

Minutes of the Coventry City Supporters Forum

25th November 2019 at 5:30pm – Ryton Training Ground

In attendance:

Colin Henderson – Chair (London Supporters Club), Dave Boddy (CCFC), Mark Hornby (CCFC), Steve Harding (Bedworth and Nuneaton Supporters Club), Pat Raybould (Family Zone), Ray Stephens (Diamond Club), Michael Garlick (Premium Membership Supporters Rep), Dave Eyles (Sky Blue Trust), Paul Howes (Leamington and Warwick Supporters Club).

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Jim Brown (FPA), Kevin Heffernan (Irish Supporters Club), Matt Cowley (Southam Supporters Club), Neil Beasley (LGBT Supporters) and David Busst (Sky Blues in the Community).

2. Action From Last Meeting

DB to keep Forum updated of return to Coventry/Stadium progress – DB update to follow

Bad Language in lounges – noted by Club

Supporter Groups to advertise travel offer – to be discussed in this meeting

Bus Timetables to be published by Club – info has been gathered, now checking for accuracy

Supporters Forum to donate/provide gifts for JSB Party – PR confirmed groups had been in touch regarding donations/gifts and volunteering

3. Club Update – DB

CH asked for update to the group regarding the Club returning to Coventry.

DB said the Ricoh Arena situation has not changed since the last meeting – the two parties are still talking regularly regarding the situation, but not that should not be deemed as ‘negotiations’

The topic was discussed by the group. CH asked for regular updates to the group.

MG said the Supporters Forum included representatives of all supporter groups, so should be offering help and spearheading, rather than individual groups doing things separately that may only represent their own views.

CH said he was happy to co-ordinate views and responses where required. The later said there should be more co-ordination of activities, so supporters groups can speak as one group and mean less confusion for fans.

DB said it was the intention of everyone to come back to Coventry as soon as possible, and the Club and the Owners will put information regarding this out when ready and able to do so.

DE asked DB about meeting the Sky Blue Trust separately. DB said he would instead provide updates to all of the Supporters Groups via the Supporters Forum.

DB said the Owners still intend to build a new stadium. Due to the confidence of commercial discussions however, it is a process that can't be conducted via the media.

Following on from the last update where DB said the Owners have 're-engaged a land agent', a long list of 18 sites was developed, which has been whittled down to 6.

There is a meeting in the very near future to whittle down to the 'preferred' site. It will be continually evaluated, as other land may become available between the designated preferred site being identified and then subsequently purchased.

2 of the 6 on the shortlist have been suggested by Coventry City Council. DE asked if all sites were in the Coventry boundary – DB said he did not know, as he did not know the sites currently until the shortlist meeting.

On the football side, the Club is looking ahead to the January transfer window with the potential use of a loan opportunity. Matty Godden is hopefully back in training soon.

4. Travel Price Increase

CH raised point that it was not communicated prior to it going up.

DB said there was a misunderstanding on the statement that had been prepared to be released prior to the increase with the Club travel partner. Instead the prices were increased, and the Club statement only signed off a week later.

MG said it still provide good value, DB said the prices continue to be subsidised.

5. Terms of Reference Draft

CH confirmed distribution, and asked for feedback.

Contacts of group – email to be set up to contact the group and advertised on website and programme.

CH suggested vice-chair of the group, in case of his absence. Suggested 2 year terms for roles. DE suggested alternate years for election – e.g. Y1 – Chair, Y2 – Vice Chair.

6. Away Ticket Allocations

JB emailed in, to ask if disruption at away games possibly caused by ST Holders giving tickets to others, and if this is a risk.

DB agreed it is a risk, but is a benefit of being a ST holder and is their right to do this. Allocations are based around several factors.

MH explained factors on decided amount per person based around expected demand, distance, allocation, time/date. 2/4/6 depending on these, working on sliding scale.

JB suggested banned supporters may be getting tickets from ST Holders.

DB explained Club has a dedicated West Midlands Police Officer, as well as spotters, to identify banned fans. ST Holder who provided the tickets to them would also be affected.

PH – would prefer lower Sunderland allocation at the home game, to reciprocate allocation given to CCFC this season. DB explained that would cost the Club circa £75k of the drop from the expected allocation.

MG asked if the Club can hold back fans. DB said that they can't.

Discussion on policing at last year's away game v Sunderland, compared to this week.

MG asked if there could be a corporate allocation of tickets for away games that could be bought via CCFC. DB said no plans currently – advise would be to contact opposition directly, but CCFC can assist.

7. Font size in programme

MG/RS/JB – difficult to read small font in programme, especially on dark backgrounds.

MH said he understood the point, however making bigger/bolder would affect amount of content in the programme. Explained there has to be a contrast in colours through the programme, but will take it on board.

Group agreed programme is among best in the league.

CH asked if an electronic version would be possible alongside print version e.g. can make larger, download, save planet. DB agreed worth looking at.

8. Players at Supporters Meeting

MC raised via email non-appearance of players at a meeting. DB explained that there was a misunderstanding on the date – once realised, 3 players were found to replace those 2 players.

Discussion on player appearances at groups, and Sky Blues in the Community visits, and scheduling of them.

MG raised point about players not appearing in hospitality lounges at recent games – DB explained it may not always be possible due to players not being there e.g. injury treatment, and depending on number of players injured/suspended.

SH asked if player could be booked further in advance – MH said can try, but the time of year with cup games and matches moving to Sunday's mean that it can be difficult as training schedules change.

9. JSB Party

PR gave update on details of the Party. Explained it is in the evening due to the match schedule, training schedule and wanting to do it before Christmas.

Groups will donate items or money to support the party.

10. Any Other Business

CH asked the group if they think there is a conflict of interest being chair of the London Supporters Club and Supporters Forum. The group agreed there was not – CH said he would make it clear who he was speaking on behalf of as appropriate.

MH spoke about disabled tickets now being available online, and the new digital ticketing option. DB said that it may be possible in the future to have the option of a digital Season Ticket.

SH spoke about a racist incident at a home game. Confirmed it and the perpetrator is being dealt with by the Club.

DE raised issue of unreserved seating/'sit where you want' mentality at away grounds – Oxford, MK Dons in particular – which was then discussed.

DE also raised use of dogs at MK Dons and their purpose. DB was unaware, and said that would be a decision of the 'home' police force.

Discussion of policing at MK Dons and the operation at Rotherham.

DE/CH explained frustration of choosing seats for a reason (e.g. medical etc) and then not being able to get it.

Next Meeting

2 meetings have been held so far this season.

1 scheduled for rest of the season – Monday 6th April.

Agreed to have one if required in intervening period, rather than one for the sake of one, if something 'serious' happens or it is felt one is required.

Venue for next meeting discussed, DE proposed Albany Club and it was agreed as provisional venue.