

Supporters Trust Board Meeting
Ship & Castle
7.30pm 4th July 2007

Attendees: Jon Darch, Stuart Rogers, Miles Hendy, Nick Tomkins, Mike Adams, Gavin Mapstone, Marie Day, James Nicholls, Terry Hamlin

OTIB

Stuart had spoken to Geoff Adams in regards to both parties' legal position in regards to the posting of any libellous comments. Geoff said he saw Klik as simply the host company and content of the forums was not their concern. As a separate issue Geoff said that he may be able to introduce the Trust to businesses who would be interested in sponsoring the forum.

Jon Darch detailed an idea on how to use the forum more pro-actively whilst applying benefits to Trust membership. He will contact pubs for home and away games to see if they will offer a discount or offers for fans showing a Supporters Trust card. In return the Trust will do a feature on their pub before the game.

Stuart said that Jay would soon be ceasing his involvement in the Trust to go travelling and that cover would be needed for his tasks on the website, intellectual property rights and modding on the forum. Jay is the last of the Trust affiliated moderators on the forum, and it was agreed that he would not be replaced with another Trust mod. This was taken as a reflection of how good the current set of mods is and with a view to making the site more independent for fans.

East End

The fans in the East End are planning to buy a flag to put over the segregation netting. Due to the cost they will be holding bucket collections during the opening games of the season. Stuart had put them in touch with Club officials to get this ok'd. Marie had been approached to ask if the Trust wanted to make a donation. It was agreed that the Trust would offer £50 in return for a button size advert on the Subbers site.

Finance

There was no financial update due to Luke being away. Stu asked whether the Trust wanted to approach Steve L in regards to purchasing another £5k of shares. Miles said that he would rather wait until £10k could be purchased.

AG8 Plaque

Miles asked where the AG 8 plaque was as the Trust was committed to delivering that. Stu said that Dave H was leading but not sure where he was on it. Miles asked if the project could be speeded up and the plaque put in place by August.

No space has yet been agreed for the plaque. A variety of ideas were suggested and it was decided that subject to the Club approving the suggestions a vote would then be put to the fans. The most popular suggestions were.

In the home dressing room / above players tunnel
By the players entrance to the Atyeo Stand
In the Club Shop
Alongside the directors entrance to the Williams Stand
Wait for the new stand to be built at the East End

Open Day – August 5th

Marie and Miles are unable to make the Open Day due to prior commitments. Jay still holds the cardboard backdrop that was used last year.

Newsletter

6,000 copies will be printed. Keith Draisey has agreed that they can be stored at Ashton Gate. Stuart reported that production was coming along well. Jay had done the lay-out and Alex had been busy QC'ing articles. Dave was doing an article on how he tracked down the AG 8. It was agreed to post the newsletter to all members as it will be too big to e-mail as a PDF.

The costs of producing the newsletter are currently expected to be around £1,500. Free adverts are to be given to the Club, John Fitzgerald and Somerfield in return for help that they have given the Trust. Mark Tovey had said that he would get in touch with previous business contacts in regards to selling advertising but this had not moved forward yet.

Ask the Chairman

Steve L is on holiday on the Open Day and had suggested that the Trust could hold a Q&A session in his absence. Jon asked whether this could be done in association with either Louis Carey or Gary Johnson. James thought that the offer was a good opportunity to promote the Trust. A format was suggested of a 10-minute sales pitch and then a Q&A with Gary Johnson with perhaps David Lloyd chairing.

It was decided that the Trust will aim to hold two to three Ask the Chairman sessions at away games. Steve L will need to be approached to find out his preferences. Miles said that he had a friend at Coventry who might be able to get a room in the Ricoh Stadium.

Match Day Presence

Stuart asked whether the Trust's match day presence should remain in the Dolman Exhibition Hall or whether it should move to a pub. Nick suggested using a back room in the Rising Sun once it was re-furbished. Jon said that the DEH was not widely accessible to fans and that the regulars there were well versed on the Trust. Miles agreed and was in favour of settling on one pub and perhaps roaming a couple of times a season.

Stuart suggested that one of the Ask the Chairman sessions could be done in a pub. Gavin suggested that the Trust presence should be focussed on the period from one to two o'clock on match days so as not to unduly affect people's routines. Miles was in favour and volunteered to help on a rota basis.

Recruitment

Stuart asked how the Trust could get more people to attend meetings. Mike suggested that a controversial subject for debate might attract people. Miles said that he didn't think that location was an issue and that the Trust should remain in its present locality. Stuart said that he was concerned that the view was that volunteering to help the Trust would mean individuals giving up large amounts of their free time and this was making people wary of committing.

Miles suggested that maybe a new format for meetings should be introduced with the first half centred on a speaker such as a player or ex-player and then business covered in the second half. Gavin suggested having a debate around a current issue such as the recent take-over rumours to explore what the Trust's position should be in such circumstances.

Stuart said that the issue of catering had still not been addressed and that a meeting could be formulated between fans, Lindley and the Club. He also added that it was good for the Trust to be pro-active and to explore issues before they arose. He had faced accusations that the Trust had jumped on the bandwagon when issues such as ticketing occurred, despite in this case the Trust reacting to an emerging situation and putting forward proposals, some of which were implemented when City played the Gas in the LDV.

It was agreed to trial a new meeting format to see if it attracts fans with September 4th chosen as the date. Debating the issue of takeover is the draft topic. Some research will need to be undertaken and fans' views canvassed.

Nick sounded a warning that any topic will need to be phrased carefully to avoid accusations that the Trust is working to a hidden agenda and to minimise negative responses from either fans or the Club.

Wedlock's

Before the AGM, James and Mike had had a good meeting with locals but were struggling to get them firmly behind proposals for an alternative use of the property. They were expecting Backwind to make a revised application. Jon noted that Backwind were under no time pressure although Miles believed that they had taken out a loan to purchase the property.

James said that he and Mike were working to form a consortium who could take over Wedlock's and were waiting for one of their associates to contact Backwind to see what the situation with them was and whether they would consider selling.

Stuart praised the running of the campaign and said that it had helped re-engage some people with the Trust and raised its profile in the local community. The campaign now needed to put together a business plan for alternative use and to sound out potential investors. Jon stressed that something tangible was needed with which to negotiate.

Miles said that depending on the price being realistic he was confident that he could find finance. He added that another area that needed to be investigated was the alleged covenant that has been put on the property. [The existence of a covenant could mean that the Wedlock's property can no longer be used as pub.] Nick wondered whether the covenant was a myth but it was thought that it could have been entered into legally when Wedlock's was sold to Backwind.

U-16 Travel

The Club have agreed the Trust's proposals in principle and have ok'd the policies and procedures. However, one of the main features of U-16 travel is the offer of reciprocal free tickets by clubs who have agreed to run the service and City have only offered free tickets for six of the lower profile games, four of which are mid-week.

Marie said she had spoken to Kate Masters who had told her that when she ran the service that they used to get tickets for 10-12 games and didn't do mid-week games except during the school holidays. She didn't run any coaches to clubs which had not offered reciprocal tickets. Her suggestion was that if the Club was not prepared to help then the children travelling would have to pay the costs of the tickets.

Miles suggested looking closer at those clubs playing City in mid-week as they would be likely to travel in lower numbers. Stuart said that in his opinion the Club's attitude towards U-16 travel had not been positive throughout the

negotiations. A lot of work had been put in to enable the re-running of the service and this was being threatened by the Club's current position.

Jon said that the only way the Club could be reluctant to offer free tickets was because they expected to sell out most games next season. Stuart said that the objective of the U-16 travel service was to bring supporters to the Club and not about short-term gain.

Miles said he would help to re-present the case to the Club and that the likely number of away fans travelling to City could be researched. Gavin questioned how many of those using the U-16 travel service as children had subsequently taken on season tickets.

Terry said he felt that the Club's stance on tickets could be detrimental to its reputation as the decision to restart the travel service had already been communicated to fans.

Communication Plan

James will compile a new communications plan for the new season. It's assumed that access to the Green Un and Well Red will continue. Alex had suggested that the Trust should be releasing more press releases rather than articles. Jon agreed that any major statements from the Trust should be by way of press release.

Bristol Boy's (On-line pseudonym) latest article was discussed as it had appeared on the website without a disclaimer saying it was an independent fan's view. The consensus was that the article was well written but safeguards should be implemented to ensure that disclaimers are in place in future.

Miscellaneous

The October 3rd meeting is the day before the Trust hosts the SW Trusts regional meeting at Ashton Gate. Agreed to move the meeting back to Thursday 11th October.

A memorial game is to be held for an ex-City youngster who has passed away early. Agreed to offer signed shirt from the Wilson era as a prize.

A letter had been received from fans linked to Trust STFC who have created a new fantasy football game asking for it to be publicised in return for commission from people entering. Jon agreed to review the site and advise whether it would be suitable for the Trust to place a link on its web-site and/or otib.

It was agreed to purchase Club Shop vouchers from the Club and to cease sending out T-shirts as a membership incentive. Marie pointed out that the membership form and website will need to be updated.

Miles suggested recruiting volunteers to help with the membership administration but Stuart cautioned about releasing membership data to non-board members.

Miles mentioned that the Trust still owned a reasonable collection of wine from the launch night which was not being put to any use. It was suggested offering a bottle of wine to the first six sign ups on Open day. Gavin believed that the offer should go further than this with all sign-ups being offered a T-shirt and a bottle of wine.

AP – Jon, Marie & Nick to contact pubs in regards to OTIB Offer

AP – Marie to contact North Street (On-line pseudonym) in regards to flag deal

AP – Dave H. to advise when AG 8 plaque completed

AP – Club to be contacted regarding AG 8 plaque siting options

AP – Stuart to speak to Steve L re Ask the Chairman

AP – Gavin to update meeting schedule with amendments

AP – Jay to update membership form to reflect Club shop vouchers