

**Supporters Parliament Meeting – 13th March 2018**

Firstly, at the start of the meeting Chris Wynne who chaired the meeting took a moment to send the SP’s full condolences to Joe Riley and his partner Kayleigh & family for the loss of their son Leo Joseph, as well as to the family of Ken Mulhearn who passed away on the day of the meeting.

1. **STFC Accounts Summary**

Brian began with explaining that the club released the accounts with a profit of around £400k for the year. Information was passed to Brian about comments made with regards to the accounts and the Lidl deal with STFC 2007.

This was a legal issue regarding the access rights of the stretch of road from the traffic lights to the main gates of the ground for both the football club and the new Lidl store. It was recommended that the club sort out this issue in order to protect it from any possible future legal action taken against it if there was an incident which went to court.

1. **Lidl update including stadium access**

Part of the Lidl planning process involved traffic management both into the proposed new store and also for the football club’s car parking, Power League & also the Shrewsbury Town in the Community Hub. The Lidl site contains 120 car parking spaces which on a match day could pose issues with people trying to enter the store while others are trying to park at the club for the match.

As part of the access deal, Shrewsbury Town FC have retained a strip of land in between the Lidl development site and the Power League site with the intentions of improving access to the ground for pedestrians. The issue of people climbing over the fences has been repeated again and again by supporters directly to Brian as well as brought up at previous Supporters Parliament meetings as people try to gain access to or leaving the Super Blues Way. The football club could not remove this fence for health and safety reasons as it leads onto the main road. As part of the negotiations for the Lidl deal, the Traffic management company involved were tasked with finding a way that a new purpose-built foot path could be constructed, this would reduce the main pedestrian flow through the main gates from Oatley Road thus reducing congestion issues with vehicles entering the site for either the store or the football club. As a result of this, a complete pathway will be built with steps in place on the steep slope from the road side as well as a barrier on the road side to reduce the chance of people getting injured running into the road. The hope is that this will be built and resolved by the start of the 2018/19 season.

1. **Matchday Catering**

Mark from MPM Stadia came to the Supporters Parliament meeting to engage with supporters about the products available in the buffets and to try and answer questions emailed in to the SP or from the floor directly to take back to MPM any feedback back in an attempt to improve the product range and improve the service on a match day.

Mark explained to those who attended the meeting that MPM are a local company who acquired the contract to provide catering at the club following the Rod Stewart concert summer of 2017 only a few days before the Aston Villa friendly match.

Mark went on to explain about the kind of events and venues that MPM work at such as Murrayfield for Rugby games, providing catering for Crystal Palace and Aston Villa football clubs.

Staff recruitment, fixed assists (the actual buffets and equipment within them) and a lack of any sales data or analysis from when the football club ran the buffets themselves after the departure of Jenny’s catering. As a result, for the earlier matches in pre-season and the start of the season, MPM over ordered to ensure that they didn’t run out of any food or drinks and could get the data they required in order to properly run the buffets with a huge amount of waste as a result. Simplification of the menu on offer was another idea which was implemented and has gone down very well with the traveling away supporters visiting the ground. The Woods bars were removed and pumps installed in the buffets themselves at the start of the season as it was the view of MPM that people would want to purchase food at the same time and same location as they ordered a pint(s). Mark admitted “that was wrong, so we changed that and brought them back out” reinstating the Woods Bars. Currently MPM are in talks with Woods to reduce the waste from the woods bars which costs MPM a large percentage of the profits from selling this product this is due to the short life that real ale has in a barrel. As an example, if there is half to three quarters of a barrel remaining after a match, that beer will not be of any drinkable quality for the next game or event.

Armed with all the data MPM have collected during the course of the season so far, they have altered the menu slightly to reflect sales of different products & can now start to improve the volumes of the products available on a match day to ensure that supporters are able to purchase the products they want, while reducing the wastage bill and improving sales.

The next stage for MPM is the quality of the products available on a match day for supporters to enjoy. However, improvements to the buffets themselves can not be done until after the season is complete which Mark feels would enable them to improve the match day experience for supporters. This is due to the time required to make the alterations that cannot be done during the season due to the limited time between matches. The introduction of Coopers Sausage Rolls who are a local company has mainly been welcomed with mixed reviews, but are selling well.

Chips…… multiple complaints and suggestions have been sent to Mark and MPM with the fact that they are not available within the buffets at the football club, this is due to the fact that there are no extractor fans to allow them to cook them. He went on to explain that in order to install the extractor fans he has received quotes of between £50,000 - £60,000 which would be a huge cost. MPM are investigating alternative methods of providing oven chips which could be cooked using the current equipment. This is ongoing.

Brian explained that the FanZone the entertainment is organised by Jamie of Shrewsbury Town in the Community with Chris Allan of EScoot, while the catering is provided by an external provider who MPM regularly work with at other events that they cater for. The introduction of a marque was to provide an area of shelter during the colder and wetter winter months allowing the FanZone to carry on. Brian handed over to Lawrence to explain the average numbers who attend the FanZone. As a match day average of between 150-200 people use the FanZone regularly, but this number can increase depending on the number of visiting away supporters. As a service the FanZone breaks even with no profit at all to report. MPM, the football club and the community team are constantly reviewing the FanZone to see how it can be improved upon for the future.

Mark explained that a lot of the equipment is provided by Wrights who provide the pies that are available on a match day, he feels that the quality of the pies available is poor and that he believes better quality products are available from alternative sources. Mark believes that having another “Pie Idol” could be required to see if the fanbase believe in continuing with Wrights, or if another supplier could be a better option.

A supporter brought up the fact that there is a lack of healthy options available on the menu and also that there are no sandwich options available like when Jenny’s use to run the buffet. Mark will look into this for the future.

Kids box option similar to one trailed last season in the family stand with the idea of a small sandwich and some fruit, or something like a small hot dog, etc…

Removal of a Soup option was raised by a supporter in the audience, Mark went on to explain that “it’s because no one bought it”. The soup that MPM had in stock was old stock that was used when the football club itself ran the catering after the Jenny’s contract ended. This stock Mark explained was also running out of date with a large quantity of it still remaining which was disposed of. Mark went on to say that he could reintroduce a soup option and ask the supporter what flavour the supporter believed would sell regularly.

1. **Season Tickets – Current offers for the remainder of the season**

The same morning of the meeting, the football club release a new mini-season ticket for the remaining 6 home matches to be played at the Montgomery Waters Meadow allowing people to save money by buying this new ticket. Brian indicated that for those supporters who wished to take up the great savings opportunity that the promotion provides but had already purchased tickets to some of the remain matches could have that money taken off the cost of the mini-season ticket.

Brian went on to explain that the club were investigating the possibility of new promotions to encourage more people to attend some of the remaining matches, due to new EFL rules these are in negotiation with the governing body before being released.

The football club are trying to promote the new season tickets for all price categories, including the new under 12 years old season ticket, which is free. The idea is to reduce the cost on families and provide the parents with entertainment for there kids as well as inspire the Shrewsbury Town FC supporters of future generations. Promotional adverts for the new season tickets will continue to be in the match programme, scoreboard, local press, website and any other method that the club can use including posters that can be hung up in pubs and bars for example.

1. **Season Tickets – Sales for next season – confirm key dates**

The dates for the Early bird are the dates when the promotion will end.

* 15th April 2018 First Cut-off date
* 24th June 2018 Second Cut-off date
* 25th June 2018 normal price
1. **Wembley ticketing update**

Brian informed all who attended the Supporters Parliament that so far, the sales were just over 5000 tickets sold (as of meeting date 13th March 2018) in the opening 48 hours better than expected after the “flack” from using TicketMaster to provide the ticket sales. Brian went on to explain that the reason for using TicketMaster to sell the Wembley Finals tickets was that the club only have 3 weeks to sell the ticket allocation of 20,000 initially given to them, whereas Lincoln City FC (Shrewsbury Town FC’s opponents in the CheckaTrade Final) will have had nearly 8 weeks to sell a similar number of tickets.

Brian echoed the disbelief of supporters with the TicketMaster charges per ticket for this event and in correspondents with TicketMaster gave his suggestion of one charge per transaction instead. The response was that this is TicketMaster’s policy for ticket selling.

One issue which was altered early in the process was that of concessions prices for those supporters over 65, as Lincoln City were selling their concessions tickets for over 60’s. The football club have made these prices the same.

For those supporters who may not be internet savvy the Ticket Office at the Montgomery Waters Meadow offered their services to assist these supporters with the purchasing of their ticket(s)

Bus parking issues at Wembley Stadium itself was brought to Brian’s attention from a member of the OSC who had emailed him the night before as soon as they had become aware of the issue. The issue is that currently construction works in the local area of the stadium mean that part of the car park is not accessible for use for vehicles. Alternative parking is available for this match on the east side of the stadium approximately 0.7 miles away in Hannah Close.

Brian has enquired with the Stadium about supporters who have mobility issues and at the time of the meeting is awaiting more details on what could possibly be provided.

1. **Safe Standing update** – Provided by Roger Groves and Mike Davis

Manufacturing is now completed and arrangements are being made to transport the rail seating to the UK. The proposed date for delivery is 23rd April 2018.

In terms of an Installation date, we believe that our best and now preferred option would be to install over the close season. With some changes to fixtures and the Lionel Ritchie concert in June we believe this gives us the best opportunity to ensure this is done correctly and smoothly as possible. We must emphasise that we still do have the ability to install before the end of season but taking into account the impact of possible play offs and disruption to Supporters we minimize this impact by waiting until the summer

Brian, Mike and Roger continue to have regular meetings in respect of the launch and open day and also finalizing benefits for those who have not yet received them.

Question: what happens if we get automatic promotion before the end of the season?

Brian advised that he was still waiting for confirmation from the EFL on exactly when promotion is officially confirmed.

Question: If you purchase a season ticket in the Safe Standing can you select where you stand?

Brian confirmed there is no difference to other ST holders and therefore yes you can select your Standing position.

Question: When Safe Standing is installed will those supporters in block 18/19 have to sit down?

Block 18/19 is no different to any other are of the stadium and therefore everyone is advised they should sit in their seats, Safe Standing is being introduced to allow those who wish to stand to do so. This will be an official Standing area.

1. **Stadium Maintenance & Training ground**

Brian updated the Parliament regarding the long running situation surrounding the painted steel at the football stadium may finally be coming to an end. Brian will bring more news on this when it is available.

Recent issues with the water throughout the whole of the concourses at the last home game against Yeovil in the CheckaTrade Trophy was brought up at the meeting. Brian & Lawrence explained that the reasons for this was a combination of condensation and the recent extreme cold weather which caused the water pipes to freeze and some burst. Thanks to the efforts of the plumbers who were called into work on Monday 5th March 2018, they completed all repairs by 18:20pm on the match day just before opening the gates for the match. With regards to the Walsall home match with all the condensation and moisture is purely down to the weather conditions at the time.

Lawrence explained about Super Blues Way about the litter that he has been clearing up before a match day and expanding on the fact that it is used a lot on a non-match day by pedestrians as well. A question was asked with regards to the ownership of an area of land around the pedestrian tunnel from the end of Super Blues Way to the Meole Brace Retail Park. The supporter was concerned with the state of the grass leading to the tunnel from the retail parks condition. Brian informed them it was not the football clubs land & is actually owned by Network Rail and would be an issue they would make enquires about.

Another supporter voiced her concerns over some of the street lights on Oatley Road not working correctly when there is an evening match. She had reported it on two pervious occasions to the department at Shropshire County Council, however, the problem still continues. Brian said they would get in touch with the relevant people at the council to see if this issue can be rectified as soon as possible.

Two new televisions were installed in the concourses to replace the ones who were not working correctly, two others are waiting for repair &/or replacement.

The Memorial Bricks by the Community Hub was brought up by a supporter who wondered whether these could be moved across to the Memorial Garden to keep them all together as well as to ensure that they are better maintained. Brain replied that these bricks cannot be moved as they people’s ashes under them, but some of them do require repair work to be carried out and it is something he had been working on for some time with the Super Blues as well as with the football club’s Chaplin both before and after Chris Smith’s passing.

South Stands Vending machine has been repaired after Simon Moore of the OSC had informed Brian that is was not working correctly & was giving out too much change. This was rectified the very next morning and is in full working order now giving out the correct change.

Finally, Chris read out an email from the previous meeting in November of 2017 to get feedback on if the issues raised were addressed.

* On Super Blues Way the fan had noticed a dip develop in the path and also a branch coming through the fence at eye level.

The offending branch on Super Blues Way was removed by the next match and the dip in the path was partially filled but remains an issue. Lawrence responded to this by explaining that he believes it is kids moving the gravel from underneath the fence in order to gain quicker access to the Power League 5-a-side pitches.

* Cleanliness of the toilets in the ground for men located in block 15 facilities often with the floor covered in urine and this gets carried out on people’s shoes meaning it gets spread to the concourse and to the stands. Also, with people climbing on the seats in the stands to access the row they were sitting on. He noticed several games before the meeting that there was a small “pond” of urine on the floor and it was not fit for him to go in. This will be monitored by the club to try and ensure this is reduced as best as possible.
1. **A.O.B.**
* **End of season awards event**

Roger approached Brian to suggest that it would be a good idea for the Supporters Parliament to take the lead on the End of Season Awards Evening for the supporters, bringing every supporters group together to try and make this a success in the future. Tuesday May 1st 2018 is the proposed date for this event after Brian had consulted Paul Hurst to ensure that all the players would be available to attend, to be held in Shrewsbury Town’s Sovereign Suite.

The Parliament is asking for all supporter’s groups as well as individual supporters to help come up with ideas which can be used to help make this and future End of Season Awards Evening more enjoyable for all in attendance.

* **Open Day 2018**

Jamie from Shrewsbury Town in the Community wishes to discuss plans for the Open Day before the start of the 2018/19 season and would like to poll ideas on what people would like to see and do at the event. Brian added after feedback from previous SP meetings the discussions has been taken not to have this Open Day to coincide with a match. This would allow supporters to be able to access more areas of the ground which normally off limits on a match day is and explore the stadium.

Anyone able to assist to contact Roger or Chris.

* **Wembley Memories**

Roger was contacted by Nick Humphreys who is the editor of Shropshire Weekly Magazine who wishes to create an article about Wembley Memories by speaking to several supporters who are interested in speaking about 1996 Football League Trophy final with how they travelled to the game and the preparations they made for the going to the game. Also, any images they have and would be willing to allow him to use that would be helpful.

Anyone able to assist to contact Roger or Chris.

* **Club Shop – Replica Shirts**

This was raised at the last meeting about availability issues of the current kit. This will be reviewed at the next meeting.
On a related note about the Club Shop, Brian explained that they are awaiting delivery of some new merchandise ready for the cup final game. This merchandise will not possess Wembley references as normally after the Wembley trips it is normally hard to sell the merchandise.

* **Toilet Seats**

The football club and supporter’s parliament have been working hard to try and resolve this on-going issue that has been a constant at nearly all meetings and beyond which as Brian explained has been slowly driving him mad with how complicated this issue has been. As the toilets fitted into the ground are vandal proof, it means the idea of retro-fitting them to include a toilet seat is a complicated one, but he hopes they may have found a solution. More on this flushing issue when the information is available.

Next meeting to be confirmed.