



## **Supporters Questions & Answers**

Thank you to all the supporters who submitted questions to the Club. The responses to each question are in red below.

We hope that the answers help to clarify and reassure you that everyone within the Club & the Members Club are doing all they can to ensure the future success of Tooting & Mitcham United both on and off the pitch.

### **Planning Approval and New Facilities**

What new sporting facilities will be built as part of the planning approval to build new housing on the Imperial Fields site?

The entrance building which will house reception, changing for the front All Weather Pitch (AWP) and a sports hall.

The rear changing/education/ community block.

Will these new facilities be built before the new homes are completed and sold?

There can be no occupation of the residential block until practical completion of the new community buildings.

How will the new sporting facilities benefit the football club?

The independent assessment was based on the viability for the whole Organisation showed there will be a positive affect on the football club. At this stage we cannot identify specifics, but increased footfall and income will benefit everyone.

Will there be any future income flows from the sale of the homes?

No, they are providing the new buildings. However, the increased footfall will provide more income.

How will the income flows generated by the new facilities benefit the football club and wider facility?

As above

What is the timeframe for the work to begin and reach completion?

It is hoped that works will commence during 2022 and completion should be within approximately 2 years.

Will the current facilities receive any refurbishment as part of the overall project? (For example, the toilet facilities in the main bar area & the function room)

See below. The toilet facilities will be included.

Will the main stadium benefit from any upgrade?

Major works have already taken place over the last few months. A 6-figure sum has already been invested and there is more to spend. We have an ongoing maintenance program. There are already stadium pitch improvements planned for the closed season. These works require significant ongoing investment which the club has to find.

In the last year we have had to spend a significant amount of money to upgrade our ground to meet more stringent fire regulations, as a result of the Grenfell Fire and to fit new pumps for the main pitch. This money had to be found, as otherwise the ground could not be

opened to the public for the start of this season. Given the impact of covid on our finances, these unexpected bills have had an impact on our plans for this season.

Do we already have organisations interested in using the planned facilities?

Yes we do.

Will the chairman benefit personally from the planned project?

No he will not.

### **Groundshare Agreement**

What is the agreement with Kingstonian? (i.e., will they be paying rent for the facilities?)

The agreement is confidential but yes they are paying rent.

Will TM Sport & Leisure receive any income from attendances on Kingstonian matchdays?

TMU will receive all the income from the match day bar.

How long do Kingstonian plan on ground sharing with us?

The groundshare is initially for x 1 season. We anticipate that thereafter it will be on a rolling contract with the right to break on both sides

Which club has fixture priority, with regards to cup draws?

This is decided by the Leagues not the Clubs.

Other than TMUFC and Kingstonian first team fixtures, what other fixtures will be played on the main pitch?

It will predominantly be TMUFC and Kingstonian 1<sup>st</sup> teams unless our under 18 or 23 teams have to play in high level competition final that requires FA grading.

Will Kingstonian also be bringing all their youth and ladies' teams to use the facilities and pitch as part of the deal?

There is no agreement on this, any further use will need to be discussed

Is there any suggestion that the main pitch will be converted to an artificial surface?

We have investigated a Hybrid pitch, part grass, part artificial. These pitches are still being assessed by Sport England and the FA but they cost several hundred thousand. Should we invest in this we would seek to include an irrigation system.

Will Tooting Bec FC continue to use Imperial Fields?

They have been invited to.

Can Tooting Bec FC play league matches on the rear 3g pitch before new changing and seating facilities are completed?

As it stands the rear pitch is not compliant and we jointly investigating a way to install temporary facilities to allow to them to play.

Will the 3g pitches be able to accommodate training for all the potential clubs playing at the ground, including AFC Wimbledon's youth section? (And who will have precedence?).

TM United have precedence on the 3G pitches. We start to agree the following seasons usage of the 3G in February due to the demand and try where possible to accommodate existing customers.

Will the groundsman be given more time to prepare the pitch for the 2022/23 season?

The Groundsman is always given the time he requires for pitch preparation and this season will be no different.

### **T&MUFC**

Will the new income benefit the football club, both the first team and the academy?

See above

Following the poor results from the first team, what can be done to improve the situation?

The management team are very aware that performances need to improve & our priority for the rest of this season is to secure a mid-table position in the league. The management team continue to review and discuss the best way to achieve this and report to the directors on a regular basis.

Why has our association with AFC Wimbledon not benefited the club through loan opportunities etc.?

We have tried to engage with them on this, but so far, we have not worked anything out that suits the best interests of both clubs. There are other clubs that have expressed greater interest and we will continue to constructively work with these clubs to do what is best for Tooting & Mitcham.

Is there an opportunity for coaching collaboration between the clubs sharing the facility?

We are always open to collaboration but again it has to be in the best interests of Tooting & Mitcham.

Will the new income flows generate increased financial commitment to the first team budget?

The Chairman continues to underwrite the 1<sup>st</sup> team budget at a substantial rate. As said in his new year statement he is aiming to make the budget more competitive next season. That said, we also rely on the input from our fan base in terms of volunteering and sponsorship. There is a strong but small core of fantastic people giving their time and expertise to the Club and new people are always welcome to come and help.

The chairman has indicated his ambition to see the club reach the National League, can he share details of plans to make this happen?

This remains our aim and we have seen some really positive steps and an increase in the numbers of volunteers and sponsors being attracted to support the club. But we need to do more on this front if we are to be able to deliver our goal of competing at a higher level. This will require greater investment and more input and support from everyone at the Club to achieve this. As ever we will review our business plan at the end of the season to see what can be done with the resources, we have available to us.

Is it sensible to have a management team that oversees both the academy and the first team?

This is part of our project for the overall Organisation and is absolutely what we believe in.

Is there a danger of young academy players prospects being damaged by being brought into the first team too early?

No academy player is brought into the 1<sup>st</sup> team until the management team feel they are ready. The decision is never taken lightly and is continually assessed.

What can be done to bring about a better balance in the first team – i.e., mixing experienced players at this level with young players?

This is something we constantly aspire to. We are actively trying to get this balance right. The Managers are constantly reviewing the first team's performance and if additional players are required, we will do what we can to bring them in.

This season, we have played almost 50 players in the first team (more than most others in the league), does this concern the club/management?

It does and we are seeking to keep a core of players together and build from this for next season.

We have seen numerous promising young players leave the club in recent seasons, what more can be done to retain these players for as long as possible and to ensure that the club benefits from the future sale of those players?

As Club we do not believe in holding back the progression of our younger players. Although agreements are confidential, we do have players on contract and where we are we are able to negotiate with their new club to have a sell on clause we do so. One of the problems that we have is the number of people claiming to be agents and influencing our young players. We have even seen one of our supporters tipping off another club.

When the team is not performing well, what more can be done to attract higher attendances?

We would welcome our supporters' thoughts on this. It is possible, Dulwich Hamlet have achieved it and we think it is more likely if we provide an overall positive experience, particularly for families.

The Members Club work hard to organise events, promote a positive atmosphere at games, create closer ties with local businesses and get others involved with the club. The new club shop and baby changing facilities, are just two quick examples of the work going on to attract new fans.

The constant negative comments on the public forum do damage all the hard work put in and will put off people from sponsoring or attending the games. Everyone has a part to play in attracting others to the Club and making our games as enjoyable as possible.

Is the academy/first team policy considered to be working? Do you understand the concerns held by fans - how can these concerns be addressed/appeased?

We believe that it does work and our reputation locally is very strong. The last 2 years with Covid have impacted us all but particularly the Academy given the lockdowns. 2 seasons were affected, as they were for all clubs, but it was more complicated because of our structures. We absolutely stand by what we have achieved and what our aims and ambitions are.

Many fans feel that the Sky filming has had an impact on matchday performances and decision making? Do you believe this to be the case?

Yes. We do feel that it is inevitable that people change in front of camera and Sky's presence has proved more intrusive than we anticipated and was not we understood from the outset. They finish with us at the end of the season.

Would it be helpful to enlighten supporters about the overall cost of running the football section? (More information may encourage fans to continue supporting the club).

We have provided the Members Club with a lot of information and we think on one occasion the Supporters Club representative, but our football budget is commercially sensitive and something that no clubs divulge.

Why have we got agents meddling in the 1st team?

Players have the choice as to whether they have an agent or not. The Club does seek advice from agents where appropriate. We wish to build productive relationships with other clubs and agents to mitigate inappropriate approaches to our players.

### **General**

The club does a lot of good work with the local community, but sometimes fails to communicate that good work. Can more be done to communicate this?

This is a fair point. Following on from the football Q&A we are going to invite a Community Q&A session to better inform everyone.

Can the Member's Club explain their role and where their raised money is spent?

This question is better posed directly to the Member's Club. That said we would encourage you to join the Members Club, as these details are given in the reports to members at the AGM. Unfortunately, Covid has meant that for the last two years the AGM was carried out virtually but in some detail.

Further information can be found at <https://www.tmunited.org/members-club>

Who are the directors of the Member's Club and what are their roles?

The Members Club have responded with the following information.

Current director roles are:

Chairman – Chris Woolley

Vice Chair & Treasurer – Steve Paine

Membership Secretary – Tom Paine

Matchday Operations – Lyn Catchpole

Boardroom Hospitality – Keith Kelly

Operations, Commercial Sponsorship & Events – Nick Shaw

Man of The Match Sponsorship – David Penn (retiring)

Club Website – Charlie Rowe

Ground improvements – Phil Nightingale (retiring)

The Members Club always need more people to help run the club & match day arrangements. If you have some free time to spare, we would love for you to join us. Please get in touch via email to: [tmufc@tmunited.org](mailto:tmufc@tmunited.org)

**All** the profit the Members Club raises from match day sales, raffles, or events, goes to supporting the first team budget or supporter improvements, such as the new programme hut. No directors of the Members Club get paid for the work they do.

Who are the directors of T&M Sport and Leisure and what are their roles?

Steve Adkins and the Chairman of TMU Members Club are directors. Their roles are to oversee the Organisation and football.

The Member's Club publishes their accounts annually, is this something that could be done by the T&M Sport and Leisure and the Supporter's Club?

TMSL accounts are published annually. We cannot answer for the Supporters Club.

What more can be done to get the Member's Club and Supporter's Club working collaboratively?

We would like to see this and would welcome them getting together to progress this. That said it is up to the 2 clubs. It should be remembered that the MC is not really a club, but a company and has wider objectives and responsibilities than the supporters club.

### **Other**

Has the club any Interest in putting a 3g pitch down on the main pitch like many teams have done. Despite the great work that goes into the pitch - come winter it really does cut up and with so much football being played would this be something you would think about.

See response above.

Why have we got agents meddling in the 1st team? We've used about 50 players so far this season with players coming and going on a weekly basis giving us no stability. Are we being used as a shop window just for the agents monetary gain whilst the main objective is to move up the league and pyramid in general (it obviously isn't working because we are heading in the opposite direction) . We are a club for the community - but it looks like agents are pulling all the strings. Agents don't do anything for the clubs in all standards of football from Isthmian to the Premiership football and are the scourge of fans worldwide. Not a good advertisement for a community club like Tooting.

See response above

Why are we persisting with a management pairing that don't know the league and look out of their depth so far, juggling about 50 players around and still only just above a relegation spot. They did a great job whilst managing the U23s and bringing the good youngsters through the system, but the 1st team looks a step too far and needs an experienced man at the helm that knows the league and players. Surely there must be times they wished they were back doing the youngsters. It's probably too late to make the play offs this season and staying up is a priority but you say you want us to be in the National League. That will never happen unless there is investment in the 1st team squad. As proved by other sides in non-league football investment brings its own rewards in much bigger gate receipts, (several teams that were in our division have hit 2,000+ recently) more bar profits, prize money in cup and trophy competitions, maybe live TV coverage. Away from the money side surely the community would rather get behind a successful club than a struggling team which we currently are.

We have to disagree; the managers know this league very well having managed the Club for the past 3 seasons and without Covid could have seen us promoted in the 2 previous campaigns. They are committed to turning the 1<sup>st</sup> team around and their squad rotation has been caused by many things, including significant levels of Covid infections and injuries. Over recent weeks we have had a much more stable team.

You are right that success should improve attendance and could create other opportunities too. The support off the pitch is vital as well and therefore we would encourage everyone to get more involved with helping the Club to achieve this.

The Chairman refers to " any surplus funds " being used to fund the construction of the new Entrance Block / Sports Hall and the new Changing/Education Block next to the rear all

weather pitch. Does this mean that if there are no " surplus funds " construction of these facilities will not happen?

This is tied into the planning consent for the residential building. It cannot be occupied until the new community buildings are completed, this forms part of the legal agreement with the local authority and the GLA.

There is no mention in the Statement about the other new planned facilities - South Stand, Gymnastics Dome, Rear Pitch Seating, Community.

Pods and Link to the Wandle Trail. Are these still part of the Masterplan and, if so, what are the plans for the financing of their construction?

The Masterplan remains and we are actively seeking finance to finish it.

What is the timescale for the construction of the Accommodation Block, the Entrance Block / Sports Hall and the Changing / Education Block at the rear pitch?

As above

Will all the building work take place at the same time, under the same contract? Or will the Accommodation Block take preference?

It is intended that the building work will come under one contract and we are working towards a construction programme at the moment. The Organisation will not be the developers.

**END**