

Silkmen Supporters' Society Ltd

Minutes of the open meeting of the Board of the Silkmen Supporters' Society

19:45 on Monday 11 April 2016 at MTFC

Present

Steve Mundy (Chairman)	George Williams (Deputy Chairman)	Stephen Walker (Secretary)	Bernie Rickman (Membership Secretary)
Myra Cark (Treasurer)	John Abbott	Chrissie Thompson	Chris Hulme
Andy Mellor			

Apologies

David Woolliscroft	Jon Smart	Marie Grundy
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5 SST members also in attendance

16/04/001 Welcome and Introduction

The meeting was chaired by Steve Mundy who opened the meeting at 19:38. He thanked members for their attendance and apologised that, due to an oversight, an open meeting of the SST Board had not been held since the last AGM (August 2015). It is intended that there should be three open meetings each year.

16/04/002 SST Supporter Survey (Steve Mundy)

70 responses have been received either on-line or by hard copy. We have started to review the information received and have prepared the first draft of a full report (29 pages). There has been very useful feedback with some praise and some criticism. We aim to publish all of the data via the SST website as soon as the information has been validated.

Steve Mundy gave an overview of the results of the survey and a summary report was circulated. There were three common themes:

1. The need for better communication from and with the Club
2. Issues relating to Club ownership and the need for change
3. Lack of a sense of strategic direction for the Club

In addition, it is clear that socialising and meeting friends is one of the important reasons that people attend matches at the Moss Rose.

Following this presentation there was general discussion covering the following areas and questions:

- Share ownership – including the fact that the SST ownership of 44,000 shares does not appear to give us any influence as there are no shareholder meetings

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- Change of ownership – it was felt that SST should be closely involved in supporting a change of ownership, for example by talking to potential new owners and facilitating negotiations. George Williams stated that the Club have recently denied that there have been any new bids to take over the Club
- Ownership of the Moss Rose Ground – reviving the attempt to get the Council to class the ground as an asset of community value which would delay any potential sale of the ground and give fans the opportunity to find alternative buyers or raise a bid themselves. It was noted that the potential new ground is not included in the Green Belt Plan.
- The recent appearance of a sign saying “For Lease” on the car park at the corner of London Road
- Crowd behaviour – it was felt that the Club have tended to ask for more evidence about the behaviour of individuals rather than making clear public statements of the consequences for the supporters and the Club if incidents arise

Action: results of the survey to be published on the SST website (Stephen Walker)

16/04/003 Meetings with the Club and Mark Blower

The meeting with Mark on 21st March was informal and no formal minutes/notes were taken. SST representatives pressed for a Fans Forum which will now take place on 14 April 2016, and Mark has agreed that there should be another one at the start of the 2016/17 season.

Mark stated that the Club operating committee is only just starting to be effective and to address strategic (as opposed to day to day operational) issues.

SST representatives will seek to hold an early follow up meeting with Mark with priorities for discussion including improved communications and the results of the Supporter Survey.

George Williams described the meeting with Barrie Darcey that took place on 16th March, the minutes for which have already been published on the SST website. Attendees felt that some of the responses received to specific points raised on behalf of supporters demonstrated a lack of care about fan issues.

The continuing disappearance of the Andy Mellor Trophy was discussed (*Post meeting note: we understand that the Trophy has now been retrieved and returned to Andy*).

Action: as the schedule of meetings with the Club has now been completed a new schedule covering the period to May 2017 will be agreed with the Club (Stephen Walker).

16/04/004 Membership Update

There have been no new SST members and no renewals since the last meeting.

Chrissie Thompson is still validating member contact details against the season ticketholder database.

Steve Mundy reported that various members have said (in the survey) that they have not received any emails from SST.

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Stephen Walker talked about the new release of the membership database software that is provided by Intouch under the agreement with Supporters Direct. Our membership data has been migrated to the new system and will now be validated. Consideration of alternative software solutions will be deferred until the new Intouch system has been tested.

Stephen Walker was asked to set up a new sstrust.uk email address for SST communications.

Action: new email address to be created and issued and tested by emailing all members and monitoring responses (Stephen Walker and George Williams).

16/04/005 Finance Report

John Abbott explained the two reports that had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the funds raised via the SOS campaign have now all been used. Currently SST has a balance of £6,659 but only £2,347 is SST funds as the remainder (£4,311) belongs to the Lotto scheme. In addition, £1,825 has been promised under this year's Silk Pledge.

16/04/006 Lotto Update

Steve Mundy explained the relationship between the SST and the Lotto (SST administer the bank accounts and lottery license on behalf of the the Lotto organisers). The monthly payment from the Lotto funds to the Club has recently increased from £400 to £500 (it was increased from £300 earlier in the season).

There was discussion about whether or not increased prizes would generate new Lotto members.

There was discussion about the need to promote awareness of the Easy Fund Raising scheme which is a no-cost way of raising funds for SST via internet shopping and it was agreed to issue messages encouraging its use via our social media and website.

Action: promote Easy Fund Raising on SST website, Facebook and Twitter (Stephen Walker and George Williams).

16/04/007 SST Elections/Working Group

Steve Mundy has rewritten the SST Election Policy document and the first draft has been posted on the SST Board intranet. Board members are requested to provide feedback to Steve as soon as possible. The policy must be signed-off at the May 2016 board meeting.

All board members who are currently co-opted must stand for election this year.

We need an Election Management Group (EMG), and this must be made up of SST members who are not currently on the Board. This group will be supported by the Secretary. The task of the EMG will be to collect nominations via a dedicated email address.

It was agreed that the Secretary will ask for volunteers via a direct email sent to each of the people who agreed to be contacted when they completed the Supporter Survey.

Andy Mellor requested that support should be provided to people who do not have access to technology/internet.

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Action: email to be sent to all potential members of the EMG

16/04/008 Other Questions from Supporters

1. **Availability of food in the Blues Bar** – since the refurbishment of the kiosk on London Road food is no longer available in the Blues Bar. Steve Mundy explained that the SST do not run the kiosk and that the only catering equipment available was transferred from the Corner Flag to the kiosk when it was refurbished.
2. **Fund Raising** – would the SST consider supporting a fund-raising walk to Altrincham next season (if the Robins remain in the National League)? There was discussion about the likelihood of people wanting to support a non-charitable cause.
3. **Walking Football/Football Festival** – Rob Wilson and Andy Worth want to run another football festival but need guarantees of the availability of the ground from the Club. Rob Wilson said that he thought the actions of the Club in agreeing to rent the pitch and then changing their minds was unacceptable. Steve Mundy agreed and said that he had informed Andy Worth that if he wished to raise a complaint then the SST would support it.
4. **Bucket Collection** – Chrissie Thompson reminded board members that there will be a collection for the Bobby Moore Appeal at the forthcoming Dover game. Only 4 people have volunteered so far and there are 7 buckets.
5. **Blues Membership** – although this scheme has now been withdrawn by the Club it had previously included a subscription to Silk Player which advertised the fact that it included the ability to listen to all games. This is clearly incorrect as commentary has not been available at a number of games this season. Note that as at 23rd April the website continues to say “Listen to every game LIVE”. **Action:** this issue to be raised at the next meeting between SST and the Club.
6. **Season Tickets 2016/17** – while SST had not been consulted with regard to the pricing structure it was felt that the promotion of the early purchase scheme is misleading and does not reflect the significant price increases due to reduced discounts. Members suggested that other clubs have more attractive schemes with a wider range of purchase options.

16/04/009 Actions from Previous Meeting

All complete with the exception of:

- Jon Smart pen picture for website – completed shortly after the meeting
- Annual Report – see next agenda item

16/04/010 Annual Report 2015/16

Clive Westbury has kindly agreed to carry out the audit.

The current target is to complete the report, including audit, by 30 June 2016 and John Abbott will start the process by providing a first draft populated with the financial elements.

Action: John Abbott to develop first draft report.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 21:50

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The next meeting of the SST Board is scheduled to take place at 19:45 on Monday 09 May 2016 and the Secretary has already submitted his apologies as he is not able to attend this meeting.