

Bristol City Supporters Trust Meeting
Bar BS3
Thursday February 7th 2008

Board Members Present:

S. Rogers, M. Hendy, M. Day, N. Tomkins, J. Nicholls, J. Darch, M. Adams G. Mapstone.

Feedback from BCFC

The Trust has met the club on Thursday 31st Jan. Stuart said that the Trust had been contacted to review season ticket proposals. This had happened two days before the meeting was scheduled. Stuart said that this posed problems with consulting with fans as the proposals were confidential and at present there is no mechanism to consult with fans at such a short time-scale. He said that whilst he was unable to go into detail the Trust had countered some proposals and made some of its own broadly covering.

- Recognising loyalty.
- Accessibility for all fans.
- Open access to all of the ground.
- Competitive pricing
- Re-using TV revenues to subsidise prices.

The Trust will not be present at the final meeting where season ticket proposals are decided but have been told that the ideas presented will be considered. It was agreed that once prices become public a summary of the Trusts proposal document will be made public.

A signed scarf and shirt have been donated by the club to Nik Williams to auction for his marathon fund-raising.

Player of the Year

Miles had met with the Club and they have agreed to split the risks and rewards 50/50. There will now be 350 corporate dinner seats sold, around 100 other seated spaces and 400 standing. Prices are likely to be £49 for dinner, £12 for a seat and £7 standing. Miles estimated that the costs were likely to be in the region of £15k to stage the event.

The players are likely to be on tables with the corporate guests and there was a view that it would be good for them to make an entrance through the hall so that fans could show their appreciation and also that they mingle after the dinner had finished.

There were some concerns about making the evening a two-tier event but it was felt that the opportunity to work with the club and the accompanying reduction in financial risk was too good to turn down.

The date is set for Tuesday 6th May.

East End / New Stadium

The Trust wrote to Steve Lansdown before Christmas offering to investigate the options surrounding a move to a new stadium. Colin Sexstone and Steve Lansdown were happy for the Trust to move ahead on consulting with fans and it was agreed that consultation needs to take place quickly to ascertain what features fans would like incorporated into a new stadium and to set up a forum that can act as a funnel for fans ideas. It is envisaged that the forum will contain one or two Trust members and other fans will be asked if they wish to volunteer to participate.

Initially it's planned to source volunteers and comment on-line and then to put a list of ideas forward to all fans to comment on. This will take the form of leafleting at Ashton Gate and hopefully engagement with the local media.

Jon & Andrew volunteered to lead on the setting up and chairing of a forum.

There was disappointment over the clubs recent stance towards fans from Willem II who had travelled from Holland to watch City play. They had been denied the ability to go in the East End by the club but had gotten tickets anyway due to the actions of season ticket holders. It was felt that the club had missed the opportunity to get some good publicity out of this.

Charity

Nik Williams is to run the London Marathon in aid of the Meningitis Trust and has asked for help in publicising this. He said that training is going well and has found a Rovers fan to race within the Marathon. Radio Bristol are involved and so is the Evening Post. A paypal button is nearly ready to go live on OTIB and he has written to all 92 league clubs asking for a donation of £10.

His aim is to raise £1,500 although it's hoped that this will be exceeded. He will also ask the club whether there can be a bucket collection at the youth cup game.

Membership Scheme

Miles had invited a friend of his who is a Stoke City fan to come and talk about the membership scheme in place there for away travel. This season there has been a rise in the number of fans watching Bristol away from home and this has seen an increase in the number of incidents that fans have been involved in. Both with the police and with opposition fans.

Mike said that following promotion to the Championship five years ago Stoke had seen a similar increase in their away support and this included more fans who wanted to cause trouble. This meant that following Stoke away became an unpleasant experience at times. Especially when visiting other Midlands clubs, Cardiff and anyone else with whom there was history.

As a result of this the club decided to identify who the good fans were and exclude the trouble-making element by implementing an ID card for all fans wishing to travel away. Fans had to pay £10 for membership of the scheme and were then CRB checked. Those with a record for football related disorder were banned from joining. All Stoke away games were made all ticket and a line of stewards formed in front of away turnstiles to check that Stoke fans had ID cards with which to identify themselves.

This had the effect of removing the hooligan element but also reduced the travelling support by around half. It did not impact on the atmosphere. Apart from the first game at Cardiff following the scheme there has been no trouble with away fans including at Cardiff where Mike said that the hostility between the fans had pretty much gone. In addition the policing of Stoke fans travelling away has been reduced as they know that controls are in place to prevent hooligans travelling.

However Mike said that the scheme had drawbacks and these largely stemmed from the way the scheme was implemented. All away fans have to have a membership card in order to obtain tickets. This includes all children and women. Stoke had also implemented the scheme so that all games were treated the same with no relaxations for lower risk games. It had also reduced the spontaneity of being able to travel away as non-members couldn't pay on the day.

His conclusion was that the scheme had its benefits but had been implemented poorly and too little common sense was applied by those charged with over-seeing it. The main plus point was that travelling away had become a much more enjoyable experience and ordinary fans were now not being dragged into trouble or stereotyped due to trouble-makers. The main drawback being the loss of spontaneity and the reduction in fans civil liberties.

AP – Press release/Well Red article needed for Trust consultation on new stadium. JD

AP – Canvas fans for features they'd like included within the new stadium. JD/NT

AP – Form consultation group for new stadium. JD/AM

AP – Finalise raffle prizes for Player of the Year and contact Supporters Club. MH

AP - Organise Board elections GM