



Committee and Co-ops meeting 5th June 2019

Present Andrew Hird (Chair), Chris Carr (Disability Rep), Paul Nelson (LGBT Rep), Michael Conroy (ALS), Jamie Bogle (Family Rep), Michael McAllister (Away Fans Rep), Dave, Rose, Jane Hughes, Chris Blyth (Atmosphere Group Rep), Malcolm Bradley (Senior Supporters' Rep)

Apologies Ian Crowe (SMB), Jim Gilling(BLC), Les Cooper (Corporate), Gavin Henderson (RR), Michael Lough (WMS)

1. Introduction & Update from Chair

Andrew Hird (AH): Apologies offered for the radio silence. Explaining that establishing the atmosphere group had taken time – covered later in minutes.

Dave Rose (DR) believes there has been a positive influence from the RAWA since its formation.

AH summarised RAWA progress since inception; RAWA is now well established as a dialogue group and influence around the match day experience, it has been involved in the naming of the south stand, bringing the flags and latticework to the Roker End, actively participating in structured dialogue with the Club, partnering on foodbanks etc etc. AH continued, we now need to look forward to what we are to do in the next 12 months, primarily helping the connection with the fan base. DR explained RAWA will be using the forthcoming newsletter to communicate with members, it will require a team of writers who can share the work involved in a monthly newsletter.

2. Stadium of Light Atmosphere and Artwork Projects

The Just Giving fundraising generated more than £10K. AH believes the display has helped the atmosphere to improve and acknowledged it has took a lot of organising.

Chris Blyth (CB) agreed the pre-match atmosphere had improved. Meetings with the printers etc, took time. He thanked SAFC staff for helping with some of design specifics and recognised that the next step is ensuring longevity and growing. Flag production was given to a local company, who price matched the best quote received. In addition to the flags, a semi-permanent display was placed in the Roker end, the latticework. There are new designs in the pipeline.

DR explained that a committed team of volunteers were in place to manage the flags before games.

Young volunteers have loved being involved in the setting out of the flags and they now have their own group forming (under 16s).

DR believes more flags are needed in the Roker End to maintain the atmosphere and filter it around the ground from there. This will need more volunteers and more funding.

Potentially flags could be sold to fans who prefer to bring their own in all areas of the ground. This work is a direct result of the RAWA survey last year which identified the need to improve match day experience, stadium identity, and atmosphere as major fan concerns, and these results have driven the actions of RAWA in 2018-19.



DR said there has been lots of discussion amongst fans about the need for new songs or at least songs that galvanise more supporters.

Michael McAllister (MMc) said a lot of new songs spawn on away buses. There was a general discussion about how RAWA might be able to help promote new songs. It was suggested that we encourage members to share ideas, and promote away trip videos etc in the members news letter and on social media. It was also suggested that when a decent new chant emerges we could maybe work in collaboration with the Mackem dictionary and ALS to really get behind it. A Mackem song compendium?

Artwork Projects

Paul Nelson (PN) is trying to get dimensions from the Club for the next piece of artwork. Suggestions for future artwork projects are front pages of the Football Echo to be used in one section, a song design artwork (stylized lyrics to Wise Men Say etc). PN explained that all future artwork projects will be dependent on budget and space. An artist has donated 24 quirky pictures of Roker Park, and requests that they be displayed together.

DR: There is potentially a city wide art project by young people that can also contribute to the overall artwork displayed. DR will put PN in touch with relevant person.

MMc asked if the artwork can be spread throughout the stadium

3. Agenda for structured dialogue meeting with safc

AH: The meeting of the SAFC administration and supporter representatives on 13 June, is likely to be a review of the season and have a financial slant. This will be prior to the potential takeover. He suggested questions about the parachute payment and it going through various accounts be asked. Advise to RAWA is being taken from an experienced accountant who will attend the next meeting. The Club have agreed and indeed encouraged this discussion so we have clarity and something on record as part of club and supporter structured dialogue.

DR said as a "critical friend" RAWA needs to ask for clarification on this issue and for it to be minuted. Once the new investor is known, RAWA should ask what is the motivation for buying safc? Who are they? Where does the finance come from? And what are the plans for the future?

AH explained that ongoing takeover details would be subject to a NDA (non-disclosure agreement) and we're unlikely to get too many answers about the new owners until after the takeover.

Malcolm Bramley (MB) asked where Stewart Donald and Charlie Methven fit-in in the new structure. RAWA will be keen to meet with the new owners and maintain the current level of discussions with SAFC ownership.

Michael Conroy (MC) emphasised the goodwill fans feel toward Stewart Donald and Charlie Methven because of the way they have acted since taking over at SAFC, with their openness and engagement. DR concurred that not all clubs have this level of engagement between club and fans, suggesting it could become a template for other clubs around the country.

AH discussed fan representation of the board, perhaps by a gift of shares to the fans via a Trust that would be set up for that purpose, this would enhance the existing work of engagement at board level.

MC acknowledged the crucial role the fans have played in building the current relationship too.

MMc: suggested agenda items from twitter include home ticketing, away ticketing changes to BCP, Wembley arrangements to be set out at beginning of season, moving away fans, safety of home fans from badly behaved supporters (how will that be dealt with this season), safe standing (AGM item),



stadium naming rights, pre -season details, disabled access at Quinn's bar, smoking area, strips for the future, moving ticket office / shop.

Jamie Bogle (JB) asked about the pricing of youth shirts, which is still very expensive.

DR: There are ongoing issues with women's clothing – little choice

PN: asked what is happening with the academy. There is a feeling that young players are moving on for relatively little money and there is a worry amongst fans that short term profit is being placed ahead of long term player development. How protected is our future?

DR: RAWA need to use the website and communications, we need to get a newsletter out in the next couple of weeks. MC will take this on.

4. RAWA AGM

AH: this should include a review of achievements / work of RAWA will be presented as part of the annual review. Attendance last year was 300 and included a Q&A with owner. RAWA would like to build on this and make the AGM part business like but also appealing to fans generally. RAWA are talking to a local company that might help make the event interesting and they will approach new owners to attend and hold a Q&A.

DR suggested early August and maybe the venue could be the Beacon of Light?

MB recognised the Stadium of Light is a big draw for attendees.

AH: Another committee meeting is needed before AGM and we need to check the Constitution re AGM requirements.

DR: Help is needed for AGM to prepare papers etc. The next committee meeting is 4th July.

5. AOB

JH presented a finance report for RAWA as funds are now running through the organisation's bank account after donations.