

Supporter Consultation Group

Meeting Two | Minutes

Date | Wednesday 28 May 2025 - 7pm

Location | The Memorial Stadium

In Attendance

Supporter Consultation Group Representatives

Ian Sams - Chair & DSA Representative (**IS**)
Danielle Smith - Women's Supporter Representative (**DS**)
Gary Brindle - Senior Supporters Representative (**GB**)
Allen Williams - Diversity & Inclusion Representative (**AW**)
Lucy Durcan - Season Ticket Holder Representative (**LD**)
Martin Hudd - Supporters Club Representative (**MH**)

Bristol Rovers

Ritchie Bates - Director Of Commercial (**RB**)
Mitch Waddon - Head Of Media & Engagement (**MW**)

Apologies

Nicola Kumi - Family & Juniors Representative (**NK**)
Anthony Cockayne - Season Ticket Holder Representative (**TC**)

1. Action and discussion points from previous meeting

A. Future of Club Magazine and fan feedback

- Representatives provided feedback that fans, in general, like the magazine, but locating where to purchase it can be challenging.
- **MW** noted that due to sales considerations the Club was considering ceasing the magazine. **RB** iterated the financial aspects and the workflow aspects behind this consideration.
- **AW** asked about souvenir opportunities around unique occasions. **MW** said the Club would be completely on board with producing printed products when these situations arise.

- **IS** asked if SCG would support the Club's decision to cease magazine, if that is made, with a unanimous yes from all participants Club committed to transparent communication as and when any decision is made.

B. Recognising Servicemen / key workers / veterans

- **MW** stressed that the Club is in complete agreement that servicemen, veterans and key workers should be recognised and would welcome recommendations on the best course of action.
- **RB** said the Club will continue to explore. **AW** highlights the Remembrance Day / Poppy fixtures in November each season, and the potential for a Blue Light or Serviceman discount.

C. ID badges for SCG members

- **MW** said the Club will be providing SCG representatives with ID badges. These will be printed and provided ahead of the 2025/26 season.
- **RB** added the Club will provide SCG members with DBS checks for purposes of engaging with other supporters on matchdays.

D. Young Pirates reintroduction or include membership in Season Ticket Price price

- **MW** stressed that the Club is working on relaunching the Junior Pirates scheme, with a rebrand, and that this will be completed in the imminent future. Further details will be provided shortly. BRSC confirmed they had put on hold any plans they had in this area pending seeing Clubs final plans.

E. Feedback on how the Club can ensure Season Ticket Holders feel valued & appreciated

- **MW** and **RB** said the Club remain open to suggestions from supporters on ensuring they feel valued, and are happy to consider and discuss any ideas brought forward by the SCG on behalf of the wider fanbase. LD mentioned previous incentives like a boxed pen had been well received and also wondered if the club could send STH a discount voucher on birthdays. RB felt far more could be done when the full capability of the Ticketing system was introduced

F. Funday – date, weekend preferred, shirts available?

- **MW** shared that a Funday date is still to be finalised, due to the shift in the 2025/26 football schedule. Pre-season and School Summer Holidays no longer coincide so the Club is investigating opportunities for a Funday-style event in the opening weeks of August. MW added the kits should be available in time for the day and would check on DS request that toddler kits will be available with Pete Weymouth

G. Quality of beer/coffee

- **RB** said the Club has been reviewing beer and alcohol choices around the ground and a new deal is in place for the new season.
- **AW** raised a concern about regular line cleaning. **RB** assured the SCG that the new process will ensure a better quality of product.

H. Low risk away fans in bars/ fanzone

- **RB** advised the Club have investigated and both Police and SAG have said this is not possible.

I. Bars feeling unwelcoming, lacking spirits, no orange juice in Exec bar, reduced seating

- **RB** said these issues will be rectified moving into the new season.

J. Safety concern re Reading fixture/ medical response

- **MW** said the concern was raised with the Stadium & Safety team, which has been logged. **RB** indicates that the Club is eager to recruit its own stewards moving forward.

3. Club Updates

A. Off-season overview

- **RB** shared that the Club is working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure both the Stadium and Training Ground are prepared for both the start of pre-season, and the first game back at The Memorial Stadium for the 2025/26 campaign.

B. The Fanzone

- **RB** shared the Club's plans for the FanZone for the 2025/26 season, highlighting how the Club is working on making the area more family-and-kid friendly with the support of the Community Trust.
- **RB** explained the Club is also looking to provide more FanZone seating along the north edge of the Memorial Stadium and down the back of the West Stand.

C. Retail Update

- **MW** shared that the 2025/26 kits will be on sale in the Club shop much earlier this summer than in previous years. Further communication pertaining to the Stadium SuperStore will be available imminently which will allow a wider range of offerings for children and women.

D. Communication Channels

- **MW** shared that the Official Club App is in the final stages of development and testing.
- **MW** shared that the media team is investigating starting a Club WhatsApp channel for the benefit of communicating directly with supporters.
- **MW** asked for feedback on the Club's recent email campaign. SCG representatives were pleased with the regular communication from the Club.
- **IS** asked that the SCG be given notice of announcements in the areas it covers. A recent announcement on the fan zone by the Community Trust caught members unawares when queries were raised.

E. Volunteers

- **RB** explains that a bank of volunteers are assisting at the Club through the summer and off-season, and the Club would happily welcome any individual who wished to give their time. SCG agreed to share the opportunity to volunteer and spend time with fellow volunteers on its various communication mechanisms. **RB** said fans should use the 'recruitment' email address to register their interest.
- **RB** also said the Club is looking at Supporter Liaison Officers to assist on matchdays. **AW** suggested other applicants for the SCG could be considered for the roles.

4. Fans Feedback

A. Season Ticket Issues and Incentives

(DS / NK / LD / AW) Loyalty or Priority Points Scheme. Possibility of Discounts, Club Shop/ Catering & Drink area discount with Season Ticket

- **RB** shared the club are looking at a form of priority points scheme with TicketMaster and more will be presented in the near future. Unfortunately, at present the systems in place within the club do not 'talk' to each other making some schemes impossible to administer. This is something the club will consider going forward.
- **DS** suggested the 'little touches' can complete the experience for Season Ticket Holders and **RB** agreed the Club will continue to explore.

(DS) Club Shop not answering communications

- **RB** noted this and will take forward with staff concerned.

(AW) Kids season ticket holders under sixteen get a free shirt and if they bring a mate to a game at a discounted price. That way you are getting more youngsters in.

- **RB** and **MW** said the Club are hopeful of including the new home shirt in the rebranded Junior Pirates scheme.

(IS) Physical Cards

- **RB** said the Club will continue to explore the possibility of physical cards for future seasons covering more than one year (but added that other clubs have experienced issues with stewards being shown cards which are no longer renewed to fraudulently gain access and this will need to be thought through as part of the process review).

B. Fanzone

(AW) Past players as ambassadors. Walking round fan zone talking to supporters

- **MW** said the Club are actively exploring this.

(GB) Can the Fan Zone be part covered?

- **RB** said the Club have explored this and the cost estimates to date are a limiting factor .

C. Stadium issues

(AW) - Change the FT Music, (IS) - Complaint regarding the walk-out music for games.

- **RB** and **MW** actively exploring walk-out music, goal music, half-time walk off, end of game music. **RB** and **MW** to bring the matchday entertainment team into the conversation, possibly including a poll of fans to include them in options/ choices

(All) – General maintenance and appearance - can this be resolved with the help of volunteers?

- **RB** welcomes any volunteers who would like to work with the Club. See 3 E above.

(AW) – A fan has raised the possibility of a Drummer behind goal?

- Having taken views the **SCG** are not universally behind this idea. Historically drummers have been used in the lower leagues by clubs who struggle to create an atmosphere and generally this hasn't been an issue at The Mem. It will take a formal vote of all members of the SCG and confirm outcome. **RB** and **MW** are happy for the Club to keep an open mind to this.

(GB) - Is the West Terrace going to be all seater next season?

- **RB** assured this won't be the case next season.

(IS) - Issues with all of stadium being cashless.

- **RB** stressed the Club is reluctant to reintroduce cash but activities for young fans in the FanZone will be free.

(IS) - South Stand bar and fan areas – constructive complaints via email say nowhere to put food or drink except on floor, could shelves be added to cladded areas, some form of flow control separating those aiming for bars/ food outlets and those wanting toilets etc.

- **RB & MW** said the Club will be installing fiberglass shelves in the south stand and some benches too. The Club is also exploring 'cafe barriers' to improve the flow of fans (as used in Airports), but will be reviewed after experience of new food drink locations shows if further controls are needed.

D. Young Pirates/ attracting new, young fans

(AW / DS / NK) - Get the players that are injured or not picked in the fan zone talking to the kids. Also invite ex-players

- **MW** said the Club are happy to do this.

(DS) - Have a young pirate committee consisting of kids

- **MW** said the Club will continue to explore this in the future once the new junior pirates arrangements become a settled group.

(DS / NK) - bringing back the Young Pirates cabin for pre match sweets and merch as well. Can goody bags given by shop to some fans be a regular thing, kids kits at cost price or free with ST next year

(GB / DS / NK) - More player interaction with young fans eg in school holidays some open training with player meets and signing sessions after would be a great idea

(NK) Draw for free mascots from within the Young Pirates group if reintroduced

(NK) Recent experience at Wembley – flags for kids –an affordable option in club shop? Blue foam fingers, Xmas Santa is a Gashead hats etc etc

- Above points discussed as part of relaunch of Junior Pirates scheme with Club committed to providing more information in due course.

E. Fan Engagement

(IS) - Dealing with the gap between owners and fans and riding the DC wave to close the gap.

- **SCG** discussed the requirements of knowing more about Bristol Rovers owners background and aims and objectives behind the purchase of the club. **MW** pointed to the recent external media obligations the Chairman has undertaken in the last 12 months.
- **RB & MW** agreed the Club can look into doing further pieces with the ownership.

Communicating with the rest of the fan base

- **MW** committed to developing a SCG hub on the Club website in the near future.

(IS) Social media forums update

- **SCG** are exploring their own social channels after a successful trial on Twitter and launch of its own email address. It will look to either have their own communities on key social media or make posts on existing fan communities

F. Preseason tour

(All) – announce this year's pre-season tour asap.

- The Club had announced the trip to Murcia, Spain, in the week prior to this meeting.

(AW) - Suggestion the club should be working with a local travel agency to offer pre season package deals to European pre season tour

- **RB** said this is not available on this occasion but something that can be considered going forward adding he had noted a fan had put a package together.

G. Attracting new fans

(AW) Fan feedback ticket incentives/ free allocation

- **RB** said there are plans to incorporate ticket incentives in some of the Club's imminent schemes.

H. FunDay

(NK) - Use Funday to sign kids up to whatever Young Pirates offering we are considering. Stadium tour, including dressing room.

- **MW** agreed Funday is a fantastic opportunity to sign up young fans to new scheme. Including a dressing room tour will be taken into consideration, depending on when the Funday is held.

I. SCG liaising with Her Game Too/ Specific issues

(DS) Update on discussions with HGT

- **DS** was invited to an initial discussion with HGT about working together on women's supporters feedback. A further discussion will take place and DS will update the subsequent meeting

(LD) More female clothing options in the Stadium Superstore

- Store staff are already working on this and more options are being explored.

5. Representatives Updates not covered above

A. Disabled Supporters Association

IS asked about Walker/ Wheelchair Storage in the new season and if plans discussed previously with DSA were on course. **RB** said this should be in place but if any issues DSA will be contacted

B. Supporters Club

Nothing to add

C. Senior fans

RB said the store team has been contacting older fans making welfare calls and seeing if any assistance is needed on season ticket renewals/ ticketing options.

D. Season ticket Holders

TC asked via **IS** if it would be possible for the East Stand fans to use the Hospitality bar in the East Stand after games **RB** said it's probably not possible due to capacity control issues and room licence. Also some complaints have been made re purchasers of hospitality packages about over crowding when STHs had somehow gained access.

E. Women's Supporters

Nothing to add.

F. Children and families

RB said children menus will form part of the options in the stadium kiosks going forward.

G. Diversity Inclusion and Equality

IS raised he had received an email from a fan noting that the Club never replaced the Club Chaplin. **RB** to consider and discuss with the SLT.

6. AOB

- **AW** raises support for the LGBTQ+ community with designated fixtures. **RB** and **MW** note the Rainbow Laces fixture is held annually and will be fully supported, as will other designated fixtures.
- **RB** is exploring options for a multi-faith room at The Memorial Stadium, as well as a Sensory Room in the West Stand (and possibly a quiet room in the fanzone area).

- **MH** and **GB** raised that the Supporters Club is exploring options for recognition of ex-players including Geoff Bradford.
- **RB** shared that, in regard to the big screen installation, further work is being done to ensure the stand and fixture is strong enough for it.
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- AW asked about what the club did to recycle old kits/ obsolete stock. IS noted Josh Evans (Kit Manager) had used social media to show what he does and MW added much had been donated to Community Trust including Boots to distribute amongst their causes/ activities.
- **SCG** to discuss the date of the next meeting and confirm with **MW** at earliest opportunity.

AGREED ACTIONS		
Action	Owner	Due
Club to communicate any decision made regarding production of Monthly Magazine once final decision is reached	Mitch Waddon	July 2025
SCG members to communicate recommendations on options for recognising Servicemen/ Key workers	SCG	August 2025
ID passes and DSB checks for the SCG to be provided and sorted ahead of the 2025/26 season	Mitch Waddon & Ritchie Bates	Aug 2025
SCG to canvass opinions on what options would help STH feel more valued/ recognised	SCG	August 2023
MW to discuss with PW what is being considered for very young fans eg toddlers kits and if they will be available for Funday	Mitch Waddon	July 2025
MW to ask those areas making external communications to let	Mitch Waddon	July 2025

SCG know of any upcoming communications, so they are prepared for any resulting contact from Fans		
SCG to publicise opportunities for fans to volunteer with football club and work with current bank of volunteers using the 'Recruitment' email address on clubs website	SCG	June 2025
MW/ RB to consider asking the unsuccessful candidates for places on the SCG this year if they would be interested in one of RBs intended matchday SLO roles	Mitch Waddon/ Ritchie Bates	June 2025
RB to mention complaints re phone calls and emails re buying ST not being answered with relevant teams	Ritchie Bates	May 2025
Club to explore updating music offerings during matchdays, including walk-out music and goal music	Mitch Waddon & Ritchie Bates	June 2025
SG to take formal vote on the drum issue and report back to MW/RB	SCG	June 2025
Club / SCG to review new food and drink offerings success in easing flow of footfall around SW/S stand areas. Consider further improvements if needed	Club/ SCG	September 2025
Build, develop and maintain a SCG hub on the Club website complete with headshots, contact details and minutes of previous meetings.	Mitch Waddon	June 2025
DS to update meeting on further discussions with HGT	Danielle Smith	August 2025
Update on walker/ wheelchair storage issue	Ritchie Bates/ Ian Sams	July 2025

Further explore Club Chaplin position at Bristol Rovers	Ritchie Bates	June 2025
SCG to confirm the MW/ RB availability for week commencing End of June July meeting.	SCG	May 2025