

Coventry City Supporters Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on the 18th of March 2021 @ 5.00pm via Zoom

1. Apologies for absence – Kevin Heffernan, Colin Power

a) Attending

Dave Boddy (CCFC)
Tynan Scope (CCFC)
Mark Hornby (CCFC)
David Busst (SBITC)
Colin Henderson – Chair
Pete Griffiths – Sky Blues Talk - Minute taker
Dave Eyles – Sky Blue Trust
Kevin Greenfield – Disabled supporters
Chris Holliday – Southam
Jim Brown – Former Players Association
Ray Stephens – Diamond Club
Pat Raybould – Family Zone/JSBs
Simon Champion – Leamington and Warwick
Mike Garlick - Corporate

2. Club up-date (including submitted questions)

Dave Boddy (DB) gave a club update. He thanked the group for postponing the original date for the meeting. He explained that at the time he knew the Ricoh deal was close. He explained that the Ricoh deal was an almost 2-year negotiation and recognised the response from the supporters had been phenomenal as they thought it would be. He explained the long-term nature of the deal of up to 10 years and at least 7 enables a long-term plan to take the club forward. DB emphasised how difficult this season had been with COVID and finances. He advised that football will be paying for this season for a long time. Possibly over the next 4 years or more. He urged us to have realistic expectations of what's possible next season. We've survived this year with ongoing support from the owner. He explained games have been hectic without any time to plan or think in between. This has affected the football and non-football side of the business.

Further questions were asked from those not covered from the submitted questions from the supporter's groups prior to the meeting

If the club returns to the Ricoh, will the club ensure that the standard of service and catering are provided to the same level as currently provided by BCFC. Will pricing of drinks and food be comparable?

DB doesn't feel CCFC can answer as it's provided by Delaware North. Tynan Scope (TS) explained that BCFC had their own in-house caterers. So, although CCFC can't guarantee the same level they can offer their input, challenge what doesn't meet the standard, but Delaware North are responsible for the standard of the product.

Kevin Greenfield (KG) – Who decides which bars and which outlets are open at Ricoh Arena?

DB – All kiosks will be open unless otherwise agreed with CCFC.

Jim Brown (JB) – Expressed his opinion that the standard of staffing was poor at the Ricoh in the season before we left and asked Is this likely to improve?

DB – Explained that Delaware North had Inherited what they had from Compass for the 18-19 season at the Ricoh. Asked that the supporters forum feedback if the service is not what it should be in the coming season.

JB – Asked about the real ale bar that Wasps have access to?

DB will take this away and look at whether this is possible.

Colin Henderson (CH) – Any progress on the EU complaint?

DB – Absolutely no news. He explained that complaints can take up to 5 years to be heard and this is likely to have been further delayed by COVID and Brexit. It's also possible that it won't be heard as we are no longer part of the EU. TS proposed that as CCFC can't impact this question that we avoid it coming up each meeting. All agreed that it would only be raised if something happened.

CH Can we have a progress report on the planning for the new stadium at Warwick University?

- Planning application
- Financing for the new stadium
- What are the economics for CCFC on taking such a large amount of debt?

DB Said there was no update but to say that there is a lot of work behind the scenes. He explained that the University are creating a master plan for the whole area to incorporate road, rail, buildings etc. There was no current timescale for this. DB explained he doesn't take day to day responsibility for the club regarding the new stadium as the owners are the ones liaising with the University of Warwick.

CH Has the club signed off the shirt designs for 2021/22? Will there be two or three kits in 2021/22?

Yes, they have been signed off late Autumn 2020, the lead times for this are quite considerable. How many kits for 2021/22 will not be announced now but they will be announced as part of the overall strategy. A lot of time is spent thinking about designs and making them perfect in party with Hummel the kit providers. Prices and timings of kit will be similar to previous seasons

DB / TS – M and M direct will not in future be able to sell kits.

CH Would it be possible to arrange a summer kids party for JSB's (COVID-19 compliant) following the cancellation of the 2020 Christmas party?

Mark Hornby (MH) in discussions with Pat Raybould (PR) have agreed it is not feasible to put on a summer kid's party. All efforts will be put into making the Family Zone as good as possible and will look to arrange a fabulous JSB Christmas party in 2021.

CH Is there an opportunity to work with fans who are independent designers / and or have supporters club merchandise to sell their stock on the CCFC website? This could include a revenue sharing agreement for the club.

TS Probably no to working with Hummel and given issues with safety it would make it difficult to get up and running and the costs would outweigh the potential benefits to the club. DB said the club was happy to promote support groups website as they already do on the CCFC website. On a follow up question regarding selling unofficial merchandise TS advised that Hummel wouldn't agree to CCFC redirecting potential customers away from their merchandise.

CH Regarding I follow, how much has the club taken in revenue so far this season compared with attendances last season?

DB advised they get feedback after every game. They are unable to give the figure in this forum. He explained when the game is on the red button the figures are less and as season tickets get access to i-follow the home games bring in less revenue than the away ones. All agreed it was worth repeating that the money paid to watch through i-follow comes back to the club.

Ray Stephens – (RS) – Do you think the EFL will make this available next season?

DB said he expects i-follow to only be available if COVID restricts attendances into next season. For CCFC the away following brings in 25% of the match day revenue. Midweek games might be different but if grounds are fully open there is no expectation of i-follow being available for Saturday games.

Following an excellent question about i-follow being available when away allocations are sold out, MH will take this away to consider but the decision is the EFL's.

CH Is it possible to live stream the clubs under 23's and under18's games for a fee?

DB would love to do this but is not sure it's financially viable for the club to do. It has been in their thoughts for the last 2 seasons. MH added that streaming requires a more robust/reliable internet connection than is available at Alan Higgs. DE made an excellent suggestion to partner with one or both universities to see if any students would like to help with this.

3. Election of a Vice Chair.

Two nominations:

1. Pete Griffiths
2. Mike Garlick

CH will send out voting forms to do this in between meetings, count the votes and announce the outcome by email

4. Election of a representative from the Supporters Forum to attend the Coventry City FC Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

Two nominations:

1. Frank Smith – (nominated by Dave Eyles Sky Blue Trust Chair)
2. Colin Henderson – Supporters Forum Chair

CH advised that he feels that having a representative from this group is important. He will send out details received from Dave Eyles - DE about Frank Smith so that all members of this group are aware before voting for who will represent this group who he is and his experience for this role.

Mike Garlick (MG) Raised the question of the Safety Advisory Group representative from the club being on this call. DB will include her in future Support Forum meetings in the future.

5. Family Zone up-date

MH as Pat Raybould (PR) not on the call at this point advised that the family zone area has moved back to Blocks 33 / 34 with plans to expand if necessary, in block 35. This will give more space that will be stewarded with a strong encouragement for a family friendly atmosphere. CH asked about fundraising and MH confirmed PR had been very active on social media with support from CCFC where requested for prizes etc

6. Club membership shirt up-date

In response to a question about shirts being re-sent following issues with sizes TS confirmed that they are working through the list and shirts have been sent out this week with some more still to do. CH asked if there was an average time for finding names on the back. TS advised that CCFC had asked for the order to be randomised but it had been further randomised when the shirts were made to appear differently on different sized shirts.

7. Any Other Business

MH UK Sports survey – Come to the club from EFL to talk about people's experience of lockdown and what sport means to them. Results of which will only help get fans to return in as high numbers and as safely as possible. The link is on the club website. CH advised it didn't take long to complete and all supporters' forums were asked to highlight this to their members.

Dave Busst (DB) - wanted to publicly thank the Southam supporters club for their donation of their annual membership to SBITC. This raised £1300 with gift aid. This was matched by a hospital charity and has gone to a Cancer support group for one of the Walking football initiatives.

JB / CH / Southam Supporters group all had trophies for last year's player of the season – Fankaty Dabo to get to the club to be presented to Fankaty and for some pictures to be taken. D Busst advised that if each group could get their trophy to the reception desk at the Ricoh, he would pick them up from there and pass them on to CCFC.

DE Will the sports bar be ready for the new season? DB – we assume so but don't know an awful lot about it. CCFC will be working with Wasps on these sorts of items over the coming months.

DE What is the exact location of the club shop and worried about the proximity to the away end. DB advised it is on the bend of the stadium in the south-east corner. The Club is looking at barrier solution in this area too, but there are no safety concerns regarding proximity to away fans.

DB Asked whether there were any questions about Membership / Season tickets that have gone on sale today? TS advised that they have been inundated with emails and questions. All agree to urge their supporters' groups to read the press released and FAQ's on the website and to be patient in their expectations of replies to emails and phone calls.

DB explained that the 8,000 figure was agreed in line the PM's roadmap out of lockdown with the plan to open all restrictions by June 21st. The 8,000 figure is 25% of the capacity of the Ricoh.

DB confirmed total sales for 2021/22 on day 1 stood at 2,607 – including corporate and executive boxes.

8. Date of the next meeting – 29TH April 2021 @ 5.00pm