



Supporters Parliament 12th February 2019

Present

Chris Wynne; Roger Groves; Mike Davis; Brian Caldwell (CEO); Lawrence Ellerby (Safety Officer); Martin Gaunt (Ticket Office Manager); Ian Whitfield (Media Manager); David Allsopp; Harry Challoner; Thomas Corbett; Hazel Corbett; Barry Davies; Geoff Davies; Rachael Dilloway; Helen Hall; Ian Jones (1); Ian Jones (2); Malcolm Lane; Marion Lane; Rob Lewis; Jill Lucas; Ian Payne; Glyn Price; Steve Price; Joyce Pulford; Rob Jones; Janet Bould; Roger Allison; Dave Richards; Nick Gurdan; Shaun Peever; Chris Allen; Ray Allen; Annette Pascall; Andy Garden; Brian Dunn; Trevor Lewis; Paul Hamer; Mark Hamer; Alan Hughes.

Apologies

Joshua Wynne; Jamie Edwards; John Bailey; Paul Coyne; Selwyn Plant; Rosie Sabin; Colin Storey.

1. Welcome and Apologies received

A welcome was given to those in attendance by the chair of the meeting Chris Wynne, with special mention to a number of new faces in the room. Introductions were made of those at the top table representing the Shrewsbury Town Football Club Brian Caldwell; Ian Whitfield; Lawrence Ellerby & Martin Gaunt and the Supporters Parliament representatives Roger Groves; Mike Davis & the chair Chris Wynne.

A tribute was paid to Peter Nottle, a regular Supporters Parliament attendee who was at the last meeting in November 2018, but sadly passed away a few days after that meeting.

The sad passing that day of England World Cup winning goalkeeper Gordon Banks was also mentioned at which point Brian Caldwell stated that there would be a minute's applause in his honour prior to the Burton game on Saturday as agreed by the EFL earlier in the day.

2. Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting on 6th November 2018

Minutes from the last meeting, which have been approved by the Shrewsbury Town Football Club are available on the club's website & copies were also available on the night.

3. Community Football Hub Update

Chris informed those in the room who may not have seen reports on the club's website, or social media feeds, that Shrewsbury Town in the Community & the Football Club have now officially taken over the ownership and operations of the Power League facility at the Montgomery Waters Meadow, since the announcement of Power League's financial issues resulting in the early ending of the 25-year lease. Chris announced that the new name of the facility is to be the "Community Football Hub" which will be operated by Shrewsbury Town in the Community and will include the seven pitches the 7 a-side pitch & six 5 a-side pitches. The bar is to be operated by Shrewsbury Town Football Club. Chris continued explaining that the bar was being redecorated with quotes from commentators of Shrewsbury Town matches including BBC Radio Shropshire's Stuart Dunn and that a soft launch party was held on Transfer Deadline Day 31st January 2019, showing off the exciting work transforming the new Hub into a place that supporters will enjoy.

Brian explained that the club & STFC ITC have upgraded some elements of the Hub including replacing the flooring, repairing the damaged couches and maintenance work on the television's screens. He continued explaining that the feedback he has had from supporters who have visited the facility has so far been positively received he is interested in continuing to improve the facility to make it something supporters will enjoy using from match days to playing matches or holding birthday parties to being a place to host functions. Brian continued that for STFC ITC it is a perfect chance to expand the current community projects which they operate on the site.

Brian then clarified the situation regarding the joint venture between the club and the STFC ITC. Power League entered a Creditor Voluntary Agreement (CVA) resulting in it, closing 13 sites across the country, which included the one at Shrewsbury Town Football Club. He and Jamie were already in contact with Power League before the announcement of the CVA as a way to expand on future Community projects. As STFC ITC is a charity it was felt that the bar should be operated by the club and not the Community team through the football club's hospitality team. Currently the opening times of the bar will be Thursday nights when the Hub hosts league matches along with Friday and Saturday's as the club aims to find a viable way of providing this service, as Power League left them with little data to plan the opening times. He did add that they do have the experience of the former Power League staff who's jobs have been secured by the club to maximise the use of the whole facility and even hinted that an SP meeting could be hosted there too.

Chris explained that the Supporters Parliament and the Football Club put a vote to Shrewsbury Town supporters for the naming of the bar within the Community Hub.

The winner from 911 votes cast through the football club's website was Smithy's Bar and is in memory of Chris Smith who, among so many things he did for the football club, was as chairman of the Super Blues. Chris sadly passed away in 2017 and is currently the only non-playing member of Shrewsbury Town's Hall of Fame Legend's list. The votes were split as follows;

- Blue Amber Bar – 222 votes
- Turner's – 297 votes
- Smithy's Bar – 392 votes

Chris Wynne explained that he had spoken personally to Chris Smith's family about creating some kind of fitting tribute to his memory which the family would be happy with and that this seemed a fitting tribute as he would regularly visit the old Power League both before and after matches so he could take coach bookings for away trips which he organised for the Away Travel Club. He added that the family are really touched with the selection by the supporters.

Mike explained to those present that the STFC ITC are hosting an open evening on Wednesday 27th February 2019 from 19:30pm with Dave Edwards and Omar Beckles confirmed to be take part along in a Q&A session. Tickets will be available from the club and the Community Football hub for £5.00. Mike continued that in association with the STFC ITC, the Supporters Parliament look to raise the funds to improve the whole of the Community Hub's facilities from new furniture, reconfiguring of the pitches & moving to integrate the FanZone onto a piece of land along the side of the Hub. Roger added that the Luton game was the first chance for supporters to visit the new Community Hub and it was filled to capacity of 200 people and the feedback is extremely positive.

The question was asked from an attendee whether away supporters would be allowed into the Community Football Hub on a match day? This is to be examined on a match by match basis in consultation with the Police & Shrewsbury Town Football Club's Safety Officer Lawrence Ellerby. Lawrence added that currently there have been no issues in the FanZone pre-match with home and away supporters mixing and does not perceive this as a possible issue in the Hub. He did reiterate that this would be reviewed if intelligence is received of possible issues & would be evaluated on a match by match basis.

Roger explained that the SP and STFC ITC are looking for memorabilia from supporters who wish to donate or loan to the Community Football Hub for example of match worn player shirts to be framed and displayed in around the bar which can be periodically rotated depending on the size and variety of the collection.

4. Away Travel

Recently comments on social media platforms have been made involving away supporters' coaches picking up and dropping off passengers. Jamie of the STFC ITC has informed the SP that there could be an option to open Smithy's Bar prior to coach pickups. Mike added that it is not Shrewsbury Town FC who dictate the pickup locations of the coaches, the locations are ones selected by the organisations Official Supporters Club (OSC) and the Away Travel who have been picking up at these points for years. This means liaising with both groups to see if this is something that the travel clubs would consider in future as it is not worth the club opening Smithy's Bar if only a couple of people show up at the bar to wait for travel.

The question was asked from an attendee who had not seen any of the social media comments as they do not use any of these platforms asking what is this issue?

It was explained that the original question which was online regarding why the supporter's away coach organisations depart from various points around Shrewsbury, but not from the Montgomery Waters Meadow? Mike continued saying that he believes a reason for this is originally at the old Gay Meadow, the roads at the ground were narrow. A coach could fit through; however, it would be potentially dangerous for pedestrians and other road users. He had had previous conversations with Chris Smith when he was alive and Chris' reply was that the current format of collecting at multiple locations works well for the service he provided. Mike added it would be something that would need to be discussed with the supporters whether they would prefer to be picked up at the Montgomery

Waters Meadow or Smithy's Bar, as well as discussing it with the travel organisations. Brian added that as far as he is aware both the OSC & Away Travel Club make pick ups at different locations not only in the town itself but in the county. If enough people would use the Smithy's Bar before their pickup then it could justify opening the bar. He continued whether adding another pickup point to the away travel clubs may not be what they or their regular travellers want, again it is something that would need to be discussed further.

Chris explained that he has had some discussions with those who organise away travel for both groups and had been told that the pick-up times and locations were already organised before the start of the 2018/19 season. The current pickup times were designed to allow the coaches to operate on their designated times & that any changes, or an additional pick up point at the football ground, can be looked into for future seasons. Brian added that this is a subject which should possibly left until after the conclusion of the season. He explained that he is aware that the OSC, for example, has a full departure timetable for the season which only alters for fixture changes & in his opinion changing aspects of this now could lead to confusion for supporters heading to the wrong pick-up point and potentially missing the coach.

The question was asked from an attendee whether in the future if coaches picking up supporters from the Montgomery Waters Meadow and/or Smithy's Bar, would be allowed to park their cars in the ground's car park if there are no health and safety issues in doing so? Brian explained that it would fine for supporters to park their cars at the ground with a disclaimer in the car park. We have done it before in the 2017/18 season for the trips to Wembley for the OSC & Longmynd coaches to gather and then pick up their supporters and it seemed to work quite well. At the same time, he continued, the Montgomery Waters Meadow was hosting several functions and as long as those functions are not affected for access to the ground, or parking, then it can be done as these functions help generate funds for the club.

5. SAG meeting Including Safe Standing feedback

Chris started by explaining the title to those in the room for those who may not know that the SAG stands for the Safety Advisory Group, who have a meeting 14th March 2019 which includes an update on the club's Safe Standing. Mike and Roger will be in attendance representing the Supporters Parliament.

At the last meeting of the SAG 24th October 2018, feedback from that meeting has been very positive with the group pleased with the way that the club has organised and maintained Safe Standing on a match day.

Mike explained that an officer from the Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA), who are the national safety group for sports stadia, visited the ground to observe a working match day during the FA Cup Fourth Round match against Wolverhampton Wanderers, and the feedback from the visit about the clubs Safe Standing is very positive with the operations at the Meadow.

Lawrence added that since the opening of Safe Standing, five different inspections have taken place at the ground with regards to the Safe Standing facility before the visit of the SGSA for the Wolverhampton Wanderers game. All of the previous inspections he continued, had received very positive feedback before the visit of SGSA's Martin Girvan and Shropshire County Council's James Watkin. The pair attended the Wolverhampton game to witness the first time that the Safe Standing area was sold-out, this scenario allowed them to see how the club dealt with large crowd numbers in the whole of the stand both Safe Standing and seated. No migration was observed at the game and

supporters occupied the area that they were assigned when they purchased their ticket, and showed that supporters are respecting the rules which the club repeat for every home match the stand is operated on their social media platforms.

Before the Wolverhampton Wanderers match, several members of the Wolverhampton Council visited the Montgomery Waters Meadow to look at the Safe Standing facilities, since then, Lawrence continued, Molineux has installed a rail seating test area for potential Safe Standing introduction into their own ground.

Brian added that the football club are still receiving media coverage from around the world and he informed everyone that the club was recently featured on Brazilian television. The continued media coverage he said is great for the football club.

Mike requested a special mention on the record to the head steward for the Safe Standing section, Dave Wynn, who suffered a minor heart attack after the Wolverhampton Wanderers match. The Supporters Parliament wish him a speedy recovery. Lawrence added he had spoken to Dave earlier that day and said he was feeling much better and hopes to be back as soon as possible.

The Supporters Parliament and Brian worked on an idea to generate a bigger atmosphere within the Safe Standing area which would also show it off on the television cameras more too. Foil flags in blue and amber (yellow) were purchased and spread across the stand prior to the FA Cup Fourth Round match against Wolverhampton Wanderers. The idea is for these to be reused within league games from now on and not just for a special occasion such as a cup match with an honesty box near the stand's exit for people to place them in for the club to reuse again.

The question was asked from an attendee on Brian's view about if the introduction of Safe Standing dramatically had improved the atmosphere within the whole ground? Match day atmosphere has improved dramatically in all stands, Brian replied, from his own observations as well as feedback he has had from supporters, in person as well as emails. This, he continued, is exactly what we aimed to achieve with the installation of the Safe Standing at the Montgomery Waters Meadow & being next to the family stand it is hoped that the kids who currently sit there will look over at the stand and see it as somewhere they wish to go and be a part of when they are older. Brian mentioned that at the Wolverhampton Wanderers match, there was a young boy near to him who "sang his heart out for the whole game" & that is what everyone involved wants to see with future generations of Shrewsbury Town supporters to love their club and sing their hearts out in support. Brian added that he found the name of this young supporter who had impressed him so much at the Wolverhampton match and contacted his parents, he explained that the family are season ticket holders in the Family Stand and recently they had enjoyed the atmosphere at several away games this season. The boy had asked if they could experience the Safe Standing for the Wolverhampton game as he had watched it all season and they will be doing a little news piece for the club's website.

The question was asked from an attendee about supporters in blocks 18/19 still standing unsafely rather than migrating to the Safe Standing area. Lawrence responded that the whole idea of creating the Safe Standing area was to provide a place for supporters to stand safely to watch a game and not to stand in a seated area. He explained that it becomes a numbers game where the more people who stand in an area, the more difficult it is to manage and make a crowd sit down in their seat. An example he gave was from the 2017/18 season with the visit of Blackburn Rovers where approximately 1600 people were in the stand and 1500+ stood for the entirety of the match with approximately 30 stewards to control crowd. The numbers are monitored for every game, Lawrence explained and he continues to communicate with the SGSA on a regular basis.

6. Matchday Experience linked with 7. Ticketing

Ticketing issues which were debated at length by supporters on social media was raised as a concern following two large FA Cup matches against Stoke City and Wolverhampton Wanderers with both games having replays to be sold to supporters. Issues with purchases of tickets & packages for ticket sales.

Brian explained that for these two high demand fixtures, the club maintained a similar ticket selling approach that they had done for previously for expected sell out matches. This season a season ticket holder had the opportunity to bring an extra adult, be it a friend or loved one, to the game plus two children's tickets. The idea being to encourage whole families to take part and get excited by the day and inspire them to return to watch more Shrewsbury Town FC matches. A similar method had been used in previous big crowd matches, such as West Ham United at the Meadow in the FA Cup 2017/18 season, followed by the Charlton Athletic in the League One Play-off Semi-final in the same season or Manchester United in the 2016/17 season. Season ticket holders were previously given a plus one option and Brian & the club were concentrating on families and inspiring the next generation of supporters to be excited about their local football team. The number of season ticket holders who took advantage of the offer was worth it in Brian's opinion with three hundred child tickets (150 people buying extra 2 kids) within this offer were sold. On social media the opinion from some supporters of this initiative was that this was the wrong decision, with some supporters missing out on purchasing a match day ticket. Some of the figures being spoken of online regarding this ticket scheme didn't reflect the actual sales to children, with only three hundred tickets out of the eight thousand on sale sold for these two fixtures.

Brian added that supporters who missed out on the match having five to nine loyalty points was unfortunate and potentially the separation of points categories could have been built differently to reward the loyal fan base (i.e. 5-9 loyalty points then 1-4). This was therefore changed for the Wolverhampton replay. The Wolverhampton Wanderers match, Brian added, was the first time since he has been at the club where this has become an issue; this fixture had sold out before going on General Sale compared to all other large populated fixtures.

Brian is open to anyone in the room, or not able to attend the Supporters Parliament meetings, to suggest a fairer system for possible future big game fixtures which enables the club to sell tickets in the fairest way possible considering the extremely short window in which to arrange the ticketing with the opposition club and also an average sale time of eight to nine days. This system should also highlight the advantage of being a season ticket holder.

The question was asked about returned tickets for the Wolverhampton Wanderers FA Cup Third Round game's waiting list: with how long was it and did many people have the chance to get a ticket? Brian and Martin responded explaining that approximately 250 supporters were on the waiting list with 75 being successful in purchasing a returned ticket.

Martin explained when he was selling the cup tickets directly to customers at the ticket office sales window, the issue with any delays in selling the tickets was not with the selling of these extra tickets for season ticket holders, but was supporters bringing several of their families or friends season tickets to purchase just one ticket per card.

Another attendee made the suggestion that the Football Club should create and promote, ready for the start of the 2019/20 season and beyond, a ticketing policy for larger matches such as high demand cup games detailing how the tickets would be sold. He continued saying that this will give supporters certainty of what they must do to have enough points to qualify and could even encourage more supporters to become season ticket holders in the first place. Brian agreed that this is something which makes sense & should be looked into further ready for next season, with many in

attendance agreeing that the tickets available for a season ticket holder. This matter will be investigated further and will be announced with season ticket renewal information.

Roger added that this can also be marketed by the Football Club as a benefit to becoming a season ticket holder to bring their friends.

The question was asked from Glyn, who said that it was “fantastic to try and encourage children and to get more families down to games, but people could not buy these tickets online which is a continual problem with Ticketmaster. Children’s tickets are a nightmare to buy online and can these tickets be made easier to buy online now, because it forces everyone to come to the ticket office causing massive queues and a lot of negative feedback for the club”. Brian responded by saying that the Ticketmaster system caused a lot of the issues with purchasing the additional tickets which then caused an error & resulted in the queues at the ticket office as supporters came to purchase the tickets that they could not do online. He continued by saying that Martin has been in contact with Ticketmaster to try and resolve this issue for the future. As a side note Brian added that the Ticketmaster contract is up in 2020.

Chris asked Martin if he has made any progress with Ticketmaster since his appointment as the Ticket Office Manager? Martin responded that it is a huge learning curve for him personally only being in the job for four months, trying to understand the club’s systems and that of Ticketmaster. The issue with the children’s tickets for the cup game was that a quota of two adult tickets (one being the season ticket holder) & up to the two kids’ tickets, was with the ticket pricing structure on the Ticketmaster system. The easiest method, which would have had no errors regardless of price, was just to have three additional tickets to one season ticket holder. The issue on the system was that only one could be an adult and two more could only be kids’ tickets. This restriction led to multiple errors on the system, meaning that the club couldn’t operate the offer online with such a limited time between the final whistle on the night at Stoke City and when the tickets had to go on sale for Wolverhampton Wanderers fixture. Now that the club are out of all cup competitions, Martin has time to work with Ticketmaster to resolve this issue in preparation for next season when everything can be in place and tested to ensure it can be used at short notice. He added another issue was that not all club’s ticketing systems operate in the same way, as a result it is a case of finding a system framework which works for our Football Club.

The comment from an attendee was with regards to the queues at the ticket office windows for the Wolverhampton Wanderers match, each taking five plus minutes per customer & his observation only two to three windows were in operation at any one time. Brian responded by saying that as a club the number of staff in the ticket office is limited to provide this service, even by bringing additional staff from the club shop and finance department, for example, to try and increase the speed of processing ticket sales. It was suggested to Brian, Martin and everyone in attendance that would it be possible for the club to have a group of volunteer fans who are fully trained in the processes of the ticket office & could be called upon to assist where available for future cup matches or play-off games if available to come in at short notice. Brian also added that if this group was formed it would relieve the club staff to man the ticket office windows for direct sales while using the voluntary group to man the phone lines to process those sales & would require multiple laptops/PCs to access the Ticketmaster system when making these kinds of sales over the phones, Brian said that he is onboard with this idea and would look into this further if some fans would be available as its difficult to get our usual match day staff to come in and work for all ticket matches at very short notice due to their other work commitments.

Brian wished to talk briefly about season tickets. He explained that they will be available before the next meeting in April and that last season the club raised the price slightly from the season before & Brian wished to hear of any idea's from those in attendance.... not including lowering the prices!

Lawrence wished to explain to all supporters in attendance a new initiative that the club will be trialling for the next few Saturday games (from the time of the meeting) remaining of this season. He mentioned the word "CHIPS" and received cheers from several supporters. He expanded on this for supporters who may not be aware of the issues with regards to the catering provided by MPM. He explained that when the fryers were installed in the West Stand, issues regarding power consumption on a match day lead to the service being removed, as the stand could not meet the demand required to operate them and other functions of the stand. Since then, Lawrence has been in discussions with MPM to develop ideas on how to solve this issue as no additional power can be provided to the stand. The solution is to provide an additional catering van outside of the West Stand near the half way line which has its own external generator to provide the power it requires to operate. The South Stand will use the catering van which is already in position at the FanZone, with both stands separated by barriers and stewards to prevent supporters migrating from stand to stand with the Super Blues way locked at half time. This was observed by Lawrence at Stoke City for the FA Cup Third Round replay and seem successful there. Lawrence hopes that this would assist the staff working in the concourse to serve supporters quickly as well as providing the supporters the food that they demand. Alcohol he added, cannot be purchased outside of the current concourse bars, however, there is no issues with supporters purchasing their drinks inside and consuming them outdoors.

8. Stadium Maintenance progress

Brian explained that since the last meeting the work to clean and repaint the steel work around the ground continues, however, recent weather during the winter months has slowed the progress with the internal and external areas of the West Stand complete and the external steelwork on Main Stand complete. It was expected that the Contractor would return around March when better weather to complete the work.

9. SP Events

Chris explained for those who had not been to previous meetings that the Supporters Parliament and the Football Club are planning on hosting an evening with the surviving members of the 78/79 Third Division Championship winning team. The date has been confirmed as Friday 17th May 2019 with Stuart Dunn helping organise the event and talking to the players involved. The Supporters Parliament are open to ideas from all supporters to make the evening a success and encourage people to contact Chris or Roger.

Roger expanded on the ideas for the night is to make it open to all and will not be a formal black-tie event.

The end of season awards night for the 2017/18 season was organised by the Supporters Parliament after the passing of Chris Smith who had previously arranged all of the evenings at the end of each season. The evening was a success as the SP members worked closely with the Official Supporters Club (OSC) and Super Blues to provide an evening for the fanbase that Chris would have been proud of. Following positive feedback from supporters the Supporters Parliament are looking to arrange a

similarly organised event with Brian Caldwell in discussions with Sam Ricketts to ensure maximum availability of players and staff to be in attendance.

10. AOB

Glyn asked about the recent disruptions and disorders at the club: starting with a supporter who has since been banned for three years after running on the pitch during the Fleetwood game 1st January 2019; bottles allegedly being thrown and supporters on the pitch during the Wolverhampton Wanderers FA Cup Fourth Round match; to the police being required to use batons to calm the traveling supporters on 26th January 2019 at the Meadow. Are the Football Club still investigating the incidents as there has been little information released from Club?

Lawrence began by explaining that the police are still investigating a lot of evidence from CCTV feeds within and outside of the Montgomery Waters Meadow with the Club providing a considerable amount of footage. The bottle throwing incident has in Lawrence's view "no excuse for people to do that". Currently the club have not been able to identify individuals for the incident, however, he has received information from a supporter which has been passed on to the police to aid their investigation.

The question was asked regarding the plastic bottles used, whether Lawrence was concerned that the supporters got these pitch side? To which he replied, the goal for Shrewsbury Town was scored by Greg Docherty against Wolverhampton Wanderers on the 47th minute at the start of the second half of the match. Hundreds of supporters were still in the concourse eating and drinking, who then poured out pitch side on-mass and it was physically impossible for the stewards to control and prevent any alcohol being pitch side via plastic glasses or plastic bottles.

Rob asked a question about the placement of the "Bottle Bar", which is located in the West Stand near the entrance to Block 18/19 which is next to the Away Stand? Lawrence responded that the idea of the complete removal of the Bottle Bar is an option which is being considered as a consequence of the incident, but the club and Lawrence do not wish to punish the majority of respectable users of the facility for the actions of a minority who caused the issues with the bottles thrown & relocation is a possible option if an incident happens in the future.

Fingers crossed it is a one off.

The question was asked from an attendee about Golden Gamble winning number being advertised more as the supporter asking explains that he has to call the Football Club after most games asking for the result. Brian replied it is normally published on the scoreboard at half time, he then asked Ian if this could be posted at the same time as the Football Club display the match day attendance on the scoreboard.

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

Next meeting of the Shrewsbury Town Supporters Parliament is Tuesday 9th April 2019.