



SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS SOCIETY LIMITED LIAISON MEETING



Thursday, 18th February 2021
16:00
Via Zoom

1. Present and Apologies:

Those in attendance were Rhys Ellingham (RE), Paul FitzGerald (PF), Shane Chapman (SC) and Kay Fogg (KF). Apologies were received from Patrick Van der Waag (PVDW) and Paul Yeomanson (PY).

Meeting chaired by PF, it was agreed that, in the main, the purpose of this meeting would be to “catch up” and not follow the usual format.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last Meeting held on 27th February 2020:

It was agreed that there was nothing outstanding from our last Meeting that was relevant any longer or that wasn't covered elsewhere.

3. General Catch Up:

Junior Blues/Ticket Office:

With Ticket Office Manager, Gavin, having left last November, and with Jordan also now leaving, KF asked what the situation was, and who would be helping with Junior Blues going forward.

RE explained that, with the current situation regarding supporters in the ground, the Club has not yet appointed a replacement for Gavin, but they would be seeking to appoint someone of a similar calibre and experience. In the meantime, he would oversee things, and involve both Matt and Callum. He wants to see more player involvement and interaction.

SUEPA:

With membership now at 299, PF asked for the Club's support in identifying a suitable 300th member and promoting, which RE was happy to do. There followed some discussion as to who might be a good candidate.

Fans' Fundraising:

PF advised that the Shrimpers Trust was in receipt of fund raising from around the time of the most recent court cases to the sum of £3,300.

The Trust had agreed to offer the money for the benefit of the team, and Mark Molesely had indicated that he would be interested in some gym equipment but things hadn't progressed. RE said that he would talk to Mark, but knew he was looking for a Teqball table, which would cost in the region of £1,000. The Trust would be happy to pay for this out of the fund raising.

ACTION – RE to discuss with Mark and report back

Zoom Meeting with the Chairman:

Ron Martin had participated in a Zoom Meeting facilitated by the Shrimpers Trust, and chaired by PF on 15th February. Whilst those in attendance had been reasonable and not at all vitriolic, PF brought a couple of questions that hadn't really been answered in that forum to this meeting:

- **Scouting Network** – Anton Robinson is the Head of Recruitment. He's at the training ground often and has lots of contacts from his playing days and amongst agents. It wasn't for the want of trying that we missed out on the signings we'd wanted in January. He's a good people person and helps with negotiations. A list of targets is already being compiled for next season.
- **Forward Planning** – Is the Club making plans for next season or just hoping we won't be relegated? RE said it's an impossible situation, we can't make plans because of Covid and because of the threat of relegation. Ticket prices would normally begin to be published around now but that's just not possible, and hasn't been discussed. There was speculation that some supporters may seek some kind of refund for this season, which had surprised Ron.
- **Fans returning** – RE said that he had written to the EFL asking for clarification of what the Government are suggesting but had received no response. Hopefully we would have more answers after the next scheduled announcement on 22nd February. There is hope that a limited number of supporters might be allowed into Wembley for the League Cup Final.

4. Any Other Business:

- **Ground Repairs & Maintenance** – KF asked if these have been going on while the ground has been closed to supporters. RE confirmed that Stuart has continued to work throughout.
- **Diversity** – PF asked that there is some consideration of this directive, which encompasses the "My City, My Shirt" campaign backed by the FSA. RE advised that April Smith already does a lot of work in this area as a result of the EFL EDI group. Possible player link up in support.
ACTION – PF to forward to April.
- **Thursday Forums** – Ron had informed supporters that he would be running these regular forums. It was acknowledged that the opportunity to do so has been difficult to arrange, but that he is speaking with more supporters and others via Zoom and Teams. RE doesn't have any involvement with this.
- **Shrimpers Bar** – there had been rumours of problems in the bar during the first lockdown, but RE advised that he has been in there several times and not seen any issues. He also added that PY has been in to collect some things and nothing had been brought to his attention.
- **Away Ticket Priority** – With the threat of relegation comes an obvious decrease in the number of away tickets which will be available to our supporters at grounds in the National League. This is something that SC had been working on with RE and Gavin in the Ticket Office. RE confirmed that we have an upgrade due on our ticketing system which would make this kind of priority easier to arrange.

- **Supporters Group Meetings** – RE advised that he would definitely be speaking to all supporter groups ahead of any planned re-opening of the ground, once information is available to indicate as to when this is likely to be.
- **New signings** – RE advised that both Ricky Holmes and Nile Ranger have been announced today. Ricky had played 60 minutes in a friendly earlier in the week and would be likely to be included in the squad on Saturday.

Nile has been with us for approx. 10 weeks, spending a lot of time early on working on his own, after the other players had left, at the training ground on his fitness and conditioning. He has recently become a father and it is hoped that he takes the opportunity being given to him. He has been on time every day.

The new and recent signings will allow Mark to manage the older players within our numbers as well as strengthening the squad as a whole.

Jay Simpson is also still with us and played in the same game as Ricky Holmes.

5. Date of next Meeting – Thursday 8th April, venue TBC