



SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS SOCIETY LIMITED LIAISON MEETING



Thursday, 21st July 2022
Roots Hall Stadium 16:30

1. Present and Apologies:

Those in attendance were Tom Lawrence (TL), Rhys Ellingham (RE), April Smith (AS) from SUFC; Paul Yeomanson (PY), Shane Chapman (SC), Kay Fogg (KF) from the Shrimpers Trust, and Rylee Doe (RD) in the somewhat unique position of representing both.

Apologies for absence were received from Shrimpers Trust Chairman, Paul FitzGerald (PF) and Trust Board member, Simon Dodd.

The Meeting was chaired by PY.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th April 2022

Follow up on actions not resolved or otherwise covered in Agenda items:

- **Bike Rack** – AS advised that it is unlikely that the bike rack will now be sited at Roots Hall. It is proposed that the students who use SUCET will be based predominantly at Garons from September and it is not thought worth pursuing the grant for the rack at this time at Roots Hall with the planned move.
- **Invoice for Junior Blues scarves to the Trust** – This is still outstanding.
ACTION – RE to follow up
- **Shrimpers Bar snagging list** – PF and PY still to progress.
ACTION – PF and PY to attend to Sunday, 24th July. SC offered his assistance in rectifying issues in the toilets.
- **Retro Shirt Day** – it was suggested that this be designated for the August BH game at home to Maidenhead.
- **Trust Memorandum of Understanding** – still with TL for sign off.

3. Embargo and delay in new signings

In response to this item, TL confirmed that the Football Club had been placed under an embargo from 6th – 19th July. This did not relate to any non-payment or late payment of wages or HMRC payments, there was a difference of opinion in relation to the interpretation of a rule and that disagreement was resolved, amicably in meeting, and the embargo was lifted. The full details are confidential. We did not miss out on any players as a result thereof.

4. Late payment of wages

TL confirmed that no staff are owed any wages, everyone is paid and up to date with their wages.

5. Lack of Commercial staff and impact on any income

TL and RE were a little surprised at this agenda item, as both feel that personnel changes have enabled a far more efficiently run department. It was noted that RD has been a welcome addition to the team over the summer period, and that proposed changes to opening times of the Ticket Office and Club Shop, from September, would also enable JG to assist with Commercial matters. It was felt that the wages saved by not having taken someone on full time was a positive factor.

6. Tickets – Match tickets and digital season tickets

Presently the Club are selling some, but not all, away games – depending on the oppositions policy on away sales. As such, there are a couple of days a week where very little ticket sales take place. In order to save costs, the club are considering closing the ticket office a couple of days a week.

The Club acknowledge that by not selling away tickets, it will not be possible to administer a loyalty scheme, however, it is anticipated that there will only a handful of games where there may be an issue, Dorking being cited as an example.

SUFC does not currently have the system (turnstiles) to handle electronic/digital tickets for home games, and, again, it would not be financially prudent to propose to install at Roots Hall. It is fully expected that this capability will be in place at the new ground.

Season cards will be newly issued for the season ahead and should be out for delivery by the end of this month. PY confirmed with RE that these will include a flyer for the Shrimpers Trust.

7. New stadium and its working group

RM had always promised that a working group would be set up to work on fitting out the new stadium and that the Shrimpers Trust would be a part of that group. It had been tentatively suggested by the Trust that the Trust would continue to have a bar to use as their base and that a museum might be installed. That request has will be passed on to the property team.

TL had spoken with Jack Martin, who would be leading things regarding the new stadium and he was also in favour of a working group being set up to explore design ideas. There was a discussion about, as an alternative to having a museum, it might be good to have items on display throughout the ground so it's a walking trail/ tour trail around the ground, and AS suggested these might be placed in chronological order which would be useful when it came to stadium tours in the future.

SC strongly urged the Football Club to use the Fleetwood Town facilities as a model for supporter areas.

Various food options and outlets are being considered (some are also being considered for Roots Hall). TL had recently attended a conference in Manchester to look at a variety of options and in particular, those in relation to sustainability.

It was agreed that the Club would look into the viability of getting industrial air fryers into RH which would enable chips to be sold. KF had a good contact at Stellisons and she would get them to make contact with RE.

ACTION – KF to speak to contacts at Stellisons

8. Junior Blues

PY and KF had met with RE and AS on 21st June to progress the situation regarding the Junior Blues. It was agreed that the Shrimpers Trust would take over the administration again with immediate effect, but that the scheme would still be collaborative between the Club and the Trust, with the Club continuing to assist with membership pack distribution etc.

The scheme would be two tier, with all junior Season Card holders and all members on the old Southend Junior Shrimpers schemes on the basic level. The paid membership would remain at £10 per season, with siblings at the same address being given a £5 discount.

All members who signed up for the 2021/22 season would be given free membership (but no new gift) for the coming season to reflect that value for money was not achieved. The gift for the coming season would remain as the exclusive Junior Blues scarf.

ACTION – RE to check stock of scarves

PF is cleansing the database to create a new one which will be far easier to use. This will be forwarded to the club once a month.

A newsletter is to be sent to everyone on the old database with information and news about the scheme for the year ahead. This will be produced, as usual, by KF, and circulated on this occasion still by the Club.

ACTION – KF to finish newsletter off and submit to RE/MM this weekend for the Club to send out early w/c 25/7/22

A system for birthday greetings is being set up by AS, who was also able to confirm that three players have agreed to take on the role of Junior Blues Ambassadors, previously held by John White.

ACTION – AS/RE to organise player greetings

Currys have very kindly come on board as a partner, offering 10% off on production of a Junior Blues membership card, with a further 10% off when buying FIFA23.

KF advised that a very generous donation of £1,000 had been received from a Trust member exclusively for use with the Junior Blues.

9. Adam Barrett flag

The missing Adam Barrett flag, funded by members of ShrimperZone, had been tracked down by Dave Bishop. Dave had been disappointed to receive an email from RE advising that the flag would no longer be considered for a permanent position on display at Roots Hall.

TL confirmed that this directive had been his. The Club always encounters a number of obstacles in acquiring the required safety certification at Roots Hall at the start of each season, TL said that the task is mammoth, tens if not hundreds of thousands of pounds is spent each year keeping the stadium *'going'*. The focus is getting through the process with the Safety Advisory Group as effortlessly as possible is the priority so as to ensure that we can have fans in the ground for the first game.

Introducing flags or banners or any description creates work. There are issues around health and safety, risk assessments have to be undertaken and most importantly the flags/ banners need have a fire resistance/ not be a fire hazard. These complications are not something TL presently has the time to deal with and his focus is on obtaining a SAG sign off for the stadium...which is already complicated enough

Whilst it was acknowledged that, in an ideal world, it would be nice, on occasion, to have flags and banners displaying the images of past greats (in particular for relevant SUEPA visits, not least one planned for Adam himself in December) – TL is not going to do anything at this moment to derail the primary objective of obtaining SAG sign off.

TL added that, other than the handful of occasions mentioned above, TL personally thinks the focus should be on the on the new generation of players coming through. ...but the reason the flag is not being installed is as detailed above – H&S etc.

Both SC and KF felt this was a mistake, Adam is not the same as the other legends who have played for us, he is one of us, and an exception could be made. TL accepted that there would

probably be others who feel the same, but reiterated the reasons for the decision made by the Club, at TL's direction.

10. Balloon Race

The Shrimpers Trust are planning a virtual balloon race to fund raise and TL and RE confirmed that the Club would provide an Executive Box, 5 season tickets and a home and away shirt as prizes.

11. Any Other Business:

- SC raised the subject matter of a gentleman who had sadly passed away just a week after purchasing his season card. TL confirmed that the Club would be refunding this money to the family and it was agreed that Shane would make contact with the family and let the club know how best to proceed
- RE wished to place on record how pleased they are with the way RD has settled into the Club, in particular saying "well done" for attracting a new sponsor for the West Stand on a two-year deal. He added that there would be new front and back of shirt sponsors, new shorts sponsors and that Toomey Motors would be doing a lot with us. Commercially, things are very positive at the moment.
- AS asked that any social inclusion visit information be passed to her when possible. PY confirmed that Karl Lansley would still be co-ordinating these for the Trust and that we would do so as soon as possible.
- PY confirmed that the cheque payment for the mini-bus had not been cashed. TL confirmed that it had not been received and that a replacement would be required.
ACTION – PY to organise replacement cheque and place stop on original
- A PDF of the new shirts was requested so that PY could organise the key rings for sale at Meet the Blues Day.
- PY queried a large number of "freebie" items being given out to other individuals for their fund raising. RE confirmed that a number of these may have been given out by a member of staff who was no longer at the Club, and that others may have been given by companies who have rights to boxes as part of their deal with the Club.

12. Date of Next Meeting – TBC (Proposal for 8th September – all to confirm)