



# Central, South West And Wales Celtic Supporters Association

Minutes of meeting between the Central, South West and Wales Celtic Supporters Association (CSA) and John Paul Taylor [JP] (Supporters Liaison Officer, Celtic Football Club [CFC]).

**Date: Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2014.**

**Venue: Wolverhampton Shamrock CSC**

**Present: Reading Martin O'Neill CSC, Oxon Shamrock CSC, Black Country Che Guevara CSC, Wolverhampton Shamrock CSC.**

**Apologies: Swindon Shamrock CCS, Nottingham Shamrock CSC, Sons of Erin 32 CSC and Coventry Emerald CSC.**

**Chair: Dave Bradshaw.**

**Minutes: George Deans.**

## Opening and Introductions.

Dave welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended the Associations thanks to JP for making the effort to attend this meeting. All present introduced themselves and stated which CSC they were representing.

JP gave us a brief overview of what his role is with some historical background. A key objective of his role is to offer a high standard of service to all supporters. He recognises that all supporters were investors in the product that is Celtic Football Club wherever they may be. He went on to say his role was to bring things together from the different Supporters Groups that are active within the Celtic Family and to make sure that their match day experiences were good enough to make them want to come back.

He added that he intended to be the link, the sounding board if you like, for these different supporters groups. His primary aim is to gather information from all points so as to create a feel for the bigger picture and be able to address the issues and concerns of fans wherever possible. JP understood that communication was vital as part of this process, and that where issues could not be addressed, he felt it was important that fans received an explanation as to why this were the case. To conclude, JP stated that he was here to listen, reflect and then feedback on issues and points raised.

Dave then went on to provide an overview of the Association as it now stands. JP enquired how many members the Association represented, to which Dave replied approximately 150. Dave went on to say that the Association had gone through many positive changes during his tenure, we are now a more open, transparent organisation with a constitution that reflects the aims and objectives of the Association. He went on to state that one of our key objectives was to establish,

maintain and improve communication between the CSA and Celtic Football Club and build relationships that will benefit all in the long run. It was noted that a meeting with Peter Lawwall last year was a huge positive step forward and that we wanted to develop links further with the introduction of JP.

### Match Ticketing Arrangements.

AF provided an overview of how his dealings with the Ticket Office had been going and outlined some of the difficulties he had faced since taking on the role of Ticket Officer. He went on to state that since JP had become involved things had started to improve a little. We now have relevant contact details of people within the ticket office as well as JP's contact details should the need arise.

There then followed a lengthy discussion based on the ideas we had put forward regarding a limited match 'season book' for fans South of the border. Following much debate we came up with the possibility of introducing a Six Match Package, with perhaps Celtic TV included. It was noted however that there would have to be some flexibility of the Package with regard to games being selected individually in advance rather than being selected in advance by CFC. JP stated that this package would entitle holders to eligibility for C/L Match Packages. JP agreed to take this back for further discussion and assured us that he would get back to us on this front.

The issue of 'away' tickets was also discussed. JP stated that CFC was taking back many of the away ticket allocations to be administered in-house rather than by other league clubs individually. He went on to say that where demand was greater than ticket allocations priority would be given to season book holders and those with 'away' booking history. This led into a discussion regarding away ticketing arrangements for European games. There was some concern here regarding some fans generating a favourable European ticket history without attending games at CP. JP acknowledged this situation and agreed that this often disadvantaged those fans that travel home and away to domestic games who then consequently have very little chance of securing tickets for European away games.

### Fan Representation.

We reiterated that we would want to be involved as an Association in any developments between the Club and Supporters Organisations. However we felt that the Club should take into account when arranging these meetings that we would need more time to arrange the necessary time off work, financing of the trip and in most cases accommodation. Collectively these represent a huge expense to the Association. Fiona enquired if there was anyway perhaps the Club would assist with financing attendance at these meetings? JP noted this request and stated that he would make representation to the club on our behalf with regard to this matter.

We touched on briefly the issue of the Green Brigade and the restrictions on banners/flags etc. JP stated that the Club had made its position very clear on this matter. Whilst there were no objections to 'ultra' style fans organising to support CFC these groups have a responsibility to behave in a manner that does not bring the club into disrepute and also to keep control of their members. JP went on to state that recent events had demonstrated that they were unable to effectively

police themselves, and whilst accepting that this may have been down to some individuals infiltrating the group, the Club was left with no option but to take action.

### Match Day Experience.

JP stated that there are a lot of new developments going on or being planned in and around the Stadium at present. These will hopefully make the Match Day Experience so much better. The Kerrydale Suite is now full to overflowing on match days.

There was some discussion regarding our thoughts on how the Match day Experience could be improved including:

- The quality of food that was available (JP at this point explained some of the contractual reasons as to “Why” the present situation exists) and the possibility of some healthier options being made available.
- Safe Standing Areas, again JP gave us some more information with regard to this and the processes required to implement this. In principle CFC fully supports the introduction of Safe Standing Areas and anticipates its introduction as early as next season.
- The late cancellation of games due to media commitments. JP stated that there should always be a six week window to allow people to make the necessary arrangements.
- There were some more ideas from the floor with regard to Fan Zones incorporating Beer Tents and such things, Family Fun Days including entertainment for young fans etc. All these were taken on board by JP and he will get back to us on these points.

### Offensive Behaviour at Football Act.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding this matter and how many fans have legitimate concerns as to how we are treated when attending games and, in some cases, how many have been criminalised for doing little more than supporting the team.

JP made it very clear that Celtic Football Club vehemently opposes this act and have done since its inception. The Club continue to be involved in discussions regarding this at various levels and continue to raise their objections to the Act. There was some discussion surrounding the song “Roll of Honour”. This is a song according to Scottish Law that comes into the said Offensive Behaviour Act and thus anyone singing this song is liable to be arrested. Celtic Football Club may not concur with this but they must be seen to be acting in accordance with Scottish Law.

### Charity Friendlies.

JP was asked why there had been no reverse Petrov charity game arranged for Villa Park, a lot of members in our area were disappointed that the opportunity to organise this had not been pursued. JP informed all present that the reason that the game did not happen was because Aston Villa were not interested in hosting such a fixture.

Whilst there were still some outstanding agenda items to be discussed, it was noted at this point that time was against us. JP welcomed the opportunity to meet with

the CSA to discuss matters of importance to us. DB stated that this had been a very productive meeting and looked forward to continuing the positive steps forward in establishing effective communication links between CFC and the CSA. JP agreed with all present that this would only be the start of such a process and welcomed the opportunity to continue to meet with us.

At this point DB closed the meeting.

**George Deans, Secretary. On Behalf of Central South West and Wales CSA.**