



SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS CLUB TRUST LIAISON MEETING MARCH 24th 2004

1 Present

Geoffrey King (GK), Derek Wilshire (DW), Michael Markscheffel (MM), Dave Scriven (DS), Paul FitzGerald (PF) and Terry Jeffreys (TJ) were present.

2 Apologies

There were no apologies.

3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4 Cardiff

PF said that there had been very good co-operation between the Club and the Trust regarding the organisation and ticketing of the trains and the coaches. He raised the subject of the shared monies and GK asked that the Trust do the reconciliation with Anita Vine regarding the 50/50 split of the profit for the trains and coaches.

PF asked why the team played in silver rather than blue. GK said that their supplier could only provide 400 blue shirts and that was not enough. The club had tried to source blue shirts in Europe to no avail. The problem was that the season was almost at an end and manufacture was running down and the shirts for next season was not yet being manufactured. The silver kit was available in the numbers that the club required so they went with it. He said that 1350 shirts had been sold to date.

GK asked why he had not been told about the merchandise that the Trust had produced for the Final. TJ said that in the end they had decided not to go for the merchandise that they had planned, as there could be a conflict with the club. They had produced an enamel Trust badge commemorating the Final, which had been provided as a gift to Trust members travelling on the trains and coaches.

The Trust had learned on the 10th March that the club would not be producing pennants so they had produced a limited amount for sale and for presentation to the Blackpool children taking part in the pre-match penalty shoot-out competition.

GK said that he had asked TJ to inform him of any merchandise that the Trust were producing for sale. TJ apologised for not informing him about the pennants but said that he knew that the club were not selling doing these. GK said that the Trust produced a shirt and a magazine. TJ said that they were producing a shirt in conjunction with Wyndham Plastics before the team got to the final and had added the LDV information at the last minute. He said that the shirts were a very limited edition anyway for sale to Trust members only.

GK's concern was that nobody asked if the Trust could sell the magazine alongside the programme sellers or in the ground – the Club has procedures to follow and the Trust should seek permission on all occasions. DS said that it was stressed that it was a Shrimpers Trust fanzine and not a match programme. PF said that it was only the superior quality of the fanzine that may have led people to think that it was a match programme but it was not sold as such.

5 Q&A

GK said that Ron Martin (RM) was waiting for the results on the public enquiry into Fossets Farm as there was no point in turning up with nothing new to say. The Q&A will however still go ahead at a convenient date for all. PF asked if there was a Plan B should the B&Q development be turned down. GK said that Plan B would be another site but RM and Delancey did not want to go down that route. He said that Martin Dawn did not plan to write off the investment that they had made. PF said that it seemed incredible that the company could not make a statement to placate the fans.

6 AGM

PF asked why the AGM and the Annual Report & Accounts were late. GK said that they were not late. PF replied that he would have expected the accounts to have been published by December based on earlier discussions and it was past that now. GK said that discussions had prompted a material change in the accounts and that had caused a delay. He wanted to be sure that the information was accurate before he published the accounts and didn't want an expensive reprint.

GK said that the club had had a very good cup run and had made savings by reducing overheads. The club had not asked Delancey for any money this season.

7 Letter to Directors

PF said that he had written to all the directors asking for their personal opinion on whether there should be an elected fans representative on the board of directors at Southend United. He said that he had received polite, non-committal replies from the directors who said that the matter would be raised at board level.

GK said that RM had said that he did not know what fans' representative would add but it was an agenda item at the next board meeting. PF said that he had done some research and there were 35 clubs who had at least one fans' director. GK said that he had spoken to a fair number of clubs that had fans' directors to take soundings on the matter.

GK said that there was a fair amount of talent on the board at present and the board, as a whole had to take a corporate view as to whether they would invite another director onto the board. PF said that there a number of talented fans out there with corporate experience and who understood the workings at board level and the need for discretion when necessary. GK agreed with this point, but stated that the Liaison Meeting was a sensible forum for the fans to make representations which on past experience showed that they were listened to.

MM felt that a fans director would lose touch with his roots. TJ said that the fans' director would stand for re-election every year and it would be the fans choice who represented them on the board. He said that if there was a fans' director on the board

then the fan base would feel that they had more of a say in the running of the club and a closer involvement.

MM said that his personal view was that he felt that it was his job to represent the supporters. PF asked if he had lost touch with his roots. MM said that the non-executive directors were very much Southend United fans. He said that although 20% of the board members owned 80% of the shares, the non-executive directors still had a major say in the running of the club and that RM was certainly quizzed at board meetings. When questioned about the sale of the Roots Hall and the training ground, he said that there was no other choice at the time as the club was in dire straits.

PF said that football is certainly going back to the community and fans are getting more involved in the running of their clubs. GK said that the club has improved its community base with the FITC and other initiatives.

DW said that the local council are very supportive of the club but do not invest any money. GK said that George Krawiecs is very pro Southend United and Southend United is an important part of the area. Southend as an area is high unemployment and has had low investment and Krawiecs is improving this by bringing money in and his remit is to improve everybody's lot.

MM said that the relationship between the club and the council is very good at the moment but they have been hard on the club in the past and unsupportive. He agreed that RM deals directly with the council at an official level.

8 Shrimpers Bar

GK said that there were no problems in the Shrimpers and that the signing on procedure was going well. PF said that there was still a problem between 1.45 and 2.45 when the majority of the Southend and the away fans arrived. GK said that he didn't want to pay an extra barmaid just for an hour's work. He had asked Sharon to monitor the Shrimpers Bar on match days. PF said that there was still a shortage of glass in the bar. TJ said that in busy periods he arranged with Colin that the potman stay behind the bar washing glasses whilst Trust volunteers collected the glasses and took them to the bar area. It was agreed to monitor the situation.

9 Any Other Business

GK said that on a matter of housekeeping, could he have the minutes earlier. TJ said that the draft minutes had not just been sent in the club today but had been sent in for verification in January. (*Secretary's note – the minutes were sent to the club on 12th January 2004*)

PF asked if the club could provide a list of the addresses of former players. GK said that this has been raised before and he had agreed but TJ said that the information had not been received.

GK said that two directors had volunteered to be the guest of the Trust on match days. PF said that a date had been set but had not happened but this would be followed up.

DS said that the club always make a presumption that the Trust will run the coaches on behalf of the club when the club announce subsidised travel as in the Scarborough cup game. Whilst the Trust would not refuse, they felt that the club should discuss this with the Trust before the announcement. GK said that RM acted alone on one

occasion and the first that they knew the decision had been made was when the information was posted on the website. He agreed that the Trust should be consulted and had asked RM to work through the proper channels.

GK said that the club wanted to continue to run the Centre of Excellence and the Youth department but there was a shortfall between the £138K grant that they get and the actual running costs. The shortfall was £30K. He said that MM, DW and Ray Osborne form the Committee raising funds to cover the shortfall but he was looking for Trust assistance on this. He had asked Anita Vine to get the Committee back together again to address the shortfall.

MM said that they had approached RBS and Keymed who were not interested in the project. PF said that the Trust would be very keen to assist the club in this project and suggested that the club were looking for new ideas for investment and practical funding, not necessarily cash from the Trust. PF asked which teams were involved and GK said that he was talking about the whole youth set up and teams right the way up to U19s. PF said that the Trust committee would discuss this very soon and report back. GK asked if MM would act as Liaison with the Trust on this and he agreed.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would advised shortly.