

Macclesfield Town Football Club

Research Proposal



by

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Executive Summary

The introduction sets out the general background to the proposal for a survey and research into the current level of support MTFC enjoys and how this might be improved. The purpose of the project is simply to gather knowledge, which can be used as the basis for a business plan, a plan of action. This is followed by a brief outline of the cost and use of resources. The cost is loosely estimated to be around £3,000.

On the following pages are shown drafts of two questionnaires. The first is aimed at known supporters; the second is aimed at the general public. The questions in each are all proposed and subject to agreement with MTFC's Management to ensure the information needs are met. As an incentive to complete and return the questionnaire participation in a draw is proposed and therefore one or more prizes are needed.

The Methodology to be employed suggests that the project can be completed in 10 steps of which steps 1-4 require cooperation between KVM Research and MTFC staff, while steps 5-10 are to be completed by KVM Research and associates.

It is suggested that the project can be completed in 12 weeks or three months.

The outline of timing is followed by a discussion of the options for printing, delivery and return of the questionnaires. Because there are many options to choose between there is some uncertainty as to the final cost. This is the reason why the cost of approximately £3,000 is only a loose estimate.

The document finishes with an outline of the background to and origin of KVM Research.

Introduction

The research and survey proposal outlined in this document has been inspired by several visits to Moss Rose Ground during the spring and summer of 2012 and the news that MTFC was relegated from *League Two* to *National Conference*. You would ask the question “Why?” Why did the relegation happen? There have been problems with several players being injured and not available for selection. Players have been sold to higher division clubs for their personal development, and to improve the club’s cash flow.

However, do MTFC have the support from the local area, it needs and deserves? If not why not? Can the poor attendance record be explained solely by the pull of the big neighbours ‘Manchester United’, ‘Manchester City’ etc.? Is there something missing within the club? Is there something missing in the relationship between town and club?

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to find some explanations for the lack of support and the low turnout on match days. The proposed research and survey is in two parts.

- Part one is for known supporters and seeks to explore whether these people are unhappy with any aspect of the club and its activities.
- Part two seeks to explore what the general public thinks about the club and its activities.

Firstly we need to ascertain some facts about the existing supporters and how they compare with the general population? For instance is there a majority of older people among the supporters? If so does the club not appeal to the younger supporters and if so what can the club do to increase its appeal to the younger members of the population? Hence the questions about age and where supporters come from.

Secondly we need to know if the known supporters or the towns people in general have some grievance against the club? Is there some feature of the management of the club, which is not liked? Do people understand the reasoning for management decisions? Is there something physically wrong at the ground like poor parking arrangement, lack of facilities or uncomfortable seating? Are the tickets too expensive? Is the ground too difficult to get to? Can people think of some solutions to these perceived problems? The majority of questions concerns these issues.

Cost

The proposal does not include a detailed, itemised estimate due to the uncertainty over printing and delivery. Printing and delivery can be itemised once it has been decided by who and how. It is assumed – but not known – the project can use MTFC’s regular commercial printer, but it is not known whether this printer is able and willing to do the work or how much they would charge. Also decisions need to be made as to the amount of printing involved and how the questionnaires are to be distributed.

However, based on past experience a loose estimate would suggest the whole project can be carried out at a cost of about £3,000. The two biggest items of that would be the fee to KVM Research for the analysis (approximately 40-50%) and the preparation, distribution and arrangement for return of the questionnaires (£40 (1,000 envelopes) + £20 (2,000 sheets of paper) + £500 (return postage)). However it is all subject to the above limitations and further talks between the Club and KVM Research.

The bulk of the work would be done by KVM Research, but the project as proposed relies on MTFC office staff to do some administrative work eg stuffing and addressing envelopes,

posting and receiving questionnaires, and it relies on MTFC to provide some volunteers to do a delivery. However, both options will depend on what is agreed.

Planning ahead

The information collected is meant as the basis for a business plan, a plan of action to improve the club and its performance in the eyes of the supporters and the local area. It will not in itself bring more people through the turnstiles at match times, but it will hopefully point to some problems that need to be resolved or it will point to some changes that need to be implemented if the club is to move forward.

It seems to the proposer that if the club is to be turned around some courageous action is needed. A Survey and Research assignment may be the start for such action and may be especially important in view of the Club's desire to move to new premises. The view of supporters will assist in the design of the new premises and help getting the organisation on match days right with regard to transport and parking.

Knud Moller for

KVM Research



MTFC Support & Participation Survey

-- Season Ticket Holders --

Macclesfield Town Football Club is keen to stay connected with you the Supporter to understand, who you are, where you come from and what you think about the club and its facilities. We need to do this in a structured way so that it can be used in planning for the future of the club. We therefore urge you to complete this questionnaire and return it to club office. You may wish to stay anonymous or you can fill in your address details at the end and take part in a draw for

About you: Q1 Are you Male? or female? Your age? 15-24

25-29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50+

Where do you live? Q2 Macclesfield area? Town Centre Bollington

Tytherington Hurdsfield Moss Lane Longmoss

Weston Broken Cross Other:

Q3 Outside Macclesfield? Knutsford Wilmslow Handforth

Alderley Edge Buxton Congleton Holmes Chapel

Other:

Q4 How long have you been a supporter of MTFC? 1 year 2 years 3-4 years

5-9 years 10 years+

Q5 What caused you to support MTFC? Good atmosphere among MTFC supporters?

Easy to get to matches? Meeting with friends? Supporting the local team?

Other:

.....

Q6 How often do you visit the club's website? Once a week Once a month

Less often Never

Q7 Are you disabled in any way? Yes No

If 'Yes' please state how:

.....

(If disabled please also note Q12.)

Access to Moss Rose Ground. Q8 Do you think tickets are too expensive?

Very cheap? Reasonably priced? Comments:

Q9 How do you travel to matches at Moss Rose Ground? Local bus Train
Own car Car shared with friends Walk Other:

Q10 If travelling by car, where do you park? By the stadium In nearby streets
Use public car park or other (please give location):
.....

Q11 Do you think car parking arrangements should be improved? Yes No
If 'Yes' how?

Q12 Do you think access arrangements for disabled are satisfactory? Yes No
If 'No' what are the problems? No disabled parking Difficulty getting through
entrance No disabled toilet Other:
.....

Q13 Would it be helpful if special buses were arranged on match days? Yes No
If 'Yes' from where in Macclesfield:

While at the ground. Q14 Do you find seating arrangements comfortable? Yes
No If 'No' what's the problem?

Q15 Do you find facilities eg toilets satisfactory? Yes No If 'No' what's the
problem?
Other comments:

General about MTFC. Q16 At the end of the 2011/12 season MTFC was relegated from
League Two to *National Conference*. Apart from loosing matches were there any other
reasons for the poor performance? What's your opinion?
.....
.....

Q17 Do the managers and leaders of MTFC keep you well informed about their decisions?
.....

Q18 Any other comments?
.....
.....

If you wish to have an entry in the draw for please state your name and address:

Name: **Address:**

Town: **Post code**



MTFC Support & Participation Survey

-- General Public --

Macclesfield Town Football Club is keen to stay connected with you the people of Macclesfield, and what you think about the club and its facilities. We need to do this in a structured way so that it can be used in planning for the future of the club. We therefore urge you to complete this questionnaire and return it to the club office. You may wish to stay anonymous or you can fill in your address details at the end and take part in a draw for

.....

About you: Q1 Are you Male? or female? Your age? 15-24

25-29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50+

Where do you live? Q2 Near the Town Centre Bollington Weston

Tytherington Hurdsfield Moss Lane Longmoss

Broken Cross Other:

Q3 Have you ever been a **supporter** of MTFC? **Yes**, still is How long have you

been a supporter of MTFC? 1 year 2 years 3-4 years 5-9 years

10 years + How do you support MTFC? Regular visits to matches

Follow results at home in local papers and on radio/tv Follow results with friends

at another venue eg local pub Other:

.....

Why do you support MTFC? Good atmosphere among MTFC supporters?

Easy to get to matches? Meeting with friends? Supporting the local team?

Other:

Q4 Was a supporter until Why did you stop supporting MTFC?

Poor performance Bad management Bad coaching

Ground uncomfortable Bad behaviour by supporters

Other:

Would you consider coming back if these problems were remedied? Yes No

Have you ever visited MTFC's web site www.mtfc.co.uk? Yes No

Q5 Never supported MTFC Why not? Difficult access Expensive tickets

Is the Moss Rose Ground too far out? Yes No

Not interested in football

Do you support any other club? Yes No Which?

What is the attraction of this other club? Winning ways Good management

Cheap tickets Easy access Good parking arrangements

How do you support this other club? Regular visits to matches

Follow results in the papers and on radio/tv Other:

.....

Q6 Have you ever visited Moss Rose Ground? Yes No

Q7 Do you think tickets are too expensive? Very cheap? Reasonably priced?

Comments:

Q8 Do you believe in supporting a local team? Yes, strongly Yes, probably

No Don't know

Q9 Would you agree to family members eg children/grand children attending matches?

Yes No It is up to them

Q 10 Would it be helpful if special busses were arranged on match days? Yes No

Q11 Do you think MTFC should/could do more to engage with the local community?

Yes No If 'Yes' what do you have in mind? Opening up their facilities for use

by the general public Arranging music/theatre performances

Issue more information about the club and its activities Stronger presence at town

events eg a stall on market days Other:

.....

.....

If you wish to have an entry in the draw for please state your name and address:

Name: **Address:**

Town: **Post code**

-- Methodology --

Step 1: Agree with MTFC content of the questionnaire and possibly a short covering letter, the classifications, categorizations and the degree of detail to be used. Ensure the information needs of MTFC are met. Each questionnaire carries an introduction, which proposes inclusion in a draw with a prize. Agreement is therefore also needed as to what that prize should be.

Step 2: Agree with MTFC the samples of people to be surveyed. Firstly it is proposed to distribute as many questionnaires as feasible among known supporters. Secondly it is proposed to distribute 1,000 questionnaires among the general population within selected areas of Macclesfield Town.

Step 3: The questionnaires to known supporters to be posted to all whose address is known with a stamped addressed envelope for return. Questionnaire also to be inserted into a match programme for an appropriate home fixture.

Step 4: The questionnaires to the general population to be delivered by volunteers with a stamped addressed envelope for return.

(Both questionnaires may be inserted into the web site on a temporary basis. They could then be repeated in 2-3 years time when some or all of the suggested actions have been implemented.)

Step 5: Collate the data and assemble the two databases (one for each part of the survey) in Access or Excel (25 hours).

Step 6: Process the databases and insert the information into appropriate tabulations for the relevant classes and categories of people. On the basis of the draft questionnaires it is suggested that 5 tables can meaningfully be derived from the survey of the general population and 7 tables from the survey of known supporters (50 hours).

Step 7: Analyse and evaluate the tabulations and the information in general, compare with other available statistics. Prepare a first presentation.

Step 8: Give presentation to MTFC. Receive comments.

Step 9: Arrange 'brain storming' session with an invited audience (excluding MTFC management) including a presentation at an evening meeting.

Step 10: Write final report taking into account comments received. (50 hours).

-- Timing --

Week 1: Agreeing content of the questionnaires with 'MTFC'. Draft final questionnaires.

Week 2: Printing of questionnaire. Deciding on size and distribution of samples.

Week 3, 4 & 5: Delivery of questionnaires.

Week 6: Receive returned questionnaires.

Week 7: Collate the data and assemble two databases. Start disentanglement into tables.

Week 8: Continue disentanglement into tables. Analysis and evaluation. Prepare presentation.

Week 9: Presentation to MTFC.

Week 10: 'Brainstorming' session.

Week 11: Write report.

Week 12: Print report.

-- Printing, Delivery & Return --

1. There are several options open for the printing, delivery and return of the questionnaires. The cost will depend on the extent to which MTFC is able to use its own resources. It is assumed the club has an established arrangement with a web site designer. It is also assumed the club has an established arrangement with a commercial printer. Does the club have a freepost arrangement with Royal Mail?

2. Known supporters.

- a. The questionnaire could be inserted as a centre page spread into a match programme and hopefully supporters can be relied upon to hand in the questionnaire some time after the match. This would be the least costly option, but not all supporters may buy the programme.
- b. The questionnaire could be posted to all known supporters using MTFC's mailing list. The mailing should include questionnaire, a covering letter, and an SAE possibly Freepost. This would be more costly, but would ensure better coverage and probably a better return.
- c. The questionnaire could be included on the club's web site. How much it would cost to do that is not known, but it would be an easier way for supporters to complete and return the questionnaire and that bit would not cost the club anything.

3. General public.

- a. An agreed number of questionnaires say 1000 could be delivered by unpaid volunteers in a few neighbourhoods around Macclesfield. The delivery should include a questionnaire, a covering letter, and an SAE possibly Freepost. This method is likely to generate reasonable response and would probably be the least costly option.
- b. The questionnaire could be delivered as an insert into 'Local People'. With a volume of <10,000 this would cost £30 + VAT per 1,000, with a volume of >10,000 this would cost £25 + VAT per 1000. The insert could include questionnaire, a covering letter, and an SAE possibly Freepost as above. This is likely to generate a much better picture covering the whole town, but will also be more costly.
- c. The questionnaire could be fashioned as a centre spread in 'Local People' and bound in with an issue of that paper. It would be easy to pull out on completion and send off. The cost of this is unknown at present.

About

KVM Research

'KVM Research' is the name under which I am working as an independent freelance researcher. While working on my own I am part of a network of specialist associates with expertise in various fields. I will call on any of these as the need arises.

My background is in Town & Country Planning, but I have worked most of my life as a statistician. My qualifications are as follows: MA (Geography), Keele University; Diploma in Town Planning, Birmingham Polytechnic; Diploma in Management, Staffordshire University; and I am a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society.

I worked for Stoke-on-Trent City Council until 2007 as a Senior Knowledge and Information Officer. In that capacity I gained extensive knowledge of population and social statistics and their use. I undertook some small-scale surveys.

Since leaving the City Council I have worked independently on a number of projects mostly for private businesses. The purpose has been to assess their market potential and customer satisfaction.

I have done research into the property market within North Staffordshire and South Cheshire, both residential and commercial. Extract from this research has been reported upon in The Sentinel, Congleton Chronicle and other newspapers.

On a voluntary basis I am engaged with Odd Rode Parish Council. I assisted in completing its Parish Plan, which was based on an extensive resident survey. The Plan was published in 2006.

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