

**Stockport County Supporters Co-operative
Stockport County Football Club**

Meeting at Edgeley Park

**29th May 2025
18:00-19:30**

FINAL Minutes

Attendees:

Co-operative - Dave Marchbank, Chairman, Paul Thomson, Finance, John Giles, Vice Chairman (part meeting over Zoom), Cath Shanley, Independent Secretary

Club - Ken Knott, Chairman, Gavin Bailey, COO, Liam Richardson, Communication and Media

Apologies

Co-operative - John Bilsbury, Comms and Media, Dave Wetters, Membership

Club - Steve Bellis, President

Edgeley Park and Match Day		Answers
1.	<p>Lease - The Club confirmed in Feb 2022 that it has agreed terms with Stockport Council on a 250-year lease for Edgeley Park, subject to approval by the Council's Cabinet on 15th March. The Council would retain the freehold of the ground, ensuring football would continue to be played at Edgeley Park.</p> <p>Can we ask why this lease hasn't been signed and what barriers are preventing this from happening? Is the Club or the Council unwilling to sign the lease?</p>	<p>Ken reported no insurmountable issues with the council, sensitive commercial negotiations are currently taking place. A meeting with the Chief Exec is planned for next week. Subject to agreement Ken is hopeful of signature before the start of next season.</p>
2.	<p>Ownership - Is the Club willing to redevelop Edgeley Park without owning the asset? Are the Club looking at purchasing Edgeley Park and would the Council be willing to sell?</p>	<p>Without the signed ground lease in place the club is not in a position to commence ground expansion. No external investment is being sought until the lease is agreed to ensure investors are comfortable with the terms of the lease.</p> <p>The club can't buy the ground as the council won't allow the freehold to be sold</p>

3.	<p>New Stadium - Is the Club considering a new stadium as an alternative to the redevelopment, if they think the lease is untenable to be signed?</p>	<p>We haven't looked at options. A desk top exercise was carried out and concluded that the cost would be £150-£200 million and so the idea was discounted on that basis.</p>
4.	<p>Planning - According to the MEN, the planning application for development of Edgeley Park was submitted to Stockport Council in June 2024 and according to the town hall's website the deadline for this to be decided was last September. Can the Club advise why this application hasn't been heard by the town hall's planning committee?</p> <p>How long does planning permission last for, from initial approval?</p>	<p>There are two reasons for the delay.</p> <p>There is pressure on planning service at town hall which is under-resourced.</p> <p>It's taken time to work through the technical elements of the application.</p> <p>The Danny Bergara and the East stand lasts for 3 years and the proposed outline permission for the South Stand lasts for 6 years during which time the club will submit the fully detailed plan.</p>
5	<p>Parking - The Edgeley Community Association are reporting that the impasse between the Council and Football Club on final matters around the scheduling of level of contributions for addressing match day parking and local infrastructure upgrades have been resolved.</p> <p>The planning application is scheduled to be reviewed at the Central Area Committee on 19th June, the progressing to Planning and Highways Committee for determination on 3rd July 2025.</p> <p>a. Will the resolution of parking issues help move the planning application forward?</p> <p>b. What implications will this have for County fans looking to park on match days?</p> <p>c. Have the ECA dropped their objections regarding parking on a match day? If they have, can you advise the reasons?</p>	<p>As part of securing the Council's support to the planning application the club have agreed to fund a package of local highway improvements intended to make supporter access/egress to the ground safer with an increased capacity, including a £30,000 contribution to improved signage/wayfinding and a £70,000 contribution to the Council to consult on implementing an expanded resident car parking scheme.</p> <p>An extension to the parking zones has not been agreed by local residents, the scheme is still in discussions.</p> <p>Fans are being encouraged by the council to use public transport where possible."</p> <p>Thomson street bridge link gives easy match day access to Edgeley Park for those using the discounted NCP car park.</p> <p>The club are in favour of approaching Vitality for use of their car park on the A6 and will take this forward.</p> <p>As far as the club are aware the ECA have dropped their objection. They are comfortable with the package of local infrastructure improvements that the club have agreed to.</p>

6.	<p>Stadium Re-development – Is the Club still planning to develop the stadium, as per the Phase 2 consultation plans outlined on the Club website and what would be the timescales?</p> <p>Phase 1a. Add 600 seats to the eastern section of the Bergara Stand. Phase 1b – redevelopment of the Railway End to increase the capacity to 4,500. Phase 2 – redevelopment of the Pop Side to increase the capacity to 5,500. Phase 3 –add a further 600 seats to the western side of the Bergara Stand.</p> <p>Please can the Club advise where away fans would be located once the Railway End is built? Would the Railway End be designed to accommodate home and away fans?</p>	<p>Phase 1A- The first phase can begin early next year, during the season, with the roofing structural repairs scheduled for the closed season. The estimated costs for this phase are £5 million.</p> <p>Phase 1b - The total cost of the first two phases is £25 million. The development of the Railway End isn't feasible unless the club is competing in the Championship.</p> <p>Expansion needs to run parallel to on field promotion.</p> <p>Phases 2 and 3 - comes last as need to keep the Porsche lounge for hospitality until the south stand facilities are available.</p> <p>The Popside development is estimated to cost £50 million.</p> <p>The expansion of the Bergara Stand will increase its capacity to 13,000, and the club needs assurance that it can consistently fill those seats.</p> <p>Given the level of the required investment to redevelop the Railway stand there was a general feeling at the meeting, that keeping home supporters behind both goals could be beneficial to enhance the matchday experience and atmosphere. That said, a final decision on the relocation of away fans is still to be mapped out - No final decisions have been made at this stage.</p>
7.	<p>Development costs – what would the Club estimate the various phases of the redevelopment cost?</p> <p>Phase 1a Phase 1b Phase 2 Phase 3</p> <p>Are there any grants available for redevelopment of the stadium? Which funding bodies would be able to assist?</p>	<p>Ken covered off costs during previous questions.</p> <p>No grants are currently available, as the funding previously available was used for the Cheadle End development</p>

8.	<p>Training Ground – Could the Club update us on the long term plans for a training ground? Are we still looking to have our own training ground within the Borough? Are we looking at an indoor facility, to achieve a higher category status and retain the best young players?</p>	<p>A number of commercial discussions are currently progressing regarding the development of a new training ground within the borough. The estimated cost for this project is between £25 million and £30 million.</p> <p>The club has submitted an application to the EFL to upgrade its academy status from Category 3 to Category 2 and is currently awaiting approval. A key requirement for Category 2 status is a full-sized indoor pitch, which the club is committed to delivering.</p> <p>To support this, the club is exploring the possibility of installing a dome over the pitch at the current academy site. This investment reflects the club's long-term vision of developing homegrown talent — both to strengthen the first team and to create valuable assets that can be sold to other clubs.</p>
9.	<p>Finance – Ensuring the financial sustainability of Stockport County Football Club is of paramount importance to the Supporters' Co-operative. In the last set of accounts to June 2024, group operating losses have increased from £4.7m to 30th June 2023, to £7.0m to 30th June 2024.</p> <p>We would like to place on record our thanks to Mark Stott for his on-going commitment to Stockport County and welcome the conversion of all outstanding loans to equity during the year, significantly reducing the Club's overall debt.</p> <p>Can the Club comment on how sustainable these losses are?</p> <p>What is the projected financial profit / loss to June 25?</p> <p>Is the Club looking for any outside investment, particularly to help take the stadium development plans forward?</p>	<p>Currently, clubs at Championship level are not operating profitably — the model is not financially sustainable. Despite this, the club remains committed to developing its infrastructure as part of a long-term growth strategy.</p> <p>To proceed with the planned stadium expansion, debt support will be necessary. This is viewed as essential to ensure the club is positioned for future success, both on and off the pitch.</p> <p>Mark Stott continues to convert the existing operational debt into equity, leaving the club in a debt-free position, however a level of external debt support will be required in order to fund the planned stadium expansion.'</p> <p>There is cautious optimism surrounding the proposed Football Governance Bill, which aims to make clubs more financially sustainable. A key feature of the bill is the redistribution of revenues across the football pyramid, which would help support the club's operating costs and reduce reliance on owner funding or external debt over time.</p>

10.	<p>Match Day and Season Ticket Pricing for the 25/26 season – Would it be possible for the Club to share the proposed match day and season ticket pricing with the Co-op?</p> <p>The Co-op understands that the Club will be facing increased operational costs, supporters are also seeing sharp rises in the cost of living, particularly with utility bills (water bills increasing by 25%), council tax, etc.</p> <p>With the Club remaining in League One, is it possible for the Club to limit any price increase to 5% or below, to ensure that pricing is kept affordable for supporters and to ensure Edgeley Park remains full or close to capacity for our home League games?</p>	<p>Season ticket prices were cascaded the day before the meeting.</p> <p>Season ticket and match day prices will be increased by 6.5%</p> <p>The club will increase the number of season tickets available from 6,500 to 7,200.</p> <p>The club advised that they averaged 9650 last year.</p> <p>A new price category for 18-21 year olds will be introduced; prices will be 378 to help young adults and ensure we don't lose fans by jumping to adult pricing.</p> <p>The club carefully considered the 6.5% increase, which reflects the necessary revenue growth both on and off the pitch to drive the club forward.</p>
11.	<p>Away Ticket Allocation - As a member of the supporters Co-op and a keen follower of the club, I do have a slight niggle when it comes to away ticket allocation.</p> <p>I live in the West Country and try to attend a home game at least once a month when I visit my family. As such the cost of a season ticket is quite a bit more expensive than buying tickets for the individual games. So when it comes to popular away game tickets I don't really get a look in. Having said that, I have managed to secure a ticket for the Wycombe game.</p> <p>My question to the club is, would they consider a partial season ticket for those of us that live a distance from the club? and take into account the amount of games in total we distance supporters have attended when it comes to ticket allocation for popular away games?</p>	<p>Currently, this isn't something the club is exploring.</p> <p>The administrative logistics of managing a scheme like this would be complicated for the club.</p>
12.	<p>Season Ticket Return Scheme – there are hundreds of empty seats at home matches, even when games are 'sold out'. Can the Club consider a scheme to encourage season ticket holders to hand their ticket back, if they can't attend, so other supporters don't miss out?</p>	<p>The club likes the idea in principle and will explore it further and are confident the new ticketing system will have the capability to allow for this.</p>

13.	<p>Match Day Commentary Service - The creation of the in stadium commentary service has been a great addition to the match day experience for supporters with a Visual Impairment.</p> <p>The one problem is that to return the devices back to reception at the end of the game often involves those with the least sight trying to work their way against the mass of supporters leaving the three home stands to get around to reception which is particularly difficult for games that end after dark.</p> <p>Could the club and the providers of the commentary devices consider allowing supporters who make use of this service the option to borrow/hire out a device for the full season perhaps with the payment of a deposit as insurance for return of the device.</p> <p>I know that Manchester City has such a system and this makes it much simpler for those needing the device to plan their arrival and departure from games.</p>	<p>The facility is provided by a third-party provider, and the club needs to engage with them to fully understand the logistics.</p> <p>Liam has taken this away for further consideration including looking at providing suitable drop off locations around the ground.</p>
14.	<p>Season Ticket Installment Plan – Would the Club consider an instalment plan for season tickets? If the Club don't want to manage this in house, can a third party finance company like Klarna be used?</p> <p>Online Ticket Sales Timing - In regard to the timing of online ticket sales, can it not be that these can be amended in some form? Those of us that work 9-5 have to consistently find ways to get onto our phones to purchase at 12:30pm. Useful when your dinner break is around there but not so much if you have any earlier or later one.</p>	<p>The Club intends on selling season tickets in the same way as previous seasons. To roll out a finance package would require the Club adding additional resources to the accounts team to manage this process and chase up payments. They don't have the internal resources to do this, especially when tackling all the other projects the Club are currently working on.</p> <p>The club feel that the current timing works for the majority of fans.</p> <p>They recently adapted the ticket office opening hours to allow away tickets to be collected up until kick off at home matches.</p> <p>The new ticket provider will offer an e ticket option.</p>

15.	<p>Can the Club explain the ticket allocation for Lincoln fans on 26th April? There is 'natural' segregation between the Railway End and the Pop Side so why have segregation on the Pop Side?</p> <p>This prevented more tickets being sold to home fans and made the attendance around 1,000 below capacity.</p>	<p>The game did not sell out.</p> <p>Lincoln requested both the Railway and Popside areas, and the club must provide adequate covered seating. If home supporters are offered certain conditions, such as covered seating or safe standing, then the visiting team must also be offered the same. The visiting club can decline the offer of certain allocations.</p>
16.	<p>Beer Pre Order Facility – I have used the machines in the Cheadle End a few times over recent home games to order beer for HT collection from the Courtyard Bottle bar. Whilst the machines are easy to use, the experience of collection is very mixed. On some occasions there has been no queue at the bottle bar to negotiate, but it is not clear there is a dedicated collection point for pre orders.</p> <p>On Saturday, I was hassled and verbally harassed by those queuing for HT drinks. One or two people were insisting that I go to the back of the queue despite preordering.</p> <p><i>Sent to Gavin via email on 28.4.25. Gavin replied , he has forwarded to the senior food and beverage team and is proposing a priority queuing system</i></p>	<p>The issues with the facility have been extensively investigated, but the club has been unable to get it to work properly. The club will look for an alternative solution, and the facility will be removed during the closed season.</p>
17.	<p>Car Parking - With match day parking becoming more difficult, could we ask one of our club sponsors Vitality for the use of their car park at Saint Christopher House on match days . I often pass this car park on match days and it is empty, especially on Saturdays.</p>	<p>The club are in favour of approaching Vitality and took this away to explore further.</p>
18.	<p>Cheadle End Mens Toilets - The toilet facilities under the CE are totally inadequate. The urinals are outdated troughs - with the floor typically awash with urine - it must be possible to update the facility to provide individual urinals (as seen in many grounds visited this season) there is also an ongoing problem with the WC facility - at every game there are long queues of persons waiting to use the very limited facility</p> <p>As the club generally improves both on and off the pitch - the toilets have remained unchanged and are now unfit for purpose.</p>	<p>These facilities are located in the newest part of the ground and have been designed to meet current standards. We believe they provide adequate amenities for matchday use.</p> <p>The club appreciates input from our supporters and will continue to review facilities to ensure the best possible experience for everyone attending the stadium.</p>

19.	<p>Wi-Fi provision in the ground – Would it be possible to secure wi-fi sponsorship for EP. I take my grandson and wifi access isn't good particularly for O2. Other clubs have free Wi-Fi sponsored by usually Internet providers, is this something that can be considered?</p>	<p>The club is currently engaging with the WiFi provider, and Gavin will bring up this matter for discussion</p>
20.	<p>Stewarding in the family stand - In the family stand and Railway End there are loads of arguments over seating. It seems a common theme that people sit where they want as opposed to allocated seats. When supporters ask the stewards to help they don't get involved to sort the problem out but fixate on getting people to sit down.</p>	<p>Gavin is in the process of scheduling a follow-up meeting with one of the local councillors.</p> <p>The club is in the process of increasing its own steward recruitment; currently, 60 stewards are directly employed, with the remainder supplied by an agency.</p> <p>A new ground safety officer has been appointed and is creating a standardized induction program to provide consistent training for all stewards.</p>

21.	<p>Stewarding - I'd like to raise a challenge / question around ground safety and specifically the inconsistency in approach by the Safety Team. They are instructing stewards to remove fans for standing without any: published policy, audible warnings over the tannoys/PA system, no verbal warnings / warning process at the time and no consistency (different areas of the ground are allowed to stand continually).</p> <p>Fans will naturally stand and sit down with the ebb and flow of a match.</p> <p>What was recently experienced and witnessed (in person and on YouTube) are a violent group of 'enforcer stewards' with a zero tolerance approach.</p> <p>What actions are the Club taking to address 1. both the policy / communication issues with Fans re standing and 2. the failure in SCFC management of the 'enforcer stewards'?</p> <p>Personal footage from Fans, YouTube links and Fan statements can be sent if requested.</p> <p>Family Stand Stewarding - Stewarding in the Popside has been aggressive. The club has met with supporter representatives, but there has only been limited improvement. Standing is much more strongly forbidden than in the Cheadle End. There have been odd comments from the club, like the one suggesting that the proximity to away fans is in some way damaging to the atmosphere, made in your last meeting with the club. Is the intention to move long standing supporters out of the Pop Side when the ground is redeveloped?</p>	See question 20
22.	<p>Family Stand Exit - It is taking a very long time to empty the Pop Side at the end of games. Older and less mobile people are particularly finding it difficult to get out. Why isn't the gate into the Cheadle End opened once the Cheadle End has largely emptied?</p>	Moving forward, the large gate will be opened 5 minutes before the end of the game

23.	PA System Clarity - the quality of the PA in the Cheadle End (and possibly elsewhere too) has gone to pot recently, to the point where I often can't tell what's being said. This could be a safety issue in the event of an emergency?	More investment is being directed into the system, with a phased approach planned to progressively improve it.
24.	Cashless - Can the Club review the strict policy of no cash accepted inside the ground? For most of this season the programme sellers inside the ground have accepted cash, but on Saturday I saw an older lady distressed because she was told she needed a card to buy a programme. Another bystander also saw this and immediately bought a programme for her, but for a club which aims to be inclusive this is not an ideal policy. I can understand the reasons for it, but surely at least the programme sellers could be exempted?	The ground will remain cashless as handling cash increases operational demands and potential risks.
25	Safe Standing - "I note with interest the introduction of safe standing areas in the Cheadle End and Railway End. Please can you advise what changes or measures needed to be implemented to both areas to allow this to happen? Furthermore was any consideration given to implanting safe standing in the Popside (Together Stand), in particular the "noisier" Yellow Block? If so, what was the reason or decision that meant it could not or would not be implemented? If not, are there any plans to consider it in future? And finally, if not, please can it be considered (and hopefully implemented)."	<p>850 seats affected in total in the Railway and Cheadle ends. This equates to 5 rows at the back of the Cheadle Stand and the two back rows in the Railway End.</p> <p>Both these areas have been where supporters have chosen to stand, leading to stewarding challenges. It makes sense to begin improvements in these locations</p> <p>The club reported no impact on plans for ground expansion and no ground works are required for either stand for the installation of safe-standing.</p> <p>Only a small amount of investment is required to complete the safety modifications needed for the rails.</p>

END.