

## **Walsall Football Club – Supporters Working Party Meeting**

**Meeting held in the 1888 Lounge at the Banks’s Stadium, Monday 7th January  
2019, 15:00**

### **Present:**

Stefan Gamble (SG) and Daniel Mole (DM) – Walsall Football Club

Steve Davies (SD), Trevor Reece (TR) and Bob Thomas (BT) – Walsall Football  
Supporters Trust

Ian Buckingham (IB) and Dave Beckett (DB) – Walsall FC Disabled Supporters  
Association

### **Apologies:**

Walsall Football Supporters Club (The Saddlers Club)

### **Minutes:**

Nick Adshead (NA)

#### **1. Points still to action from last meeting**

DM advised that work to create a Fan Zone is complete and this will be open from Saturday’s game against Scunthorpe United. The area will be available to all supporters with a valid match ticket.

SG advised work is still ongoing regarding the increase in Disabled Car Parking provision and advised the DSA to liaise with Laura Greenhouse, DLO.

SD is still waiting on further information from Greg Oxley regarding his query around ticket prices and ticketing structure.

#### **2. Update from Walsall Football Supporters Club (The Saddlers Club)**

In the absence of any representative of the Saddlers Club, SG advised matters are still being resolved by solicitors regarding the Lease of The Saddlers Club building.

### **3. Update from Walsall Supporters Trust**

SD referred to a number of issues regarding the Boxing Day fixture against Bristol Rovers to which DM replied confirming the following:

An internal meeting with Department Managers has taken place to resolve the issues. The Catering Manager will be out on the “shop floor” for the next two home matches to see the issues with kiosk re: cold food and running out of stock for himself.

The toilets issue was due to a blockage on Christmas Eve and required the work of an outside company who were not able to deal with it in time for the Boxing Day fixture. There were also issues with the Power Voltage Supply for Hygiene facilities which has been resolved. It has been agreed that members of staff will now be checking the facilities during the game and be on radio to deal with issues as they occur.

Discussions are also ongoing with the Safety Officer re: pitch encroachments and exploring measures to deal with them, in particular in the away supporters' end of the stadium. Alongside this, step rails for the Middle and Upper Tier of the HomeServe Stand are also being discussed.

SD asked if as much notice as possible can be given to supporters for the Fans Focus Meeting. DM and SG confirmed that this date is still to be agreed but they would give as much notice as possible to allow as many supporters to attend.

SD asked if SG had spoken to the Stadium Safety Officer Jim O’Grady re: issues raised with car parking at the last meeting. SG confirmed he had spoken with Jim and he was not aware of the issue and advised that this instruction had not come from the club. Jim has spoken to car park staff.

SD also raised the issues of the email sent to the Club re: exiting the Green Car Park taking so long after matches. DM confirmed he responded to the initial email and our SLO and Safety Officer are looking into viable options but these are, sadly, limited.

SD raised concerns re: number of open turnstiles in the St Francis Group Stand at the Luton Town game. SG advised the matter will be passed onto Head of Turnstiles and asked to report back.

SD asked if the money from the Josh Ginnelly sale will be put back into the manager's budget. SG confirmed that transfer money received would be reinvested, as would the prize money received from the Checkatrade Trophy and the FA Cup.

SD advised supporters had raised concern with the heating in the Stadium Suite and Bescot Bar. DM advised the club agree re Bescot Bar and plans are ongoing to improve this facility.

SD also referred to the issues with the pre-paid drinks queue in this area. DM responded that signage has now been put in place to ensure those supporters who have pre-paid are served first.

SD advised he had been asked to ask why transfers fees are undisclosed. SG confirmed the Club will disclose the information if they feel it is in the club's best interests to do so (as has been the case for certain previous transfers) but also advised that such deals are commercially sensitive for any number of reasons and confidential between the parties with both clubs involved in the transaction having to agree on any public disclosure.

SD advised Kevin Paddock has stood down as Membership Secretary of the Supporters Trust and will be replaced in due course.

SD asked for clarification on the "Volunteer Role" that is being advertised. DM advised that the club are seeking volunteers to help and assist supporters on a matchday and not just work in the Fan Zone area. Club staff will run this area and not the volunteers.

SD asked if the club will be replying to the letter received from supporter Rob Harvey. DM & SG confirmed that the club are currently putting together a response, which will be sent by 10<sup>th</sup> January.

SD raised an issue which happened at the FA Cup game against Bolton Wanderers on Saturday following the game where a young supporter was treated unprofessionally by a steward. DM said the Club will speak to PC Stuart Spencer and offer assistance to ensure the matter is followed up.

#### **4. Disabled Supporters Association**

IB gave an update on the DSA membership - 58 registered members and 55 members on the Facebook page.

IB confirmed that the Christmas Presentation did take place on Boxing Day in front of Block M. Although the announcement did go out, it wasn't at the same time as the presentation. DM asked IB to liaise with Daniel Clarke on matchdays to ensure announcements are made as the presentations are taking place. It was agreed that for those supporters who were unable to attend on Boxing Day they will be asked to attend the Rochdale game on 2<sup>nd</sup> February and receive their presentation at half-time alongside the Academy Player of the Month, at which time the club photographer will take an official photograph. DB will co-ordinate on DSA behalf and liaise with SLO Daniel Clarke on the day.

IB advised that the wheelchair had been sourced. A small presentation will be made at the Bradford City fixture on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. DM and SG confirmed the chair will be stored at the stadium and thanked the DSA for this initiative.

IB confirmed the DSA are currently speaking with families with autistic children regarding how they can help them attend matches and make their experience attending matches better. DM asked IB to liaise with Laura Greenhouse, Ticket Office Manager/Disabled Supporter Liaison Officer, regarding this matter.

IB advised the DSA will be speaking with Royston Randle and the Away Travel Section regarding ways to move forward in organising transport to away games for Disabled Supporters.

IB and DB advised the 'Legends Night' was an excellent evening and thanked the club again for the items donated to the auction. It was advised that £1,600 was raised on the evening which the DSA Committee agreed for the money to be donated to the family of Teddie Phillips.

IB advised that the current website is no longer being maintained and that the DSA are looking into alternatives to ensure the website can easily be maintained by members of the DSA Committee. Until this is resolved, the questionnaire is currently on hold at which point the DSA will liaise with the club to assist with the distribution of the questionnaire through the club's media channels.

IB confirmed the DSA have recently emailed the FSF (Football Supporters Federation) to join.

IB raised concerns with the stewarding in the St Francis Group Stand, in particular at the recent game against Coventry, where stewards appeared to be watching the

match instead of the supporters and allowing able bodied supporters to congregate in front of the wheelchair users towards the end of the game and stewards not attempting to move supporters. IB advised he did raise the issue with steward Dave Gollins at the recent game against Luton Town. DM advised the matter will be discussed with Safety Officer Jim O'Grady.

IB asked if the club could look into improving instructions on tickets and signage for the Away Disabled Supporters in particular. SG advised Laura Greenhouse will look into this alongside the Car Parking Space issue.

IB stated that he would liaise with the Club's DLO Laura Greenhouse regarding the setting of a date for the next Open Meeting which is provisionally set for 20<sup>th</sup> February.

DB asked if the Club would consider retiring a seat in the stadium in respect of Teddie Phillips. SG stated the Club would be more than happy to look into a fitting way to commemorate the sad passing of Teddie.

## **5. Club Update**

SG noted that it has been a tough few weeks on the pitch and that the club are concerned at its current league position.

SG also noted that funds are available for the team manager to strengthen during this transfer window and all of our efforts were focused in this area.

## **6. Trust and Club Joint Activities**

There were none.

## **7. Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**DATE FOR NEXT MEETING MONDAY 4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2019 AT 15:00.**

**The meeting closed at 16:44.**