Supporters Parliament

17th July 2018

**1) Matters arising from last meeting**

Nothing noted from last meeting.

1. **Season Ticket**

Brian Caldwell explained to those in attendance that sales of season tickets was just over 3400 at present with only 27, at the time of the meeting, not renewed from the previous season.
Brian went on to explain about how the club wants to encourage younger supporters to become season ticket holders and instil a love for the sport and the club, with the great ticket initiatives for Under 12’s (free) and the Under 23’s with rates which the football club is trying to market as best as possible.
Ian Whitfield had made Brian aware of supporter’s experiences with the charges for buying match day tickets online and the feeling towards these charges and explained that he intended to contact Ticketmaster to resolve this issue. Going forward Brian wants to try and streamline the ticket buying process with Ticketmaster as currently there are a number of different charges for collection, postage, etc. which could make the process confusing to supporters and put them off buying a ticket and ultimately make then adverse to attending matches, which clearly is something Brian does not wish to happen.

Brian explained to those in attendance the costs passed onto the football club by Ticketmaster per print at home ticket, season ticket, match day ticket. Brian does not wish to pass these charges on to the supporters as he doesn’t agree with them, as a result the club pays these per ticket charges. He went on to explain that with regards to the two Wembley experiences, he felt that the club couldn’t take that large a hit on these particular Ticketmaster charges and hoped supporters realised that, however unpopular as it was.

The question was asked about what age a young person can buy a match day ticket on their own? Brian explained that it is a tricky area, a hypothetical scenario he described was that if an issue with a young person getting into trouble occurred at the ground, the club would not be able to simply eject them from the stadium as they would have a duty of care for that young person’s safety and well-being until a parent or guardian arrived. Brian added that he wished to encourage more young people to attend matches at the ground.

1. **Steel Work Update**

Brian Caldwell explained that work continues on the cleaning and repainting of the steel work around the football ground. Halls Construction who built the stadium have been working with the club to resolve the issue with the paint provided to them. Brian explained that the whole process involved cleaning the steal work and removing the algae growth, followed by painting the steel in fresh paint. He explained that the west stand is nearly complete with both the exterior and concourse complete, leaving just the steel above the seats to finish in that stand. The whole process from start to completion is an estimated to be 40 weeks from mid-April, Brian was also pleased to explain that the new paint work means the club have a new 5-year extension to the guarantee.

Ian Whitfield has throughout the process been providing photos and videos on the club’s website and social media feed showing supporters the progress of the paint works.

1. **Safe Standing Update**

Brian explained that to date 200 season tickets have been sold for the new Safe Standing area which is a great start. After discussions with the SGSA, the football club are allowed to sell tickets for the Safe Standing area on a match by match basis. Reasoning for this that both the club and SP representatives believe that not all the people who stand at matches can either afford, or commit, to a season ticket for work, or personal reasons. Having this facility allows the club a chance to offer the new facility to a wider audience that would otherwise try and stand somewhere else in the ground in an unsafe way thus potentially blocking the view of other supporters who choose to sit.

On a match day, ticket holders for Safe Standing will use turnstiles 9 & 10 where they shall be issued with a coloured wrist band to allow them to access the area, these colour bands will change for every match and will be non-transferable.

Match day tickets for Safe Standing is something Brian is looking into so that the club can have an idea of numbers entering the area on a match by match basis. He went on to explain that he is looking into providing tickets on a match day by either: moving the West Stand ticket office to a location that would serve both the West and South stands, which would result in the loss of several bike racks in that area; or by converting part of the offices on the south stand partly used by the Shropshire FA into a small ticket office for just serving Safe Standing tickets. The benefit of this would be that a full ticket office connected to the internet could be linked here allowing real time allocation on the club’s ticketing system providing the club with vital data on the new seating/standing area. The second option would allow the West Stand ticket office to remain where it is.

A mini season ticket for the Safe Standing area’s first three home matches was mentioned and Brian commented that he was working on a solution for a reduced fee which does not affect season ticket holders.

It was asked weather a sticker can be placed by each Safe Standing season ticket holders place stating that a season ticket holder stands in this place to assist self-policing by supporters as well as helping the stewarding team for the area. The idea, it was believed, would also help prevent supporters congregating in one area of the stand instead of in the seat/standing place that is associated to their match day, or season ticket. Brian was willing to investigate this in preparation of the upcoming start of the season. In addition, it was mentioned that the club could print something on the tickets themselves stating the rules of Safe Standing to act as a “gentle reminder”.

Standing around the rest of the ground, such as currently occurs in block 19, was questioned and how will the club enforce supporters in those areas to sit down instead of standing, which has been the norm. Brian explained that he and the Safety Officer Lawrence were in discussions about enforcement, he is working with supporter’s groups to encourage people to move to the Safe Standing area. A lot of supporters in block 19 actually do not have a ticket for this area, but usually migrate from somewhere else in the stand. This is an issue that the club will be investigating going forward as well to minimise standing in the block.

Row M in the South Stand is classed as Rail Seat 2, which has reduced leg room compared to other seats in the ground, the club have informed the season ticket holders who were affected by this. Banners in the Safe Standing area have been ordered for use in Row M to utilise this area which will be mainly empty.

It was suggested that the football club should, as part of its advertising, use the scoreboard to advertise the fact that Shrewsbury Town FC are the first club bring Safe Standing to the Football League as well as all the screens in the concourse. It was left with Ian Whitfield to investigate further.

Parliamentary Debate on Safe Standing in Westminster

Mike, Roger and Justin on behalf of Shrewsbury Town FC & STFC Supporters Parliament travelled to London to visit the halls of Westminster for the debate “Allow Premier League & Championship football clubs to introduce safe standing” which received 112,026 signatures to trigger the debate.

The feeling from the members of Parliament who attended the meeting was that there is strong support for Safe Standing in football stadia in the Premier and Football League. However, due to the current legal proceedings neither the MP’s from Liverpool or the victims and families of the Hillsborough would comment. The Government has requested a full review of the proposal of Safe Standing to be re-examined at the end of 2018. Unfortunately, Shrewsbury’s local MP Daniel Kawczynski was not present at the debate.

Launch Party for the Safe Standing will take place across the weekend of the Bradford match, Friday evening 3rd August 2018 and a pre-match 4th August 2018 with a special Match Day programme for those who contributed to the campaign and a ribbon cutting ceremony. Roger informed the room that there will be a section of future programmes with updates on the progress of the Safe Standing area.

Brian informed the room that the engraved plaques to be fitted to the safe standing seats, for those who contributed by purchasing certain packages, had arrived at the ground & they were expecting the arrival of the wall of fame board for all those who donated towards the project.

The decision was made not to use the South Stand for the Brentford pre-season game as Brian wanted the first use of the stand to be presentable with all elements installed correctly.

1. **Kit Supplier Update**

The 2018/19 season is the last season of the current contract with Errea.

1. **Open Day 2018**

It was felt that the best time to have an open day was during the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of August 2018.

Exact date to be confirmed.

1. **Fundraising**

Brian explained his new idea to encourage people to come to the Montgomery Waters Meadow with a “Postcode Ticket Giveaway” giving a winning season ticket holder free tickets for them to give away in their local area.

“Paint the Town Blue and Amber” During the play-off final build up at the end of the 2017-18 season, Roger, Mike & Chris of the Supporters Parliament with Glyn Price of Blue & Amber went around Shrewsbury towns businesses and spread banners and flags to promote the football club.

1. **Themed Match Days**

Glyn of Blue & Amber, who was not able to attend on the night, has been working with Brian in organising themed match days involving Shrewsbury Town In the Community (STFC ITC) who are also trying to plan match day events.

* Beach Volley Ball day
* Blue and Amber day
* Fan Fitness day
* Walking to the ground day
* Flags day
* Christmas party day
* Stickers day
* Spirit of 79 day
* Retro shirt day
* Seagull appreciation day
* End of season party

These shall be explored further with Glyn, the football club and STFC ITC.

1. **Match Day Experience**

FanZone – The football club and STFC ITC, brought in the marque around October 2018 to provide some shelter for supporters during poor weather conditions. The club are now looking to provide a more permanent structure to improve the FanZone on a match day. The Shrewsbury Town Official Supporters Club are planning donate some picnic benches to provide somewhere for supporters to sit down.

Brian is investigating if it is possible to put a television, or projector, within the FanZone order to show Sky Sports matches.

Concourse – It was asked by someone if the concourses could be individually named to make it easier to praise staff or to give feedback.

1. **Walking Football**

The Supporters Parliament was contacted about expanding on the current walking football provided by the STFC ITC. Chris wished to update people and gather any feedback from those who attended the meeting, including ideas such as playing on the pitch on a Saturday before a match.
Details will be passed to Jamie of the STFC ITC will be explored more at the next meeting.

1. **Memorial Garden**

The OSC’s chairman Simon Moore approached both the club and the Supporters Parliament about the OSC taking full ownership of the upkeep and cost of maintaining the club’s Memorial Garden.

Brian Jones of the OSC has been performing the day to day upkeep of the garden recently and explained the work that he has been doing to maintain the gardens. All the flower beds have been layered with new bark, as well as the areas around the fence. The treatment of the bench around the main tree has been completed too.
Chris put on record a special recognition of thanks to Diane who had previously been maintaining the gardens until recently and all the hard work and effort she put into the garden.

Brian Caldwell echoed Chris’s recognition of Diane’s work on the gardens and wished to thank her for all her hard work, he went on to thanking the OSC for taking on the project and especially Brian Jones for his hard work which he has put into it so far, noting that he rarely saw Brian Jones without his wheel borrow. The Memorial Garden, he continued, was a project achieved through the Supporters Parliament and is also a legacy of Chris Smiths who had helped to fund it and with many people he personally sees using the gardens on a day to day basis for reflection and remembrance.
Chris explained how Simon had been replacing the dead roses within the gardens, he then went on to explain about one particular white rose plant which had been added in memory of Shrewsbury Town fan Monty.

1. **Letters and Emails**

Most received were with regards to Safe Standing which have been answered within the Safe Standing section of these minutes.

1. **A.O.B.**
* Paul from the room asked if the club had any plans to celebrate the 1978-79 title winning season that promoted Shrewsbury Town to the second tier of English football?

He suggested that possibly a dinner to reunite the surviving members of the squad and allow them to talk to those who attend about their recollections of that time. It was also felt by some that this would be a great opportunity for the SP to raise funds for future projects for the fanbase.

The feeling in the room was that this is something the SP should explore with the club to bring to a future meeting.

* Match day experience for that games’ sponsors was brought up by Stuart. He spoke of his experiences as a match day sponsor, he describes being taken into the lounge to the table, informed that the bar was available and their meals shall be served shortly. He went on to explain that beverages were served at half time and summed up by compared this to his experiences at Ludlow with former players at the tables interacting with the sponsors and making it a far better experience in comparison. Stuart went on to say that he doesn’t feel he can sponsor another match with what is currently offered and knows many other local business and individuals who feel similarly to him.
In response Brian explained it is something that he and the football club have been exploring for some time with former players interacting with not only the sponsors lounge, but also the supporters in the Sovereigns Suite and also the FanZone.

Next meeting to be confirmed but likely to be 7th August 2018. Details on the Supporters Parliament Facebook page and on the club’s website.