



Supporters Parliament

Meeting held on Wednesday 7th August 2019

at the Montgomery Waters Meadow

Present

Chris Wynne; Roger Groves (Supporter Liaison Officer); Mike Davis (Supporter Liaison Officer); Brian Caldwell (CEO); Ian Whitfield (Media Manager); Jamie Edwards (STiTC); Joshua Wynne; David Allsopp; Janet Bould; Harry Challoner; Paul Coyne; Barry Davies; Rachael Dilloway; Andy Garden; Nick Gurden; Barry Hawkins; Elaine Hawkins; Brian Jones; Ian Jones; Malcolm Lane; Marion Lane; Rob Lewis; James Nightingale; Rebecca Nightingale; Lynn Price; Stewart Price; Dave Richards; David Ruscoe; Richard Vernon.

Apologies

Lawrence Ellerby (Safety Officer); Martin Gaunt (Ticket Office Manager); Hazel Corbett; Rob Fox; Helen Hall; Jill Lucas; Simon Moore; Ian Payne; Selwyn Plant; Joyce Pulford; Colin Storey

1. Welcome and Apologies received

The meeting was opened by Chris Wynne with everyone in attendance welcomed, and it was confirmed a list of apologies had been received which would be made available along with those present on the minutes produced.

2. Review of Minutes from last meeting

Chris confirmed that the minutes of the last meeting from May had been agreed between the club and the Supporters Parliament and were available to view on the club website.

3. Match-day Experience – Open it up for views & thoughts but also cover the following:

- **Ticketing**

Brian Caldwell (CEO) explained that the club are constantly working hard to identify and deal with any ticketing issues in a speedy and efficient manner for supporters who have an issue when trying to gain entry to the Montgomery Waters Meadow. He explained that Martin Gaunt (Ticket Office Manager), who was unable to attend the meeting, has been proactive in investigating the club's rejected ticket report and is analyzing the data to see if there is anything that the club can do to reduce this figure throughout the season. 123 tickets were rejected at the turnstile, Brian explained, with the full details within an article on the Shrewsbury Town Football Club website.

<https://www.shrewsburytown.com/news/2019/august/ticket-update/>

He added that he was pleasantly surprised that the ticketing issues for the Portsmouth game on 3rd August 2019 were as low as they were following comments he had seen online. He added that across the country, all football clubs have issues with tickets on the opening game of season & that the ticket office at Shrewsbury Town will be working hard to ensure that this number is reduced as the season progresses to allow supporters to enjoy the match day experience. The club wish to encourage supporters to contact the clubs ticket office with any issues with ticketing including Season Tickets and Fan cards.

A supporter explained that a friend, who attends the home games with him, had issues with his season ticket card for the west stand. They went to the west stand ticket office hoping the issue could be resolved, but they were informed that they would need to go to the main ticket office at the front of the stadium. Brian explained that currently the west stand ticket office is only a location to sell match day tickets to take pressure off the main ticket office, allowing them to deal with ticketing issues and ticket sales for the rest of the ground. Season ticket scanning issues is something that Brian is exploring with Martin & Lawrence Ellerby (Safety Officer), who was not able to attend the meeting, to introduce at some point in the season when they believe that they have a work around. Chris Wynne (Supporters Parliament Chair) added that his observation of social media posts around ticketing issues for season ticket holders, the most common question being asked was whether supporters require a new season ticket card each season. Brian explained that a new card is only required if the supporter changes their seat/Safe Standing space in the ground or change of price category. The cards were introduced to save both the supporter having to collect a new season ticket book/card every season & also to save the football club money as the new season ticket is simply added to the existing card in the supporter's possession otherwise.

- **Parking**

Chris explained to the supporters present who may not be aware that the football club no longer have access to the parking facility at Percy Throwers Garden Centre. As a result, Shrewsbury Town Football Club have been investigating alternative locations for both home and away supporters to park on a match day.

Brian explained that the agreement for parking at the Percy Throwers Garden Centre was made when the Montgomery Waters Meadow hosted a concert which required the sourcing of additional parking spaces for the large volume of people visiting the ground and the previous loss of Sutton Grange Nursery. As part of the agreement a chargeable fee for supporters was agreed, which included the cost of stewarding the car park. The Percy Throwers group have been taken over by a company called Blue Diamond, whose feeling is that the continued parking of supporters is affecting

their business, restricting the number of spaces for their customers. Brian was informed, towards the end of the 2018/19 season, of the companies wish to not allow supporters to continue to park at this site and has been investigating alternative locations for the club to operate a similar system which is within a close proximity to the ground. The Meole Brace Park and Ride was an interesting proposition for multiple reasons in his view. The proximity to the ground with an estimated ten-minute walk, around 660 parking spaces which Brian felt was not going to be full on a typical Saturday afternoon from around 13:00-15:00pm. After discussions with Shropshire County Council during the summer break, an agreement has been made where the club steward the parking facility with an approximate 300 spaces available initially on a trial basis. Since Shrewsbury Town Football Club moved to the stadium from the Gay Meadow, the council made it clear to the club that the Meole Brace Park and Ride was a prohibited area for match day parking. Supporters have been parking in the Meole Brace Park and Ride & Shropshire County Council has not enforced this. The only way, Brian explained, that the club could receive the parking spaces from the council is if it is properly managed and stewarded which has its own costs to operate.

A three-match trial was made during the pre-season.

- For the game against Aston Villa, supporters parked over 600 vehicles at the Meole Brace Park and Ride. This also gave an opportunity to test out the route signage for travelling supporters
- The Dundee United game saw 75 cars use the Meole Brace Park and Ride facility
- 268 cars using the facility for the Portsmouth game.

There is clear demand for parking close to the Meadow grounds for both home supporters and for travelling supporters. Brian presented an example from the Portsmouth match where 1714 supporters travelled to watch their team & wanted them to feel welcomed to be at the Montgomery Waters Meadow, to enjoy the FanZone & have a few drinks. Brian added that Portsmouth supporters only used four coaches and two minibuses, which if full would have accounted for approximately 250 supporters, an estimated 300 supporters traveling by trains and other public transport, which as a result is an estimated 1000+ traveling by car (unless they are keen cyclists). Brian is keen to make a success of the new carparking at the Meole Brace Park and Ride for a small fee to cover the cost of operation, however, if a supporter has another suggestion to achieve an outcome which satisfies all home & traveling away supporters then he encourages supporters to contact him to discuss this further.

Brian explained that he had received multiple emails with regards to departing the Meole Brace Park & Ride. The feedback received from a supporter on the length of time it took for him to depart of around twenty minutes, compared to another supporter who spent over an hour patiently waiting in the post-match traffic from the Meole Brace Park and Ride when it combined with the traffic leaving the neighbouring retail park.

A supporter asked Brian what is the percentage of available car park spaces within the clubs' grounds? Brian explained that every car parking space at the Montgomery Waters Meadow is purchased by supporters for the season. There are a number of spaces allocated to staff and members of the media etc to park at the ground. Brian explained that with regards to the space for members of the media, Ian Whitfield (Media Manager) will inform the ticket office the day before a game to advise them of how many spaces are not scheduled to be used by the media and can be placed on general sale for supporters. This practice is also used by the hospitality department. However, with regards to other empty spaces in the car park on a match day that are sold to supporters, Brian is considering asking season ticket parking pass holders to inform the club that

their parking space will not be used which would allow the club to sell that space for that game and donate the funds to Shrewsbury Town in the Community.

Chris raised an issue from a supporter who emailed the Supporters Parliament with regards to the cost of the car parking permit at the Montgomery Waters Meadow being almost as expensive as a season ticket within the ground. Brian explained that currently the club still have a waiting list of supporters who have shown an interest in purchasing a car parking permit & shared with those present that he had received an email from a supporter who had been waiting for some time to take advantage of parking at the club. Brian explained that the permit price has been reduced since he came to Shrewsbury Town Football Club from approximately £300.00 to £225.00 to ensure that a parking season ticket was not more expensive than a match day £10.00 parking charge.

A supporter asked how are traveling away supporters being directed to the Meole Brace Park and Ride facility both before and after a game? Brian responded that the media team will continue to use its social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter & Instagram) where they connect to the opposition's username on each platform & the visiting club share the information among their own supporters. For the situation following a game's conclusion, Brian said that Lawrence Ellerby (Safety Officer) is the best person to expand on this question further but it was a fair point as the gates between the West Stand and North Stand are closed post match so Club would look at signage for away fans to direct them along the path between Lidl and the Community Football Hub.

A supporter asked whether it would still be free for parking in the Meole Brace Park and Ride on an evening game. Brian replied that there would no longer be any free parking at the Park and Ride site and explained the reason for this was that Shrewsbury Town Football Club received an annual bill from Shropshire County Council for the use of the facility to cover their lighting and personnel costs to close & securely lock the site after evening games.

A supporter asked if the football club still provide a bus service from the Shrewsbury Railway Station to the Montgomery Waters Meadow for away supporters? Brian replied that the club do still provide this service, for both home and away supporters to use to get to the stadium for a match from the main Shrewsbury Bus Station. This service requires better promotion by the football club to increase already good numbers of home supporters who use the service, along with the away travellers, as the club pay for this service with the cost offset by the return ticket cost. Chris added an issue he has noticed multiple times with regards to coaches at the stadium & the cars parked at the football ground. After a match has concluded and supporters board their relevant coach, these coaches are meant to have priority of leaving the clubs car park via one lane which runs along the perimeter fence of the club from behind the South Stand, past the Memorial Garden and out of the main gates of the stadium. Chris explained that on many occasions last season and after the Portsmouth match 3rd August 2019, cars in the left lane attempt to push into the lane to get a quicker exit, or have turned their vehicle on the corner of car park in a way which blocks the coaches getting past safely to expedite the departure from the ground. Naturally supporters wish to leave the ground as quickly as possible after a match. In Brian's observation he has seen cars weaving through the car park in an attempt to get into 'pole position' for a quicker exit while pedestrians are either walking through the car park to leave the ground, or to their own vehicles to join the queue to leave the stadium & it can be difficult to control the flow of traffic with the volume of vehicles parked. Brian will consult with Lawrence Ellerby (Safety Officer) about what could be achieved for future games but there is a reliance on car park ticket holders driving responsibly.

- **FanZone update**

Jamie Edwards (Shrewsbury Town in the Community) explained that when Shrewsbury Town in the Community took over the operations of the now named Community Football Hub and Smithy's Bar from the Power League, it was their intention to move the FanZone from its current position by the South and West stands to an area alongside the Hub. Jamie wished to thank the SuperBlues and the Official Supporters Club (OSC) for providing the funding to make the move and upgrade possible.

Shrewsbury Town Football Club's hospitality will be providing the food and beverages to sell in the new FanZone as part of the Smithy's Bar, which as a result means that the club would be able to make more profit.

The front door of the Hub at the time of the meeting is unusable due to construction of a new ramp to the door which allows the old ramp to be dismantled and give more space for the FanZone project. The site will operate from only one entrance through the bar, giving supporters access to both facilities of the FanZone, Smithy's Bar and the events for children utilizing the KidZone (7-a-side pitch) & 5-a-side pitches.

Following the feedback the community team received from supporters, it was identified that there was nothing in the FanZone to entertain children on a match day ~~in the FanZone~~. The children would run and play on the community pitch at the side of the Community Hub, having to avoid empty glasses dotted around the field, and later in the week members of his team would have to remove the glasses from the pitch. The KidZone will provide a new method of entertainment for children attending matches with a series of activities where they can be scored on to earn, for example, certificates for their efforts, which it is believed would give the parents/guardians some time to enjoy a drink while their children are entertained in a secure & entertaining environment.

The container stage currently in use at the FanZone will be moved into the upgraded FanZone and will be slightly elevated to allow the artist performing to be more visible to the audience, with Chris Allan who organises the stage looking at ideas to make improvements.

The marquees which were in the previous FanZone were hired for use on a match day and currently Jamie and the Community team are investigating either purchasing rather than hiring a new marquee specifically for the new FanZone, or investigating another method of providing shelter for supporters.

Another idea which Jamie would like to develop is to use a second container which will be converted to house entertainment for older kids who may not wish to take part in the elements of the KidsZone. This container would house several consoles with FIFA and other games available to play and compete.

A supporter asked about the speed of service at Smithy's Bar which from their own experience at the recent Portsmouth match on 3rd August 2019 where the service was slow due to the number of supporters within the bar. Currently on a match-day Smithy's Bar has two bars comprising of the main bar inside and also a Woods bar which is set up on the decking outside near the pitches with a proposed new third bar located within the newly moved FanZone. The current Woods bar will be altered to have the same range of drinks on offer as the main bar within Smithy's, as too will the proposed third bar. It is Jamie's belief that this extra bar facility in conjunction with the two current ones will allow for quicker service for supporters on a match day.

Brian wished to thank both the OSC & Superblues for their donations to this FanZone upgrade project as none of the works could have started without these funds to improve the matchday

experience for all supporters. The upgrade of the FanZone and KidsZone will be an evolving process as and when new funds are raised, whether it be from prize draws or auctions, to any other form of revenue collection. It is both Brian and Jamie's belief that this should be achieved in full consultation with the supporters.

The capacity of Smithy's is 220 people with the potential to expansion with the introduction of the FanZone's moving alongside, plus the extra bar facilities operated by Shrewsbury Town Football Club's hospitality department means that the club will see better revenue and allow more supporters to be served in a timely manner.

A supporter asked whether the current Shrewsbury Town in the Community Hub by the community pitch will be moved along with the FanZone to the other side of the stadium. Jamie responded by saying that the Hub would remain in its current location & on a match day there are no plans to change the facilities function with the games consoles still being used. Match day mascots enjoy an individual experience which will still operate from the Hub from 11am, they have tours of the stadium followed by food served in the Hub as they do not wish to expose the children to Smithy's Bar where supporters would be drinking. This ensures that the Hub would be used in some format going forward. An average matchday would see 50-100 supporters using the facility just for the mascot and matchday experience packages with both the children taking part and their family members accompanying them and also enjoying the experience. Jamie also informed the room that Shrewsbury Town in the Community has applied for funding to provide a "Disabilities Supporters Match Day Club" with the hope that they can provide activities on and off the pitch and with the moves being planned of the KidsZone, the Hub can be used as a secure place for disabled supporters and their families/careers to visit and is a platform to achieve more on these kinds of projects.

4. Supporters Liaison Officer (SLO) Role

Mike Davis & Roger Groves introduced themselves as Shrewsbury Town Football Club's new Supporter Liaison Officers, taking over from Brian who formally occupied the role but felt more could be achieved. The pairs recent successes with projects like the introduction of Safe Standing to the EFL made them a perfect fit for the club. Roger briefly described the role of the Supporter Liaison Officers (SLO) which include;

- Communication with the SLO from opposition clubs for both visiting supporters to the Shrewsbury Town, and our own supporters traveling away from home which involve subjects such as parking, general match day friendly pubs and activities being held at clubs such as FanZone.
- This new role allows Mike and Roger to attempt to deal with any issues which arise and potentially cause issues for supporters & not have to wait for the next meeting of the Supporters Parliament to be held in order to try and rectify the issue.
- Parking issues for disabled supporters have already been achieved by the new SLO's.
- South Stand Flags had an issue with delivery of their new flags in time for the opening game of the season against Portsmouth, this issue was also dealt with by the SLO's.

Brian explained that a Twitter account has been set up for the new SLO role http://www.twitter.com/Shrews_SLO and an email address for supporters and other SLO's to contact Mike and Roger slo@shrewsburytown.co.uk

5. 78/79 reunion update

Chris explained for supporters who were unaware, that in the match day programme for the Portsmouth match 3rd August 2019, a full-page advert was printed for this event with a confirmed date 17th August 2019. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the organisers this date has had to be rescheduled for 23rd November 2019, which coincides with the League One game against Bristol Rovers at the Montgomery Waters Meadow.

Formal letters informing the former players involved in this event will be sent detailing the date change following the SP's meeting. Roger added that currently 9-10 players are confirmed to take part in the evening and it is his hope that with this extra time the organisers can secure other former players from the 78/79 squad to join them with the package which has been developed for the evening promises to be a fun night for the squad and for the supporters in attendance.

6. A.O.B.

• Ipswich Town ticket price

The club released the tickets for the Shrewsbury Town Football Club's away trip to face Ipswich Town with a cost of £27.00 for adults, this cost was met with some negative responses from supporters online who felt it was too high for League One. Brian explained that there is nothing that Shrewsbury Town Football Club can do with regards to the price that Ipswich Town Football Club charge for their match day tickets. When compared to our own pricing structure, charging £20.00 for an adult ticket, makes STFC one of the cheapest in our league.

Mike and Roger intend to contact the SLO at Ipswich Town Football Club and voice their disappointment of the ticket costs for supporters.

• Proud Salopians Update

Andy Garden (Proud Salopians) explained that the Proud Salopians are attempting to organise a date for the formal launch of their organisation either at the Montgomery Waters Meadow, or at the Smithy's Bar. Their hope is that representatives from Shrewsbury Town Football Club, Pride in Football & Football Supporters Federation will join the members of Proud Salopians with the possibility of taking part in a quiz night at Smithy's Bar for all supporters who are interested in attending.

Andy explained that the group is organising the production of badges & stickers to help raise awareness of their group and what it stands for a platform for LGBTQ+ supporters of Shrewsbury Town Football Club.

Andy wished to thank Matt Burgess for his help in creating the logo for the group.

• Shrewsbury Town Football Club Away Supporters Team

Saturday morning 17th August 2019 the Shrewsbury Town Football Club's Away Supporters Team will play their first match in three years prior to Salops home game against Rochdale AFC and all supporters are welcome to attend.

- **Open Day at Shrewsbury Town Football Club**

Mike explained to the room that the Open Day at the Montgomery Waters Meadow held on Saturday 20th July 2019 was considered a huge success. Over a thousand supporters took part in the event meeting the players after many took part in Shrewsbury Town in the Community events.

This year's event was organised at late notice and the Supporters Parliament and the club encourage supporters to provide feedback to make next seasons event and future events even better working with all the organisations and supporters' groups.

A huge thank you from Shrewsbury Town Football Club supporters to Manager Sam Ricketts, his coaching staff and the players for all their efforts from signing pictures and merchandise to taking photos with supporters.

- **South Stand Flags Update**

South Stand Flags has raised enough funds to produce 60+ flags featuring various images, logo's and other designs. Delivery of the flags was meant to be 8am on Saturday 3rd August 2019 before the opening game of the season against Portsmouth, however, a delivery issue arose meaning the flags would not arrive until 6th August 2019. Not wanting to leave the Safe Standing area flagless, the SLO's, Football Club & the club shop sourced temporary alternatives until the flags can be unveiled at the next League game against Rochdale on 17th August 2019.

Next meeting of the Shrewsbury Town Supporters Parliament is Wednesday 9th October 2019.