

Supporter Consultation Group – Meeting Four

Wednesday 6th August – 7pm – The Memorial Stadium

1. In Attendance

Supporter Consultation Group Representatives

Ian Sams - Chair & DSA Representative (IS)

Allen Williams - Diversity & Inclusion Representative (AW)

Danielle Smith - Women's Supporter Representative (DS)

Gary Brindle - Senior Supporters Representative (GB)

Lucy Durcan - Season Ticket Holder Representative (LD)

Martin Hudd - Supporters Club Representative (MH)

Nicola Kumi - Family & Juniors Representative (NK)

Anthony Cockayne - Season Ticket Holder Representative (TC)

Bristol Rovers

Ritchie Bates - Director Of Commercial (RB)

Mitch Waddon - Head Of Media & Engagement (MW)

Laura Marlow - Marketing Manager (LM)

Actions and discussion points – previous meetings

A. Club to look into team-sheet options for supporters

Club publication may happen for bigger games. In the meantime, the Club are supporting the Supporters Club Programme and will see how it progresses over the planned five game initial period.

B. SCG to provide details to Club for Club passes and enhanced DBS checks

SCG members to provide the Club with their contact details for passes and DBS checks to be sent out for completion.

C. Club to investigate Monzo payment issue for junior supporters

The Club is awaiting confirmation from the provider on a potential solution and will work towards an update.

D. Club to investigate blue goal nets at The Memorial Stadium

This has been completed.

- E. SCG members to communicate recommendations on options for recognising Servicemen/ Key workers

AW presented a proposal on a relationship with a local Regiment on joint ventures for Players, Community Trust and Fans. Meeting confirmed agreement to go to next stage. The Club will speak to those currently involved in this area to confirm their agreement.

AW also mentioned accepting Defence Privilege Card and Blue Light card holders- with later possibly marketed as Blue and White Light campaign. Club to consider what can be offered and feed back to SCG group.

- F. SCG to canvass opinions on what options would help STH feel more valued/ recognised.

Further discussion in agenda item below.

- G. Club to ask those areas making external communications to let SCG know of any upcoming communications, so they are prepared for any resulting contact from fans.

Club apologised for this having been missed on the Priority Points announcement but will re-instate moving forward.

- H. Outcome of Club consideration on implementing SLO roles.

The Club will progress when time allows.

- I. 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.

Discussed further in agenda item below.

- J. Update on walker/ wheelchair storage issue

The Club confirmed the intended area is not yet ready. The Club has identified an alternative space and will inform DSA when it can be announced.

2. Club Updates

- A. Mem redevelopment

As announced at the Fans Forum, the Pre-planning process is ongoing and there is nothing further to update on. The Club continues to meet Council requirements for surveys and modelling and is working hard behind the scenes to complete these requirements as and when they arise. The perception that nothing is happening is incorrect and the Club is excited to share more information as and when it becomes available.

B. Screen

The new screen's first use, at the home fixture against Harrogate Town, was a soft launch of initial functionality. A full range of features are included and will be introduced in future games.

A concern was raised regarding a lack of music and entertainment at half-time. The Club confirmed there was a concern the matchday entertainment was being heard on speakers in the two teams' dressing rooms and, to avoid potential sanctions, the decision was taken to switch off the music at half-time. The issue will be addressed and fixed before the next fixture.

C. Family Fun Day

The Club was eager to hold a Fun Day but, given the early start to the season, a plausible date was impossible to find in the calendar. The Club feels the Open Training Day, which provided full first-team access, hit the mark for what supporters were looking for in terms of off-season engagement.

D. Blues Bar to become heritage space

The Club confirmed that there would be a piece of work undertaken to refresh this area, focusing on heritage and memorabilia.

3. Fans Feedback

A. First game feedback

Many supporters mentioned and noted some improvements and the new Children's area was a major feature.

Fans also welcomed the opportunity to see and speak to owners on their tour around facilities.

Areas raised by supporters were: stage, food and drink shortages, significant queues then told no drinks left, limited offerings in South Stand, basics such as no tea bags/milk, why no adult meal deal and kids meal deal was poor value, servers insisting on adding sugar or pouring bottled soft drinks in to glasses, tables by food huts allowing fans to do themselves were missing in many areas, lack of clarity on ability to come to buffet more than once in Hospitality plus description of offering as Gourmet.

In South Stand pasties had stuck to the baking tray so fans didn't receive the lower pastry part. Fans also raised no toilet paper in loos as early as 2pm, toilets seats broken off, flushing issues, no locks on toilet doors in ladies, dirty seating in most areas and rust on handrails in Boxes, lack of promised shelves on cladding in South Stand, warm beer.

Those in hospitality in East Stand reported no longer being allowed to use the bathroom facilities halfway down the stand, including some with mobility issues and ladies (where there are very few alternative toilets).

RB said the Club took full responsibility although there was a perfect storm of reasons but not excuses.

On investigation in a lot of instances agency staff brought in (including those at short notice to replace no shows) were not showing the customer service our usual match day staff would. Many staff who had booked holidays immediately before first possible game, were unavailable due to EFL bringing first game forward by a week.

Clubs best staff are students who will be with us all season. Students were yet to arrive in the City.

In most cases those told no stock left were incorrectly advised. Fresh supplies were being brought/ connected by runners and had simply not yet arrived. Although not widely known, the construction method of South Stand specified by previous management severely restricts the services that can be offered particularly in South/ South West Stand. Chocolate cannot be offered in warm weather as refrigeration is not permitted in that area. Even bespoke fiber glass bars had to be ordered. RB added alternative confectionery would be in place for next game. No cooking is permitted so fresh supplies have to be brought via Fan Zone and behind West Stand. Improved signage is being obtained to make clear what is available and where. Toilets were inspected before ground opening. All breakages have now been repaired/ replaced. The Club has decided to reintroduce adult meal deals and review children's offer.

RB asked for specific complaints on other areas to be sent to him by SCG so he can complete any further investigations. To reduce queuing a further bar facility is being urgently considered and will need Safety Officer permission. This should considerably ease pressure.

RB took the Group through the limitations of some bars and the effect that multiple pours can have on temperature at peak flows. A second food option may be added to the Hospitality offering to provide choice.

On the issue of East Stand toilets unfortunately there had been repeated incidents of fans using a toilet visit to then enter the hospitality area to use bar and facilities free of charge despite securities best efforts. Also, complaints from hospitality customers. RB will look at possibility of adding further facilities behind the East Stand and how mobility restricted fans may be accommodated in the Hospitality toilets so as to reduce amount of stairs over a short half time break.

B. Retail/ Ticketing feedback

SCG confirmed they will issue formal congratulations on social media to Club retail department for the stock in the shop. No one can remember so many people wearing official club products at any other time

SCG had reported instances of overly tight insistence goods purchased from the Shop being returned within 14 days. Especially since recent stock all seems to be smaller than the norm. RB added that this has since been changed to 28 days and asked for any affected fans details to be sent to him.

SCG said some fans had purchased seats with no or poor view of the goal but had not been warned of the restricted view when paying for tickets. RB added Ticketmaster should display this information.

He will get it investigated and if needed will task a member of staff with doing a survey and ensuring affected seats are so labelled. IS confirmed the seats shown above have since been swapped to STH satisfaction.

RB confirmed Macron do not supply mini kits, so these had to be obtained from another supplier.

SCG asked about the policy of STH fans not now getting a reduced hospitality charge despite having already paid to enter the ground. RB explained prices had been reduced so fans likely to be no worse off than under the old policy. To offset the whole amount would negate club's profit. But he will review if STH may be able to re-sell their tickets for one game or receive some other gesture from the Club.

SCG welcomed pre-order lists when trial new items low initial stock had ben sold quickly, acknowledging club staff need to ensure there are no excess stocks held by higher initial orders.

C. Owner/ fan engagement

SCG commented that fans present at the recent Fans Forum or who heard it on the radio/ club website were greatly comforted by news of the Club having recently submitted two extensive surveys the Council had asked for on the Club's development of the training ground and stadium.

SCG added a large majority of fans consider nothing is happening so any snippet of news such as this would greatly assist in giving fans peace of mind progress is being made. The Club will consider in consultation with the owner.

4. Season Ticket focus area – value and retention

NK and LD presented research they had completed on added value offers given to STH by other EFL Clubs. The Club thanked both SCG members for the research.

RB added there were some ideas which if approved would need to wait until next season or until Clubs systems allowed them to be undertaken easily without affecting service. But there were some points made which could be introduced sooner depending on cost and infrastructure. The Club will investigate.

5. Representative Updates not covered above

a. Disabled Supporters Association

In the interests of time IS offered to send his points to the Club to consider ahead of next DSA meeting

b. Female fans

DS mentioned the free sanitary products and better solutions she had found available at other clubs. Club to consider options.

6. AOB

- *The possibility of the stadium store being opened at half-time was raised but it was confirmed that this was sadly not possible because of security resources and re-entry concerns.*
- *The tunnel was not pulled back at half-time in the opening match of the season, impeding the view of some supporters in the West Terraces. The Club was not aware of this, or the reason, and will ensure the issue is resolved moving forwards.*

- *The question of robust plastic glasses was raised. The Club will review with the relevant departments and report back.*

7. Date of next meeting

While the SCG had discussed the merits of switching to bi-monthly meetings, the decision was made to meet in September to review success of actions taken on the points raised from the first game of the season.

Dates proposed were 4 September and 11 September – SCG to inform club of availability.