



Supporters Parliament 6th November 2018

Present

Chris Wynne; Roger Groves; Mike Davis; Brian Caldwell (CEO); Lawrence Ellerby (Safety Officer) Ian Whitfield (Media Manager); Eric Ramsey (Academy Manager); Joshua Wynne; John Bailey; Harry Challoner; Paul Coyne; Barry Davies; Geoff Davies; Rachael Dilloway; Malcolm Lane; Marion Lane; Rob Lewis; Simon Moore; Peter Nottle; Lynn Price; Steve Price; Stewart Price; Rosie Sabin; Chris Jones; Elliott Jones; Brian Jones; Janet Bould; Ian Jones; James Nightingale; Rebecca Nightingale; Roger Allison; Barry Hawkins; Elaine Hawkins; Nick Gurdan; Shaun Peever; Daniel Evans; Alisha Morris; Kian Morris; Sean Evans; Alan Birkett; Chris Allen; Ray Allen; Scott Demmerling (STFC Media Team); Lewis Poole (STFC Media Team); Steve Williams; Annette Pascall.

Apologies

Helen Hall; Ian Jones; Jill Lucas; Ian Payne; Selwyn Plant; Joyce Pulford; Richard Vernon.

1. Tour of the new home dressing room

Brian Caldwell took supporters in groups to tour both of the clubs changing rooms, starting with the away changing room, to demonstrate to supporters who may, or may not, have been in the changing rooms before the spec and size etc of the original home dressing room. He explained that when the Meadow was built, both of the changing rooms were identical in size and design. The club felt that the team's home dressing rooms needed to be improved both in size and facilities available for the team to use.

The decision was made to utilise the gym which joins to the existing shower area as a new place for the home changing rooms, which is larger and squarer shaped compared to the previous long and thin style.

22 places exist within the new home changing room, each had the player's shirt hung up with the shorts folded up behind the seat and has space for the players personal items, boots and a power socket including USB charging point. A TV is within the changing room with an area for the football analyst to set up and make a presentation at half time to the players.

2. Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting

Minutes from last meeting are available online which have been approved by the football club.

3. Youth Academy presentation by Eric Ramsay

Eric Ramsay, Shrewsbury Town Youth Academy manager, started by explaining the structure of the “Elite Player Performance Plan”. All academy teams nationally, he explained, are ranked from category 1 to 4 with Shrewsbury’s being ranked as a category 3, premier league Academies are normally category 1. Shrewsbury’s ranking was confirmed following a recent audit scoring highly compared to other teams in League 1 with commendations for the coaching program that they operate as well as the quality of the environment & the playing philosophy that they teach.

Eric continued to explain that the recent members of the youth academy who have progressed to the senior team include: Christos Shelis; Lifumpa Mwandwe, a second-year scholar who has been training regularly with the first team; Ryan Barnett and Cameron Gregory who is currently on loan at Halesowen.

Eric began explaining briefly about the team who work with him at the academy

- Dan Copnall – Head of Coach Development
- Adam Davies – Head Physiotherapist
- Louise Taylor – Head of Operations
- Cal McKenzie – Lead PDP Coach
- Alex Ramsay – Lead YDP Coach
- Charlie Musselwhite – Lead FP Coach
- Harvey Parkes – Head of Pre-Academy
- Phil Smart – Head of Goalkeeping
- Mike Wilson – Logistics Co-Ordinator
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The recent additions to Eric’s team include

- George Carpenter – Performance Analyst
- Kevin Briggs – Lead Strength & Conditioning Coach
- Laura Wellings – Welfare Officer
- Andy Van-Ommeran – Head of Education

Coaching Playing Philosophy is a key element, which has been an aspiration for Eric’s, to instil across all age groups at the Academy is not solely results driven but to produce a better all-around footballer. Someone who is not just League 1 standard, but aspires to produce player who can compete in the Premier League. This football club has produced players who can compete at that level and he feels that it is a standard which as an academy we should continue to focus on. Eric explained briefly how the Academy tries to develop a style for the individual player to grow and develop within the system, while expanding on their own technical capabilities as they develop within a team.

The Coaching Programme within the Academy is key Eric explained, previously staff retention within the system has been an issue with coaches not evolving and developing with the programme nor do they get an in-depth knowledge of what is involved with the programme and coaching methods within the Academy structure. He continued adding that it is key for the coaches to have no wastage of time in sessions, STFC Academy is a Category 3 and has less time to train the young players when compared to a higher Category 2 or 1 systems who have much more time with the players. In Eric's previous experience at a Category 1 system, there are some cases where time is being wasted in training sessions. In Eric's mind, as a Category 3 Academy, every minute to train and develop these players is vital and he aims to limit any wastage and maximise the time spent with our players.

Eric went on to explain about criticisms Academy's across the country have faced for not helping the players who do not make it to the first team is a myth, Academy's across the country aim to give the young players a full education. Growing Life Skills program for players who are on what is referred to by Eric as "day release", with players in mainstream education, training with the coaches at the Academy and also have some educational lessons with the under 18 scholars also educating them in workshops such as Mental Health & anti-racism. The Academy students also have access to a consultant sports psychologist who from this year will also work with the parents as well as the player. All this, Eric concluded, is designed to give the player a rounded academic achievement, not just as a footballer. He continued to say that the aim of the Academy to ensure that if a player leaves the system at any point that they do not leave the system without it adversely affecting their personal education if they wish to explore another career path.

Eric explained that in recent years some of the students who passed through the Academy system and were approaching the end of their training, have moved on to UK & American universities on full scholarships. Some of these players have returned to the STFC Academy as part time coaching staff bringing their own personal experience to the system, along with an affinity with this football club and its academy's training programme.

One of the academy's goals is to recruit the best players from across Shropshire and the local catchment area. An element of this is to establish and continue to have good relationships with the "bigger clubs" in the area such as Wolverhampton Wanderers, Aston Villa, West Bromwich Albion, etc. as well as good relationships with grass root teams, schools, colleges & the Football Association, with a new part-time team of scouts searching for the best players to join our academy and not one of the others in the area.

A first for the STFC Academy is a new role as a full-time head coach of the pre-academy. Pre-academy is a stage which the players first contact with the academy system from 7-year olds up to give the players a positive start to their training with the aim of improving the quality of the players produced.

Finally, Eric spoke about the difficult job of bridging the gap in developing youth team players into a position where they can join the first team squad, which as he said "is not easy". The jump from playing 17-18-year-old youth level to senior first team is huge, from pace to performance and it can be difficult for young players to play regularly and establish themselves into a team. Eric and his team are working hard to address this by forming new strategies to achieve the ultimate goal of getting young home-grown talent into football at Shrewsbury Town Football Club. Eric briefly touched on loan moves to allow players go into a new, mostly first team environment at a lower league level such as the Conference. This process gives an opportunity to possibly play in a senior men's first team where the player may not have had any previous experience playing at that level as well as give the player a new experience at different training methods at these clubs compared to

what the players are used to at the Shrewsbury academy. This helps to develop the player in both playing in different styles and also learning from a different group who play the game for their livelihoods, so have much more drive to succeed than an academy player may experience which is something that the academy coaching staff can not replicate and can only be experienced first-hand in these different environments. The best players at the Under 18 level progress through the ranks to have the opportunity to train with the first team on a regular basis and also have the exposure to senior football via the explained loan moves.

Continued coach development is high on Eric's agenda, to improve the quality of players who pass through the Shrewsbury Town FC Academy and with Dan Copnall as the full-time Head of Coach Development who analyses the work they do with the players and to feedback to the coaches. Dan can also ensure that the coaches have the correct training and themselves attend the correct courses to be at their best to train at the highest level.

A supporter in the room asked "What numbers do you have in the academy and the pre-academy?" Eric replied by explaining that there are 140 players from Under 9 to Under 18 level within the academy structure. Several hundred young players are met by the coaching staff with Shrewsbury Town in the Community, of which approximately 40-50 players will make up the pre-academy group, these players will over time be reduced in number when entering the Under 9's level of the academy.

Another supporter asked "Are you given any targets for losing players at each level that they progress through?" Eric replied that it is a tricky one for the academy being placed where it is, he continued saying that other "bigger" clubs can come in at any time and entice the players away from our academy program up until the player is 14 years of age and are offered scholarship agreements which makes targeted numbers difficult. This is why in Eric's view the best way to retain the best players is to have the best possible program and provide opportunities to develop at Shrewsbury Town FC's Academy. Brian added to this by saying that he is more than happy with the structure of the academy and that in his experience building a successful academy structure takes time and that he feels with the promotion of Wolverhampton Wanderers to the Premier League, Shrewsbury Town is best placed to offer local youngsters a chance to become a professional first team footballer.

A supporter asked "Is this academy funded by the main football club?" Eric explained that Shrewsbury Town FC provide the bulk of the funding for the Academy which is then matched by the Football League and that this is the same for all clubs in every league. The higher ranking of the academy category means an increase in the funding & facility infrastructure, the football clubs must provide to their academy.

The chair of the meeting, Chris, informed supporters that if they wish to go and watch the under 18's team play, they play Saturday mornings from 11am at the Shrewsbury Sports Village on Sundorne Road with full details of the upcoming matches on the football clubs' website.

4. Power League & community pitches

Brian began by explaining the details that he and the football club are aware of. The Power League formally are in a CVA (Creditors Voluntary Agreement) and that the company have approached all who are either owed money or are the landlord of sites such as Shrewsbury Town FC, to accept a

settlement which is formed in three different tiers. Currently, the offer to Shrewsbury Town FC is the third of these tiers, which involves three months of full payments from the Power League, followed by three months of reduced payments. Brian and Jamie several years ago met representatives of the Power League about the football club and the community team jointly taking over the operations of the site. Power League themselves then were looking to get out of the lease they had with the club which is currently almost half way through a 25 year's lease.

As of 16th October 2018 the club accepted the CVA from Power League and are now in discussions for the proposed STFC & STITC take over as Power League are aiming to close the Shrewsbury branch of their operation in January 2019.

For Shrewsbury Town in the Community it is a chance to use the facilities to expand what is on offer to the local community and their projects, Brian also hinted that this could also be of benefit for the club's academy. They are looking to continue to maintain the current pitches, but would also consider altering the pitches themselves from the current five-a-side to possible seven-a-side pitches.

Brian continued to explain about the bar within the facility which STITC may not be able to operate due to their charity status, however, Brian pointed out that as this is a joint proposed venture it could allow for the football club itself to operate it as they possess a licence which covers all of the land Shrewsbury Town FC own. Currently this is a proposal and no plans are set in stone.

5. SAG meeting Including Safe Standing feedback

Mike began by explaining that himself, Roger, Brian and Lawrence sit on the SAG (Safety Advisory Group) which is a panel made up of local authority, Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance service representatives who the Safe Standing organisers and football club had to provide evidence of the safety aspect of installing Safe Standing at the club and meets all regulations of safety for supporters, accessibility for emergency services, stewarding, etc...

Recently Mike and Lawrence represented the club and supporters at the second SAG meeting since the installation of Safe Standing and the response is very positive on multiple fronts. Special comments on how well the stewarding on a match day continues to work as well as special praise for the supporters in the area for making Safe Standing a success.

Mike continued saying that the club and representatives of the SP will continue to work closely with SAG as currently Shrewsbury Town FC are the only club in England and Wales to have Safe Standing in operation & that all other clubs in the country who wish to follow our clubs lead are watching what happens.

Lawrence added that the club have had two formal inspections of the Safe Standing facility since it was installed and launched, the second being the previously mentioned SAG group, previously Martin Girvan BSc from the SGSA (Sports Grounds Safety Authority) and interim Chief Executive Martyn Henderson of the SGSA & the feedback from this visit was equally positive. Martin Girvan BSc will be returning on the 15th December 2018 to inspect the overall match day operation and not just Safe Standing with two councillors from Wolverhampton displaying their interest in the Safe Standing and the clubs operations of the facility.

Brian added that currently the Safe Standing area has a regular occupancy of 75% capacity which displays how popular and well received the facility is by the supporters.

Mike requested that supporters who use the Safe Standing should continue to provide feedback to help improve the experience.

6. EFL Fans group update

Roger represented Shrewsbury Town FC & the Supporters Parliament at the EFL Fan Group Meeting which is a meeting hosted by the FSF (Football Supporters Federation) & Supporters Direct who have both joined together based around the idea of funding and the idea they can do more as one united group.

Stand up for choice (Safe Standing) was an interesting topic of which Roger sat listening to the discussion wondering if he would be asked how it was going at Shrewsbury Town..... he was not asked a single question about it. Roger's belief is that the FSF and Supporters Direct are waiting for a "big team" like Tottenham Hotspur to announce that they are planning on installing Safe Standing before they formally get behind the campaign.

Weather postponement of matches was another issue raised at the meeting, the main part of which was with regards to traveling away supporters heading to a game. Brian added that the clubs always wish to get a match on where possible and it is certainly an issue where public, staff and players safety is key and normally the match officials have the final say with regards to the pitch status. **The EFL are looking into making a postponement video and producing a guidance document to give all supporters a clearer understanding of the guidelines.**

Rail fares was another issue raised with the supporters' organisations having discussions on this matter with the rail operators & an idea about having a weekend where supporters would boycott the railways for match day travel and use traditional coach travels organised by the individual clubs, or in the case of Shrewsbury Town FC using the two supporters' groups in "The Official Supporters Club" and the "Away Travel Club".

iFollow was raised, but as it was addressed at the last Supporters Parliament meeting, more details on this are available in September 2018 minutes. **The FSF confirmed that it would continue to lobby the EFL to support the 3pm kick off blackout.**

Supporters engagement with football clubs which everyone feels is being addressed through the Supporters Parliament. **A recent survey reported that 85% of Supporter groups were meeting with their clubs twice a year. 82% believed they were meeting with the right people at their club. 25% of clubs were not showing suitable levels of information.**

Ticket pricing was brought up with many views on what some clubs charge for away supporters. **Particularly in the Championship. There was also a discussion on concessionary ticket pricing with a view that there is inconsistency around current age brackets. The committee took on board the suggestion to set up a separate group to look into ticketing in more detail.**

Fans for diversity, which is part of the Kick it Out campaign, that works throughout the football, educational and community sectors to challenge discrimination, encourage inclusive practices and campaign for positive change. It aims to promote how inclusive & welcoming football supporters are.

"Watching football is not a crime" clubs working closely with the police to ensure supporters are treated fairly within the law, this is being seen as an issue by many supporters.

Please note that some more details have been added in bold type, taken from the notes supplied to Roger following the meeting; these were not available at the SP meeting.

7. Matchday experience

a) Catering – ‘Shuttergate’

Lawrence explained why the shutters in the concourses throughout the stadium came down automatically during the Sunderland match. The shutters can only be operated in two ways, either by a key control in each kiosk primarily by the staff working within them, or the stadiums automated fire alarm system which triggers the shutters automatically as a method of fire control. These systems are common at many other football grounds and other venues he explained. For the Sunderland match, the automated fire alarm system kicked in at the worst possible time 15:50pm during a near capacity stadium with some supporters believing it may have been for some kind of security reason for the staff working in the kiosks.

Lawrence has since placed notices across the ground near each kiosk explaining briefly that the automated shutter system may close in the case of an emergency to try and make it clearer to supporters if an incident like this happens again in the future.

Two of the shutters were damaged during the Sunderland game as supporters tried to stop their decent, these have since been repaired in time for the Barnsley game several days after the incident.

b) Bird fouling/cleaning

Bird mess throughout the concourse and in some areas of the main stands is being addressed, Brian did wish to note that this will be a continuing issue as long as the club continue to allow the birds to nest within the ground.

Cleanliness of the disabled toilet in the South Stand was also brought up from an email sent to the parliament by a supporter, which had been brought up at a previous meeting and included cleaning of the seat and cobwebs in the cubical.

8. Stadium Maintenance progress

Brian explained to the parliament that the painting work on the West and Roland Wycherley Stands externally is now complete with some work internally in these stands still to be completed. Brian is very pleased with the progress made so far as the process is making the ground look far better.

The process is due to be extended by several weeks due to the fixture list where matches have been played in the stadium, but Brian is confident that this process will be completed before Christmas.

As soon as the cleaning and painting works to the steel of the stadium are complete, the football club will be given a cleaning program to follow to maintain the paint work for the future.

9. AOB

a) Match day parking – email received from a supporter

Parking at Percy Thrower's from 2019/20 season and beyond with new owners taking over. The previous payment for parking on the site was £5.00 on the day, now this has been limited, the car park is closed from 2pm with a "Car Park is Full" sign where the supporter in his email has noted that this has not been the case and that the car park is not full.

The agreement with the original managerial team at Percy Thrower's has been in place since the parking arrangements for the Rod Stewart concert. Last season, 70 season ticket parking spaces were sold, with up to 225 additional 'on the day' parking spaces available on a match day. Blue Diamond is the name of the new company who own the Percy Thrower's parking site and are concerned about over filling too many spaces with football supporters and denying their own customers a place to park and shop in store. The new/current agreement is to limit the additional parking spaces beyond the 70 season ticket parking spaces to 50 pay on the day spaces, but Brian did comment that the club are in negotiations with another possible site which could accommodate the parking capacity lost as a result of what's happening at Percy Thrower's.

b) SP Logo

Matt Burgess approached the Supporter's Parliament and offered to create the organisations first logo which is currently on all the SP's social media feeds.

c) SP Video

Matt Burgess approached the Supporter's Parliament about creating a video for the club's website explaining who the Supporter's Parliament are and what the organisation does for the supporters of Shrewsbury Town football club including

- The Memorial Garden
- SuperBlues Way
- Toilet Seats
- FanZone
- Chain around memorial bricks
- Toilet Seats (so important it had to be noted twice)

d) Concourse kiosks

As discussed in the last meeting, supporters wondered if it was possible to name the kiosks around the ground. This will be expanded in the next meeting of the Supporters Parliament.

Brian will approach Mark from MPM and invite him back to speak to the Supporters Parliament in the future.

e) 78/79 event

Supporters Parliament and Shrewsbury Town FC are looking to hold an event to celebrate the 40th Anniversary year of the 1978/79 title Third Division Championship winning season.

Friday 17th May 2019 is a proposed date for the event and the Sovereign Suite is now booked for the day, the Supporters Parliament wish to ask supporters for suggestions on what they would like to see and do at this event, any memorabilia from that season would also be helpful to make this celebration event more special.

f) Armistice Day remembrance 6 metre banner for Salford City FA Cup game

Supporters Parliament explained plans to produce a 6M x 6M banner with a poppy on the club's logo and the message "Lest we forget" for the centennial anniversary of the end of the First World War. This will be displayed and encouraged to pass across the Safe Standing by supporters on the day before kick off as a mark of remembrance, Mike had an image of the banner to demonstrate to supporters in the room. Brian hopes that this can be used every season going forward, he also explained that the club had arranged for a bugler to perform "The last post" along with formal service personnel to take part in the remembrance proceedings.

No other points, the meeting was closed and those present thanked for their attendance

Next meeting of the Shrewsbury Town Supporters Parliament is Tuesday 8th January 2019.