



SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS SOCIETY LIMITED LIAISON MEETING



Thursday, 8th February 2018
Roots Hall Stadium 16:00

1. Present and Apologies:

Those in attendance were Geoffrey King (GK); Rhys Ellingham (RE); Paul FitzGerald (PF); Shane Chapman (SC) and Kay Fogg (KF). It was explained that Paul Yeomanson (PY) would attend if one of the other Trust representatives was unavailable.

Meeting chaired by GK, who welcomed RE to his first Trust Liaison meeting.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th December 2017

Follow up on actions not otherwise covered in Agenda items:

- **Local Promotions** – the background to this item was explained, going back to the Oldham game a few years ago where their home supporters were paying just £5 to get in and our supporters paid £20. This was a matter former CEO Steve Kavanagh had originally taken up, lobbying the FL on our supporters' behalf. A further example of this was evident at the recent game at Peterborough, with only top end prices available to Southend supporters, including an "on the day" price of £28.

ACTION – Trust to provide evidence to GK

- **Youth team contract** – all now finalised and signed. No further action.
- **Frankie Banks scrapbooks** – the Trust is still awaiting these to research further. GK agreed to talk to SUCET's April Smith to see if they could be located. April later advised KF that Frankie is away at the moment but will continue to liaise.
- **Shrimpers Bar** – The issues with the hand driers and hot water in the ladies are thought to be down to an element requiring replacement, which causes the switch to trip. Bar staff are aware of this issue and will re-set if alerted. 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 – Trust to continue to monitor; GK to ensure that someone is delegated ahead of each game to ensure things are working as part of routine checks

- **Reciprocal Parking** – PF advised that this is another historic item, raised with both Supporters Direct and FSF, which SW had had an element of success with. Although advised that some coach parking fees had been collected at Roots Hall, none had reached the Trust. RE agreed to continue chasing up clubs in our league about coach parking and that five of the eight clubs left have agreed not to charge, with two more still to come back. Coaches will not be charged for parking at Bury, Oxford, Blackburn, Plymouth or Bradford. Steps will be taken ahead of the start of next season to put this properly in place with a clear indication of who should be collecting coach parking fees at Roots Hall and where it is supposed to go.

ACTION – RE to continue chasing the host clubs for our remaining away games, and to put early procedures in place for next season

- **Aviva Scheme for Employees** – PF felt that the Trust, the Club and SUCET had missed a trick here and that we could have all co-operated together for a better outcome. Point noted for the future.
- **Wheelchair supporters using toilets in the Shrimpers Bar** – Stadium Manager advised that there is a toilet for wheelchair users in the South East corner.
- **Child mascot changing** – mascots are now being changed in a more discreet place.
- **Player attendance at Trust events** – With the change of manager, RE advised that he is yet to ascertain his views on social activities. It was noted that player attendance would be particularly beneficial with the forthcoming Race Night on 24th March.

ACTION – RE to discuss with CP

3. Club Finances

PvW provided a written update that, at the time of the meeting, the tax affairs of the club are absolutely up to date. The Club has no taxable income for Corporations tax – hence no update on this/ nothing to pay. This procedure would, for the time being, continue.

GK expressed the hope that this agenda item could, at some time, be dropped but agreed with PF when he advised that this item will remain on the Agenda at the behest of supporters for the time being.

4. New Stadium

GK advised that the stadium plans will not now be heard by SBC before the meeting scheduled for June. This is due to the fact that the Council does not sit in the two months preceding an election, with one scheduled for May. Requests for updated ecology and highways reports have been requested by the Council, and are in the course of preparation, as is an updated report requested by Historic England concerning the Ancient Site. A review to predict that the impact of the stadium and retail park will not have a detrimental effect on the High Street generally has already been submitted. PF asked if there is any benefit to the Trust lobbying the Council, if the Chairman thinks this would be helpful. GK agreed to speak to the Chairman to seek his opinion on this.

ACTION – GK to discuss with RM

5. Junior Blues

KF and RE confirmed that the Christmas Party had been a great success, with thanks to the coaches from SUCET who helped organise the activity part. Everything went very smoothly with lots of positive feedback from parents.

It is hoped that another “Meet the Players” day can be held in the Easter holidays to give the members the chance to meet the new manager.

Representatives continue to work together to try to ensure the success of the Junior Blues. Plans are currently being put together to streamline the renewal process via the ticket office, and consideration of the gift for next year.

6. Trust Banners and Trust Match Day

PY had asked if one of the Trust’s “pop up” banners could be displayed in reception and in areas with heavy footfall.

It was hoped that the designated Trust Match Day could be the match on Easter Monday against Gillingham, and that flyers could be handed out at turnstiles, as well as showcasing the new mini bus. Ideas surrounding additional fund-raising with signed shirts were also discussed.

ACTION – RE to discuss with Ricky Duncan

7. Former Players Association

PF advised that SUEPA (Southend United Ex-Players Association) had launched on 12th January, following discussions with the Middlesbrough Ex-Players Association surrounding the Moody Blues fund raising appeal. Andrew Leeder is providing the focal point and main contact of this scheme, which is being run as a joint club/Trust project. It is hoped to provide a mechanism for former players to stay in touch with the club, and membership is already over 70.

It was felt that engaging with one of the more high profile players to have moved on in recent times would also reach out to current supporters and more recent ex-players.

GK asked if the Trust had contacted Steve Waggott for help/information on the operation of such a proposal, as he had had previous experience in setting at least one such organisation up.

ACTION – RE to speak with Ryan Leonard; Trust representatives to contact SW.

8. Any Other Business:

- **Liam Callaghan** – PF and GK outlined the idea behind trying to help supporter Liam, who suffers with quadriplegic cerebral palsy, with fund raising to buy a new wheelchair. The Trust, Club and SUCET are all working together to help Liam through the fund raising. The Trust are considering dedicating one of their forthcoming events to help with raising money.

ACTIONS – PF to talk to Dale Spiby about the press release, and potentially discuss events with Liam’s mum. RE to talk to players and establish rapport between them and Liam.

- **Cost of drinks** – This remains under discussion on both sides, with various options and ideas being investigated further. The Trust does have the capability to produce a membership card with photographic identification which could be used. GK advised that a point of sale system may be able to be introduced which may incorporate a loyalty scheme.

ACTION – GK to discuss further with the Club’s Bar Managers and PvW.

- **West Stand** – issues surrounding supporters standing at the back of the stand and causing obstructions for people trying to get to and from the snack bar and/or toilets, and, also blocking the area completely for wheelchair users was raised.
ACTION – GK to discuss with DJ
- **Loyal Away Supporters Scheme** – Still investigating the feasibility of such a scheme, SC had discussed with Shrewsbury supporters attending Roots Hall recently, how their scheme operates. It is not possible to run such a scheme without involving the Ticket Office. RE advised that this is something he had looked into during the close season at the end of last season. It was agreed to discuss this within the club at a Heads of Department meeting.
ACTION – RE to report back

9. Date of next meeting – TBC