



CHELSEA SUPPORTERS' TRUST NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2017

Chairman's Report

Welcome to our first Newsletter of the Year, and indeed our first one for far too long, for which I owe you a huge apology. As a result this might be a longer newsletter than usual as we have a lot to catch up on. I promise to keep them a little briefer in the future!

Membership Survey & Membership Administration

As some of you may know, Celia Mindelsohn stood down from the Board in the autumn for personal reasons. Celia has been involved in the CST since its inception and has been responsible for both the Membership Survey and Membership Administration. It is no exaggeration to say that the CST would not be in the strong position it is without



Celia's efforts over the last four years and to say that she has left a massive hole and is a very hard act to follow would be an understatement. The Board and I hope all of our members, would like to thank Celia for her very significant contribution to the Chelsea Supporters' Trust.

The knock on effect has been that the completion of last year's survey has been delayed but Ramzi Shammass has picked up the baton and we hope to release the results to the membership within the next few weeks.

Membership Renewals

Compounding all of this has been a technical issue with the software we use to administer sending out emails to you (hence the lack of newsletters recently); membership sign ups and payments. Some of you may have been unable to sign up or renew your membership via the website. We are working on this at the moment and hope to have it sorted out in the next few weeks. However, it is probably pertinent to remind the membership that the Board agreed some time ago that we would move to an **annual renewal date of June 1st** to coincide with the end of the football season.

This means that you do not need to renew your membership until June 1st this year. If you are unable to sign up via the website, you can always sign up and pay via our 'PayPal' account by emailing paypal@chelseasupporterstrust.com. We will receive confirmation and update your details manually and confirm when that is completed. Alternatively you can click on the 'Donate' button at <http://chelseasupporterstrust.com/membership/>. We will be sending out reminders to renew membership to all members leading up to the June 1st renewal date.

Special General Meeting

For those of you who were able to make the SGM last October, I discussed the move to form 'Working Groups' to more effectively manage the issues that CST membership have voted for in the motions put before the Board at the AGM. In this way I hope that we will be able to meet our mandated objectives in each key area important to you. In summary the Working Groups cover the following areas and are headed by the following Board members:

- **Atmosphere (Richard Weekes, David Johnstone)**

- **Supporter Issues** (Cliff Auger, Chris Rayburn, Charles Jackson, David Johnstone)
- **Stamford Bridge Redevelopment** (David Johnstone, David Chidgey)
- **Affiliations** (Cliff Auger, Tim Rolls, David Chidgey, Debs Coady)
- **Membership Survey** (Ramzi Shammas, David Chidgey, Chris Rayburn, Charles Jackson)
- **Community** (Cliff Auger, Chris Rayburn, Debs Coady)
- **Overseas Membership** (Dan Silver, Richard Weekes)
- **Membership Development** (David Chidgey, Richard Weekes, Dan Silver)

In order to increase transparency, a more collective responsibility and to enable our progress on these issues to be monitored more effectively throughout the year, going forward we will include reports from the Working Groups with each Newsletter.

*We will be holding our second **Special General Meeting** of the season on **February 25th 5.30 pm – 7.00 pm at the Lillie Langtry, 19 Lillie Road, London SW6 1UE***

Other than reporting back on our activities since the last SGM, I hope that we will be able to discuss with you the issues around the move to a temporary stadium whilst Stamford Bridge is re-developed and will dedicate 30-45 minutes for a Q&A to the Board on this and of course any other pressing issues you may have. As always the meeting will be broadcast live at <http://mixlr.com/chelsea-fancast/> and will be released as a podcast shortly after for any of you who are unable to attend in person.

It should be noted that we are finding it increasingly difficult to find suitable venues and times for our SGMs on a match day due to the lack of venue availability and to the uncertainty around kick off times which are often subject to change at late notice. But we look forward to seeing you at the Lillie Langtry, a new venue for us, on February 25th.

Atmosphere

The Atmosphere working group continue to hold regular meetings with the club in an effort to improve the atmosphere at Stamford Bridge, for example, concerning the procedure regarding supporters holding and taking part in independently organised displays. Progress was made in the meetings and we are due to have further meetings in the future concerning the above. The Atmosphere working group were also proactively involved with the displays marking the 20th anniversary of Matthew Harding's death.

The group is also discussing the introduction and funding of more banners for former players and a more permanent display within the ground, as well as funding the replacement of existing banners.

Of course, they are mindful that atmosphere, or the concern about it diminishing with a move to a temporary stadium, will be at the top of the agenda in the months ahead and will continue the dialogue with the club to ensure that a decent atmosphere can be maintained both at Stamford Bridge and whichever stadium we move to temporarily.

If anybody wishes to share ideas, thoughts or generally discuss the atmosphere at Stamford Bridge then by all means email the head of the working group richardweekes@chelseasupporterstrust.com



Supporter Issues

Ticketing

Cliff Auger and his team continue to work hard on behalf of the membership and all supporters on what are the most contentious issues we face such as ticketing and allocations. Recently Cliff discussed the issue of Wolves offering a lower allocation than we had envisaged (15% of ground capacity for FA Cup ties being the norm). Subsequently the Club have managed to secure an allocation of 4,612 and should be applauded for their efforts.

West Ham Away

We look forward to playing West Ham on Monday March 13th and we hope that the sterling work done by Cliff and Debs Coady in collating so much useful feedback from those of you who attended the League Cup fixture will lead to a much better match day experience this time.

The feedback from you was discussed with Chelsea FC Board members and sent on to the Met Police and West Ham and as a result we expect that some of the points we raised about policing and stewarding will be heeded. Of course this may not be helped by re-scheduling the match for a Monday night kick off.

Kick Off Times

Kick off times (and their rescheduling) are increasingly seen as a massive irritation to Chelsea supporters and supporters from all clubs. Tim Rolls has been proactive on this issue and has produced a very in depth analysis on the effects of the Broadcasters changing Kick Off times at short notice or scheduling them at times and locations guaranteed to cause the most disruption to supporters. Tim's report has been produced in conjunction with members of the Premier League Trusts group affiliated with Supporters Direct and he is in the process of setting up a meeting with representatives from Sky TV to present the report with a view to Sky hopefully taking on board our concerns. We will update you of any progress here, as well as letting you know the outcome of the meeting together with publishing Tim's report in due course.

Supporter Lifts Initiative

Of course one of the repercussions of re-scheduled or inconvenient kick off times is the additional expense this can cause for supporters, even if the Club have organised subsidised trains or coaches. One issue is how do you get back home from the drop off point when it's very late? To that end, Chris Rayburn has come up with a possible solution to facilitate contact between supporters who might need a lift home from the drop off point. Supporters, who wish to share cost of travel back, or offer / receive lifts, can use the following Twitter hashtags to connect:

*Those on the club train: **#cfctrain** then add their preferred destination*

*Those travelling on club coaches: **#cfccoach** then add coach number and preferred destination*

*For more information on the lift share scheme have a look on the CST website here
<http://chelseasupportertrust.com/1394-twitter-travel-assist/>*

Stamford Bridge Redevelopment

Planning Permission Granted

As most of you no doubt know a momentous date in Chelsea's history was etched on 11th January when Hammersmith & Fulham Council approved planning permission for Mr Abramovich to redevelop Stamford Bridge.

David Johnstone who heads the Stamford Bridge Redevelopment working group was afforded the privilege of speaking on behalf of Chelsea Football Club and Millhouse Capital as a Chelsea supporter at the Planning meeting and did so eloquently and passionately.

It seems that we are almost there, but...there are still a few hurdles to overcome before we see the first bricks of the current stadium bashed with a pick axe.



The Club need to agree with the Council ('Section 106') the compensation and contribution to the local community to mitigate disruption caused by the redevelopment. This is pertinent as several local residents have been quite disgruntled about the proposals. We hope that Chelsea FC take account of this wherever they can and act as 'good neighbours', after all Chelsea is at the heart of and very much part of the local community and ultimately we all have to get along together. Going forward the Trust will do all it can to assist the Club and encourage dialogue with the local community.

Our responsibility now lies with maintaining dialogue with the club to ensure that the concerns of supporters relating to the redevelopment, move to a temporary stadium and the move back are listened to and acted upon. In brief we believe the key issues here are ticket pricing and atmosphere but you can read our full statement here:

<http://chelseasupporterstrust.com/1426-planning-approval-stamford-bridge/>

Suffice to say that we thoroughly applaud the hard work and efforts of Mr Abramovich's team to get us this far.

Affiliations

Supporter Campaigns

We continue to work closely with both Supporters Direct and the Football Supporters Federation to protect the rights of supporters and get their voice heard with Broadcasters, The Premier League, Football Association and lobbying Parliament.

This often comes in the form of supporting and getting involved with various campaigns such as Safe Standing which increasingly looks to be gaining traction within the Premier League and Football Association. We welcomed the 'Playfair Qatar Initiative' to Stamford Bridge before the Leicester game, once again in support of their campaign to hold FIFA and Qatar to account and to respect the human rights of the Qatar workforce.

Tim Rolls, Cliff Auger, Debs Coady and David Chidgey regularly represent the interests of Chelsea Supporters in attending meetings organised by Supporters Direct and the FSF, and in particular the Premier League Supporters Trusts group.

Safety Advisory Group (SAG)

We have yet to get agreement from the Council, Club and Police to be invited to sit on the Safety Advisory Group meetings which address Policing and Stewarding on match days, but we are able to submit items for discussion on the agenda. We will continue to press for full inclusion on the SAG as other Supporters' Trusts have successfully done. We firmly believe that when considering match day concerns and issues that it is vital that the match day supporters' voice is both included and listened to.

CPO AGM

The Chelsea Pitch Owners held their AGM in January, in what was a well-attended meeting. Seven of the CST Board attended the meeting, several of whom directed questions to the CPO Board. Due to planning permission to redevelop Stamford Bridge being granted to Mr Abramovich and his team, the AGM had added significance as the

CPO will be instrumental in working with the club to ensure that 'Section 106' is passed; agreeing the re-development of the ground and allowing the name Chelsea FC to be used whilst we play in a temporary stadium. One of the key resolutions was to enable the CPO Board to offer to extend the lease to Chelsea FC to up to 999 years, in the hope that this will persuade the Club not to attempt to buy the freehold. The CST voted to pass all of the resolutions on the Agenda.

In spite of the likelihood that redeveloping Stamford Bridge should guarantee football being played at Stamford Bridge in the foreseeable future, we believe that CPO still have a significant role to play in ensuring this remains the case in perpetuity and in particular protects this beyond Mr Abramovich's tenure of the club.

We will continue to work closely with the CPO to encourage share ownership and assist in reaching a successful and amenable agreement in relation to the freehold in any way we can. You can of course purchase shares by emailing info@chelseapitchowners.com or visiting <http://www.chelseafc.com/fans/chelsea-pitch-owners>

Community

Founders Day



Cliff Auger and Chelsea Historian Rick Glanvill were recently interviewed by a French TV channel on the work to clean up Brompton Cemetery. We will be planning another Saturday morning clean up when the weather improves where we can tend to some more Chelsea related graves. In addition, we are planning to hold a 'Founders Day' to mark the anniversary of the formation of the Club as near to the 10th March as we can.

As well as a chance to honour our history and some of the former players buried at Brompton it will hopefully help to get more supporters aware of the work we do to help to maintain these graves. As soon as we are able to commit to a date, we will of course let you know.

Local Businesses

We will be reaching out to local businesses such as pubs and restaurants in the coming months to work out how we might be able to help improve the relationship between them and match day supporters. It has not gone unnoticed that many 'Chelsea' pubs are either closing or being re-modelled in to places where perhaps we are not as welcome as we once were. We are also mindful that when Chelsea FC move to a temporary stadium this could have a dramatic and negative impact on some of our favourite local hostleries.

Overseas Membership

Our links to and relationship with overseas Chelsea supporters is very important to us and whilst many are unable to come along to support the team on a match day, their views and concerns are no less important.

To that end, Dan Silver has been given responsibility for Overseas Membership to liaise with Supporters Clubs and individuals who support Chelsea, wherever they may be. He has recently been in touch with as many overseas groups as possible to ascertain what the main concerns are for overseas supporters and how we can best help to represent them to the club.

He'll be reporting back to the Board at the next meeting at which point we'll devise a strategy to get the voice of overseas members heard as effectively as those in the UK.



If you are a Chelsea Supporter overseas and you have a particular concern or issue you would like addressed, then please contact Dan at dansilver@chelseasupporterstrust.com

Membership Development

With a (relatively!) new Board it provides a good opportunity to review how we do things and hopefully improve them. This was very much the thinking behind the creation of working groups. One area that is constantly under review is how we recruit new members in an age where engagement is ever more difficult with the plethora of media available and the large numbers of disparate groups both in the UK and overseas.

We are therefore currently reviewing Membership Development strategy with particular emphasis on the Trusts match day presence; how to engage more effectively with younger supporters and how we can work more closely with official supporters groups and other Chelsea representative groups.

We are committed to being an inclusive and transparent organisation and believe that the more we all work together; Chelsea supporters will then get the representation they deserve.

If you have any comments or ideas in terms of how we can reach out to the youth, the supporters groups and increase our membership then by all means get in touch with davidchidgey@chelseasupporterstrust.com

Of course, our membership have a part to play too by renewing their own membership and encouraging as many friends and family to join up, get involved, have their say and get your voice heard!