

Coventry City Supporters Forum

Agenda for Meeting on the 18th April 2024 @ the CBS at 6.00pm

1. **Apologies for absence** – Kevin Heffernan, Paul Armstrong (Coundon), Pat Raybould, Steve Moloney, Colin Power, Mike Garlick, Jim Brown, Darren Cowley (Southam)

Attendees – Supporters Groups– Colin Henderson (chair), Pete Griffiths (Sec / vice chair – Sky Blues Talk – Alan Ludford (Diamond Club), Lewis Wale (Proud Sky Blues), Mark and Tony (Rugby Supporters), Paul (Welsh Supporters), Laura Smith (Family Zone)

CCFC – Mark Hornby, John Taylor, Doug King, Jodie Jones, Leigh Thomson.

2. **Matters arising** – There were 2 items.

Street named after former players – Colin Henderson has looked into how to get this off the ground and has researched information from Coventry City Council. For streets to be named it either needs to be proposed by a developer or an organisation, such as Coventry City Football Club. Whoever requests the street name would need the permission from the families of the players themselves. Colin has spoken to Jim Brown about the possibility of working with the Former Players Association on this.

Colin will contact the planning department at Coventry City Council to identify which major house builders are looking to build in the Coventry over the couple of years. It was confirmed this was an idea unanimously backed by those at the last Supporters forum. It is hoped that the club can be involved in this initiative in some form.

Safe standing – John Taylor – COO – Confirmed they had received feedback from supporters. The club are talking weekly with stadium owner, Safety Advisory Group and other parties. They are intending to have a trial row at the next home game. They know where we hope to go and a solution will be communicated once issues have been worked through. This will need to be decided before next years season tickets go on sale so expect something soon.

There was a wider discussion about the ‘away fans’ culture of standing throughout the game and everyone is aware of this but safety, especially with large crowds, has to be paramount.

3. **Equality and Diversity (EFL Mandate)** – John Taylor

Safeguarding – everything in place for the club. Safe to operate and Barnardo's have done reviews of the Academy and this has all been passed. Match days provision for

safeguarding is all in place. John talked about the Equality and Diversity EFL framework and that there are gold, silver and bronze awards. The club are aiming to achieve the bronze award within the next few weeks.

4. Club up-date by Doug King - Owner

Doug talked Training ground initially. He confirmed the infrastructure, car parking pitches etc should be completed in the next couple of months. That is part 1. The next part is to have a fit for purpose training establishment. They are in conversations with architects to provide an elite training centre and whilst this is being delivered a hybrid solution may be necessary.

He spoke of the start to each of the last 2 seasons has been a real handicap but is really hopeful that most things are in place for this not to be the case for the 2024-25 season.

He spoke of elite level performance in every aspect of the organisation. Hence bringing in John Taylor as chief operating officer and Dr Claire-Marie Roberts as performance director to look at the performance side of the club. The psychology and recovery aspects and the players are encouraged and are enjoying the difference this has, is and will make.

He said he will not comment on any transfer speculation and has asked his whole team not to. His official response is he doesn't know what we are going to do in the summer but the club will do what they will do and follow on the successful recruitment from last summer. He is confident we will have everything in place for the start of the season.

His aim is still to make the playoffs 3 out of 5 seasons and looking to win the playoffs to get through the door.

He referred to the 22-23 accounts and advised his goal is to look at a sustainable operating model irrespective of transfer ins and outs. The target is for within the next 2 years. He feels this would be an epic achievement. This can't be at the expense of a competitive team, relegation is not an option.

There will be more money from TV due to the new deal but this will affect fixture days and kick off times.

Colin Henderson advised that the first 6 months of the season will be agreed at the start of the season which would aid planning. Doug King agreed that this was his understanding too.

Mark Hornby advised that UK streaming would not be possible other than through the Sky Sports app or red button – iFollow would only be for overseas fans.

Doug has been really encouraged that the operating losses have stayed the same given the player quality have costs have increased substantially.

5. Responses to submitted questions – John Taylor

On separate sheet

6. Family Zone up-date – Laura Smith

Laura thanked the sponsors, fundraisers and the club and players for their time and support. Now have a gazebo and space outside the arena that's worked well. They have over 450 children who've registered on the loyalty scheme although this is less than last year and they are looking at why. You do not have to be a JSB to register for the family zone.

Player cards and autograph books have been well received. Youngsters will get the last of the cards at the QPR game.

They need to recruit new volunteers for next season. Already spoken to John Taylor and Jodie Jones to look at glitches that have happened during the season to review last and look forward to next.

Colin Henderson encouraged family zone information at the start of the season to communicate to all supporters' groups.

Discussion around improving the opportunities for family zone, moving it into the ground and making use of halls within the arena (subject to agreement and availability) as well or instead of outside. The club will work with the Family zone volunteers to continue to improve what's on offer.

7. Dates for future meetings – All

Next one looking at July or August – depends on if it's pre-season or first weeks of the season. Then looking at 3 over the year, with one of these being face to face. Club anxious to make clear that supporters groups don't need to wait for a meeting to raise a concern or question.

8. Any Other Business

Player of the year – Presentation by Supporters clubs at the QPR home game – CCLSC & Welsh Supporters – Jodie Jones will share details tomorrow, asked for names by 1 May. Limit of 4 people per supporters' groups to be involved.

FA Cup Semi Final ticket process – Numerous Supporters club

Ticketmaster issues – Wembley rules on leaving one ticket at the ends of rows and other strange issues that we all encountered.

CCFC were told how to release tickets for FA Cup Semi-Final – They need feedback on the system so that they can look at any issues. Most ticketing platforms are rigid.

The date of the game was an issue as the club were waiting for the date of the game to be agreed. Then working on different deadlines with different parties. All processes needed to be signed off by the FA and Wembley.

Given the allocation and that the club has 19,500 season tickets it wasn't possible to allow 2 tickets per season ticket as had been the play off option last year. Mark Hornby felt the process was fair and that supporters who have bought tickets in previous years had the chance to buy for Wembley.

Diamond club mentioned elderly supporters struggled with purchasing tickets through Ticketmaster online. Jodie Jones advised everyone who had emailed the ticket office had received a reply and if anyone was having an issue that would be the best thing to do.

Changes to disabled ticket purchasing for the game, compared to last year, had been made following feedback from fans and had ran more smoothly for these supporters.

Following a question about whether a different ticket platform is being considered, John Taylor advised that Ticketmaster are the number one provider of tickets for events in the UK. Doug explained the club are looking to improve the agreement that they have with Ticketmaster going forward. There are also other enhancements that can be looked at with Ticketmaster.