

Fans' Council meeting



[Steve Peart](#)

[March 17 in Football](#)

Some belated notes on the meeting on Thursday. About 15 present, including Michael Davies and two from ABM Catering. The first item on the agenda was a Trust update. Unfortunately no Trust Director was present, to the evident disappointment of the committee. Trevor Stroud was going to attend but pulled out after Andy Harman's statement that afternoon. That, and the Trust's following statement, were read out. I then said that I had been told (from a reliable source) that Harman was unhappy with the way that his bid had been inaccurately reported by the Trust director presenting the two bids to the other directors on Monday evening, that it had been seriously undervalued. That meant that the Board were voting on inaccurate information. With no director present that could not be verified, I may follow this up this at the next meeting. The general feeling was that the AH statement was unclear and there was relief that the process was now moving to the next stage.

MD gave a report on the Sunderland match and said it was the largest day's takings the club have ever had. He said that not everything went as planned, lessons were learnt (more on food and drink from further down). There were two arrests, for abusive language and for pitch incursion, both Sunderland. Police dealt with a fight in The Hour Glass after the game. 40 seats were broken by the away fans, 29 in away end, 10 in Beechdean and one somewhere else I didn't catch. The board will consider reclaiming the costs from Sunderland, although MD accepted that broken seats are normal in football. He said there were footprints on the broken ones. MD said that the stadium's official capacity is 9448, but that can go down for some matches when seats are taken out of use, such as when Bucks Uni are filming. For Sunderland it was below 9000.

Paul, the ABM Catering manager was present, with his assistant Will. They attend every other Council meeting. He reported on food and drink at the Sunderland game. Twelve extra staff were employed, they were needed because the Sunderland fans did not come into the stadium in numbers until 2:10pm, and put great pressure on the servers. Out of 800 burgers in stock, 150 were left over, although some kiosks did run out temporarily as they waited for runners to re-supply them during the match. Some pies were left over and, out of 24 cheese and onion pasties, 12 were left over. He said that burgers and pies were getting cold after being cooked. The pie warmer doors were being kept open because of the fast throughput, they need 20 (I think he said 20) extra pie warmers but they cost £500 each. They originally changed to Pukka pies to get new pie warmers but they won't supply any more, and anyway are pulling out at the end of the season, from all football clubs. They are looking to use Wrights Pies instead, and hopefully get some warmers from them. They had 240 portions of paella to sell but the pan kept blowing out. They will get a shield for the next game. The small kiosk in Frank Adams was open, selling drinks. They normally allow for 800 in FA but Sunderland was 2700. Someone said that, in FA, the kiosks don't seem to be organised very well, you get groups of staff crowded

around a till. It would be better if only one took the money, and that they all have a briefing before the shift, so they understand exactly what they are doing. Paul said they do have a pre-match briefing, and he pointed out that they sometimes get abuse from customers. At the Portsmouth game they will be selling a children's food and drink box for £3.50 as a trial, the contents of which would normally sell for £6. Someone asked if leftover food could be discounted, rather than throwing it away. Paul will consider that, he said it is highly unusual for the club to still be selling 10 minutes before the end of the game. It is normal at clubs to close up after half-time.

MD said the Pod on the terrace has now passed the H & S check and will be open for the Portsmouth game, with the crowdfunded drinks fridge finally in use. News of the Pod being available came as a surprise to the Council chairman, given the heated debate about its prolonged non-availability at the last meeting, and that the job for completing the electrical work needed had been handed over to the Council.

A new two year shirt sponsor deal will be announced soon, it will be by far the largest shirt deal the club have signed, nearly double the previous highest. MD couldn't give the name just yet but said you know will who it is by a news item on the official site last week (Bloomers will get a good night's sleep...). The white strip will be retired at the end of this season. In spite of it being very popular with the players, it doesn't sell well in the club shop. It is also more costly for the club to maintain three kits for the players. He was confident that having just two strips would not cause any kit clashes.

364 season tickets have been sold so far. The request by the Council at the last meeting, to extend the discount deadline beyond 31 March, has not been addressed yet.

A long term deal has been signed for a new Big Screen, at no cost to the club. It will be installed over the summer in the same place, and will be slightly larger. It will show a live feed of the game, with supporter messages returning, and rolling adverts below. It will not act as a scoreboard or clock apparently, MD is going to try and replace the current failing scoreboards.

There is a water leak in the Honours Lounge, I took that to be rain rather than a pipe. MD said the buildings are in a very tired state after many years of neglect.