

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

Attendees: Jon Darch, Stuart Rogers, Mike Adams, Marie Day, James Nicholls, Dave Hedges, Nick Tomkins, Terry Hamlin

Membership Fulfilment

This meeting started with training on the membership fulfilment process and agreement was reached for more board members to take an active involvement in the processing of new members and renewals. A number of actions were identified to progress this. Nick will cover Dave and Marie will cover Mike.

Stuart is to write a personalised letter to all members due to renew and include a copy of the recent newsletter.

Trust members are a priority group for ticket sales. The Club is now able to flag supporter group membership on the database to identify and verify eligibility. The Trust will provide names and membership numbers on a monthly basis to the ticket office.

Under 16 Travel

The club have confirmed that priority will be given to providing tickets for this. The Trust will let the club know well in advance if it is running a coach and how many tickets are required. The club will set aside tickets from the away allocation. CRB checks are now coming back for volunteers, so it will soon be possible to start arranging away trips.

Online

Jon has established a better way to solicit online membership sign-ups, which will cost the Trust £20 a month. Everyone present felt that this was worth pursuing and should be actively promoted. Traffic to the Trust site is up and there is a lot of good content being created. Jon offered to compile a regular e-newsletter, which will include some preparatory copy and a link to the Trust website.

Work continues to add value to the membership card and pubs are starting to sign up to provide discounts.

Offline

Mike pointed out that many members do not have access to the Internet and offered to send out a regular communication by post called "Trust Life". The first one will be to members about the extended deadline for objecting to the latest planning application for flats on the site of the Wedlock's pub.

Safe Standing

A debate over safe standing led to a discussion about the need for the Trust to formulate policy decisions on certain things. We have formulated a policy decision to support the opening of the East End, however, there are other topical issues that need airing. It was agreed that Jon would write an article from a personal viewpoint and that this would lead to an invitation for all those interested to attend the next meeting, at which the Trust would discuss the issue with a view to formulating its official stance on the matter.

Feedback from meeting with the club

There will be an "Ask the Chairman" Q&A at Watford. The Trust is ready to purchase the plaque for the Ashton Gate 8 and the club have agreed a number of positions around the ground to put it up. The Trust needs to canvas opinion from fans about the best place for this. The Ability Team will take part at half-time during the West Brom match and will write an article for the programme. They have first refusal for the next cup match to conduct a collection. The club have agreed to provide 2 signed shirts.

The Club issued an open invitation to Trust members to spend some time behind the scenes in the ticket office or police control box and experience the day-to-day running of the Football Club.

The club has previously confirmed that it will be possible for future games for season ticket holders to move seats to accommodate bringing friends or relatives to games. In response to requests from supporters, the Club has also now clarified that if a season ticket holder wishes to permanently move his or her season ticket seat, even to a different stand, then that will be possible. The season ticket holder will need to contact the ticket office (preferably in person) to arrange this.

The East End was discussed at length. The Club advised us that prior to the game QPR and City fans clashed across the segregation netting and items were thrown. Only the intervention initially of stewards and then the police prevented larger scale problems. Later in the game, once again City fans ran towards the QPR away support. None of this was picked up in match reports or local press. However, of the 6 arrests in the ground that day, 5 were in the East End and related to these incidents.

The police have advised the club that unless restrictions are placed on the use of the stand 11 matches currently considered to have "Police Free" status would require policing (at significant cost) in the future. It is on this basis and the risk to health & safety that the club has restricted access for the time being to season ticket holders only. The club now has to report to the Football League on a match-by-match basis. Currently, that report includes incidences of persistent standing in the East End, which may lead to capacity sanctions in the future.

The Trust does not condone violence and recognises that the few have spoiled it for the majority. The Trust did seek assurances that there was adequate stewarding and policing in place prior to kick-off and that segregation nets were in place. The Club confirmed this was the case and didn't want to overdo the police presence. The Club stated that they too want to encourage support in the East End and that, contrary to the views of some supporters, do not want to see it fail. The Trust will produce a statement on the East End and standing.

Consideration will be made to invite Tommy Alford and David Lloyd to the next meeting.

Actions

AP – Dave to source Conqueror Velum paper, C4 non-window envelopes, A4 card

AP – Dave to consolidate certificate template into one version

AP – Marie to purchase a printer

AP – Stuart to load Act database program and bring to next meeting

AP – Dave to bring all fulfilment components to next meeting and distribute

AP – Stuart to write to all lapsed members

AP – Dave & Stuart to investigate database upgrade

AP – Jon to compile e-newsletter and Dave to send it out

AP – Jon to write article about safe standing

AP – Mike to put together and send out postal communication about the Wedlocks

AP – Nick to arrange a survey to explore the best place for the plaque once it has been ordered

AP – Stuart to draft East End statement