RM assured those present that this has now been satisfied – and the Petition dismissed. He added that this has been the most successful financial year in the last decade.

PF asked when the next set of accounts would be published and when the next AGM would be. PvW responded by saying that the audit of the accounts is ongoing and that the biennial AGM is due this year.

RM emphasised that he is now taking a more personal involvement with staff at the Club and is in the process of meeting individuals and groups of employees

The tribunal to set Dan Bentley's fee has now reached its conclusion, with an initial £1.0m fee plus add ons being set. The initial fee is to be paid in instalments over a period of time. RM added that this fee is "compensation" to the Club, not a valuation.

4. New Stadium

RM was able to give a much clearer update than had been provided at any previous Liaison Meeting. British Land remains committed to the scheme, with re-submission of revised plans due. Southend

Council also remain committed to the scheme, with the development seen as being complementary to the success of the town and the High Street. Weston Homes are also very committed both at the Roots Hall site and at Fossetts Farm.

5. Junior Blues

KF reported that she had just attended a brief meeting with DM, RE and CL, and how disappointed we had all been about the lack of players at the recent Christmas Party, and RM agreed. Plans are in hand for an end of season function for the Junior Blues, as well as an Easter event at Adventure Island.

KF explained some of the difficulties with the flag bearers ahead of each game and PF agreed to help with wording a consent form for this.

ACTION – PF to provide wording for consent form;

KF to liaise with DM for events

6. Southend United in High Street/Shop Stand

The Trust had expected to be involved with the recent stand in the High Street, RM said that reports from the Commercial team were favourable and suggested we liaise with them.

ACTION – PY to liaise with DM

7. Car Park

The car park had been raised at a recent Trust Meeting, everyone agreed how much better the tarmac had made some of the car park, but that many dangerous potholes remained that made traversing the car park difficult for some supporters. RM agreed that he would look into the possibility of further improving this aspect of the car park.

ACTION – RM and PvW to investigate

8. Toilet Facilities

KF and PF advised the long history of issues with various toilets in the South Upper, Family and West ladies. RM agreed that this was an issue which could spoil the fans experience (in addition to a health and safety issue) and as such was high on his agenda. In addition to the ongoing improvements and remedial work; the ladies and gents toilets in the East Stand would be re furnished over the next 2 weeks. RM had been advised that this was the area needing the most urgent attention. It was then mentioned that the toilets cleanliness was also an issue as it appeared that they had not been cleaned from one game to another. RM said that we paid an independent contractor to clean all the toilets before every game. Then followed a discussion about the toilets around the ground – after which RM said that he was not aware how bad the other toilets were. He said that he and PvW would inspect all the toilets as soon as possible – and on an ongoing random basis PvW would check them throughout the season.

9. Big Games and Lack of Refreshments

At recent games with large crowds, the food and drinks outlets did not seem to have anticipated demand and some had run out of all food entirely. Other outlets had run out of lids for hot drinks which was also of concern. RM agreed that they would look into this and again investigate the viability of mobile vendors.

ACTION – RM/PvW to report back

10. Corporate Sponsorship for Sponsored Walk to Charlton

PF advised that the Trust were arranging a sponsored walk to Charlton ahead of our game there on 8th April. This will be split between the Trust and Little Havens. Walkers would be setting off at midnight on the Friday evening with the intention of arriving at the Valley around 1 p.m. He asked for permission to seek some sponsorship from amongst some of the Club's corporate sponsors. RM was happy to agree to this and advised liaising with DM.

ACTION – PF/PY to liaise with DM

11. Shrimpers Bar/SUCET

PY brought up the matter of SUCET's continued usage of the Shrimpers Bar. He explained that the bar is never set up correctly ahead of matches as the youngsters move furniture about, and that food and other rubbish is left in there, in often overflowing bins. The Trust had been under the impression that they would not have much need to use the bar since their move to a different area and were disappointed that the hard work and money invested in improving the bar were being overlooked because it's being left in an unacceptable state. Photos were produced to back up claims.

**ACTION – PY to email photos to PvW
PvW to follow up with Dale Spiby**

12. Blues Lottery

A new committee is to be set up to steer the Lottery, which continues to struggle to attract new members.

ACTION – Trust and Club to provide new committee members' details

13. Any Other Business

- KF asked if contract talks have begun with any of those players out of contract this summer and RM replied that contract talks are underway with some of these.
- Trust representatives raised the matter of dissatisfaction amongst supporters about the way in which Adam Barrett is being treated and enquired if there was any way in which this matter might be resolved. RM agreed to try to seek a mutually satisfactory solution.
- RM sought opinion from those in attendance about Nile Ranger, without revealing detail of the act currently under investigation by the FA.
- RM was asked to draw the winners of the Trust's Christmas Quiz, the results being as follows:
 - 1st prize (£100) – Paul Bunyan
 - 2nd prize (Two tickets to Blues Legends' Lounge) – Nicola Slater
 - 3rd prize (Bottle of Champagne) – Katie Kelleher
 - 4th prize (Signed football) – Paul Yeomanson
 - 5th prize (Tub of sweets) – Helen FitzGerald

14. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting – 2nd March 2017