

[QUESTIONS BROUGHT TO CUSG MEETING ON MON 23rd SEPTEMBER 2019 BY THE USERS OF THECUMBRIANS.NET FORUM](#)

- No Group is made/forced to answer any question and does so at their own behest.
- Some Groups have answered both their own specific questions and the ones that were marked 'All in attendance', others have answered just their own specific questions.
- If a Group hasn't answered their questions, a simple 'No answer received' has been written. This is in the interests of clarity within the CUSG Group.
- TheCumbrians.net would like to thank all those who replied on behalf of those who submitted questions.

QUESTIONS FOR CUFC: NOTE – ANSWERS PROVIDED BY NIGEL CLIBBENS.

FIXTURES BOARD:

Regarding the fixtures advertising board, there has been complaints regarding it not being updated. could you answer the following on it please?

Why after the complaints of it showing the Crawley game at the top over a week later and emails from David Holdsworth to a supporter saying this was unacceptable - why then was the Mansfield game still showing as the next game 3 days after it was played?

Why didn't any director pick up on this, as surely they must of seen the board on the way into Brunton Park on their way to do things?

We were aware and the groundstaff explained why the change had not been made and what they were doing about it.

Is there a lack of pride and lacklustre attitude amongst staff/directors?

I respect your opinion about the timing but I strongly disagree with the conclusion and it's unfair on those concerned.

The priorities of work are set by head groundsman. He is experienced and well respected (award winning). It is right he decides which day to day stadium tasks are done first. He has an assistant. They know the board needs changing and the importance of doing it timely along with the rest of the workload.

What plans do you have for this board in the future to make sure it is updated regularly?

The target is to change the board by latest close of play Tuesday latest. In practice, for the most part it is changed the next working day morning. That is not always possible due to events and special circumstances. There is always a sound reason - oversight, forgetting, lack of pride and not being bothered are not one of them.

There's been questions regarding a walk around/check list in previous CUSG meetings - is this on it?

Yes -It is on the monitoring list.

It was mentioned by an employee, it can't be updated on the night after a game due to traffic problems. By 6pm everyone is away as there's no incentive for any supporter to stay - it can be done then surely. Not necessarily the grounds team but by someone else.

Closing down after games takes time. Due to traffic etc it is not possible to use a high ladder in the roadway in area of the main access point until the site is full clear.

There is a list of jobs to be done on the evening before the stadium can be closed and secured - these cannot be held over and must take priority.

Reference the fixture board, can the club afford additional 7's and th's or should the trust buy new marker pens. Even if it's updated it still looks shoddy, please can it be sorted?

Replacement /new boards and some numbers were ordered some time ago. Not every number we required has been received and a further delivery is awaited (received late this week). In the interim, whilst not what we would want, rather than not have the date shown, the groundstaff used a stop gap measure.

SCOREBOARD:

We were told a scoreboard was imminent in many CUSG meetings yet this hasn't materialised, what excuse are you going to use this time for not having one?

The CUSG minutes have detailed the situation each meeting and it has not been described in that way.

In regards the scoreboard, its utterly embarrassing how long it has gone on for, surely a sponsor would be interested in having one behind the Waterworks with there company plastered all over it?

Everybody would have wanted a replacement much sooner. We have had a number of set backs but the commitment to have one has always been there. The issues have been described in detail and are there as a matter of record in the CUSG minutes.

On the subject of the scoreboard, why can we not directly replace the one that's already there? Surely as it hasn't collapsed the ground must be strong enough to take a direct replacement.

We made the decision that the cost of fixing compared with benefit of what the old scoreboard displayed was not the best use of the club's money. It would still only be able to show the game score (which fans knew anyway) and time (which fans can see on a phone or on watch). We decided it made better sense to invest in a modern screen which would be able to do more and give more information.

As an aside the underlying ground is gravel & none of the stands have collapsed yet. More bullshit from the club! Are we likely to get a working scoreboard this season?

An update is detailed in the meeting minutes. An order has been placed and the screen is being manufactured for installation in October..

EWM:

What guarantees do the club/owners have against EWM calling in their debt anytime soon?

There are legal agreements in place which determine how the commercial funding arrangement works.

Additionally, each year as part of the normal annual audit process and EFL source and sufficiency of funding process, we receive undertakings about future support. This provides the necessary assurance for the club (and satisfies our independent external auditors).

Can we have a copy of the EWM loan facility Agreement?

Just the same as any contract or commercial agreement at this or any other football club or any company, the legal agreements we have in place are not disclosed publicly. This is the same for every agreement not just EWM. This is normal practice.

It therefore will not be disclosed.

ON THE PITCH MATTERS:

In the CUSG questions it was denied by yourself that the aim of the club was just to survive as a football league club for as cheap as possible and the aim was promotion. Results are speaking for themselves and we have recruited worse players than last season, my opinion, that aren't even good enough for tier 4 which is shocking for Carlisle United. How then can you possibly say promotion is the aim when we've recruited so badly?

The Club's aim and ambition is for promotion. We are seeking to be successful in a viable and sustainable way which does not risk the future of the club. That means we have to go about our business in a certain way.

We then support a manager to recruit players he wants, to build a team and implement his way of playing to fulfil our club's ambition.

Football is a game of opinions and everyone has a view on every player – rightly so.

There are aspects of our performances which we can all see need to improve, as the manager has been honest to admit. All the players and staff are working hard to address them.

Have you failed in your position as on the field, which is where the club gets judged, we have gone backwards every season you've been here?

From the comments and questions from fans its clear, the club is judged on many things not just on the field. On the field success is the top priority.

However, I agree, it is perfectly true that by remaining in L2 the club has not achieved its main short term ambition of promotion.

Could the club survive a relegation to non league?

The survival of the club is not related or dependent on which division or League we are in.

Are the board worried about the crowds and how long can this continue before it gets serious consequences on the spending available to the manager?

The board is always looking at crowds. They are clearly very important for many reasons not just financial impact.

We look at all the issues we face rather than automatically saying changes in recent attendances lead to a change in spending.

In 18/19 we set the budget based on 4600 attendance. The actual average last season was 4712 which was both an increase on 17/18 and better than our budget.

We want to see crowds increase, like they did last year. We are working to do that both off and on the field, but the actual attendance can fluctuate for many reasons from week to week, so we have to take a broader view on what we do in response to crowd changes.

The average after 5 home games 19/20 at the moment is 4320. After 5 games last season 17/18 it was 4364. Home fans average 4123 vs 4038 last year; that is a bit up. But away fans 197 vs 326 last year. But it is only 5 games so drawing conclusions is difficult at this point.

Our club plan overall is to match our spending with the cash the club has coming in. We need to grow as a club. Income from home attendance impacts on the cash coming in. If they trend down it is a concern.

We set the club budget and football budget season to season and review it in advance of each transfer window based on the circumstances the club faces (including crowd income but not that alone).

In 18/19 our income from league match ticket sales was about 30% of our total recurring income (excluding income from cups and players sales etc). It was similar to 17/18. This % is expected to fall in 19/20 because of the large increase in EFL distributions to the club this year.

As you can also see from the information below (if you want the detail), crowds play an important part in determining club income and therefore our spending, but there are many other factors too. The detail is crucial not just the headline figure of crowd attendance

Further information, if you are interested, we look at things like:

- home and away fan numbers
- mix of fans - ages etc
- "ticket yield" - the net income we receive per fan after VAT (which is very different from the headline prices because of the mix of concessions, offer, season tickets and complementary tickets); this is on average approximately £10 for walk up
- the impact of ticket initiatives like 8K for MK, the community ticket scheme, free kids tickets
- no-shows of season ticket holders etc.
- scheduling of games - at different points in the season fixture scheduling impacts; midweek fixtures and opposition mid-week can make a big difference
- season to season – the teams making up the division
- our form and results and the opposition
- same opposition in different years
- attendance compared with years past (the experience over the last 40 years is interesting compared to recent years in L2)

For example:

The average after 5 home games 19/20 at the moment is 4320. After 5 games last season 17/18 it was 4364.

We have an average Home fans so far of 4123 vs 4038 last year – slightly up on home fans which might be a surprise.

But away fans are down 197 vs 326 last year (largely because of the opposition we have played compared with last year - uncontrollable).

Last year we played Forest Green on a Saturday and 4166 home attendance – this season on a Tuesday mid September and it was 3219; well down; fixture scheduling uncontrollable. The similar fixture this time last season was home game six on a Tuesday vs Grimsby and 3316 fans attended. That night we had 3173 home fans compared with 3143 vs Forest Green.

How's Holdsworth's laryngitis? When the teams doing well you can't shut him up, when it's poor, currently, there's no word of him. Really concerned about him.

No answer received

How can you justify £22 for what was served up on Tuesday night. Sleeping tablets are only £9 ish on prescription?

Some 0-0s live in the memory that might but not for excitement or goal mouth incident.

With our average attendance of 4,320 which is lower than the league 2 average and likely to drop below 4,000 will the budget be further cut for the following season?

The budgets for the 2020/21 season will not be set until after March 2020. Given the unpredictability of football there is no merit in looking that far ahead and making predications as things can change very quickly.

As a point of principle the club has to match its spending with the cash it has coming in and income from home attendance impacts on cash coming in.

See answer above

OTHER STUFF:

If you employ a contractor to do work and its satisfactory, how long do you wait to pay them?

Every case is different. Some paid before work is done, some when its done and others on credit. Some by contra and offset against what they owe us.

Can we raise a question about why the coach looks like it can do the job but then keeps breaking down? The second one isn't about Pressley but why the Reays fun-bus keeps leaving the players stranded after away games!

The issues have arisen from mechanical failure and then accident damage which initially was assessed as repairable but then could not be. In all the cases it was unpredictable problems but it

led to major disruption and late arrivals back. Nobody wants that. We are pleased we were back to normal with no issues on the trip Bradford.

The much fiddled with and now shambolic EFL Trophy is traditionally played in the midweeks leading into International weekends. Why have our games v Wolves U21 (Tues 24th Sept) and Blackpool (Tues 15th Oct) been moved from these dates (Tues 3rd Sept and Tues 8th Oct respectively)?

The three group fixtures can be played up to the week commencing 11 November 2019. The clubs pick the weeks that best fit their schedules. They don't automatically have to be set based on International breaks.

How can you justify charging £10 for i follow when the commentary is a second ahead of the bloody pictures?!

The price is not set by the Club and the service is not run by the club either – in practice we get complaints/ feedback but can't do much to resolve them for fans there and then, which is very frustrating for everyone. We take the feedback seriously and speak to i follow as issues arise and they deal with them.

The service needs to work.

If there are issues with the service please report them to i follow immediately and notify the club.

We have passed the feedback to i follow and they are investigating. When we have a reply we will share it.

QUESTION FOR CUFC & CUOSC:

Why is there a lack of urgency to get things done such as the scoreboard, disabled facilities, fixture board changes etc etc?

CUFC: The scoreboard and fixture board are explained above. On the disabled facilities we have made some improvements and the Disabled Group are formulating ideas for others (see CUSG minutes). When they are confirmed the club can look at them.

CUOSC: There is a lot of good work done at the club that goes unnoticed. Generally, things get done as quickly as the budget or staffing levels allow. The problems with the scoreboard are well recorded

QUESTIONS FOR CUOSC:

Can we have an update as to what the trust have done in terms of representing supporters interests. What meetings have happened, what progress has been achieved and how have you helped the club in the last 3 months.

Our representatives have attended both the club's Holdings Board and 1921 Operational Board meetings. If there is anything to report from these meetings we include it in our weekly email briefings to members. We are also members of the club's Business Club.

We attended the Football Supporters Association AGM and reported back on that. The club were grateful for the help of our volunteers over several days with the collation and distribution of season tickets.

We are also working on improving our website.

We continue hold supporters' surgeries before every Saturday home match. We also want to develop the bond between the club and the wider community and our collection for Carlisle Foodbank before the Mansfield game was extremely successful.

Billy Atkinson was on the board that chose Pressley, was Pressley his choice and what football knowledge/experience does Billy have to help him have input into choosing a new manager?

It was stated at the time that Steven Pressley was the unanimous choice of the Holdings Board who were supported in the process by the Director of Football.

Have the trust gained any further info on EWMS future plans?

We continue to work actively behind the scenes on this.

QUESTION FOR SLO:

What have you done this season?

No answer received

QUESTION FOR THECUMBRIANS.NET:

Have you had any further thoughts/discussions about not attending these meetings or putting it back to a user vote?

At present, we feel that attending CUSG is beneficial for our users. They know that we will ask anything they wish us to, and several have thanked us personally for the attitude we've shown with regards to collating and sorting the questions. We also feel that we bring a positive attitude to the meetings, and have been forward in helping with various tasks and events.

We're trying to push forward plans to make CUSG more professional, and kind of a 'one stop' for any Groups or queries fans have. Utilised correctly, CUSG can be an excellent avenue for fan interaction with the Club.

If there was a sudden surge of feeling that we shouldn't attend, we would obviously discuss, both ourselves and with the users via the messageboard.