



SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS SOCIETY LIMITED LIAISON MEETING



Wednesday, 13th April 2022
Blues Lounge, Roots Hall Stadium 15:00

1. Present and Apologies:

Meeting chaired by Paul FitzGerald. Those in attendance from SUFC were Tom Lawrence (TL), Rhys Ellingham (RE) and April Smith (AS). Those from the Shrimpers Trust were Paul FitzGerald (PF), Paul Yeomanson (PY), Clare Chapman (CC), Simon Dodd (SD), Rylee Doe (RD) and Kay Fogg (KF).

Apologies received from Matt Mundy (MM) and Shane Chapman (SC).

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th January 2022

Follow up on actions not otherwise covered in Agenda items:

- Badges for Social Inclusion events couldn't be produced as hoped, and, instead, "1st time fans" badges are being provided and used instead.
- AS advised that she is still looking for relevant funding for the proposed bike rack. A suggestion was made to talk to Michael Markscheffel who may be able to assist.

ACTION – AS to investigate and report back

- Junior Blues database has been "cleansed" but there are still issues with it, including a number of members of the old Trust scheme who are considerably over age, and one child who RE has had dealings with this season, still not appearing on it.

ACTION – RE to address

- Invoice still to be raised for the Trust to pay their contribution to the cost of Junior Blues scarves.

ACTION – Club to produce invoice

3. Youth Team/contract

PF advised that the Trust's 5 year commitment to paying for the mini bus has now been fulfilled and that the contract the Trust have with the Club is up for renewal. Discussion ensued about the contract currently in place and whether the terms of that had been fulfilled, specifically, the lack of the Shrimpers Trust logo on the youth team shirts for a large amount of the early part of the season on home shirts and being totally absent on away shirts. It was noted that the Trust do not always take up all the benefits on offer by way of the contract.

PY and SD emphasised the need for "value for money" to be evidenced to Trust members, and the ability to raise awareness of the Shrimpers Trust by having the logo present.

The Trust would be happy to continue to support the youth team but some changes would need to be considered.

TL and RE considered that some of the wording on the contract had caused some confusion but accepted that there had been a breakdown in not ensuring the Trust logo was on shirts early enough in the season. The commitment should have included the away shirts as well as the home and the possibility of also having the u17 shirts was considered.

TL advised that there will be a bespoke kit throughout the Club next season.

The Club would appreciate the Trust's support with a final payment on the mini-bus which is likely to be sold in the near future, as SUCET have two of their own, and would then generate some equity.

ACTION – TL/PF to liaise on mini-bus

ACTION – TL/RE/PF/PY to agree outline contract for continued youth team sponsorship in consultation with Trust Board

4. Junior Blues

The new database had been received and PY had produced some data on membership. In the summer of 2017, when the Trust transferred their membership to the current scheme, there were 335 members. Current figures are 214 remaining Trust members and just 29 “paid up” members on the current scheme. This demonstrates how much numbers have gone backwards and it was noted how disappointing this was for all concerned.

The Junior Blues exclusive “Meet the Players Day” had been held earlier in the day, and KF reported that just 13 children had come along, although 21 had been booked.

During a full and frank discussion, TL and RE accepted that the Club had not given the Junior Blues the profile it deserved, hampered partly by a streamlining in Club employees. It was suggested that the Trust resumes control of the administration side of the scheme, although the Club would still be involved in mail outs, welcome packs etc.

It was agreed that a planning meeting would be held in the not too distant future with RE, AS and KF.

AS advised that a sensory room is being created in the corner of the family stand, in partnership with Little Heroes and the benefit of a grant of £1,000. Dave Foxall (Sammy!) is helping out with advice.

RE said he hoped that he may have found a sponsor for the Junior Blues, and should hear in the next week or so.

KF asked for a new Junior Blues Ambassador to be identified once contracts have been confirmed. AS asked if KF would provide a detailed description of what was involved.

ACTION – RE, AS & KF to arrange planning meeting for Junior Blues

ACTION – KF to provide “Ambassador” sheet to AS

5. Shrimpers Bar

There are a number of issues still in the Shimpers Bar, some of which have been reported on several occasions. These include a main overhead light out at the end of the bar closest to the gents’ toilets; heaters not working and the continued issues surrounding the alcove in the entrance hall.

TL suggested composing a “wish list” so the Club can see what can be done easily to rectify things as clearly things had not been attended to by the previous facilities manager, and Mick Maddox, who is currently taking this role, may be able to resolve some of these.

ACTION – PF/PY to prepare “snagging” list

6. Social Inclusion

PF advised that continued visits have gone well, although there have been some issues which have caused a little embarrassment, in particular when guests have been asked to pay for the soft drinks in the boxes. He emphasised that the Trust do not want our guests to be asked to pay for their drinks.

As requested that she be notified when guests on visits are in wheelchairs as this does present some logistical issues which she needs to be prepared for in advance. For future notice, the Trust are to liaise with AS on engagement matters, and RE or James Ball on the corporate side.

7. SUEPA / Retro Day / Scarves

It was reported by PF, that, unfortunately UPS have not been able to deliver the Ukrainian scarves in time for the match on Good Friday, when Andy Leeder had secured the help of several ex-players and a number of volunteers to sell them. It is now hoped that they will be received just after Easter and therefore be available at the match on 23rd April against Halifax. This ties in quite well with the Amnesty International planned “Football welcomes” theme at that match, when a number of refugees will be in attendance. The Trust would welcome the opportunity to provide Ukrainian refugees with one of the scarves, if the numbers can be provided.

PF noted that no-one from inside the Club has ordered one of the scarves, which was disappointing. TL said he would order one. Flyers are also to be produced with a QR code for people to purchase.

It is hoped that one of our final two home games, on 2nd or 15th May, can be a designated "Retro Day" match, which would give further support to the Trust's retro shirts.

ACTION – RE to produce flyer

8. Supporter Group Meetings

It was noted that the next Supporter Group Meeting would be held on 21st April at 7.30 in the Shrimpers Bar.

The action log created by the Trust to record action items at meetings was still under review.

ACTION – PF to review/update the log and circulate

9. The Trust Memorandum of Understanding

A copy of this was circulated by SD to TL and RE, and they will liaise further.

ACTION – TL, RE, SD to liaise

10. Any Other Business:

- **Forward Planning/New Stadium** – TL reported that the Club is now working on the business plan for 2022/23 however, given the financial consequences flowing from back to back relegations, the Club would not be self-sustaining until we move to a new stadium and will be reliant on Ron and Group company support. Once we move to the new stadium, that will change.

TL confirmed that work would start on the training ground first, which will enable Boots & Laces to be demolished so the main stadium work can commence. TL had met with some architects himself and felt exciting times were ahead.

- **Meet the Blues Day** – AS advised that this will depend on when the season starts but it is looking likely this will be held on 31st July. She will be co-ordinating the event. It is hoped that one of the highlights of the day will be a 5-a-side tournament featuring Arsenal, West Ham and Manchester United. It was agreed that the Club would look to launch one of the kits, probably the away one, with the Junior Blues at this event.

ACTION – AS to liaise with PY

- **West Stand** – KF had circulated an email prior to the meeting highlighting a number of issues in the West Stand.

ACTION – TL/RE to revert back on matter raised

- **Sponsors Evening** – there had been some confusion over the number of places the Trust would have at the upcoming Sponsors Evening. This was confirmed to be 14. RD also advised that he had not received an invite himself, and it was confirmed that it would seem that not all invites had been sent.

Date of next Meeting – TBA (looking late June)