

Coventry City Supporters Forum

20th July 2023 @ 5.00pm

Questions from Forum Members

1. Are there any changes to parking and pick up points for home supporters arriving by coach for the new season? (Bedworth & Nuneaton)
DB – No changes planned
2. Will the Supporters Clubs have access to the sale of home match programmes at their venues as briefly discussed at the previous meeting? (Bedworth & Nuneaton)
MH – Plans for programmes next season are still being finalised. Looking to take back the selling process around the arena and external sites (Dhillons brewery) including supporters' groups. Question asked about digital programmes – MH doesn't feel there is a large appetite.
Jim Brown asked if sales had fallen. MH had advised the trend has been they have been falling across football and CCFC are looking to buck that trend. CH asked whether the club are considering digital programmes? MH – Not at present.
3. Given the significant increase in season ticket sales, has there been any thought to operating a fan village for all home games? (Sky Blue Talk)
Mark O'Shea from the Arena advised several options had been given to the club much like the Birmingham and Middlesborough games last season with food, drink and music. There is power and data and are looking at lighting for evening games.
4. Are we likely to continue closing seats in 'on-sale' areas when it seems that the risk reduction impact is minimal? Mainly blocks 10-13. (Sky Blue Talk)
DB – 10-12 are in the away end under the current structure of the away end unless we look to change it like the Middlesborough game last season. League rules mean CCFC have to give 3,000 tickets to away clubs. 13 was closed for safety reasons. There is a new Head of Operations for the arena and this has been brought up with her. Asked about rumour that Leicester only giving CCFC 2,000, MH advised this is not true.
5. The service within the corporate lounges has been disappointing. Is anything happening to improve it? (Sky Blue Talk / Corporate members)
TS advised that last season they had a lot of positive feedback, and it was by far the best season in corporates. This is based on number of compliments and the number of complaints received on match day and after games. Mark O'Shea – added that over 500 staff are employed on a match day. Tend to train on the day before the game. Been a journey building up skills, knowledge and lack of people. Frasers have brought cleaning and catering in house to be in control of standards

CH asked about random surveys after the game. TS said seasonal members have a process, those that buy match by match are given opportunities to feedback with follow up calls post match.

6. What plans are in place to improve fan safety after the game? Mixing people and cars on the stadium footprint and outside seems to be a recipe for disaster. (Sky Blue Talk)
DB advised there is a vehicle lockdown on the stadium footprint.

PG mentioned not just on the footprint but more widely outside of the footprint. TS mentioned the underpass to the car park opposite the main road. CH raised the issue on the crossing at the top end by the exhibition hall. CCFC are happy to look at in discussions with the safety meetings to see what can be done.

Dave Eyles asked about keeping fans behind. DB explained that this is not an option. TS gave an update at the end of the meeting from the police liaison officer who advised that this can only happen if they receive specific intelligence as otherwise it is against the individual human rights to hold back supporters in an away end

7. Are there plans to open the club shop straight after games at the CBS? (Sky Blue Talk)
DB advised it will be closed for 10 minutes after the game by the nature of the position where it is. DB says CCFC will make an announcement of retail operations shortly for 2023/24

8. Is there a breakdown of fan ejections and stewarding issues in each block for last season? (Sky Blue Talk)

DB has this information for the ground as a whole – he was not sure if they have a breakdown for each block. He was not able to share this in a public forum

9. Is there a timescale for the release of the new away shirt for 2023-24? Will there be a third shirt in 2023-24? If so, when will this be released? (Coventry City London Supporters Club)

TS – the answer is yes and yes and there will be a third shirt

10. With more season ticket holders in 2023-24, there are concerns over the overcrowding in the East Stand at half time in and around the toilet blocks. The overcrowding is aggravated by the queues for drinks and food etc. This could be alleviated by the introduction of a zig zag queuing system for the drinks and food outlets used extensively at other venues? (Coventry City London Supporters Club)

Mark O'Shea – talked about expanding out at half-time to use the outside and trying different approaches to improve the situation.

Aware that once attendances are over 21-22000 there are issues due to the design of the arena.

CH will give feedback direct to Mark O'Shea as he sits in this area

11. It's great that Doug King is investing in Ryton and on the Area pitch. Do we know if there are plans, in conjunction with Frasers, to improve facilities on the concourse both food/beverages and toilets. Half time is a particular concern based on last season? (Diamond Club)

Mark O'Shea - New sponsorship deal with Budweiser and about £50k has been spent on the concourse with a lot of refurbishment on each of the food and beverage kiosks. Looking to improve sustainability throughout the whole offer

MH advised that he had been working with the Arena over Summer to design and install new CCFC branding on concourse and outside Arena.

Jim Brown – Asked about vegetarian options? Mark O’Shea – trialled new offers on the concourse – every kiosk will have 4-5 different vegetarian options. Currently working on alcohol offers

CH – Are Frasers / CCFC looking to share some marketing material. Mark O’Shea advised there are plans on the walls and looking at a video with Budweisers to show what’s available.

12. Will the club benefit from sales on match day in & around the ground? If so, what changes are being imposed (if any) in terms of catering products, pricing & availability, especially with the increase in football that record numbers in season ticket purchases will bring? (Bedworth & Nuneaton)

DK – Aligned with Frasers and CCFC does share in the revenue and this was part of the broader deal for the licence agreement. Encouraged fans to get in early to take advantage

13. What plans are in place to cope with the additional fans who will be attending the CBS as season ticket holders this season (18,000+)? Are half time checks returning to your seat going to be in place for 2023-24? (Coventry City London Supporters Club)

14. Bigger crowds mean more issues getting in, toilets, half time refreshments, egress. Have any changes been made? Are there more plans in the pipeline? (Sky Blue Talk)

15. Family Zone – Have the club considered funding it? (Sky Blue Talk)

MH advised it hadn’t been directly, monetarily funded by the Club in the past. The current model has existing funds from various sources, as well as Club giving time and other resources directly, and providing prizes/donations for fundraising. There are plans being worked on for the forthcoming season including the Club creating a dedicated Family Zone space. Frasers working closely with Game which won’t be ready for the first game of the season but will come on board during the season to be a dedicated video game area.

16. Financial – Was the EFL loan fully repaid as part of the takeover transaction? (Sky Blue Talk)

DB – No it wasn’t. When the loan was taken (21 of 24 took it in the championship). All clubs had the same repayment plan – last payment due Jan 24. EFL funding comes through monthly and Premier league funding comes through bi-annually and this is reduced to pay the amount.

17. What other commercial opportunities are the club exploring alongside sponsorship and corporate sales. (Sky Blue Talk)

TS – Numerous opportunities – advertising and partnerships with various businesses in a creative way to work with the business and what they ask for and what budgets they are working with

Will be engaging with the local and regional business community as things have changed significantly given the increased visibility of the club and working with Doug King directly

18. Does Doug intend to inject any external investment into the playing side of the club, or is this ringfenced to infrastructure? (Sky Blue Talk)

DK – No comment – I mean there's so much chatter and you see what's going on with players coming in and going out. Doug said he 'likes to keep his cards close to his chest'. The strategy is to bring quality to the club, looking to upgrade everything including the playing squad.

19. Do SISU still have any financial involvement or any contractual obligations with Coventry City Football Club? (Sky Blue Talk)

DK – No, the fact is that JS was invited to Wembley as he thought it was a nice thing to do. She came as DK's guest. Sisu have moved away from the club.

20. How does the new stadium licence agreement compare to what was in place previously? (Sky Blue Talk)

DK – He feels it's a fair deal for the club and the stadium owner and you can see the collaboration taking place to enhance the experience and the ground and football club and community. DK advises the difference has been CCFC investing in the safe standing and the pitch. Very positive between both parties

21. Who is responsible for repairs to the new pitch? (Sky Blue Talk)

Within the agreement there's a pitch committee overseeing the new pitch.

22. Is there any external debt currently housed in either Coventry City Football Club Ltd or CovCityCo Ltd? (Sky Blue Talk)

DK – There is no external debt other than a small bond debt of about 20k who they are trying to find who gave the money originally.

23. Could you explain the new family zone season ticket seats and how the messages seem to have become mixed around extending its size? (Sky Blue Talk)

DB – Don't think it was ever mixed. Internally the plan was that we would sell clockwise for family zone and anti-clockwise for the standard seating. The family zone sales were much quicker than they anticipated. It got to the point where the family zone sales were completed.

24. What are the club's biggest challenges over the coming years? What the current plans to overcome them? (Sky Blue Talk)

DK – It's a tough league this year and the foreseeable future. Can only do what we can do. We will invest in the infrastructure of the club, Ryton and the pitch and this will continue as facilities need upgrading and as we bring in better quality players this has to be the case or they won't come. We have a proven management team who are locked into long term deals and he is optimistic that they can work with the improved players. Looking to get into the play offs 3 out of 5 years and to win one of the play offs. Most of the plans put in place in Jan / Feb have been hit massively and he is happy of the progression at the club.

He feels our Corporate outreach has been poor – this is the focus over the next 6-9 months. Focusing on getting the right players for the medium / long term to continue to progress the club.

25. Are Supporters Clubs required to pay sponsorship fees to get players to attend meetings? If they are, what will this year's costs be and what do we get for our money? (Leamington & Warwick)

CH suggested that L&W lead and DB agreed take off line as figures haven't yet been agreed.

26. At the last meeting, donating the £5 vouchers to the Family Zone was discussed. The lack of a formal response from the club on this has been disappointing. Are the club now able to clarify if this is still possible even though the deadline for using the vouchers has passed? (Coventry City London Supporters Club)

DB wants to have another look at this and provide a mechanism for making this happen. The deadline of 31/5 was the club's own one so we can move this.

27. Good progress has been made with the club's archives with everything removed from the CBS Arena to a safe secure storage place in the city. The next stage is for the club to agree to transfer the archives to a Charitable Trust which will secure the future of our history and heritage. Can the club confirm they are in-agreement with this course of action and agree on some timescales? (Jim Brown – Club Historian)

DB confirmed this has been discussed privately. DB confirmed conversations have been had with DK and discussions to make this possible will be arranged.

- 28 TV's have been fixed within the concourse and in the corporate areas.

- 29 Jody Jones looking to arrange a disabled supporters meeting at the end of August

- 30 Questions from Michael Garlick – disenfranchised by the marketing of corporate areas. They then missed out on the premier league packages. TS doesn't think that any corporate members missed out as the time was extended and specific arrangements made directly with corporate members.

Based on season ticket numbers this has been a success.

- 31 Why can't the corporate season tickets come with car parking or a link to buy this at the same time? TS advised it's a separate company and so there is a public portal that all corporate members can purchase them through the hospitality team

- 32 Will there be food available in the clubs corporate lounges? Mark O'Shea confirmed that this was upgraded second half of the season and will continue for this season.

TS – when DK first came to the meeting with heads of departments. We'll do things behind the scenes and then tell supporters about it. DK has taken the approach that a lot is going on behind the scenes and not been announced in advance but instead as things are happening or have happened. He feels the club has been good at communicating.