

Thursday 9th August - 1881 Suite Southport FC

Ian Kyle (Director) Phil Hodgkinson (Director) and Natalie Atkinson (CEO)

GROUND DEVELOPMENTS

Main Stand

Initial budget was £500k due to planning delay on getting builders in; it was only when they began doing work that certain things such as discovery of asbestos, bats, lack of fire proofing and drainage issues became apparent. Electrical wiring was catastrophically dangerous. The cost of the refurbishment then increased three fold for the full job to be complete.

We have to make things bigger to meet Football League regulations, such as bigger changing rooms, therefore much of the work is structural so things like Ken's office will have to disappear.

We need to add entry/exit to the bar and main entry in the ground as we will lose that space. The new cladding can't go on until you've cut these holes in the main walls. The cladding alone costs £250k, so if we cut holes in it now and replace it when the structural work is complete the price of the job doubles.

We did as much as possible in phase one, some things will happen during the season and others as part of phase 2. Due to some of the delays, there are things we ran out of time to complete in part 1. Phase 2 is significant. We've paid for Phase 1. By the end of the August, to date, Ian and I will have invested a lot of money.

Aspiration for terraced paddocks in front of the main stand to increase ingress.

Away stand

The aim Next season is to cover the away end and install a number of seats, include catering and car parking behind that stand by moving the new stand closer to the pitch.

Pitch

The pitch needs levelling, currently the drainage is inadequate and underinvested in. Council and college have allowed us to invest in a new main drain and proper sprinklers.

An application will be made to the Football Foundation in January 2019 to cover the cost of this and also some of the cost of the new Away End.

Toilets

We are looking at quotes to get the toilets done during the season we might not get everything done but they are high on the agenda. As we are looking to refurbish the whole ground in stages over the coming seasons, we have to ensure we do not waste money by having to do costly jobs twice, this has to be taken into consideration.

We wanted to refurbish toilets in the bar but due to creation of exits we could end up doing them twice and doubling costs. They are set to be done as soon as it is possible.

Long term plan

On the launch plans it shows a way in/way out car parking area on the land behind the stand – is that happening?

The wider scheme is that as the stand is a long way from the pitch, the away end will be moved closer to the pyramid rather than 5 metres of tarmac. Same with Popular - fencing will come inside the floodlights. So it will come forward 8-9 metres to create space. We would also like to move the Jack Carr closer to the pitch and extend it to the full width of the touchline, creating fans concourse and bar underneath, this will allow for up to 150 parking spaces and entry and exit points for those cars.

Love to speak to school and college re.buying some land from school and college to increase car parking spaces which could create access behind ground for 75 parking space.

Ground currently doesn't create atmosphere unlike the photos from the 60s and now there is dead space so these areas must move forwards.

TIY project

Toilet needs doing, over and above that most of the structural work is phased in. We'd love a scoreboard. We just need to exchange ideas – TIY are very welcome, we wouldn't say no to anything that benefits us and it's what we want to do.

Training Facilities

We want our own training facilities and are talking to the council about that. The council have agreed to gift us as a grant for one of the 3G pitches because the council are currently a long way off their quota for the area; they should have 13 full sized pitches they have none. Soil samples are being carried out on the proposed site in August.

Community facilities generate revenue for the club. The school and college are supportive.

Our preferred site and that of the council is Meols Park , we have loosely discussed creating a sporting centre of excellence in the whole area in conjunction with the Council , School & College, not only does this involve a lot of investment, as the ground is peat based further soil samples need to be done on the whole site to ascertain if the ground is suitable for building and also 3G pitches, this is a very long term project which may or may not come to fruition, hence the club have identified a new site with the help of the council.

Better facilities means better players, better ground facilities and a better ground for both new supporters and existing ones.

Playing Side

We have our biggest ever playing budget in history of the Club but to put it into perspective it is still less than half of Salford's and they won the league by 3-4 points!

We have to balance priorities between playing investment and facilities. Plan to make the club self sufficient within 3 seasons from now , to ensure Board Investment can concentrate solely on infrastructure development and playing budget, along with our new Academy.

The Club needs stability, we finished 15th last season and were out of our cups in the first round - would like to win a local cup and finish top 7 and try and have a run in the cup. For me it's about demonstrating improvement.

We have 12 months to learn what we need to do to get out the division, if we got out of it earlier we wouldn't be ready as a club; the ground and facilities wouldn't be ready we need to keep improving. Last 4 years in the National League saw the club fight relegation, we want to go up and never have to do that but be looking upwards so it is crucial that we are ready and prepared, and the club weren't ready; we are building no quick fixes, measured approach for sustained success.

We have 3-5 promising young players who we have signed with a view to them becoming first team players in 12 months, we will do thjs every season as well as invest in the academy to ensure we reduce player turnover and have more belonging . These players train full time with us. We have loaned them down the pyramid for experience, but loan clubs cover the wages and they can be recalled at anytime.

We have an arrangement with Huddersfield - Pure Business Group sponsor the Huddersfield academy. We get first refusal (within reason) on the under 23 players on loans and permanents if they become available and we've got a knowledge share with their club to look at best practice both on and off the pitch, this allows our staff at all levels to spend time with their counterparts at Huddersfield Town and learn from their experience, from Manager, Coach , Players & CEO to Media , Community and Commercial staff.

Liam would prefer five outfield players on the bench, with loan keepers people expect them to play, we are hoping to add another keeper imminently.

Great scouting network and excellent sporting director and strong links with clubs with premier league and championship clubs. Southport FC's reputation with other clubs is improving and relationships are being built.

We've got a couple of lads coming back from long term injuries around the squad training with us but not contracted to the Club that are for the future and we are thinking for the future.

Finances and Income Generation

We have not lent the club money - it is not directors loans. We do it all through sponsorship or share acquisition as we have got to generate revenue for the club.

We feel the bar is currently a sufficient size, as we monitored footfall last season. We increased corporate facilities because it can bring more revenue into the club and more revenue can be made this way. Once it gets to 6pm the sliding divider will be removed to open up the room. Following this, it will be open up until closing time whether corporate have finished or not.

With the new layout we can increase non-match day revenue, something which it's never had. We can now cater for sit down meals for 170 people or 250 standing. Functions are booking in and we will run Christmas parties. 1 function a week will add significant revenue stream we didn't have.

We were breaking even on the Everton deal but Natalie has negotiated a better deal more games, more income for the games and higher profile matches as a consequence of the facilities and Everton ladies which could rise to a six figure income per season. A formal long term agreement will hopefully be made once work to pitch is complete so we need to look at the club as a business.

Business development for SFC has high standards set. Candidates with track record of success up the leagues are in the pipeline.

Community and Engagement.

Lee Folkard will begin to engage with the community through community programmes, starting with an event when we play Ashton on the 25th. Mini port memberships include a free season ticket and an invite down to the club on their 7th birthday.

SFC are in partnership with the Atkinson, Pleasure Land and splash world plus more with discounts for season ticket holders.

Natalie has met with the MP, information on club will go into council owned business and increase exposure through his own social media.

Utilisation of the new facilities to run programmes that are community orientated such as primary learning partnership, dementia society, senior football etc with some such organisations meeting at SFC.

Long term, we are considering a cafe/shop/drop in centre. We are meeting with Arriva about exposure in their office in town and also to discuss transport links to the club.

Exploring a package to provide an online video subscription service for exiles (embryonic stage) might not be possible but we will investigate.

I have changed the SFC theme tune – we aren't trying to change everything but we needed a big hard shake. I chose all together now because I believe it represents where we want to be as a club and community , together . (PH)

Players will do more in the community as we are now a full time Club.

Online Ticketing

Deadlines on ticketing are in place for this season as we are with Kaizen. We encourage supporters to buy online - man power means deadlines are imposed. It's a big change, we envisaged some issues and will look to continually improve. There are only 5-6 big away followings that we see being very busy, possibly one or two others but many don't travel that well (20-100) It's better for the club if supporters book tickets online from a revenue and planning point of view. Through the information left online we can learn about our fans so we know our fanbase better.

Prior to online ticketing, there were 3 games where we had people going round the ground recording the average attendance. At these matches 120 juniors were reported to have gained access into the ground but there was nothing like that number actually in the ground

Tickets can also be purchased in the bar, bar staff will ask if you have a ticket we will develop our own ticketing system over the next 6 months but are currently in a 12 month agreement with Kaizen.

We just ask that people try to come to the ground a little earlier than they might usually do. We are changing and need to make this change together.