



SOUTHEND UNITED SUPPORTERS SOCIETY LIAISON MEETING

held on Wednesday, 4th February 2015



1. Present and Apologies

Apologies were received from Paul FitzGerald (PF). Those in attendance were Steve Kavanagh (SK), Paul Yeomanson (PY), Shane Chapman (SC) and Kay Fogg (KF).

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th November 2014

- Pie and Pint Night – SK said that PB is more than happy to be involved with one of these. PY advised that consideration is being given to arranging two this year, the first, soon, with ex-Blues favourites, Kevin Maher and Mark Gower, and one later in the year to which Phil and hopefully, one of his co-commentators could be invited.

ACTION – PY to progress

- Family Excellence Survey – This is an outstanding item for PY to follow up on with our Junior Blues

ACTION – PY to progress

3. Club Finances

SK reported that things remain largely unchanged from the last report on the financial side of things. However, it was worth noting that HMRC have now removed the marker which had been placed on us signalling that they now have a more relaxed view towards us.

SK advised that we would not be having a “match for a fiver” this season. Southend United have already identified an 18-19% increase in numbers on last year via various initiatives, whilst other clubs have noticed only minimal increase, or even, as in some cases, a decrease in numbers. The “match for a fiver” initiative was designed to generate both more support and more income at identifiable games.

SK reported that the Salary Cross Management Protocol (SCMP) findings for League 2 this year show SUFC as only 11th in League 2, in terms of turnover. Because, under SCMP, the Club can only spend 55% of turnover on players, this directly affects what is happening on the pitch. Without the shirt sponsorship being flexible due to the relationship, then players of the calibre of Joe Pigott and Jack Cassidy would not have been able to be brought in.

The club is showing real growth in numbers but this needs to be developed as we are slipping substantially behind clubs in League 2 and that could have significant impacts on the team going forward, if not rectified. It is expected that there will have to be a small rise in both Season Card and Match Day Ticketing prices, with Season Cards having been frozen for the last four years. If we manage to gain promotion, then prices will be increased further to allow the Club to compete because of SCMP rules.

4. New Stadium

Nothing further to report except that further segments of the “dome” continue to arrive and be stored.

5. Wax on, Wax off challenge

KF and PY both questioned a lack of promotion for this event. KF said she understood many photos and some video footage had been taken during the patch testing with Suze Newton last week and that this had not materialised in any promotional material. It was agreed that SK would liaise with Warren and the Echo in giving this worthwhile cause more prominence and encouraging the players to re-tweet to give maximum exposure as it had been the players’ particular choice to support this.

It was noted that the Club did not ask the Shrimpers Trust to give up their share of the income as originally envisaged, and that this was a gesture from the Trust.

ACTION – SK to liaise with Warren and Chris Phillips

6. Junior Blues

KF reported that she and PF would be attending a meeting at Marsh Farm tomorrow (5th February) to discuss a potential Easter Holiday event for the Junior Blues there. SK had requested possible dates for this from Phil Brown, and would continue to chase for them in advance of the meeting.

ACTION – SK to obtain possible dates and communicate them to KF

KF to liaise with SK following meeting

KF also asked for some help from SUCET with half term imminent in promoting the Junior Blues as membership had been fairly static for a while.

ACTION – SK to discuss with SUCET

7. CI Connect

PY and PF are to meet with Mark Weston of CI Connect next week in the Shrimpers Bar to discuss the no fee trial.

8. Youth Sponsorship

PY advised that the Trust are looking at a new fund raising idea, based on a model currently run at Ipswich Town, in which people are invited to become “Friends of the Academy” and “buy in” at one of several levels of shares on an annual contribution. Everyone’s name would be recorded both at the Academy and at Roots Hall, and participants would be entered into a draw held three or four times a year with the number of entries according to the level of their “share”. Prizes would be such as to appeal to participants and all monies raised would be ring-fenced for the youth .

9. Supporters' Group Meeting

SK is more than happy to attend these in the future but it was emphasised that there was no intention of allowing them to become a simple Q&A session with him. There were a number of items raised from the last one which were brought to SK's attention:

- Disabled section within TBV – SK felt this was a logistical problem and the idea of putting potentially vulnerable people in this section could prove tricky. He requested more information from the group on this which could then be discussed with the Stadium Manager.

ACTION – Supporters' Group to discuss

- Disabled access to the Shrimpers Bar – there should be a ramp available. Various discussions were held and SK believed a permanent solution did exist and agreed to look into this.

ACTION – SK to progress

- A "shopping list" to be compiled with things which can improve the supporters' experience, particularly with a view to family initiatives which it may be possible to seek external funding for.

ACTION – Supporters' Group to progress

SK said that, if there practical things that can be easily worked on, the group should feel able to email him directly rather than bringing them through the Liaison Meetings which could delay them.

9. Any Other Business:

- SK is taking part in the sponsored bike ride to Amsterdam for Prostrate Cancer this year and the Trust has agreed to make a donation to this once his Just Giving page is up and running. SK noted that he had lost both his parents to cancer, and his dad to Prostrate Cancer.

- The ladies' toilets at the North end of the West stand – KF has repeatedly complained about the state of these, however, they had now been raised by another supporter. KF reported various faults which SK said he would follow up with the Stadium Manager. SK noted that he had raised this before and work had been done before the York game so some of this had been addressed.

ACTION – SK to liaise with Dave Jobson

- New kit, ladies' fit tops – KF asked if consideration could be given to having a ladies range of the new kit this year. SK agreed to speak to Just Sport but noted that the Club did not have control over kit purchasing for the shop.

ACTION – SK to liaise with Club Shop

- Fairfax Drive exit after game v York – KF reported that, again, an away team coach had pulled forward to block this exit, creating issues on exit.

ACTION – SK to discuss with Dave Jobson

- Availability of footage for compilation of suitable material for the End of Year awards – PY raised concerns about this. SK agreed to liaise.

ACTION – SK to liaise

- Ball boys' beanie hats – it was noted that, at one of the coldest and wettest games of the season, the ball boys against York were bare headed.

ACTION – SK to investigate the whereabouts of the Trust supplied beanies!

10. Date of next meeting – 2nd April 2015

Apologies from Shane Chapman.