

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

Meeting Notes

held on Monday 30 September 2019
(rearranged from Monday 23 September)
at the Fingerpost commencing at 6:30pm

ATTENDANCE

Present (SCSC): Pete Towe (Chair), Damian Beaumont, Ian Brown, Andy Burt, Caroline Burt (Independent Secretary), John Giles, Ed Keane

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

It was noted that Richard Park was very interested in meeting with the Co-op, but unfortunately couldn't make the meeting on 30 September due to business commitments. Representatives of the Co-op subsequently met up with him for an informal chat on Monday 7 October.

Progress since the last meeting

1. Could we have a general update on developments at the football club since the last meeting e.g. investment, seats in the Railway End, scoreboard, etc.

In terms of investment, there is still an interested party and as previously, the timescales are being dictated by them. The Board are confident that this is a viable option and will keep the Co-op informed as to any developments.

The Club has spent £10,000 on putting seats in the Railway End, specifically the two blocks nearest the Vernon Stand. This is a mixture of brand new seats and recycled old ones. The intention is to have this open to away fans for our high attendance matches, starting with Hartlepool.

The scoreboard was obtained via the Pioneer Group for free, and cost £20,000 to install. However, in two years' time it will have paid for itself thanks to the advertising we can put on there. The Pioneer Group are updating the software for free, but this will take time as obviously their business takes priority. The scoreboard is capable of doing far more than it is at the moment.

Finance

2. What is the profit / loss that the Club will be report to June 2019?

The figures have still to be finalised, but we will have gone from making a loss to making a small profit thanks to the summer concerts.

3. How many season tickets have been sold for next season? Please provide a breakdown for adults, junior, students, leisure key, senior citizens, etc.

The final figure is 1,898 which is up on the figure of 1,759 from last year.

The Club agreed to provide a breakdown.

4. There are concerns about the difficulty the Co-op has had getting financial information from Sedulo, despite Steve Murray signing an NDA. When the accounts are filed for 2019, would it be possible to have the requested information more quickly?

Steve should now have received all the information he requested, but the elongated process has been noted.

5. There are rumours that the summer concerts will only be held every two years going forward. Is this the case?

No idea where this rumour has come from?! The Club are due to sit down with SJM this month to start negotiations.

The concerts last summer were deliberately undersold to play it safe - capacity was kept at 15,000 when it could have legally been 18,000 or with some ground alterations, 20,000. It was a show case for future years.

There were 46 complaints to the Club – mainly concerning noise levels. Parking was also an issue.

Should the concerts take place again, a lot of lessons have been learned. Someone would need to be brought into the Club specifically to manage the event as the time pressures put on the current team was too much, especially on Simon Dawson. It wasn't exactly a quiet end to the season either! Rick Hinks also should be recognised as he ended up putting in 95 hours overtime in the two weeks leading up to the event and the week after.

There would also be an extensive Q&A document put on the website to try and minimise the number of calls into the office.

Ticketing

6. There have been several complaints both on social media and to the Co-op regarding the lack of cash turnstiles on match day. There is a concern that this is going to deter the casual supporter who makes a last minute decision to attend the game. Is there anything that can be done to work around this?

The aim at the start of the season was to go cashless and the Club intend to continue with this. The whole process does seem to be a lot smoother now as people get used to the online system or are getting to the ground earlier to buy their tickets. There are now four ticket windows open on match days and there is the option of opening two more if required.

The Co-op asked what the ratio of online ticket sales and pay on the day was. The Club agreed to look into this and come back with the information.

7. When will the Super 10 tickets go on sale?

They should go on sale at the end of October.

Training Facility

8. At the last meeting between the Club and the Co-op, Jim Gannon and Gary Burton said they have taken responsibility for sourcing new training facilities.

Are the Club looking to lease or purchase training facilities?

Has the Council been approached regarding a training facility within the borough that could be shared with the local community? This could attract funding if a 3G pitch were included amongst the plans. Plenty of space up top at Woodbank Park and the hall isn't used for anything so would make a good base and plenty of parking.

Alternatively, if Manor Farm can't be used have County considered taking over the vacated lease from City's old facility at Carrington?

The Club are currently using five different facilities: Cheadle and Gatley FC, Seashell Trust, Cheadle Heath Nomads, Manor Farm and St Paul's High School.

However, there is always an aspiration to own our own facilities.

Club Shop

9. The opening times of the shop are generally not helpful for someone who doesn't live / work near Edgeley Park

Contacting the shop by e-mail and phone is also difficult, I guess as when they are open they are so busy.

Are there any plans to extend the opening hours and try to improve the service offered by the club shop?

Mike Petch is now in charge of the Club Shop – he is Head of Retail, whilst Vicky remains in post to look after operations. Mike has lots of ideas to improve service, starting with some basic housekeeping such as a dedicated e-mail address and enhancing the online system. Hopefully these, plus some other improvements, will start to be introduced in the coming weeks.

The intention is for Club Shop hours to be extended. Other changes include focussing more on using Stockport based companies for merchandise, the introduction of paper bags and a move away from single use plastics.

10. Is there anything the club can do to try to improve the supply of kits, especially for children? It has taken me two months to get two green kits – I had similar problems last season.

Joma don't make junior kits, so they have to be ordered bespoke. There has been a tendency to play it safe when ordering these kits for fear of over-ordering which clearly has meant that people are struggling to buy the kits they want. This is something that Mike will be looking at.

Catering

11. What steps are in place to improve the catering match day catering? The quality is extremely poor, one fan was served a hot dog at the Aldershot game for £4 and the bun was stale.

This is an ongoing process and the Club are continually trying to work with CGC to improve the service offered. The Club very much understands the frustrations of the fans!

12. The bottle bar in the Cheadle End was initially introduced to sell drinks to the fans quickly. They are now also pulling pints which slows service down – why was this introduced?

Simon Dawson promised to look into this as this is not something the Club agreed to.

Environment

13. What steps are the Club taking to reduce their environmental impact? Obviously, we are not allowed to use glass pint pots and bottles in the ground, but there is a worldwide focus on the environment at the moment – specifically the use of plastics.

Would it be possible to allow people to bring their own reusable pint pots to reduce the use of single-use plastics? Such as these:

<https://punksandchancers.co.uk/products/yes-bab-steel-pint-pot>

This is a really good idea, and it is obvious that the Club need to review the recycling policy within the ground to bring itself in line with the current environmental concerns.

Future Events

14. Can a fans forum be arranged?

The Club are always open to this. The aim is to try and hold one by the end of October.

15. Would the Co-op be able to hold the Hatters Half marathon at Edgeley Park next year?

Yes. The Club noted the Hatters Half was another well organised event.

16. Would the Co-op / Wellspring be able to hold a collection for food / clothing / ruck sack appeal from the cabin and a collection inside the ground?

Club advised that Mark Lockyear is responsible for this, but that there are only a limited number of bucket collections allowed in the ground per season and these have already been allocated. There might be scope for this to happen at a cup game however.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Monday 4th November 2019