

Shrimps Trust meeting with MFC Chairmen

Date: 17th September 2019

Present: MFC – Graham Howse, Rod Taylor

Shrimps Trust – Steve Doran, Ron Freear, Ian Lyon, Stuart Rae, Jack Steer

Rod and Graham started out by denying any truth in the recent newspaper speculation of financial difficulties at Morecambe FC. These were old reports that were re-hashed in the wake of the Bury FC expulsion from the Football League.

Shrimps Trust presented the directors with a cheque for £250 towards their campaign for fitness equipment at the club. This was voted on by members in the August 2019 Update email, and resulted in 67 votes in favour of the donation and 46 votes against.

The Trust also passed on a cheque for £100 from Paul Rogers of Morecambe and Heysham Constitutional Club towards Rod's appeal at our AGM for funds to sign a replacement for Andy Fleming after his sudden retirement.

Graham welcomed the donations, but queried why the Trust appear reticent to support the club. Do the fans not trust Graham and Rod? Jack explained that members obviously want to support the club, but are more focussed on using Trust funds to benefit supporters, and particularly the Raise The Roof campaign, instead of day-to-day running of the club including player budgets.

Ron asked what will happen to the club in the next 9-12 months, when the owners' 2-year commitment to support the club expires. The co-chairmen replied that the owners will continue to keep investing in the club until a credible offer is received. The owners will definitely **not** sell us up the river.

The introduction of extra charges for tickets bought on match days is working well for the club. Pre-paid tickets are more efficient, allow the club to get a better idea of how many spectators to expect, and enable better planning of staff and resources.

The beer station introduced on a trial basis on Easter Monday has proved effective in reducing queues, and is now owned by the club. It will be used for most games.

There is no news on the Community Block to the rear of the Globe Arena – it was owned by PMG Leisure Limited (now in administration). MFC owners have made an offer which is still on the table, but the administrators are holding out for more money.

The chairmen reported very few synergies/benefits from our owners' connections with Worcester Warriors. The club have used the training pitch once, and the ground was considered for pre-season preparation, but we received a better deal from Myerscough College.

Pre-match entertainment is being improved – the inflatable penalty goal is now being used regularly (bought with a Fans' Fund grant which is spread over 2 seasons and comes in as it is spent on initiatives) and face painting is being added. There will be a Community Day and an Academy Day before Christmas, so further entertainment will be tried out.

The happy hours promotion in JB's Bar is proving to be a great success (particularly with the live football games shown on TV) so this will probably be an ongoing promotion throughout the season. It is all adding to an increasing feel-good factor around match days.

Andy Fleming is still contracted to the club and still on the payroll. Lewis Alessandra is on a short-term contract, but the club are hoping to extend it and Lewis is keen to stay.

Raise the Roof campaign – Rod is expecting a cost of £35K-40K for the new roof at the back of the Ace Scaffolding Stand. Shrimps Trust are looking to mount a short concentrated crowdfunding project to raise as much money as possible towards this target, using a rewards-based approach. The club asked for any ideas to be passed through to them so they can get involved in providing some of the rewards. The First Choice Suite at the Globe will be made available at no hire cost for Trust fundraising functions, provided they do not clash with other functions.

The Trust have asked for permission to display a very large centenary flag in the away end of the ground for games when the away end is not in use. This was agreed. The club are starting their centenary celebrations in May 2020, and asked for a Trust volunteer to join their Centenary Committee.

Shrimps Trust handed over a silver tray donated by the family of Clarrie Hollings, with a view to displaying it in the club reception. Rod gladly accepted it, and appealed for more club memorabilia that could be displayed around the Globe Arena.

Next meeting to be arranged shortly.