



Supporters Parliament

Meeting held on Tuesday 14th May 2019

at the Montgomery Waters Meadow

Present

Chris Wynne; Roger Groves; Mike Davis; Brian Caldwell (CEO); Lawrence Ellerby (Safety Officer); Ian Whitfield (Media Manager); David Allsopp; Thomas Corbett; Hazel Corbett; Paul Coyne; Barry Davies; Rachael Dilloway; Nick Gurdan; Helen Hall; Ian Jones (1); Ian Jones (2); Malcolm Lane; Marion Lane; Rob Lewis; Jill Lucas; Shaun Peever; Glyn Price; Lynn Price; Stewart Price; Steve Price; Daz Davies; Tom Downes; Will Smith; Roger Allison; Andy Garden; Brian Dunn; Trevor Mainwaring; Rebecca Nightingale; James Nightingale; Mike Heath; Mark Hamer; Alan Hughes.

Apologies

Joshua Wynne; Selwyn Plant; Joyce Pulford; Colin Storey

1. Welcome and Apologies received

Chris Wynne opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, and introduced the panel to those who were visiting for the first time. He explained that this meeting has no formal agenda & that the purpose is to get feedback from the supporters of Shrewsbury Town Football Club of their thoughts on the match day experience at the club together with any comments, complaints or ideas on how to improve the people experience when they come to the Montgomery Waters Meadow.

2. Shrewsbury Town FC Announcement

Brian Caldwell explained that the club's current deal with kit supplier Errea expired at the end of the 2018/19 season. He was happy to reveal that Admiral have signed an initial two-year deal with the

club to produce all of Shrewsbury Town's replica kits and team training wear. Brian is confident that this new exciting partnership will allow the club shop to be able to keep up with the demand from supporters in all sizes.

3. Match-day Experience

A supporter asked Brian about the steel works outside the ground, some of which are still showing signs of rust in some areas & asked him for an update on the progress of the painting works. Brian responded that the work to paint the steel around the Montgomery Waters Stadium was postponed during the winter period with the weather conditions potentially not being the best for allowing the paints to dry properly. He had recent been in contact with the company and they hope to soon recommence the works during the close season with an estimated four to five months for completion.

Brian wished to share with the supporters at the meeting that the EFL dispatch a mystery family twice per season to every EFL football club in all divisions & provide a full report on the match experience. Shrewsbury Town FC received the Family Excellence Award for the 2018/19 season. Brian added that he takes these reports extremely seriously as it provides him with valuable information about areas of possible improvements from the detailed report provided, and allows the club to see the match-day experience from a different perspective. It gauges how the club responds to any enquires that may arise on matters such as parking information and how that overall experience was handled. Ticket purchasing is done by these families online, or via calling the stadiums ticket office. They also examine any activities available to the supporters at the stadium during the visit, which, as Brian explained, was perfectly as the match chosen for the visit was against Portsmouth, which was also the Armed Forces Day at the Montgomery Waters Meadow where there were lots of additional activities, including tanks and displays available to entertain the family.

The match day programme is also examined to ascertain whether the content is value for money and has activities inside for children. On the families' first trip earlier in the season, Brian explained that the programme seller missed to add the unattached poster & as a result the programme was marked down for that visit. A steward in the Family Stand was also named in the report from the visit as being very welcoming and helpful to the visiting family during their experience. After receiving the report, Brian continued to explain that a meeting was held with Lawrence Ellerby (Safety Officer), Ian Whitfield (Media Manager), Martin Gaunt (Ticket Office Manager), Jamie Edwards (StiTC) & Sib Hayes (club shop) who examined the report in detail to see where improvements could be made in all aspects of the clubs operations to make the whole experience better for all supporters, as well as to encourage new supporters and families to attend matches at the Montgomery Waters Meadow.

A supporter raised the issue of housekeeping inside the stadium with regards to litter on a match day, including: empty bottles; crisp packets and other discarded food wrappers which could cause a health and safety issue if not addressed by not only the football club, but supporters as well. Even with the instillation of additional bins within the concourse area, she believes that this is a behavioural matter with supporters and needs to be addressed. Lawrence explained that he had

arrived at the club last season & during the West Ham United FA Cup match when he could experience a full stadium at Shrewsbury Town, he explained that the West Stand after the game was horrendous with the levels of litter on the floor of the concourse alone & he felt it was a potential major health and safety risk. He explaining the situation to Brian that the club need to provide additional bins across all of the concourses in the stadium to reduce the potential risk to both our own and visiting supporters.

The FanZone also suffers an issue on a match day with litter. The remaining equipment and materials from the instillation of the Safe Standing area which is stored along part of the perimeter of the west stand fence is not well covered to hide the mess from not only visiting supporters to the ground but also anyone who is walking past & in her view if not maintained correctly could escalate into an environmental issue. Brian explained that the building materials which are kept outside of the ground were given to the football club after the building of the new Lidl store upon completion of the construction by the contractors, and will be useful to the club going forward, such as extra barriers for example. A lot of these materials have already been used for stadium maintenance and there is now considerably less remaining than what was originally received. He will ensure that the team responsible will maintain the area with better housekeeping practice of the remaining materials to ensure that their visibility is minimised. The original seats which were removed during the installation of the Safe Standing area are within one of the containers which are located adjacent to the FanZone & the area in question.

Brian informed the supporters that Lawrence & Martin Gaunt (Ticket Office Manager) attended an EFL Fan Engagement Seminar at Birmingham City's St Andrews's stadium, where they listen to new ideas from other clubs to improve the match-day experience for supporters or enhance the ones which the club currently operate to provide Shrewsbury Town with an even better family experience. Since their return Lawrence & Martin held a meeting to explore what they had learned and with Brian and Jamie Edwards (Shrewsbury Town in the Community), they discussed what elements could be done at our club and what cannot be achieved with the resources and funding available.

A sensory room within the Family Stand is something that the club and community team are exploring how such a facility can be financed.

4. Ticketing

A supporter asked about the pricing structure within the ground with their example being that it costs more to sit in Block Two of the Roland Wycherley Stand compared to the corresponding area the West Stand, block 18. Brian responded that it is his understanding, bearing in mind that he himself had never visited Shrewsbury Town FC's old home of Gay Meadow, the Roland Wycherley Stand is treated similarly to the old main stand at Gay Meadow and was historically a more expensive ticket.

A supporter wished to praise the ticket office. She prefers to use that facility rather than online via TicketMaster and she has noticed the very positive improvements that makes it far easier for her to purchase tickets from friendly & helpful staff. Brian appreciated the positive feedback and explained that with the recent rotation of staff in the role, since Martin's arrival as ticket office manager, his aim is to improve the customer focus of staff within his department.

5. Refreshments in the concourse

A supporter asked Brian if the club would consider installing facilities in the concourses for accepting credit and debit card payments? Brian explained that the catering in the concourse is sub-contracted to MPM catering and has been in contact with Mark Morris of MPM who is interested in returning to the Supporters Parliament for feedback from supporters. Brian continued to say that he will certainly discuss this issue with Mark, but did mention that in the past the club has had some issues with card payments within the ground as the terminals utilize the club's Wi-Fi system which could be an issue with the bandwidth available and that if the club and MPM decide to go forward with this facility, then it is something that would have to be investigated further. Lawrence added that this could have the potential to speed up service in the concourse with contactless payments, but would depend on what Brian and Mark discuss.

A supporter added that if the issue with Wi-Fi bandwidth was a potential problem for the club to deliver a card payment service in the concourse, then perhaps an additional Wi-Fi system just for these payments could be used depending on cost to deliver. Brian asked the panel and the room if rather than relying on a Wi-Fi system to deliver a card payment option, could the terminals themselves be hard wired into the club's network as an option. GPRS payment terminals that operate using satellite technology which would then not use the club's network in any way which, Mike believed, is what is being used within the Shrewsbury Town in the Community Hub & that prices may also increase to cover the costs of providing this service.

Chris asked what do supporters think of the concourse facilities available and the addition of the outdoor catering facilities on the West Stand and the and South Stand.

One supporter explained that for him, one issue with the catering both inside and outside of the ground was the menu signage & in his experience the wording and prices being too small for people waiting to read and make their selection. As a result of this, he explained the service is slower as people read the menu options when they are being served, instead of while waiting further back in the queue. Brian responded that he will look into this with MPM for the supporter.

A supporter asked about the position of the outside caterers who are also used at half time for the South Stand tucked into the corner by the FanZone away from the stand itself. He also asked about why the outdoor bar used in the FanZone is not used at half time? Lawrence replied that the units are used for the FanZone before matches so it did not seem appropriate to bring in another catering van in for half time closer to the stand, when one is already present and is set up ready to serve. Changes to the FanZone are being investigated for next season with the location of the catering vans part of the discussions. The zero sales of alcohol from the catering vans at half time was Lawrence's decision based on his experience at other sports grounds, the sale of alcohol from the external catering vans would in his opinion increase the temptation for supporters to remain outside and drink rather than return into the concourse after half time ready for the game to resume, especially if the weather on the match day was very good.

During the trial he explained, some issues were identified and a compromise was made with, for example, opening the gates to the catering vans in both stands before the referee's whistle blew for half time which as a result eased the pressure on the concourse staff as well as the catering van staff. On a positive note, Lawrence explained that supporters are making their way back inside he

ground, as a result this does not place a strain on the limited number of stewards within the ground to monitor supporters drinking outside, to those who are returning to their seats inside.

Now that the season is over and the trial is now concluded, Lawrence asked the supporters present for their own opinions of the external catering van trial as well as the feedback from the service provided within the concourse. One supporter asked with regards to variety of products which are on offer could be more varied and not just burgers, pies and chips. Brian and Lawrence will raise this with MPM when they have their meeting and forward the comments from some supporters during the trial of a lack of continuity of products available from each catering van.

A supporter explained that in his view, the introduction of the external catering vans during half time has helped to ease congestion in the concourses of both stands tremendously, but he wondered if the additional service provided is financially viable for MPM to continue to provide in the future? Lawrence responded that he is very keen for it to continue and has hoped that it has been well received by the fan base. The match day trial using the catering vans was only planned for three games originally, but was then extended for the remaining home fixtures of the 2018/19 season and would require further discussions with MPM.

A supporter asked if the club could consider introducing an STFC version of the "Shrewsbury Cup" at the stadium on match days. He explained for those who are not aware of the scheme which launched in the town in March 2019, that the Shrewsbury Cup is a scheme where customers can purchase a reusable takeaway cup for £1.00 from companies who take part in the scheme as a way to reduce the use of the current single use takeaway cups you see in restaurants and coffee shops, then they can return the cup to a participating retailer for a refund of the £1.00 spent. The cup can then be properly cleaned and reused by another customer. He thinks it would greatly reduce the level of plastic cups used within the FanZone and also the concourses on a matchday. Lawrence explained that he has experienced this kind of scheme at his previous job at Edgbaston Cricket Ground after the CEO arrived from working with the Rugby World Cup. The plastic pint glasses had the Edgbaston/Warwickshire County logo printed on them. The premise of the scheme was that at Edgbaston you would purchase the glass when purchasing your first pint, reuse it every time you returned to the bar and when you are leaving the ground you return the plastic glass to the bar for a refund. However, he explained that most of the time many people took them home as souvenir. One issue he found with this sort of scheme was the time it would take to process refunds to supporters which could cause queues. Brian offered to look into this idea further with MPM and see if it is a viable solution to reduce waste of single use cups for the club and as a result reduce the refuse bill.

6. FanZone

A supporter explained to Brian that MPM's service of the Woods real ales here are still not of a good enough standard compared to the exact same ales available at the Woods Bar inside the ground and that some supporters are choosing not to use the FanZone as much and would prefer to head inside for a drink instead. Another supporter explained that several factors could be at play with the quality of the ale served in the FanZone, depending on the length of time the ale kegs has been allowed to settle before serving to supporters. Brian will address this with MPM and try and resolve the issue.

7. Shrewsbury Town Supporters Parliament's Player of the Year Awards

A supporter wished to express their gratitude to those responsible for organising the evening, with all the players in attendance along with manager Sam Ricketts. The supporter expressed that their children had the time of their lives interacting with the players and enjoying the food prepared by the club, concluding that the night was the best version of a supporter's awards ceremony they have experienced.

Brian wished to thank both Roger and Mike who organised the night with the club, working with the Media Department to ensure the still image slides and video footage played correctly and using a high-quality projector and, in his opinion, looked very professional on the night. Two seats were reserved on every table for members of the squad to sit and interact with the supporters. All the feedback he has received from supporters since the night, has been nothing but positive.

8. Pre-Season Friendlies

A supporter asked if the club had any pre-season games yet to be confirmed and announce.

Yes was Brian's response. The club at the time of the meeting, were waiting on responses from several other club's before Shrewsbury Town officially announces all of them based on dates which the Sam Ricketts has provided.

9. 78/79 Championship Winners Night

Members of the Supporters Parliament and others involved with the organisation of this evening are still in discussions with former players and a date has not yet been chosen. However, as soon as a date can be found that does not conflict with any potential matches or local events, such as the Shrewsbury Flower Show, an announcement one will be made, allowing a reasonable amount of time to allow tickets sales before the event

Currently the organisers are trying to collate ideas for the evening from both the players and supporters on what kind of event it should be, e.g. a formal evening meal for all, or the players having a formal meal and then join supporters for a less formal occasion in the style of the Supporters Player of the Year Awards where supporters enjoy a buffet.

10. Car Parking

Brian explained that the club have a very good relationship with Wyevale, who currently provide additional parking near to the Montgomery Waters Meadow, but he said that this capacity may not be available in the future. He is in ongoing discussions with them as well with other potential sites to give supporters a place to park their vehicles as near to the ground as possible.

A supporter asked about the car park at the Montgomery Waters Meadow immediately following the final whistle of a game with vehicles moving across the car park while pedestrians are leaving the ground, or returning to their own cars as well as vehicles leaving the Lidl car park. Lawrence explained that there are eight car park stewards available on a typical match day, which can then be

increased for bigger games where they expect more supporters to visit the ground. The stewards cannot control people getting into their vehicles and leaving the parking spaces to head for the leaving lanes. All the stewards can do, he explained, is to control the flow of traffic through the exit gate. Lawrence added that compared to previous seasons, where pedestrians would use the Super Blues Way, or the main gates to access the main road, more supporters are choosing to use the new footpath between Lidl and the Community Football Hub as a direct route to Otley Road, allowing traffic to exit the grounds quicker; it is a balance which is constantly under review.

Another supporter raised the issue of pedestrian safety after matches on Otley Road, as why the road is not closed after a match to allow supporters to safely depart the Montgomery Waters Meadow like it was when the club originally moved. Also, the addition of the footpath between Lidl and the Community Football Hub has created a bottle-neck where supporters could clash after a match. Lawrence began by explaining that he has been in discussions with the Police with regards to supporters potentially clashing after matches on the footpath leading to Oatley Road & they are looking into officer deployments for the start of the new season and beyond with additional lighting already having been installed on the path to improve safety.

11. Shrewsbury Town FC Open Day

A supporter asked if there was any news on whether the football club will host an Open Day at the Montgomery Waters Meadow in preparation for the 2019/20 season as one was not held for the previous 2018/19 and would it be used to launch the new kit?

Chris explained that before the start of the 2018/19 season, an Open Day was discussed at the 17th July 2018 meeting of the Supporters Parliament. It was agreed that the club would host an event during the Bank holiday weekend at the end of August 2018, however, due to various circumstances on and off the pitch, the Open Day was not held.

Brian explained that any Open Day would certainly require the involvement of the players, who do not return until 20th June 2019. Rob from the OSC (Official Supporters Club) added that previously Open Days were held during July and, even if not all new player signings are completed by this point, the vast majority are in place to make it an event for the supporters and the young supporters to meet and interact with the team. Open Days at the club also provide supporters a chance to interact with supporter groups such as the OSC, Supporters Parliament, ShrewsTrust, Away Travel Club, SuperBlues and others. For the OSC he added the lack of an Open Day last season severely impacted the OSC's membership figures and that not all supporters purchase a match day programme, so may not be aware of the work organisations do for the club, or coach services which are provided, so as a result these supporters, the organisations and the ultimately the club itself are affected. Brian responded that an Open Day could be an open training session where the players will certainly be involved as well as providing tours of the stadium facilities. Rob added that holding it as a training session rather than match day like previously against Hibernian pre-season game 31st July 2016 where no supporters could tour the changing rooms due to them being in service by both teams would be a better idea and that the squad could use the Away dressing room which would allow supporters to view the home one.

Brian explained that the new kit will be launched well before any Open Day but a release date currently is not available at the time of the meeting.

Brian explained to the room that he would discuss the idea of an Open Day with Manager Sam Ricketts and get his views on hosting a training session closer to the start of the 2019/20 season as well as speaking to STFC ITC Jamie about planning the event.

12. Ball Boys/Girls at Shrewsbury Town FC

A supporter mentioned the fact that a lot has been in the news about the professionalism of Ball Boys/Girls at Liverpool and wished what they know what the setup is for them at Shrewsbury Town FC as he felt some of them are too young for this job and that it could be a danger to their personal safety.

Lawrence responded by explaining that the selection of the Ball Boys/Girls is done through the Shrewsbury Town in the Community team and that he takes their safety extremely seriously on a match day. Lawrence added that where appropriate, he will move them away from a specific area to somewhere safer within the ground when required. Brian added that the stewards are constantly observing the Ball Retrievers throughout all matches, as too are staff from Shrewsbury Town in the Community who are responsible for them. An example of this being in the last game of the season at home against Walsall, when they were removed from near the away end around 30 minutes before the final whistle as a precaution.

13. Shrewsbury Town FC L.G.B.T.

A representative of a newly formed Shrewsbury Town FC L.G.B.T. (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) supporters group, which was formed in March 2019 on the Blue and Amber message board forum, wished to thank supporters for the warm reception which the newly formed group has received on both Twitter and Facebook social media platforms, and enquired whether the club would be interested in backing an organisation such as theirs to which Brian replied “100%”.

Brian will arrange a meeting with them to develop this inclusive organisation further.

Adding to this subject, Shrewsbury Town Football Club would like supporters to be aware of the EFL Code of Practice and as such need to communicate this with the supporters.

The EFL Code of Practice:

In 2012, following the high-profile incidents surrounding discrimination in the game, the Prime Minister hosted a round table discussion at Downing Street.

EFL, along with The FA, The Premier League, the Professional Footballers Association and the League Managers Association, provided an interim response to Government detailing our proposed activity to combat discrimination and work for greater inclusion within English football.

Since then, the EFL has produced the Equality Code of Practice. The Code of Practice covers 12 areas of the business from accountability through match day, general, academy and community operations.

Clubs should show an understanding across all these areas and be able to demonstrate how they meet each of the twelve points in order to meet the minimum standard. There are many benefits to meeting the minimum standard. Not only, morally, is it the right thing to do but it can help prevent legal action being taken against the Club. In addition, the business benefits can have an impact on any Club by assisting in attracting more supporters, more businesses/sponsors and a more talented employment pool.

All documentation/evidence for the twelve points has been updated and we are awaiting feedback.

The Twelve points are:

Accountability and Commitment (Board and club)

Policies

Legal Compliance

Behaviour (Everyone associated with the club) Education & Training (Everyone associated with the club)

Reporting & Managing Incidents

Awareness Raising & Communication

Workforce

Fans

Activities (Club monitors diversity)

Consultation & Relationship Building

14. During the close season

Brian was aware that during a season many followers of Shrewsbury Town FC interact with others in person on a week by week basis. He is aware of the mental health aspect for some of the club's supporters who, during the close season, lose these regular connections during the summer months until the start of the next season. He would like find a solution to address this through some kind of social events with Shrewsbury Town in the Community to be held at the club, allowing supporters to continue to meet up and keep in contact.

An idea suggested by one supporter was to host events similar to the official opening of the Community Football Hub & Smithy's Bar with Dave Edwards & Stuart Dunn to bring supporters together.

Another idea was a Quiz night hosted at the Community Football Hub & Smithy's Bar.

15. AOB

Lawrence wish to thank Hazel Corbett for a wonderful article she wrote for the matchday programme and club's website of her experience behind the scenes during matchday of how stewarding is operated at Shrewsbury Town FC. The link to the article is here;

<https://www.shrewsburytown.com/news/2019/april/matchday-stewarding-an-insight/>

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

Next meeting of the Shrewsbury Town Supporters Parliament is Wednesday 7th August 2019.