

Tony Goodall Fans' Conference

Thursday 2nd September – 5:30pm



Attended:

Andrew Cullen, Tony Brown, Anna Mitchell, Johnny Moore (PFC).

Barry Dewing (Pompey Independent Supporters' Association), Barry Thompson (Northern Blues), Donald Vass (TGFC Secretary & Chichester Portsmouth Supporters' Club), Gemma Raggett (London Supporters' Club), Gez Johns (South West Supporters' Club), Graham Price (Pompey 808), Ian Marshall (Chimes Lounge), James Attwood (Pompey Northern Ireland Supporters' Club), Jeff Harris (Armed Forces & Services Club), John Brindley (North Stand), Mike Fulcher (TGFC Chair & Social Media Groups), Roy Gregory (Central Branch Supporters' Club), Scott Clarke (Clan Pompey), Simon Colebrook (Portsmouth Supporters' Trust) & Steve Tovey (Legends Lounge).

Apologies:

Colin Farmery (Pompey History Society), Pam Wilkins (Pompey Disabled Supporters' Association)

Agenda:

1. Ticketing

Q: In common with some other clubs, we faced significant issues with ticketing over the summer, with many fans experiencing website difficulties, long queues, and complicated processes. What went wrong, what's been done to resolve these problems, and what lessons have been learned for the future?

AC: I've conducted a full review of the issues the club and our supporters faced. Some things were beyond our control, some were within our control. First of all, I'd like to apologise to all those people affected for the first two matches, the first game against Crewe in particular. There were a number of different issues to contend with.

Firstly, we received notice from the EFL in July that we could return to full crowds, just three weeks prior to the first game. That was very welcome news, but previous indications had been to prepare for a staggered return and not to presume that full crowds would be allowed.

We knew we would need to put the first three games on general sale in order to give us enough time to sort out season tickets. With hindsight, the decision to allow people to buy their own seat for these first three games may have been the wrong one. The original plan was to allow supporters to choose any seat for a flexi game and that their usual seats would not be reserved for them. To me this did not seem quite right, as I thought it was only right that season ticket holders should have the right to buy their seats from where they had watched games from over several seasons. We therefore had a determination to go back to the ticketing company and find a solution where flexi season ticket holders could secure their own seat for these fixtures. That was successful but added complications to the process, though I still think it was right thing to do.

We then had the biggest problem, the reconfiguration of the stadium. Many people were needing to relocate. That became a long, complicated process, particularly at the ticket office counter as people wanted to take their time to choose the right seats. We wanted as many people as possible



to be with their family and friends. We recognise that's a massive part of the matchday experience. We therefore had ongoing conversations with the safety authorities, who were supportive and helpful, to claim seats back. We initially thought we'd get 500 seats back, and ended up with more than 1,200. That was a good result and we hope to get even more back soon.

Another big issue was Covid. We had a high number of staff needing to isolate, either with symptoms themselves or having been 'pinged' in July.

Previously, we've been able to lean on Ticketmaster for their telephone operation when selling big events, but they closed this facility down during the pandemic so that wasn't available to us. We'll be more lined up with them in the future and involve them more in what we're planning. The website crashing was a difficult one to resolve. We needed the telephone lines to support online queries. When we launch big things on site we should insist on Ticketmaster support on site. The website crash was beyond our control, but we should've tested internally in advance. That would be a big positive to take forward.

There were then a range of reasons why people were having to queue. Website problems pushed people offline. Having fewer things on sale at once would've helped, and we should've separated flexi season ticket upgrades and seat moves. If we'd had the time again, we'd do things on a stand by stand basis on pre-allocated days. We can potentially take this forward when moves occur in the South Stand and North Lower on a smaller scale. It was upsetting seeing people in long queues, particularly lots of disabled and elderly fans. We need to do better.

We hold our hands up – things were incredibly difficult. The staff left at the ticket office and those from other departments who supported them all, who had not been "pinged" or affected by Covid during this period, did an amazing job – but there were a lot of problems and it was not an easy process.

Q: Staffing levels in the ticket office appear to have been a contributing factor to the problems. Have the necessary positions been filled?

AM: It's hard for us to recruit on the south coast due to location. As a League One side, we're not offering salaries that attract candidates to relocate, so we need to attract relatively local people. It's a tough position to fill as it is specialist. We are working with a specialist sports recruitment agency to fill the position and are working hard to get the right person for the role.

Q: Are there any plans to repair or replace the ticket office IT system?

AM: Ticketmaster is widely used by other clubs and stadiums in football. This is often beneficial, for example when we're playing at Wembley and can lift their seating plan map straight onto our own platform to sell directly to our own fans. I've moved ticketing systems several times before – it's a really difficult process and often comes with compromises to the system. We're in contract with Ticketmaster, but when that finishes in a few years, as with all contracts we'll go to market and look at other options to ensure we get the best system at the best price.

Q: The rollout of 'The Hub' appeared to be incomplete and ill-timed. Are there any plans to re-introduce it, and will there be testing with fans first?



AC: We did too much too soon – it was not a great time to launch it. We had too many projects on the go and trying to shoe-horn that in alongside a complicated season ticket process was an impossible task. Keenness overtook delivery in what was an unusual and unprecedented set of circumstances. We want to be a digitally well-connected club in the future. We'll use focus groups to test all new applications in advance from now on.

Q: In the 19/20 season, the club sold 14,500 season tickets. How many have been sold this year?

AM: We had 12,795 flexi-season ticket holders and have sold 11,337 full season tickets. That leaves around 1,500 fans who are choosing to remain flexi-season ticket holders for now, but who we hope will be back in the future as the pandemic moves on. In a normal year, we'd lose around 1,500 season ticket holders. They're usually replaced with new season ticket holders, but of course since 19/20 we've not been able to do that.

We've really pushed the membership scheme this year – we had 700 members in the season before last, and we're now up to 1,725 adults and 264 junior members. They'll be our target in future to convert to full season tickets when we can.

Q: If the number sold is lower than expected, will there be any opportunity to put season tickets on general sale, or to sell half-season tickets in the winter?

AC: We need to work through the North Stand Lower consultation process first, talking with supporters in that area who will be affected for a small number of fixtures for the second half of the season, and then see what is left. We will then announce plans for more part-seasons or half-seasons.

Q: When will season tickets be sent out to fans? Will fans be sent new tickets if and when they move seats during the season?

AM: They'll be dispatched on Monday 6th September, first class. We're hoping everyone receives them by Friday that week. Adults will get new Visa season ticket card. Juniors will be different, but will also be sent out in the same week. Seat details won't be printed on cards as the seating plans may change. In the North Lower for example, the rows may change name even if the position remain the same. This means we won't need to charge you for a new card each season or each time your seat changes. The season tickets will be accompanied by a paper card with seat details on which fits into a wallet which will be sent out at a later date.

Q: Will the postponed Plymouth home game be re-arranged before season tickets are due to come into effect? If not, how will you manage the potential confusion around ticketing for this fixture?

AM: The Plymouth game has moved to Tuesday 21st September. We recognise it will be confusing for supporters with two paper ticket fixtures, followed by one on the season card and this one on paper tickets again. We'll be communicating this really clearly so fans know what they need to do for that game.

Q: Fans who bought season tickets using the managed payment scheme appear to be paying £27 more than other fans. Why is this?

AM: That's a price discrepancy we noticed and have sorted out by reducing each match ticket by £1 for those paying with this scheme.



Q: Some fans have reported that the managed payment scheme isn't showing up in their ticketing account. What's being done here?

AM: We've picked that up this afternoon, and are on Ticketmaster's case to get it resolved as soon as possible. [Update - this has now been rectified and is now live and working]

Q: Disabled fans report not being able to book carer tickets online. When will this be resolved? Can disabled fans have a separate point of contact or sales window in future to avoid needing to join the main queue?

AM: If they're a season ticket holder, the carer ticket is reserved online for them to add to their basket. The problem is for general sale – if we put 'free' carer tickets down as an option we can open ourselves up to any fan being able to select the free ticket without providing the relevant paperwork. There's a way to resolve this online but it will take a bit of setting up. We can add ticketing privileges to people's online accounts. This won't happen overnight. We need a new ticketing manager in first, but it's on our radar.

AC: We've set up a meeting with disabled fans. We could organise a personal service – we'll go through the process with them.

Q: Away tickets are going on sale very close to the fixtures, as close as a week to the game. Is this an issue with the home clubs, or our own ticket office?

Q: This is also causing problems with tickets not being posted out in enough time to be received before the game. Some supporters have been told to speak with the home ticket office when they arrive, only to find their names were not on the home team's duplicates list. This adds a great deal of unnecessary stress to a long away trip. What's being done to improve this?

AC: The problem is not of our making. Many clubs are also finding themselves short of staff. EFL rules say away tickets should be dispatched to clubs five weeks ahead of fixture, but it's much shorter than that at the moment. AFC Wimbledon tickets arrived today, less than a week in advance, while MK Dons arrived yesterday, 10 days in advance. We will do all we can, but the EFL and clubs are naturally being sympathetic at the moment to the situation that most clubs find themselves in.

Q: How many hospitality season tickets have been sold? Will the Legends Lounge be open for the Cambridge fixture?

AM: We're starting from scratch on hospitality. We appointed a new Head of Hospitality in June – he left a week before the first game and took his assistant with him. We've sold over a hundred seasonal hospitality packages, not including our sponsors' seasonal tickets. We've opened the Partners' Lounge and the Chimes Lounge for the first two games, as we wanted to get service right on day one rather than open every lounge and overstretch ourselves. For the first game, we served a cold afternoon tea, which worked well but wasn't ideal. This was because we had no chefs and limited hospitality staff. Even our Head of HR was working in one of the lounges – everybody rolled up their sleeves to deliver which was great to see. For the second game, we had a great Executive Chef in to deliver a hot three-course meal which was well received. We've worked hard to get him on board for rest of the season to manage our hospitality food offering. We're now



confident with staffing levels so can open the Montgomery Lounge and Chairman's Lounge. The Legends Lounge is shut for now but may be back in time for the Sunderland game. We've got a new Hospitality and Operations Manager who's hit the ground running. We'll be able to sell hospitality tickets through Ticketmaster in future, which will make it easier for fans to buy.

Q: Why was the decision made to sell parking online?

AM: As part of the drive to become a cashless stadium, we wanted to make car parking available to pre-book online. We've also been able to sell a season pass for parking, including for our disabled supporters. Previously, when sold on the gate for £10 cash, it was difficult to manage and meant fans didn't know if spaces were still available when they arrived at the stadium and be turned away. This way, fans know they're booked in.

Q: Will the club move to 'NFC' ticketing [which has caused issues at turnstiles at some other clubs]?

AM: We've upgraded our turnstile readers, and have used QR codes for the last 3 games. That's worked really well - fans have been able to load tickets on their smartphones and scan for entry. We're not planning to move to full NFC tickets just yet - we want to make sure everything's working. We'll test NFC tickets in small groups to ensure the readers are successful. We've been really impressed by how fans have embraced the QR codes. It reduces pressure on the ticket office to print and pack paper tickets in envelopes.

2. Fratton Park

Q: How many seats remain out of action? How many have been repaired, and has the process of getting season ticket holders back into their correct seats afterwards gone smoothly?

AC: The certified capacity currently sits at 17,700 (including the Milton End for away supporters). This is up from the initial figure in June of 16,482. The previous declared capacity in June 2020 was 18,948.

AM: We've been pro-active about asking people if they'd like to return as soon as seats are repaired. 236 people who were originally asked to move are now back to their normal seat.

AC: The caveat is that seats need to be reinspected 48 hours before every game, and seats could still be taken out of action if we're not following through on commitments given to council. We could've stopped when we reached a capacity of 16,500 but I wasn't prepared to do that - together with Marie Steadman and Steve Cripps, we worked really hard to get additional seats back in. I understand why fans are frustrated, but we're doing all we can and we find ourselves in a better place on available capacity than was originally envisaged back in June.

Q: Fans in the North Lower will need to move beginning in January. How will this be organised?

AC: Not all of the North Lower will be done in one go. We will move sections of fans at a time for 2-3 games each. We're preparing a plan with the contractors to identify which blocks will be affected for which games, and will then set up a focus group of people affected in the North Stand

Lower well ahead of January. We'll look at how we communicate this and where people have the option to relocate to while they're displaced.



Q: At what point did the health and safety authorities inform the club that some seats in Fratton Park were no longer safe to use? How long has the club known this was likely to become an issue?

AC: There are ongoing checks and annual reports with the SAG / Local Authority and I understand the problem is not something new. There are wider problems than just replacing seats. There are other factors that all need to be resolved prior to a seat replacement programme commencing.

PS Factors calculate how many seats can be operational at any time in a stadium. The perfect situation is to have a PS factor of PS1, but we currently operate in different areas between PS0.6 and PS1. Therefore, before seats are replaced, other background work has to first take place in certain areas of the stadium. This can include access improvements, structural modifications to corrosive metal and cladding and consistently meeting fire safety regulations. These works can obviously become more complicated in older stadiums.

Other factors also played a part in rescuing capacity from a PS Factor of PS1. For example, the Green Guide (the guide to Safety at Sports Grounds), states a minimum requirement for sight lines – C Value. These should not be below C60 and in some cases we had some seats at Fratton Park with a C value of just above C23. All these sight lines and C values have to be addressed first, so the issue extends much more beyond broken seats and these have to be completed before seats are replaced so we are Green Guide compliant.

TB: We knew that there was significant work to be done, but a lot of decay occurred during lockdown principally due to the inactivity of the stadium for such a long period. The potential capacity reductions were on top of the financial losses suffered last season and us then preparing for another season of Covid restrictions.

Our original plan had been to start work on the Milton End but we had to revise that in order to ensure we could get as many Pompey fans in the stadium as possible and maximise capacity which was a massive job in itself.

We also encountered problems getting the new seats for the North Upper delivered from abroad due to the worldwide polymer material supply problems which also impacted several other clubs, but we managed to source temporary grey seats in the North Stand in time for the first two home matches.

Q: Why are we only proceeding with redevelopment now when the stadium has been empty for 18 months?

AC: The owners only decided to agree the £11m stadium works when they could see a way out of pandemic – that was around March and April. We also did do a massive amount in the North Stand the summer before.

TB: During Covid we spent over a million pounds on basic stadium repair works including a new North Stand roof in Summer 2020, without which the stand itself would have become non-operational.



This was on top of maintaining a significant playing budget, making no redundancies and the purchase of ROKO, so we couldn't have asked much more of our owners during the pandemic in terms of financial support.

The club then committed to the new programme of stadium works on the three stands so we can all look forward to an overall increased capacity. The timing hasn't been perfect, but the work on all the seat moves was specifically aimed at increasing the capacity for this season to get as many of our fans as possible back into Fratton Park.

The owners should be congratulated for such a commitment, especially during a worldwide pandemic when all football clubs are feeling the financial strain.

Q: Some blocks in the North Upper were temporarily replaced with seats of a different colour due to supply issues. Has this been resolved? Are the supply issues affecting many industries likely to impact further work on the stadium?

AC: Many construction companies are experiencing supply chain issues and are having real problems getting work done. Shipping and building raw materials is tough at the moment. The seats in the North Upper will all be blue by the end of the month

Q: Will the reprofiling of the North Lower result in less legroom?

AM: The reprofiling will result in a better view of the pitch and a move to standard leg room. That will help us to increase capacity and increase the number of disabled seats.

Q: When will we see the plans for redeveloped parts of the ground? People going through the difficulty of seat relocation will be more understanding if they can see where we're heading.

TB: We want to show the updated CGI images of the new stands to all our supporters as soon as possible. Our main focus has been sorting out day to day operational issues and the stadium works, but are confident that this work will enhance the special atmosphere at Fratton Park.

Q: It's believed that safe standing will be piloted this season in some grounds ahead of an anticipated change of law. Will the club be looking to install rail seating at Fratton Park in the future?

AC: There will be a few pilots permitted between now and end of season. We remain totally open minded. We know that some people like to stand, so if you can identify a particular area and consult with the people there who will be affected, we might do. This will require planning, supporter consultation, all aligned to the findings from the pilots. If there's a will in certain areas of the ground we will certainly look into it. It's an exciting time, and a big shift in government policy.

Q: Media reports suggest the government intends to continue with plans for 'vaccine passports' as a requirement for large events soon. What guidance has the club received from the EFL on this, and what planning has been done to consider the practicality of checks at the ground?

AC: Safety officers and the league have talked about it. It's been piloted at Premier League grounds but in some cases there have been difficulties with long queues, and the process has been abandoned at some points just to get people inside the stadium. It is highly likely that these might

be introduced if infection rates increase. This may be the government's way of saying 'if you want to continue to have large crowds, you need this mitigation'.



Q: You've previously indicated that you would meet with a group of disabled supporters to look at plans for disabled facilities. How did that go, and what's planned? Have any opportunities for disabled facilities in the North Stand been identified?

AC: I met with a disabled group recently and presented our plans for the new facilities to get their guidance on it. They looked at what we were doing to improve accessibility in each of the stands, as well as the introduction of a Changing Places facility. We were able to answer quite a few questions which came forward. It was a very constructive meeting. We can look at their concerns too, for example the size of wheelchair spaces, which we can build into our designs. Of course, it will be good to place some additional disabled seats and we should be able to add some into the North Lower. We think we may be able to get some wheelchair spaces in the Chimes Lounge too as a result of the improvements to the South Stand if some obstacles are overcome.

Q: What are the plans for South Stand hospitality and executive seating going forward, both next year while the stand may be disrupted and beyond that when it is redeveloped?

AM: It will remain as it is this year, then as part of the South Stand works will be reprofiled next year which will remove the 'hanging baskets'. We will relocate hospitality seats into the stand which will offer great seats and views.

AC: We'll aim to minimise disruption as much as possible.

Q: There has not been a supporter representative on our Safety Advisory Group of late. Can this be resolved?

JM: As a club, we're invited to the meetings – it's not us who organises them. The last meeting was in April, which was mainly about the concert as we didn't have football crowds back at the time. At the next one, we will ask the SAG Chairman to invite Pam Wilkins. Pam remains a member of that group.

3. Player Update / Football Structure

Q: What are the club's reflections on the summer transfer window? Is the management team satisfied with the makeup of the squad?/

AC: The key objective when we set out was to align the squad to the new philosophy and identity that Danny Cowley and Nicky Cowley wanted. We needed a better balance in certain areas, and wanted to challenge as best as we could. 65% of the squad was out of contract but we still had 2/3rds of the budget committed to players in contract. We've ended up with 14 new signings, seven with Championship experience plus four Premier League loans, two promising youngsters with potential for the future and Conor Ogilvie with huge amount of League One experience. We ended up overspending on the budget, both on wages and on transfer fees paid– the board wanted to back the manager and we wanted to secure some good players at the end of the window. Our priorities in the final few days were a creative midfielder, who we got in Miguel Azeez, and to give ourselves options on the right side of defence, which we got through Mahlon Romeo. That gives us the ability to change formations as well. I read lots of things about Danny being frustrated and desperately wanting a striker in the last two days– I don't recognise that reaction. We were all quite clear and agreed as to our priorities which were these two positions. We have four forwards, including John Marquis and Ellis Harrison where the club has invested significantly.



In George Hurst, we have a player who was coveted by several clubs, including some in the Championship, and we worked hard with Leicester City to secure George's loan. In Gassan, we have a player highly thought of by Norwich City and who really impressed in pre-season. In the manager's view, we're now significantly better in several positions and I agree. We're very happy with the way the window has gone.

TB: The owners were really helpful on Tuesday evening in assisting us to sign Mahlon Romeo. They have a long-standing relationship with the Millwall owner and without their direct input in a series of calls on Tuesday that deal wouldn't have happened.

Eric, Michael and Andy Redman are passionate about the club and always want to help where they can along with regular monthly recruitment meetings. Danny Cowley and the football department did some great work in the summer, especially proactively identifying the loans. Everyone worked so hard over the summer – we've been tracking Miguel Azeez since May. It takes a while to re-mould a squad to a new playing style after a change of manager and we're all pleased with the work done to date.

Q: Does the club have any interest in the free agent market?

Q: Is any money set aside for the January transfer window, or will spending there also rely on making funds available through sales?

TB: We're already over budget to get where we are, but have monthly recruitment meetings with all the directors and we're always looking at new options. We flagged a player today who could potentially be an option.

AC: We're not just looking at the next window, we're looking at next summer's window. We're constantly looking for improvement.

Q: Will there be more flexibility in January owing to higher crowds [and ticketing income] than expected?

TB: Despite the budgeted extra losses this season for reduced fans, we still maintained the competitive playing budget, and in fact we're already over the budget now to get to this point as well as providing unbudgeted transfer funds for the purchase of Joe Morrell. We have monthly recruitment meetings with all the directors and we're always looking at new options.

Q: Many members of the squad are out of contract at the end of the season. Are the club in talks with any of these players over renewals?

TB: We've tried to adopt a consistent policy of dealing with players over the years as a group rather than individuals. Haji Mnoga is a bit different as he's younger, and we've secured him for a further three years and secured a pathway for him with his loan at Bromley. A good number of players are on options [for an additional year]. It all comes down to how the new season unfolds with a new playing style for the new management team.

Q: Have the club made a decision on the need for a Sporting/Technical Director?

AC: I'm looking at positions right across the club at the moment and not just in the football department. The job of a Sporting/Technical/Performance/Football Operations Director means different things at different clubs. I want to plug any gaps we have here. I want to further enhance our player recruitment, which has been very good over this last window, and want to closer align the first team and the academy. We want to align recruitment, sports science and medicine



throughout the club. We want a clear identity here from top to bottom. In terms of football operations, Roberto Gagliardi and Phil Boardman have done a magnificent job over the summer in identifying and recruiting players all aligned to the brief provided by Danny and Nicky. Tony Brown has worked so hard with clubs and agents to get deals over the line at the best value to club. Anabel Roman has done a fantastic job of getting the paperwork completed and ensuring we are compliant with all the new player regulations and squad lists which are changing all the time. I want to optimise what we're doing and make the club as strong as possible in every area of our operations.

4. iFollow

Q: Some fans are disappointed at the switch from Express FM pre-match coverage, which focuses exclusively on Pompey, to BBC Solent pre-match coverage, which features content on other south coast sides. Why was this switch made, and what changes are now planned for the future?

AM: We made the decision at the end of the season to switch, as the running order on Express FM and iFollow clashed. We made a great pre-match show towards the end of last season and wanted to integrate that with iFollow, then move across to Radio Solent commentary at kick-off, but the EFL haven't been able to enable us to do that. What we've decided is to meet with Express FM and create a pre-match show in collaboration with them. We'll stick with what we've got at the moment but will switch back when we've got that pre-match show up and running.

5. Discrimination

Q: Has the investigation into discriminatory messages sent by academy players and the subsequent appeals process been complete? What was the outcome?

AC: The process needed to be really thorough, and we had to recognise that given the ages of those involved that this also presented safeguarding issues. We initially suspended the entire academy for three days, then once we were satisfied which boys were not involved they were brought back in. The final outcome was that three players were released. We found no evidence of a racist culture in the academy, and all the boys had received regular EDI training, over many seasons, the latest for the new first year scholars being one week before the incident. They were all individually able to repeat the key learnings of these EDI sessions back to us in the investigations. We are committed to a policy throughout the club where we cannot tolerate discriminatory behaviour.

Q: Our new signing Mahlon Romeo spoke out strongly against Millwall supporters after they booed the squad for taking the knee in December. There have been audible boos from some Portsmouth fans when our players have taken the knee this season. How do we plan to support the players if and when they choose to make anti-discrimination gestures?

AC: We will back the players 100%. Right across the game in England in the last few weeks and very much at Portsmouth I've noticed applause from the crowd to counter any boos taking place, which is really healthy. What we will do as a club is make sure we're really strong on anti-discrimination messages and promote this message as hard as we can and in particular using the screen pre match.

Q: The club posted a statement condemning discriminatory social media posts after the Wigan fixture, while a discriminatory song regarding ex-players and staff dying of Aids has



resurfaced at away games this season. Does the club need to be more proactive in tackling behaviour like this?

AC: The Wigan incident is subject to a police matter. We wanted to stand with Wigan on their statement – that's the right thing to do to when another club's players are targeted in this way. What we don't want to do is lecture fans on matters such as taking the knee. We instead want supporters to join us in solidarity in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. We all need to work together.

Q: Last year, we signed up to the voluntary Football Leadership Diversity Code which promotes diversity across both ethnicity and gender. When is the club due to publish its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan and its annual report on progress?

AC: Like all clubs, we are subject to a regular EFL audit on equality diversity and inclusion. This will be completed in October. There will be a series of recommendations coming from that, and we also want to engage on those recommendations with Pompey In The Community who are in a good position to support the club on these matters. When we get that report, that will be the time to put that plan together. We've done lots of work ahead of this audit and the plan will follow on from that. I am taking a personal lead on this together with our HR Manager, Lina Small.

6. Training Ground & Infrastructure

Q: Has the transition of the Roko members' gym been successful? What are the future plans for the Roko site and training ground?

AC: The gym has over 2,000 members. The building itself is in desperate need of TLC as its not had much capital investment over the years. The spa and PlayFootball pitches had to close as they were unsafe and not fit for purpose. We're hoping to reopen the spa in near future. We're committed to operating the gym and have done some alterations there to incorporate our academy offices. We want to bring everything together and make it an exciting hub. The next stage is to develop a long term strategic plan for the training ground, which might include putting some 3G pitches down there. The strategy will be to build a top-class facility capable of attracting first team players and to develop better academy players as well.

Q: Did we buy the building or the Roko company?

AM: When we bought the building, ROKO were going to make all the staff redundant and close the health club business, so we decided to take on the business as well. The staff and members all moved across to PFC.

Q: Are there any updates on discussions with local stakeholders regarding changes to local infrastructure?

AC: Stephen Morgan MP has become engaged on some of our long-term ideas for Fratton Park. He's facilitated a meeting between myself and Network Rail in late September. We'll need to continue working with local stakeholders to get everything done which we'd like to do.

7. Finances

Q: What's the financial health of the club like after coming through a year and a half without fans?

TB: It's been very tough. We've had a huge loss of income and the loss of fans attending fixtures, but the owners have provided the financial backing to support the club. We spent about £5m just

on stadium infrastructure alone in the past 4 years before the announced new programme of stadium works. It's been a challenge but we're in a good position.



Q: Will the £11m stadium redevelopment cost be coming in a single tranche as a share issue? When will it be showing up on Companies House?

TB: We went over the [owners' initial investment of] £10m by June, which you will see in the next set of financial accounts. We are spreading the cost of the works over the three/four-year period to manage cash flow and maximise our stadium capacity during the works. The new investment from the owners will be in the form of share capital.

Q: One of Tornante's other businesses Topps are having a difficult time – is this likely to impact Pompey?

TB: No, it's a business with very solid foundations.

8. Ownership

Q: Has a date been set for Michael Eisner to attend a TGFC meeting?

AC: I had a conversation with him yesterday – he'd be delighted to attend. We'll fix a date for that in the not too distant future.

MF closed the meeting at 7:45pm.

- Minutes by Donald Vass