



N.B.S.T. NEWSLETTER

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Nuneaton Borough Supporters' Trust
www.supporttheboro.org.uk

First impressions of Liberty Way

The move to the new stadium appears to have met with the approval of the majority of Boro fans, judging by comments made at the recent Fans' Forum and on the Internet. The new (permanent) stands, the social club, the catering facilities and the new pitch have all been generally given the thumbs-up. The restricted access points, uneven surface around the stadium and temporary buildings and structures have not been so well received, although it is understood that these matters will be addressed over the next few months. There is much work still to be done within the stadium, but the club and their band of volunteers deserve a pat on the back for the work carried out so far in such a short space of time.

The most disturbing factor in the ground move is the apparent animosity between the Boro and the Nuns which means that there are two social clubs, a terrace open to the elements, confusion as to who owns what and who has precedence, and general lack of co-operation between both clubs. The matter of charging for car parking has also put the rugby club on a collision course with Boro supporters, who prefer to park elsewhere. Is it too much to hope that this situation can be resolved amicably without pointing fingers and blaming each other?

A welcome development

However, by far the most uplifting consequence of the ground move was the agreement by the football club to allow a supporters' representative on the new "management board" at Liberty Way. This change comes about as a result of initiatives established by the supporters trust movement, which has championed fans' representation at football clubs for a number of years. NBST has tried to gain this representation at the Boro since it's formation, purchasing shares in the football club and receiving "assurances" from various club officials that this would result in a place on the board. Unfortunately, the football club failed to deliver on it's promises for a number of reasons, so credit must go to NBST member Nathan Walker who approached the club on behalf of **all** supporters' groups and succeeded in achieving this significant agreement. A supporters steering committee was formed in July with two representatives each from the official supporters club (OSC), the supporters trust (NBST), the independent supporters club (BISC) and the fanzine ("Taking Liberties"). Following the initial meeting the BISC decided against any further involvement in the steering committee, stating that they wished to maintain their independence. It was decided to co-opt a further two supporters on to this committee, and to hold an election to select a Supporters' Representative to sit on the new management board at Liberty Way. Three supporters have been nominated to stand in the forthcoming

election; Andrew Briggs, Greg Daffern and Tony Reid. There will be a question and answer session in the social club, on a date to be confirmed, to allow each candidate to state their case for election to this important position.

The new set-up

At the Fans Forum held at Manor Park last October it was announced that a "charitable" or "sporting" trust would be established at Liberty Way to ensure that the ground could never be sold or a single investor gain overall control of the football club. We were told that there would no longer be any 'directors' of the football club once their loans were repaid, and that this trust would be solely responsible for raising revenue and operating within a strict budget. Since the ground move little appears to have changed, with the same hierarchy still running the football club and no mention to date with regard to the new trust.

The position of the shares held by NBST has not been resolved, with suggestions from certain quarters that these should be donated to the proposed charitable trust. The general opinion amongst NBST board members is that the membership should be consulted before this course of action could be considered, bearing in mind the efforts and sacrifices made by Trust members in raising the money for the purchase of these shares. The NBST board has offered to sell the shares back to the club at the price paid in 2004, and to use that money to fund a community project at Liberty Way such as facilities for the disabled or similar initiatives. This would give the Trust and its members a lasting legacy at Liberty Way, and ensure that the football club and its supporters could benefit from improved facilities. The response from the club was lukewarm, to say the least! It appears that there is nothing to stop NBST from selling their shareholding to anyone they choose, giving the impression that the shares will be worthless once the new trust is formed. We await developments in this matter with great interest.

NBST website

Members may be aware that the website has been down for some time, due to circumstances beyond our control. There appears to have been a breakdown in communication between individuals involved with the website, past and present. The good news is that a new website is ready to be activated once these problems are resolved, so members will be able to enjoy updates on NBST's activities in the not too distant future. Apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Contact point for NBST at Liberty Way

Since the move from Manor Park, Nuneaton Borough Supporters' Trust has found itself without a home at Liberty Way. Chairperson David Hall has been unable to secure a permanent position within the stadium from which he can deal with members' questions, accept membership renewals or spread the gospel according to Supporters Direct. Fortunately, after discussions with the Boro general manager, David is now to be found temporarily sharing Andy Pace's programme shop next to the Boro shop. So, if you need to ask any questions regarding the trust at the Boro, wish to make a donation towards NBST or know anyone who would like to help the trust in any way, please have a word with David on match days before kick-off and at half time. Eventually, NBST hopes to have a permanent home at Liberty Way once any proposed developments are completed.

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