



Bromsgrove Sporting Fans Forum Thursday 28th July 2022

All,

Please find below my notes from the latest Supporters Forum.

I have received some feedback & updates over the last 48 Hours so this is v2

Before we get into the conversations, I would like to put it on record my thanks to all who were in The Rouslers Bar. The event was enjoyable from my side and I thank you for keeping to the “house rules” of mutual respect.

Charles McDonald was correctly disappointed in the reaction that he received when entering the room. The vast majority of the Forum was conducted with mutual respect. In future we should realise that we are all present as we wish the best for Bromsgrove Sporting.

I'll group the comments by theme, so they might not be in the order asked.

Also I haven't typed out who asked questions and what they were word for word ; I physically can't write scribbled notes that quick.

Bromsgrove Sporting First Team

All present gave a warm welcome to Thomas Baillie, our new 1st Team Manager.

Injuries – Miro is being assessed, Jack Newell has started training, other than that everybody else is clear.

Targets for the season – Team needs to work very hard. It has not been good enough for the last 18 months. Wherever I have been I have won something, will be extremely frustrating if I do not do this at Bromsgrove. I will not allow us to be just another team. Expectations need to be met. There is silly money going around. Up to £800/week. There is no player in this league worth that. There is serious money in this league, some clubs paying Step 2 wages. I will not do that. Need to worry about ourselves and not other people. Come March we need to be around the play offs.

It was asked if the Board has set you an actual target against the budget/money you have been given. The manager's answer was no.

Budget has been set on a slightly higher gate than last season but at same amount as last year.

U21 Team. Players will have 12 months to prove they are good enough for the 1st Team.

Thomas as asked about his managerial set up – I have an entourage not a backroom staff! I have UEFA qualified staff, goalkeeping coach, analyst. There is no hiding place at this level. The staff talk regularly to ensure they all pull in the same direction.

How about the two young players we have signed who have gone on loan, should they go on contract? These two players want to play for Bromsgrove Sporting 1st Team, a contract would not help the issue. We have chosen Studley and Stourport as we have good relationships, contracts are almost meaningless as they can just write to the FA and get it cancelled. We can't stop players moving to teams for more money or any other reason. Thomas recalled that players will "misbehave" if they want to leave even if they are on contract.

However if we put players on contract they cannot get the experience at other clubs.

Bottom line is that non-League contracts are not what they used to be, Professional clubs are not paying the monies they used to (you would be lucky to get £10k and a Pre Season Friendly)

Conversation asked about responsibility for if we went down last season, issue raised that the minutes were not accurate. I did say that we all try to best and people can have different recollections.

Is the squad ready for the season? Possibly need another couple of players to sign (UPDATE – They have). We have to let players go who have not done enough. Players from last season were invited to prove themselves for this season, some have, some haven't. With Sweeney & Mikey we should be able to score goals. We have a Plan A, Plan B and a "**** or bust" Plan C.

It's a new squad, still learning names! Please give me until mid-September for a settled team that will deliver. It's an extremely tough league, given of course that these are part time footballers.

Thomas received a warm round of applause when he left.

Gary Hackett

Mike confirmed that Gary Hackett never applied for the Managers role on either recent time. Mike had spoken to him but he was happy working at WBA and his own business and never applied.

Bromsgrove Sporting Colts

Andrew Mason gave some background to his role, what can be achieved this season and what the plans are for forthcoming seasons.

Relationship between club and colts best it has ever been.

150 colts have been given passes to get free entry into games. They are going to play games at half time against opposition teams (same age group) or amongst themselves.

Planning to get all 20 teams here ASAP with all silverware from last season (once holiday season has calmed down).

Next generation of players are being signed and will go to Stourport and Studley for experience.

Club have been inundated with parents asking for their children to be reviewed for a place in the set up.

Free Season tickets to schoolchildren? This is something Andy would like to look in to, local schools have asked if we have community coaches. Andy wants to do this as quick as possible, free tickets to schools but please understand the club is playing catch up.

Academy and U21's are planned for next season. 9 players already earmarked for U21's for next season. Need people in the right places to be able to do this. Monthly meetings with Colts to ensure clubs are linked. Need to get Coaches in the club to go out to schools, AM is working on improving as quickly as we can.

Chairman confirmed that the first team players will also be asked to visit schools and hopefully become the children's heroes.

AM confirmed that he has 150% backing from Mike and the club.

Colts will adopt a first team player, player will attend training sessions and also go to end of season interviews.

Bromsgrove Sporting Ladies

It was asked why the women's team have to pay £2500 to play on the pitch, when we are a community club ?

The women have had 2 years free, whilst the Veterans' team have paid all the time.

The women are paying less than the veterans team

The chairman advised the just because we are a community club everything cannot be free e.g. the Leisure centre is a community asset but you still have to pay to go in.

The questioner was adamant that we should not be charging ladies teams and money should be found from elsewhere.

Do the Ladies team have access to the 1st Team support staff.? The chairman reminded everybody that there are an independent entity as are the Veterans and the Colts – they have their own accounts.

Thomas reminded everybody that nothing is free and in previous clubs this was what he had seen, keep the monies within. The ladies are paying £166/game, Thomas advised that a 3G pitch would probably be £300 so with this arrangement it is a win-win.

The questioner wanted to know why we were not riding on the success of Ladies football, the club had supported them for two seasons. Girls through the Colts will link into the Sporting Ladies team, as we progress with an Academy and U21's the Ladies might need to play elsewhere.

The questioner cannot understand why we cannot exploit the ladies team for commercial reasons. AM asked that time was needed to complete the Pyramid set up through the Colts – how we fit everybody onto the VG is a future decision.

Mike Burke advised that for the current standard the team play at then playing at the Victoria Ground was an exception.

Checking my notes it was not Mike who said "honoured to play" (everything MB said I made sure I annotated as such).

I am afraid I didn't capture who.

It was identified by a supporter that most teams in the Ladies league play on park pitches.

Attendances

It was asked if a gate of 800 from 100,000 people in Bromsgrove is a poor achievement. How do we get more people into the game – what is a reasonable return on the gate. Mike Burke advised it was a poor season last year but was questioned and it was suggested that a crowd of 2000 should be expected. Sporting had the highest average crowd in the league last season despite the league position. It was the view that the Board could do better in getting attendances into the ground.

Concession Policy

The chairman confirmed that the club would not partake in concessions for disabled /armed forces supporters. This is a purely commercial decision.

The chairman confirmed that when options were being discussed it was suggested that legal advice might need to be taken in respect of checking who is actually disabled and whether the club could ask them if they were disabled.

It was suggested that the club could not ask a disabled supporter what gave them the right to have a disabled concession. This was a similar situation as when masks were a legal requirement in shops. Shops were not allowed to ask those not wearing them for health reasons what the health reason was.

It was confirmed that Carers who attended with a disabled person would be admitted free of charge.

Rouslers Bar

Sky Sports in Rouslers Bar – Could we speculate to accumulate?

It costs £500/month, can we do this to stop people moving into Bromsgrove High Street at 5.00 on a Saturday?

I suggested that perhaps this could be sponsored but was reminded by a Forum member that answers were expected from the board, and I shouldn't be making any suggestions as Forum host.

Discussion continued onto how many nights a month this £500 could be spread across?

Graham Scott confirmed that this would be reviewed.

Finances

At last forum (February) it was declared we were losing £2k per week. This was not the state at the end of the season, we had some additional sponsorship. Questions were asked on why £2k was given as a weekly loss when sponsorship was already in place. Do we have a business plan ? Questions we re re-asked on a Business Plan

Graham Scott - Matt Foden has got some new sponsors with Joe Amess

The budget for players has not gone down. We have new sponsors this season as well. Need to anticipate gate receipts to budget, there are no sugar daddies at this club, will not repeat what happened at the Rovers.

Shareholders will see the EOY results very shortly

Loss will depend on gate and sponsorship etc (total income)

Seem to be based on gate money, do we have a plan to increase revenue? Academy will help next year. Can we attract more commercial revenue / sponsorships / event days. AM discussed the youth set up and how this would increase revenue, academy will make money. U21's will play alternate Saturdays at The VG (U21's can play 3 over age and so will be used for 1st Team trials and players returning from injury.).

This years budget is set against an average gate of 876.

If this is not met or alternative income streams are not found, then the budget will need to be cut.

Ground Improvements

Rent rebates are received and have gone towards, in Summary :-

- Covered Disabled Area
- Revamped Rouslers Bar
- Managers Office
- Perspex/Glass replaced in Main Stand
- Disabled Toilet being prepared
- Storage Sheds in place for the Graages which have been removed for the Disbaled Toilet
- Front Office been refurbished
- Pitch Restored
- Town End – Planning Permission has lapsed. Need £50k. We were offered a loan but the Interest rate offered was not sustainable. Grants are beeter obtained if you need it for promotion.

Shares

It was asked if shares are available to be purchased.

They are, up to a maximum of 10% of the current share value of the club. Shares are £125 each

Contact Mike Burke or Phil Baker for further information via email.

hello@bromsgrovesporting.co.uk

The chairman confirmed he has no current plans to release any of his shares, he would rather that shares were purchased from the club.

Bromsgrove Sporting Supporters Society

A question was asked about the vote of no confidence held by the Society, where 80% of those who voted put a vote of no confidence against Mike Burke.

Mike responded by advising that 80 out of 105 BSSS members had voted for him to resign ; with three promotions and a turn around of the bank account he declined to resign.

It was noted that chairman had been recently offered “over the odds” for his shares (basically to buy him out) he confirmed he had declined offer.

Bromsgrove Rovers Limited Company

Some Sporting Directors have the name, with the new Bromsgrove Rover AFC then it may have to take action to ensure the name is kept within the current set up.

3G Pitch

Would we like it – yes for Finances and Income

Would Thomas like it – well half the league are 3G

However it needs to be funded, Mike would welcome a monies to put a plan in. The Chairman identified that at one club the Chairman had bought the pitch and is being paid back per game.

Does anybody have £500,000 to invest ?

Sponsorship

AM announced that the club will be having a Funday (1st Sunday after season ends).

- Colts Coaches v Fans
- Ladies Games
- Vets v Professional Vets Team (might be Aston Villa)

Hoping to run games on VG at end of season

Looking for sponsors for Academies, Colts, U21's

The Chairman confirmed that Matt Foden was leading the activities with regard to Sponsorship. Please contact Matt with any ideas or offers of financial support or Volunteering

There is no Pop Concert or Bonfire night planned ; if we have volunteers to push forward on these great ideas then please come forward and help. Everything cannot happen in one go.

Division In The Club

The questioner was frustrated personally about division which had been going in, in his opinion, for 6 years. His worry is that nothing is happening.

The Chairman was asked about the 80% vote of no confidence in a poll ran by the Supporters Club. Mike replied that this vote is not representational of the overall fan base and he stated he has no plans to leave his role.

The chairman advised that meetings were in place with the BSSS, there is a common understanding to move forward. Details cannot be communicated at this time.

The questioner asked that there was a plan to bring together, The Chairman reconfirmed that discussion were ongoing between the Club Board and the Board. It was then asked about the AOA's (Articles Of Association). In 2020 the society had a different opinion than the club, in 2022 both agreed on the AOA and are now actively working on them for the benefit of all.

External Competitions

External competitions. Why don't we play in the Birmingham Senior Cup ? We have to enter the cup, it costs us money to enter, they take a % of the gate money. It would be great to get to the final, bu we also have to affiliate to the Birmingham County – we would probably lose financially if we only played one game.

We play is the Worcestershire Senior Cup – we are affiliated to Worcestershire.

Comment from Thomas : When they come around there are so many hindrances with injuries – they would be better per-season.

Attendance: 54

Thank you to the panel and to those who have put questions forward, shared comments and to everyone for coming out. Look forward to another Forum very soon.

Following the event I would like to advise that my “neutrality” has been questioned by a small number of people.

I did my best with the information available and if I made any errors then I apologise.

If anybody else would like to host the next Forum then please step forward.

It has been suggested that the next Forum could either be recorded or videoed.

Although this is of course possible the implications of GDPR would need to be carefully considered.

Foxy