



# SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS SOCIETY LIMITED LIAISON MEETING



Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017  
Roots Hall Stadium 16:00

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## 1. Present and Apologies:

Those in attendance were Geoffrey King (GK); Danny Macklin (DM); Patrick Van der Waag (PvW); Paul FitzGerald (PF); Shane Chapman (SC) and Kay Fogg (KF). Apologies were received from Paul Yeomanson (PY).

It was agreed that GK would chair meetings going forward.

## 2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Follow up on actions not otherwise covered in Agenda items:

- **Local Promotions** – the action still remains with the Trust as there has not been a Meeting since the last Liaison.  
**ACTION – Trust to raise this item at their next Board Meeting**
- **New shirt front sponsorship** – DM revealed that the club would be changing the front sponsor with immediate effect and with launch planned for the following day. The name on the shirt front would now be “The Amy May Trust #nut allergies ARE serious”. DM also advised that the club would allow shirts already purchased to be exchanged, like for like. In the light of this, the club would henceforth be a nut free stadium.
- **Anton Ferdinand shirts** – some extra shirts had been promised by Anton at the Sponsors’ Evening, and again at the Gala Dinner. The Trust made it clear that we do not want these if they were going to cost the Club money. No further action.

## 3. Club Finances

PvW reported that all salaries had been paid up to date and that they are “on top of” the tax situation.

## 4. New Stadium

GK advised that the club is still waiting on the outcome of the planning application, with a result hoped for following SBC’s planning meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September. The 16 week deadline is due to expire just ahead of this meeting.

PF raised the Trust’s recent involvement in canvassing for support, following consultation with the chairman, who was happy for the Trust to be proactive in its support. PF wondered if there was better value in the Trust contacting the council as an organisation or encouraging members to write as individuals.

**ACTION – PF to contact RM to discuss this point**

## 5. Junior Blues

KF advised that take up on renewals was a little lower than expected, with approx. 52 existing members renewing, although a further 51 new members had signed up. All current members who have not yet renewed will be phoned in the next few weeks, and all those on the original Trust Juniors scheme will be written to by the Trust.

KF raised a concern over the new gallery on the website for photos of flag bearers, which had not been updated since the first match of the season.

**ACTION – DM to ensure gallery is up to date**

## **6. Shrimpers Bar Entrance Hall/9. Stadium Facilities**

It was agreed to combine these two items on the agenda.

PF brought up huge concerns about the disgraceful condition of the gents' toilets both in the Shrimpers Bar and in South Upper at the first match of the season. Both were blocked and the stench pervaded into the bar area making it very unpleasant. He emphasised that this should not be thought of as a problem for the bar manager but a failure on the club's part to make sure that facilities are adequate ahead of a match. GK agreed, saying that this should be checked on the day preceding a home match, and that, if SUCET were found to be leaving things in the Shrimpers in a poor state, he would take it up with them directly. PvW advised that it would seem that some signage had been put up during close season and that residue from drilling had caused some blockages. All gum had been removed from urinals and that the toilet areas themselves had been deep cleaned during the close season. He also advised that there had been problems with water flow and sewerage problems relating to the flats behind the South stand causing problems in the toilets in the South stand. SC also advised that there was no hot water in the South stand toilets.

**ACTION – PvW to ensure that a proper check is carried out on all toilets ahead of home matches with relevant staff. Hand cleanser to be installed in toilets where hand washing is problematic.**

PF raised the issue of the entrance hall to the Shrimpers Bar. Last year the Trust had funded some major improvements to the bar, including replacing the flooring in the entrance hall. During the summer, what is presumed to have been a red carpet roll has been laid and taped down onto the flooring which has left unsightly dark tape marks. Following discussion, it was deduced that this would most likely have been down to a presentation evening for SUCET students and GK agreed to take this up with SUCET management.

**ACTION – GK to discuss with DS**

PF also raised the unfortunate issue surrounding a wheelchair bound supporter's treatment at Meet the Blues Day, concerning parking, and the same supporter's issue with access to the disabled toilets being blocked with queues for the West stand bar during half time at matches. The club has apologised to the supporter for the issue at Meet the Blues Day and GK confirmed that stewards should ensure that the walkways are kept clear in the stand.

**ACTION – Club to allocate a steward with specific responsibility for making sure this access is as clear as possible. All stewards to be reminded that supporters should not block walkways, especially at the back of the West stand.**

SC asked if the problems surrounding a lack of draught beers at the recent home game would be resolved ahead of the next one. DM replied that he was confident the issue would be resolved. SC also asked if bar staff could be trained to rotate beers in chillers so that the ones in there longest are used first.

## **7. Away Travel Reciprocal Parking Charges**

PY had provided a list of those clubs which had charged us for parking official supporters coach parking last season, or early this season:

Rotherham - £23 per coach

Doncaster - £20 per coach

Northampton - £10 per coach

Peterborough - £20 per coach

Scunthorpe - £10 per coach

Walsall - £12 per coach

Wigan - £20 per coach

It was agreed that the club would contact clubs in writing to advise that it is not our normal practice to charge for parking opposition supporters' coaches however, should we be charged for parking at their ground, we would reciprocate at Roots Hall.

**ACTION – DM to ensure other L1 clubs are written to and to diarise so that Roots Hall staff know to enforce charges where appropriate, with any revenue gained coming back to the Trust.**

## 8. Roots Hall pitch

Trust members raised concerns about the condition of the pitch this season. PvW advised that the company we have used previously in the replacement of the pitch over the summer was no longer offering the same service and as such, an alternative company had to be used. This company was delayed in the work they were doing at West Ham, where machinery broke down, meaning they were approximately 2-3 weeks late in getting the Roots Hall pitch underway, which has obviously impacted on the growth and "bedding in" of the pitch. An improved Rigby Taylor fertilizer is being used which focuses on the root development, and it has been left to grow longer before cutting ahead of Saturday's match, which, it is hope, will show an improvement. SC asked about the pitch watering and it was explained that it is watered at half time in response to a request from the manager.

## 9. Stadium Facilities

See item 6.

## 10. Any Other Business:

- **Youth Team Mini-bus** – The Trust is to pay £5,000 per a year as part of their contract for sponsorship of the Youth Team, which will go towards the funding of this new mini-bus, which is currently being held for the club. It is a 17 seater.
- **Youth Team Contract** – The Shrimpers Trust name is now on the Youth team shirts and the Contract is due to be sent to the Trust for approval.

### **ACTION – DM and PF to liaise on the Contract**

- **Alan Moody** – Alan and his daughter would be guests of the club at the match on Saturday, and would be presented with the resultant cheque from the recent fund raising to date. DM noted that the designated box (20) still needed to be cleared. Disabled toilet facilities had been arranged. Some commemorative prints had been commissioned, with cost being £380. DM advised that there are loads of people wanting to meet him on the day, and it was agreed that this might be better managed doing so in the Blues Legends' Lounge after the match. A request was made that the manager and players be approached for donations

### **ACTION – DM to talk to PB**

- **Club medicals** – SC enquired about the medicals carried out before signing a player bearing in mind the recent injuries to newly signed players. DM advised that the initial medical would be carried out by Ben Clarkson, and that players would then be sent for x-rays. Both Rob Kiernan and Michael Turner went through this procedure. Sometimes, when situations like this arise, it is old scar tissue causing the problem.
- **Individual roles** – SC asked about Bob Shaw and Brian Horton, and their roles within the club. GK responded, explaining their responsibilities, Bob Shaw is Chief Scout, and although he doesn't scout this particular area himself, he has others reporting to him that do. Brian Horton is an important link between the youth team, the under 21s, the manager and the first team. He works closely with Ricky Duncan.
- **Hospitality upgrades for STHs** – SC asked why the upgrade costs for STHs are more expensive this year. DM replied that it was due to the uptake, particularly on the more expensive games.
- **Newport – Carabao Cup** – SC expressed his disappointment over the situation regarding tickets sold for this game. He would have preferred to sit in his normal seat in the South Upper, which didn't officially go on sale until late on the day. The East stand was very full and people weren't sitting in their allocated seats necessarily making it difficult to find seats.
- **Frankie Banks** – KF made a formal request for the Trust to be given access to some old scrapbooks documenting Frankie's time at the club, in particular his work with the Senior Shrimpers. She has seen these books which were found during SUCET's move, requests from the Trust to SUCET for them has so far fallen on deaf ears.

### **ACTION – GK to raise with DS**

- **Future meetings** – GK asked that, in future, we liaise amongst ourselves for future meeting dates, with KF over-seeing this arrangement. He would like the Agenda published at least a week in advance of meetings in future. PF agreed to re-circulate Minutes half way through cycle to prompt people on their outstanding matters.

## 11. Date of next meeting – Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> October at 4 p.m.