



SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS SOCIETY LIMITED LIAISON MEETING



Thursday, 7th December 2017
Roots Hall Stadium 16:00

1. Present and Apologies:

Those in attendance were Steve Waggott (SW); Patrick Van der Waag (PvW); Paul Yeomanson (PY); Shane Chapman (SC) and Kay Fogg (KF). Apologies were received from Paul FitzGerald (PF).

Meeting chaired by PY.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th October 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 in January
- **Youth team contract** – still remaining outstanding after Danny's departure.
ACTION – SW/PF to finalise the trust's Youth Contract
- **Alan Moody** – PY reported that the final figure raised was £11,700 with a final £100 being donated by a former Southend supporter.
- **Frankie Banks scrapbooks** – April Smith, from SUCET has kindly agreed to try and get these. The Trust will continue to monitor this action.
- **Shrimpers Bar** – PY advised that the workmen currently undertaking work in and around the bar are leaving lots of plaster, paint and dust, which is not acceptable on match days. The issues with the hand driers and hot water in the ladies are thought to be down to an element requiring replacement. Stadium Manager, DJ has advised that new heaters are due to be put in to replace the ones currently there which are ineffective and suspect.
ACTION – SW to liaise with DJ and workmen to follow up on all these points
- **Reciprocal Parking** – SW advised that he is working hard to try and ensure this is all in hand, and confirmed during the meeting that there would be no charges at Bristol Rovers for the upcoming match
ACTION – SW to continue to update/liaise with Away Travel organisers
- **iFollow** – Following canvassing of supporters, SW provided the following summary of points and responses from NeuLion, the company behind iFollow:
UK subscribers say that the audio commentary is not as good as it was on Blues Player plus you cannot listen in to the pre and post-match discussion on BBC Essex. Response: the nature and length of pre and post-match audio coverage is down to the individual club, they just need to advise NeuLion if they wish to extend it.
It is a shame the audio commentary cannot be linked to the visual on one stream. Response: for technical reasons linking the BBC feed directly to the video stream is not currently possible. You are, however, able to add your own commentary to the video via our (their) own Remote Commentary App.
Picture tends to break up in the 2nd half and tends to buffer a lot. Response: We (they) are aware of this issue, it only affects certain games on desktop devices. NeuLion are working with Realise to find a fix.
Territory restrictions. Response: Currently iFollow subscribers are restricted in the content they can consume depending on whether or not they are a domestic or international subscriber. In short, a domestic subscriber cannot listen to live audio or watch premium VOD outside of the UK. This would, for instance, stop a fan with a UK pass listening to commentary while on holiday abroad. An international subscriber cannot listen to live audio or watch live video/premium VOD inside the UK. We do understand that there have been some isolated incidents of frustration from supporters who have expected to listen to commentary on their travels. For that reason, we are working on a fix with NeuLion that will separate live audio and video restrictions, allowing people to listen live whilst still upholding our strict broadcast restrictions around video.

- **Aviva Scheme for Employees** – PY advised that the Trust had secured a grant of £300. This will be used in line with the original target of reaching out to involve disadvantaged groups in the community with football.
- **Cost of drinks** – This remains under discussion on both sides, with various options and ideas being further investigated.

3. Club Finances

PvW reported that wages, PAYE and VAT are all up to date. The chairman continues to support the club substantially.

PvW also advised that the accounts are currently under audit with the intention of the accounts being before the Board of Directors early in the New Year, ahead of circulation to supporters with the intention of an AGM being held in Spring 2018.

4. New Stadium

SW advised that, as has been seen, there is a huge amount of promotional activity, with the #ourtimeisnow. New hoarding is being added to the land on the Rochford side of the planned development.

PY asked why the plans are not on the Agenda for the Council Planning meeting for this month as this was when supporters had been led to believe a decision would be made. SW replied that there will likely be more comment over the next few weeks, and that with a big submission like this, it is vital to ensure that everything is ready and in place to aid decision making. Once everything is correctly in place, then it will be put to the Council.

PY pointed out that the lack of information and communication with supporters, and also with the Trust Chairman directly, creates negativity towards the Chairman. SW agreed to mention this to RM.

ACTION – SW to discuss transparency issues with RM

5. Junior Blues

KF advised how disappointed she had been and that her concerns surrounding the Junior Blues designated match on 21st October had been well founded in that the day was not what any of us would have wanted for the children. The club's lack of organisation was noted and had been discussed with RE. The Junior Blues game next season would take place earlier and would have better input and activity.

The Christmas Party will be taking place on Tuesday, 19th December at Play Football. KF has been assured of full player support for this event.

PY commented that the Trust have been concerned that a parent of a young Junior Blues member has recently made negative comments about the Junior Blues on social media about her son not being allowed to be a flag bearer, when evidence exists to show this had been explained as he is only 5. She had spoken with someone at the club who had organised a pitch visit for her and her son at the last match. The Trust feel that the club should have supported KF, as it sets a precedent for the future.

ACTION – SW to discuss with RE

6. Trust Banners and Trust Match Day

PY advised that part of our contract for the Youth Sponsorship included a "Trust Matchday" but that this has not been taken up over the last few years. With a drop in adult membership, the Trust would like to exercise their right to take up a Trust Matchday.

With the Trust's donations close to £200,000, some new banners and flyers are to be produced and would be used to promote the Trust. SW granted permission for a new "pop up" banner to be put in the Ticket Office.

ACTION – PY to liaise with RE

7. Former Players Association

PY advised that plans are in hand for the forward planning group to help set up an organisation for our former players. This has gained momentum following the organisation surrounding Alan Moody's recent fund raising campaign. SW pointed out the upcoming "Evening with Stan Collymore" and whether it might be a good idea to try and involve him? Further discussion ensued surrounding other former players to involve.

8. Any Other Business:

- **Wheelchair supporters using toilets in the Shrimpers Bar** – KF raised a concern surrounding an adult male wheelchair user being brought in to use the ladies' toilets at the last home game while she had been in there. Whilst recognising that there is no alternative, it was

agreed that a steward or member of bar staff should be informed to check the toilet is clear before this supporter uses the toilets. This would be a concern from a safeguarding point of view as a number of children also use these toilets.

ACTION – SW was in agreement and is to speak to those concerned

- **Child mascot changing** – in a similar fashion, concerns were raised by Trust members about children changing either in the toilets or in the corridor leading to the Gents' in the Shrimpers. Discussion continued about various other options as, again, this is a safeguarding concern.

ACTION – SW to discuss with SUCET to find an alternative

- **Programme Notes** – Further to this item in last Meeting's Minutes, SC advised that Clare's programme notes had, again, been edited. The Trust had read the original notes and the amended ones, and consider this to be over zealous editing. The reason given was that it was "unfair to criticise a member of staff", however, this was in relation to the state of the pitch and led into observations surrounding the use of 3G pitches.

ACTION – SW to discuss with RE/MM

- **Player attendance at Trust events** – PY asked for the Trust's thanks to be given to Anton Ferdinand for his attendance at the recent AGM, his willingness to answer a multitude of questions at the following Q&A and his kind comments surrounding this event in the most recent programme. This led on to the attitude that players may not be approached to attend Trust events on Saturdays, in particular in light of an upcoming fund raising event, which is not Trust run but, which, apparently a number of players are attending.

ACTION – SW to discuss with Commercial and with PB

9. Date of next meeting – TBC