



www.stadiumwatch.co.uk

[An independent user group monitoring the
Lakeside Stadium Complex Doncaster]

Press Release: PR002 23 January 2007 10:00 a.m.

StadiumWatch call for Audit Investigation into SMC Ticket Records

StadiumWatch is very concerned about the continuing irregularities in the recording of attendances and ticketing arrangements at the Keepmoat Stadium. Fans at last Saturday's local derby game where Rovers entertained Scunthorpe United have reported further instances of "double selling" of seat tickets, which raises the obvious question of how the related ticket monies are being recorded.

Nigel Wroe, StadiumWatch spokesman, reported personal experience of "double selling", stating that his niece had been sold a match day ticket in the South Stand, for which a season-ticket holder later arrived to take up.

The SMC's announced attendance figures for two games at the Keepmoat Stadium were subsequently reported to the Football League as being overstated, with the "official figures" being several hundreds lower.

At the recent Johnston Paints Trophy game against Darlington, poor ticket office management kept an estimated thousand fans queuing in the rain as the game kicked off, of which about 500 decided to enter at half-price. It is not clear if Rovers received compensation from the SMC for lost sales.

"I really do wonder what on earth the SMC are playing at over this. I have written to Mr Gilliat, the SMC Finance Director, to report falling public confidence in the integrity of the ticket selling and recording process, and challenged him to call in an independent auditor to examine the records, and issue a full report for public consumption".

"In particular we would want the auditor to examine the cut-off between the full and half-priced post kick off tickets, the tally of sold tickets to-date, including those double-sold, and the relationship between monies received by the SMC and monies paid over to the Club. There is lingering concern over the 250 per match complimentary tickets the SMC help themselves to and whether they are going to good causes as intended."

StadiumWatch have called for an independent auditor to be witness to the ticket and turnstile records, much as there is one present at the National Lottery Draw for all future games.

The Stadium is a community asset, and the SMC have to be seen to be acting with complete probity and integrity. Only an independent audit of the process so far can restore public confidence. Confidence is not high. At the very least the Mayor should be concerned at the continuing gaffes on the part of the SMC.

www.stadiumwatch.co.uk

[An independent user group monitoring the Lakeside Stadium Complex Doncaster]

The Mayor saw fit to vest the responsibility for running the stadium complex in the Lakeside Sports Complex LLP, the legal entity behind the SMC, rather than the sporting clubs. Questions have been asked of the Dearne Valley Leisure Trust, DMBC's partner in the LLP, about the lack of disclosure in their recent accounts of their involvement as a designated partner in the LLP, and how this is consistent with their charitable aims. The Charity Commission has been informed.

According to their accounts, the DVLTL has been in receipt of £950K of Council funds in the past four years, with in the region of £400K payable in the next two years. In the year to March 2006, the DVLTL received £5,000 for "general purposes" from the LLP.

StadiumWatch are very concerned to know if monies raised by the SMC from sponsorship, rents, hospitality and other commercial ventures, particularly those monies being levied from Rovers fans on match days, and from community use of the facilities, are being distributed for "general purposes" to a partner in the LLP, rather than retained for the avowed purpose of funding stadium repair and maintenance.

"I have asked the Finance Director of the LLP to justify this extraordinary payment made to the DVLTL and to indicate if any part of the million pound sponsorship monies recently received by the SMC have been allocated to the DVLTL, and similar organisations, and exactly how much", said spokesman Nigel Wroe, "and whether this is within the formal agreement establishing the LLP, who exactly authorised it, and how much has been paid to date".

Nigel Wroe said, "With the cash-strapped DMBC introducing cut-backs, it doesn't take a giant leap of imagination to foresee that £200K p.a. promised to the DVLTL being made up by the SMC via a virtual levy on Rovers fans and other users paying sky-high prices for drinks, food, parking and charges for other amenities such as pitch and room hire, this is why the affirmative action launched last week should be intensified. We simply cannot risk SMC incompetence and overcharging being an effective brake on the continued growth and success of Doncaster Rovers."

High prices, poor service, broken promises, continued pettiness over use of the digital scoreboards, ticketing gaffes, double selling, heavy stewarding, heavy handed treatment of Rovers match officials. This further news that prior distributions to the LLP partners for whatever purpose would be very hard for tenant clubs, fans and other users to accept.

Notes:

StadiumWatch resources are available from <http://www.stadiumwatch.co.uk>

Note 26 to the DVLTL 2006 accounts state: "Stadium management fee £5,000 - Received from Lakeside Sports Complex LLP for general purposes".

Limited Liability Partnerships are a new form of legal entity created by the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2000. Put simply the partners agree in a confidential document their relative shares in contributions to assets in a winding up, and their participation in any profits. The disclosure requirements are less onerous than the more familiar limited company model. LLP's are registered at companies house, and are taxed in the same way as regular partnerships.

The DMBC and the DVLTL are designated partners in the Lakeside Sports Complex LLP.