



# CHELSEA SUPPORTERS TRUST

## MINUTES

### Special General Meeting 21 February 2015

#### **CST Board Members**

Tim Rolls (TR); Cliff Auger (CA); David Chidgey (DC); David Johnstone (DJ); Neil Beard (NB); Stuart Kinner (SK); Iain Rodger (IR); Julian Beattie (JB); Celia Mindelsohn (CM)

**Apologies:** Theresa Magee; Paul Jeffrey

#### **Opening**

The meeting opened at 17:35. TR welcomed members to the meeting and advised that the meeting was quorate.

TR urged CST members to report any incidents witnessed concerning the French police in Paris to [customer.services@chelseafc.com](mailto:customer.services@chelseafc.com)

CST have issued a statement with regard to the incident on the Metro which can be found at [http://www.chelseasupportertrust.com/paris\\_metro.html](http://www.chelseasupportertrust.com/paris_metro.html)

#### **Ticketing**

CST have formally written to the Club requesting a freeze in ticket prices; this was before the announcement of the new TV deal. Following this, the Trust was invited to meet with a senior club executive to discuss. CST will campaign for reducing ticket prices, particularly for young people, for when the new deal kicks in. There was no commitment from the club re ticket price freeze or future policy on pricing but he is keen to keep the dialogue open.

#### **Stamford Bridge**

Details of discussions with CPO Board and CPO AGM can be found in February's newsletter at [http://www.chelseasupportertrust.com/docs/newsletter\\_feb15.pdf](http://www.chelseasupportertrust.com/docs/newsletter_feb15.pdf) . There is no news on the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge.

#### **Football in the Community**

CST has made a submission to the Dept of Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) Expert Working Group on Football Supporter Ownership and Engagement. The submission states that supporter ownership of clubs like Chelsea is unrealistic but that supporter representation on a club board is achievable and desirable.

## **Safe Standing**

The Welsh Assembly is taking safe standing seriously and it is also under discussion in Scotland. The momentum is with it; there are fewer politicians against safe standing, but realisation is still probably long term.

## **Atmosphere**

Members of CST Board have had several meetings with senior members of the Club board. Topics discussed include seating, safe standing and siting of away supporters. NB stated that the Club is listening to supporter concerns about atmosphere.

## ***Stewarding***

A member noted that, since the QPR game, stewarding has been relaxed. In the MHL, supporters have not been asked to sit down and there have been no letters sent re persistent standing, but there have been warning letters about standing on seats and hoardings.

## ***Siting of away supporters***

A member stated that away supporters should not be sitting in the Shed. Club has asked CST to solicit supporter opinion as to where away supporters should be seated in the next annual survey. Preferred area of East Upper is not possible because of Health and Safety concerns. A return to East Lower may be possible if dugouts are moved to West Stand (the manager does not like being surrounded by away supporters) but any changes may have to wait until stadium is redeveloped.

A member stated that some clubs provide good seating areas for away supporters.

Noted that Club is constrained by configuration of current ground; any redevelopment should incorporate safe standing and siting of away supporters in new design.

A member asked about maintaining atmosphere by keeping people together if there is a temporary move to accommodate redevelopment of Stamford Bridge. NB confirmed that CST have already spoken to the Club about this and they understand the need to keep people together if we move.

## **Meetings with the Club**

Four CST Board members met with Club executives in December to present the results of the annual survey. This was well received by the Club and they are keen to keep ongoing discussions with CST and to be kept informed of future survey results. The third annual survey is due to be sent out to members in May this year. For continuity, many of the questions will remain the same, but CM invited members to suggest any questions on issues of concern to supporters.

**[TR welcomed Amanda Jacks, case worker for Football Supporters' Federation (FSF)]**

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

CST have been in talks with Fulham and QPR Trusts since we share the same local council and police area. All these Trusts have agreed to have a joint approach to get the club supporters represented on the Hammersmith and Fulham Safety Advisory Group (SAG). Minutes of the SAG show that there have been discussions about football in the borough with contributions from the Police, St John's Ambulance etc. but currently there is no

supporter representation. It was noted that Crystal Palace Trust participate in their local SAG.

Noted that there is currently a big problem with touts at QPR for bigger games since the away allocation has been cut.

The Premier League (PL) have met with Trusts that participated in the demonstration outside PL headquarters last year to discuss ticket pricing. CST will ensure that we are represented at the next meeting. FSF are organising another demonstration to coincide with next PL meeting.

## **Touting**

Over the last few months, the majority of feedback received by CST has been about street touting and members ask why the police do not appear to be enforcing the law.

It was noted that changing the ticketing system to eliminate paper tickets by putting cup games, etc. on season ticket and membership cards would greatly reduce the opportunity for touting.

TR stated that it is not helpful when the Minister for Culture Media and Sport calls touts 'classic entrepreneurs'. CST is disappointed that the recent Bill to outlaw touting was recently thrown out of Parliament.

Noted by a member that touting contributes to lack of atmosphere at SB as the majority of people purchasing tickets this way are tourists who may have little interest in Chelsea.

CST will be organising a 'write-in' to the local councils affected (H&F, RBKC); all were urged to participate and it was noted this would be particularly powerful if members who are residents of these boroughs wrote in.

## **Questions from the Floor**

A member asked whether the Secretary for Culture Media and Sport had received any donations from secondary ticketing organisations.

Ben Price announced the formation of 'Chelsea Fans Against Racism'. There is currently a Facebook page and they are planning organise a poster and tee-shirt campaign. The aim of the group is to show the rest of the world that Chelsea do not accept racism in any football ground – 'As fans we do not accept it any more'. Amanda Jacks stated that FSF has small pot of funds for diversity projects and suggested that the group contact them.

A member stated that he always informed police stewards when he heard racist remarks at games but has been met with the attitude that they would like to sweep it under the carpet, with responses such as 'your word against theirs'. AJ advised that if this occurs, their shoulder number should be taken and reported to the area police. Kick it Out also have an [app](#) where the seat number can be reported and they will deal with the incident.

*The minutes of the Q&A with the police officers will be circulated to members once they have been approved.*

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