



SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS CLUB TRUST LIAISON MEETING

Thursday, 27th November 2014



1. Present and Apologies

Steve Kavanagh, Paul Yeomanson, Shane Chapman and Kay Fogg were in attendance. Apologies were received from Paul FitzGerald.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th September 2014

Follow up on actions:

- Dan Bentley's shirt has now been received
- The outstanding bill relating to coach hire for Wembley has now been settled. SK apologised for the length of time this has been outstanding
- PF/PY still to meet with Southend Borough Council to discuss engaging the wider audience in support for the club
- Pie and Pint Night – outstanding.
ACTIONS – SK to discuss with PB; PF to consult with Trust members re guests
- The Trust banner is now on display in the main car park
- CI-Connect – SK reported that, unfortunately, the company has not been in touch and are un-contactable
- Trust flyers – PY advised that the ticketing office manager had thought the flyers were only to go out with Season Cards. SK immediately advised her by email, that this was not the case and that flyers were to go out with all posted tickets.

3. Club Finances

SK confirmed that things were largely unchanged, we are a L2 club with L2 financial constraints. Things are "tight" as usual and we are beholden to the support from the parent company. HMRC payments are up to date and we have had a good payment record with them over the last 12 months. Wages are also up to date.

The biggest limiting factor to the growth of the Club and development of the playing squad is turnover. We are limited to 55% of our turnover on wages under league rules and we are very close to this, hence difficulty with finding new sponsors and non-attendance is hurting the Club's growth.

4. New Stadium

PY brought to SK's attention the publication of information which had been published on www.construction-contract.info relating to the "demolition of Roots Hall". SK wasn't aware of it.

Not directly related to the new stadium however, SK informed us that with effect from Saturday, car parking will no longer be available in the Prospects car park and people currently parking there would be transferred to the main car park for the foreseeable future. Prospects have also forced Myles Hire's vans out and the club is working with them to help resolve a difficult situation for them.

5. Junior Blues

PY reported that the Junior Blues are still progressing well. Outstanding actions from the last meeting had been resolved. We have 41 JB's so far booked for the Christmas Party and it was agreed that a follow up article of this in a forthcoming programme would be a good idea. We would also like to progress an earlier idea of a JB day at Marsh Farm in the Easter Holidays. PY also mentioned the idea

of a JB's bib for our very youngest members on joining and which can be sold as well. The Club shop doesn't currently hold any such stock and it was felt this would be a good idea.

ACTIONS – SK to contact Tom Biggs regarding contacts at Marsh Farm.

SK to ask Warren Lucy to ensure we have Sammy and Elvis at the Christmas Party, and to prepare a follow up article.

KF to contact the Echo with regard to a photographer and/or reporter attending the Christmas Party.

6. FA Youth Cup, Cup matches and ticketing

PY commended the success of the Youth Team in their cup progress so far and suggested that it would be good for the forthcoming home tie against quality opposition in Middlesbrough, if an announcer was available as many people do not have access to team sheets, and if the scoreboard could be operating. It was felt that Mickey G would not be available due to other work commitments but the Trust would help to try and find someone who could do this. It was also suggested that The Blue Voice could help with support on this occasion.

ACTION – PY to help try to source an announcer

Complaints had been heard from several sources on the closure of the South Stand during recent cup matches, therefore denying Season Card holders their seats. SK explained the problems with opening the South when numbers are low, and that opening the West offers far more, in both capacity and in facilities. To open the South Stand, we would need to secure around 3.5 – 4k supporters. This is difficult to predict when so many people are “walk ups” for cup games and do not make advance purchases. It is clearly in the terms and conditions that certain stands may be closed on occasions.

SK advised that it is a recognised problem that the current ticketing system doesn't allow for Season Card holders to reserve their seats for cup games on line. The ticketing system is due for a major change and the Club is currently looking at options which will allow this and which it is intended would be brought in for next season.

It was pointed out that tickets for the recent FA Cup game had actually been in breach of FA Cup guidelines, which dictate that the minimum price charged to adults should be £10, as Season Card holders were given the opportunity to pay just £5 and even this didn't encourage a particularly good gate.

The Club is currently also considering introducing a members' card which would have a one off payment for issue, and then allow holders to book tickets, including cup games, to their card and secure a discount on purchased tickets. This would be more attractive for the casual supporter. A new telephone system for bookings is also being considered.

7. Any Other Business:

- **Blues Player** – SK advised that a new version of Blues Player is now available which allows commentary on an Ipad or Iphone, and longer highlights. The Trust were encouraged to bring this to the attention of a wider audience as this raises revenue and actually is a good service.

ACTION – PY to include this information in Newsletter

- **Family Excellence** – The Club is keen to pursue the idea of a children's guide to Roots Hall, and would like to involve our Junior Blues in helping to compile this.

ACTION – PY to consider survey

- **Replacement Season Cards** – Following on from discussions held between the Trust and SK, the fee for a replacement Season Cards is to be reduced from £30 to £15. The online charter would be changed to reflect this. SK pointed out that there would have to be a charge for this as there is a cost involved. The charge prior to this season had been £50 for a replacement Season Card!

- **Code of Conduct** – Southend United FC are taking part in a pilot of 15 clubs in the country of Equality and Diversity. This is to research what we do and how we address issues of these kinds. SK is keen to secure the help of the Trust in researching this.
ACTION – PY to forward the Trust’s policies on Equality and Diversity
- **Programme Notes** – SK was keen to understand why some of the matters he raised in programme notes seem to pass unnoticed. Having mentioned both the alleged racist chanting at the recent Luton game, BBC headlines of “Southend costlier than Man City” and the subject of artificial pitches recently, he had expected responses from supporters, however, nothing had been noted. Unless fans are vocal on such issues, complacency becomes the winner.
- **A Match To Remember** – SK has been keen for some time to have an annual match designated for supporters to remember those who have passed away, either supporters or players connected with the Club. This match is to be the first match played in January each year, and the names will be listed in the programme and hopefully on the scoreboard. There would be a minute’s applause at this match in memory of all connected with the Club who have passed away in the last year. The first of these matches will be on 10th January 2015, at home to Plymouth.
- **Wax on, Wax off fund raising proposal** – still awaiting Phil Brown’s agreement.
ACTION – SK to chase
- **WIFI connection for Trust credit card sales** – PY raised the issues over transactions in the Shrimpers Bar where people want to pay by credit or debit card and asked for access to the Club’s WIFI on match days, particularly as we are currently selling high end items. PY also requested that the items of jewellery currently on sale be added to the Club’s Official Website.
ACTION – SK to discuss with the relevant people
- **Away Supporters** – SC brought up that, at Tranmere, a steward had boarded the coach and told our supporters where they needed to go, where the nearest place was they could get a drink and answered any questions. He also collected the £10 parking fee. It was felt this would be a good idea for us to employ as it would encourage away supporters to come to the Shrimpers Bar.
ACTION – SK to discuss with Dave Jobson

10. Date of next meeting - tba