



Meeting with Eben Smith 10th March 2023 Meeting outcomes

Attendees

WAGMI United

Eben Smith

Crawley Town FC

Tom Allman

CTSA

Reuben Watt - Chair

Sam Jordan - Vice-Chair

Hugh McKinney - Fans' representative

Summary

The meeting was set up to explore a number of key concerns of the CTSA board and its members. The questions were shared with Eben in advance to allow for more complete answers and the intention was to discuss these on the call.

The call lasted 45 minutes and it consisted more of a general discussion rather than a focus on the specific questions. The content of the discussion did answer some of the questions and where this happened, the discussion points are marked under the relevant questions.

During the call Eben admitted that WAGMI had made a number of mistakes and that some errors were compounded with other errors but he also pointed out that bad luck had plagued the club since they took over.

The CTSA has requested a further call to explore the remaining unanswered questions and other issues that arose during the call.

How do you intend to repair broken trust and the negativity surrounding the club with regards to WAGMI?

Eben gave an outline of the current environment around the club. He accepted that the relationship with the fans was not great and in particular he highlighted the antagonism and personal abuse directed by some of the support towards members of WAGMI.

WAGMI attempted to make Crawley Town of interest to others outside Crawley but Eben admitted that this fractured the support leaving Crawley supporters in the UK feeling less important, which he admitted was a mistake.

It was agreed that the situation in playing staff terms will not change now until the end of the season and that the priority is to fully support Scott and the players in all the remaining games. It was also agreed that both the ownership and CTSA would publish messages urging supporters to support the team until the end of the season.

CTSA also pointed out that a Community Action Plan was being drawn up to improve relations between the club, the supporters and the local community.

Chris Galley promised a Fans Forum this month. Why isn't it happening?

Eben will look into this.

What is the financial situation of the club and WAGMI United? When will the club be releasing their accounts?

This was not discussed.

Preston has said that year 1 was going to be a year to learn. What have you learnt this past year? Do you have any regrets?

WAGMI bought the club in April 2022 and not knowing much about English football their intention was to limit their involvement and see how it goes. They had no network of experts in England. This was complicated by the John Yems situation two weeks after purchase.

When they bought the club it was in debt and heading for administration. In addition there were unexpected ongoing legal issues with two former employees. The club is now debt free

When they approached Bradford initially they ended up in a legal situation that was not of their making and they found it difficult to know who to trust. They trusted the people who recommended Betsy but the club did not present the right structure for him. After the Betsy days, there were compounding errors, which didn't help.

What are your thoughts on the current squad?

The Glenn Morris situation was bad luck - Ellery was recalled by Brentford the day after the club agreed that Glenn could leave to gain more playing time.

Eben asked if the fans understand that the club loses money before paying the players. The NFT sale helped but the club had reached the limit approved by the EFL in the Autumn and were in a position that they couldn't buy without selling.

The advice was that we needed a midfielder and towards the end of the year Tom was not playing very well and there were no offers for any of the other players. A football decision was taken to allow Tom to leave to enable further players to come in.

Regarding Tony Craig, Jake Hessenthaler and George Francombe, WAGMI wanted to be more transparent but this was difficult due to the legal situation which dictated that the players could no longer be part of the club. Eben accepted that they got it wrong with the lack of transparency on this.

It was put to Eben that WAGMI had not put the right people in place to do the right thing and Eben accepted that they had not made the right decisions.

The CTSA asked if there was an incentive package in place for the players to avoid relegation. Eben confirmed that it would not be allowed under EFL rules to add a clause into a contract this late on.

Where does the blame lie in our 6 consecutive defeats?

- Are you going to be sticking with Lindsey?

This was not addressed specifically but the agreement that we all need to support Scott and the team suggested that the present playing staff and management will remain until the end of the season.

What are your plans for next season? If in the National League? If in League 2?

Preston and Eben work with a group of investors and there is enough money for next season. We will need to wait until the end of the season before a decision is made.

There are no real buyers for the club - they have been approached by some groups who won't commit to funding for buying the club.

Can you confirm you'll allow a vote for a new chairperson at the end of the season, should we be relegated and therefore promotion to League 1 in season two being Impossible?

This was not discussed

Why did you do your tweet on twitter following the Stevenage game? Do you regret it? If not, why not?

- "We have nothing to lose and everything to gain" What did you mean by this?

Eben agreed that his tweet didn't help and he regretted sending it.

What is the club structure?

This was not discussed

When will there be an experienced CEO in place?

The club cannot afford to hire a CEO.

How do you and Preston keep up with what is happening on the ground?

Eben personally watches all the games and expressed the same frustration as the supporters over the current situation.