

STOCKPORT COUNTY SUPPORTERS' CO-OPERATIVE AND STOCKPORT COUNTY FOOTBALL CLUB

Meeting Notes

to be held on Monday 25 February 2019 at the Fingerpost Hotel
commencing at 6.30pm

ATTENDANCE

Present (SCSC): Ian Brown (Chair), Andy Burt, Caroline Burt (Independent Secretary), John Giles, Ed Keane, Phil Robinson

Present (SCFC): Steve Bellis, Malcolm Clarke, Simon Dawson

Apologies (SCSC): Pete Towey, Damian Beaumont, Steve Murray, Andy Plant

Takeover

1. I noted the Co-op were giving a letter to be passed by the Club, to the potential parties looking to invest / take over. I presume (as no communication from the Co-op has suggested otherwise) that since then no investor has made contact with the Co-op.

Why do the Club feel there has been no response?

2. What is the state of play with the negotiations with the investors?

The Club confirmed that the letters had been passed on to all parties and receipt acknowledged. They will engage with the fans when the time is right.

There are still two interested parties, although one is more probable than the other. The investor in this case is still trying to put his own affairs in order before any deal can progress - the current uncertain economic situation is not helping! Negotiations will continue at the pace dictated by the interested parties.

Guiseley Statement

3. Could the Club please confirm whether a response has been sent to Guiseley FC to the statement issued by their Chairman on 10 February?

The statement apologised to Guiseley supporters for what they described as `Incidents caused by a minority of Stockport County fans`, and went on, without being in any way specific, to refer to `trouble from away fans`.

When County supporters misbehave...they deserve criticism, but I am unaware of ANY trouble or `incidents` worthy of the name before, during or after the game.

If a response has not yet been drafted and sent, to this work of fantasy, could it please be a strong rebuttal.

The Club have written their response in the programme notes and have responded to an e-mail received from the FA.

The Club made it clear that help was offered to Guiseley in the form of stewards from Edgeley Park and the GMP, but this was refused. It is also clear that the game was

not stewarded properly with County fans being directed into the home end, despite the game supposedly being segregated.

The Club always offer to send our stewards to help out at away fixtures – this is why fans will see familiar faces at certain fixtures e.g. Altrincham on New Year's Day – but we can't enforce it as the opposition club have to pay for them.

The FA have agreed to close the matter following on from the correspondence with the Club, but fans must be aware that any encroachment and/or throwing objects onto the pitch could cause the Club significant problems going forward.

The official response from the FA is as follows:

"Many thanks for your letter dated 19 February 2019.

We are disappointed to learn that individuals responsible could not be identified, however the clubs intent to ban those found guilty of such behaviour is recognised. We also note that the club released a statement in the next match day programme warning spectators about their conduct.

The Football Association has considered the matter and will not be taking any formal disciplinary action on this occasion. However, please be advised that we may have to consider disciplinary action against the club if further reports of spectator misconduct should be received and The Association reserves the right to refer to the current matter in such circumstances.

The Football Association now considers this matter to be closed."

Booth Street

4. Please could we have an update on Booth Street? Have alternative arrangements been sought?

The Club managed to negotiate an extension to use the car park until the Maidstone game. They have been trying to talk to Stockport Homes in the hope of negotiating an extension until the end of the season, but they are not easy to get hold of.

One alternative would be Stockport College, but there are only 105 spaces as opposed to a much higher number on Booth Street. It wouldn't solve the problem, but it would help.

There is no easy answer.

Catering

5. Can we please have an update as to the current catering arrangements and in particular how the current parlous state regarding service to supporters is concerned.

On Saturday (v AFC Telford) it was well known that a big crowd was expected and that, owing to two successful ticketing initiatives, there would be a large number of families with children in the Pop Side particularly, but yet again large queues were the order of the day, and the catering unit ran out of hot dogs by half time as these queues were forming.

This is not only ludicrously bad economics, but also clearly unacceptable to supporters who have a right to expect decent service.

An assurance that this situation will at last be addressed, would be appreciated.

As reported at the last meeting, there is a full review of the catering being conducted. The service provided against Telford was very disappointing to say the least.

The club highlighted the issue of non-functioning equipment that appears to have deteriorated over time.

This has had a negative impact on the service offered by the caterers but the club are working to get these issues resolved.

CGC have been asked to provide some different food options other than pies, burgers and hotdogs e.g. Sandwiches were on sale for the last game, but they didn't sell.

The bottle bar has brought some success. A new bar has been discovered in the Cheadle End that had previously been boxed off. This has been reinstated and will be used to sell draught beer.

The spend per head is being monitored and regular figures are being fed back to Malcolm Cooke. On 29th December against Kidderminster, the Cheadle End made £1,136 plus £322 on the bottle bar. On 16th February against Telford it made well over £2,000. Part of this is due to the staff now pre pouring pints before half time in an attempt to get people served.

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Quality remains an issue but with pressure from the club on the incumbent caterers the club is hoping to improve the fans match day experience.

Since the 29th December against Kidderminster, the Cheadle End has seen takings rise with the introduction of an additional till on the concourse bar and an improved queuing system coupled with pre pouring.

The queuing system overall still needs addressing once the equipment is fully functioning on the food/beverage serving areas of the concourse.

Once this is sorted it is the intention to move the food /beverage serving areas and spread them out to get people served quicker with better products

It was mentioned that the bottle bar now seems to be selling beer on draught which negates the point of it as it just becomes another queue.

The three bars on the concourse should ease congestion - bottle bar will serve a mixture of bottles/draught against Spennymoor and then the club will evaluate.

Bottle/draught set up Concerns were raised about the number of children in the Vernon Stand and the chances of them getting refreshments on Saturday (against Spennymoor). The Co-op suggested setting up a table selling sweets and drinks to take the pressure off the kiosks. It was also suggested that more people needed to be manning the kiosks. Two people isn't enough.

There will potentially be 900 children coming on Saturday. The Club promised to consider the above points.

6. There appears to be an inconsistency in pricing between the Main Stand and the Cheadle End. Although the Chicken Balti Pies are advertised at £3.20 in both stands, I have been charged £3.70 two on separate occasions in the Main Stand (the Kiosk near Ground Control), but when I have been in the Cheadle End every time this

season it has been £3.20. It bothers me that some County fans are routinely being overcharged. Please could someone ask the catering firm what is going on?

The Club acknowledged that some of the pricing on the boards was wrong, but that this particular issue is not something they had come across. They will investigate.

Stewarding at Edgeley Park

7. Over recent months county have received criticism in the NLP from visiting fans about their treatment during their visit to EP. Comments about heavy handed stewarding - visitors not being allowed to hang flags - and general poor facilities.

Is the club made aware of the feelings of any unhappy travelling fans and do they make every effort to inform visiting fans - in advance - of the rules concerning the display of flags etc. Is the catering company informed of the games which might attract visitors in good numbers?

This has been passed to the Safety Team for comment.

If there are any specific examples, please could these be passed onto the Club?

Vernon Stand Ticketing

8. Please could we have an update on the new ticketing system in the Vernon Stand? Are the turnstile scanners a success? If so, what are the timescales for rolling it out to the rest of the ground?

The system worked seamlessly. 1,611 tickets have been scanned over the last three home games. 29 out of 63 season ticket holders took up the offer, over 1/3 of which were senior citizens.

Further training for the turnstile operators is taking place with a view to the scanners being rolled out to the rest of the stadium in due course.

What progress has been made on people being able to select a specific seat?

Progress is being made, but there are no timescales as yet.

The Club suggested that Leon Berry, who is overseeing the new ticketing system, attend one of these meetings to give a full update and answer any questions.

Future Potential Investors

9. Can you also ask the Club when will further debt to equity take place please?

This will not be decided until the end of the year.

10. What is the projected profit / loss for this season as it stands?

It is a moving feast – it depends on how well we do on the field, what sort of profit the summer concerts generate, etc.

11. If we get to Wembley, are clubs still expected to be charged for using the stadium?

The Club agreed to check, but the understanding is that this is how the FA make their money back so we'd assume so.

Next Season

12. How are things progressing regarding making arrangements for next season – specifically player's contracts?

This is down to the manager. Jim is already in talks with players regarding contracts. The Club are in a good position to go into next season - there are full time football clubs who are training less than us. The Board will support the manager with regard to how the club will operate with regard to training frequency.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Monday 8th April 2019