

**CHELSEA FOOTBALL CLUB
SUPPORTERS' CONSULTATIVE FORUM, 2014-15 SEASON
Minutes of 1st meeting**

Meeting held in the Attenborough Suite, Chelsea FC at 10.30am on Saturday 13th September 2014.

Attendees	Club title/ group represented
Alexander, Chris	Club Finance and Operations Director
Atkins, Steve	Club Head of Communications and Public Affairs
Barker, Kelvin	CFCUK
Barrett, Neil	UK branch
Beattie, Julian	Chelsea Supporters Trust
Daine, Nav	Club Head of Concessions
Dartnell, Alan	Over 65's
Doherty, Tim	UK branch
Dwyer, Kevin	Home ST holder
Eldridge, Andy	Chelsea Supporters Club
Gerrard, Carol	Away season ticket ("ST") holder
Hayden, Lisa	Disabled
Hillers, Karl	Overseas supporters branch
Jeffrey, Paul	Chelsea Football Fancast
Newby, David	Club Marketing Manager
Overstall, Keith	Club Head of Security
Regan, Andy	Electoral Reform Services (Chair)
Robinson, Adam	Member
Smith, Graham	Club Head of Ticketing/ Head of Supporters' Liaison
Trapp, Goran	Hospitality
Trenter, Peter	Chelsea Supporters Group
Tyler, Joe	UK branch
Winton, Natalie	Family

Apologies for absence

Goodliffe, Ludo	16-21's
Gourlay, Ron	Club Chief Executive
Neal, Matthew	CFCNet
Ramprasad, Bharat	Overseas supporters branch

(Action points are underlined.)

INTRODUCTION

Forum members introduced themselves. The Chair covered housekeeping rules for the season. It was requested that Forum members speak up for the dictaphones and that members don't produce their own minutes until the formal minutes are published. Occasionally the Club will request that a discussion is kept confidential and it's hoped that will be respected.

SECURITY

PSG away

This matter was addressed first as Keith had match day duties to attend to. The Club commented that a lot of pre-match liaison takes place for a European tie. Two issues were of concern from the PSG match, namely overcrowding in the upper tier and the positioning of/abuse suffered by disabled fans. The former was brought to the attention of the Club who told UEFA. It was not acceptable to the Club.

One member commented that the appeal for the disabled fans took place at UEFAs headquarters last week. Club staff also attended. Firstly there was a preliminary hearing with the adviser who worked with us and PSG on the matter. A partial stadium closure and fine were the original planned punishments with the idea that fines went to charities. Negotiations continued including the possibility of an apology. At the last minute PSG rejected the package and proposed giving tickets to those fans affected. Our disabled fans rejected the offer so the appeal panel heard the case. The issue of whether our fans were abused due to being English or disabled was raised to which we replied it wasn't for us to analyse the abuse. The TV footage shown at first in the hearing just showed the goals so we showed them the precise footage of some of the abuse.

The outcome is that PSG has been fined 50,000 Euros. The solution should have been to put us with Chelsea fans or to keep us where we were but with appropriate security in place, whereas there was only one person in place to assist on the night.

The Club commented it would make renewed efforts to put across our expectations of appropriate standards for all fans.

One supporter commented that the overcrowding in the top tier could have led to serious problems and that UEFA must improve such issues.

Touts

One supporter requested an update on the Club's efforts. Even at 10 this morning there were touts outside the ground on Fulham Road. The Club responded that the streets around the stadium are a police matter and a lot of work goes on behind the scenes. Over 3,000 memberships were cancelled last season. Having fans threatened or harassed could lead to another exclusion zone.

One supporter commented that the police don't seem interested in arresting touts. It was suggested that the Club publicise at least some of the measures it takes to tackle the problem.

The Club commented that touts have a sophisticated network in place and those on the streets selling tickets are just the runners. They will very rarely encroach on the site. An exclusion zone may help. One supporter commented this can be difficult to obtain in the courts.

The Club will consider ways to publicise measures taken against touts and encouraged fans to contact the police if they consider an exclusion zone would assist.

Touts are becoming more sophisticated. The Club is targeting deliberate fraud rather than someone who genuinely can't attend. In the latter circumstances, the Club will try and help resell those tickets but there is a ticket exchange in place for the majority. Names are handwritten on European match tickets.

One supporter suggested that membership cards include electronic match tickets. The Club responded that seat details would still have to be printed so fans know where to go and stewards can check details. That piece of paper could be photocopied. Also there is certainty of who has been sent tickets when they're printed by the Club. The Club has the capability for "print at home tickets" but has serious concerns about the security issues involved.

Persistent standing

The Club requested that fans consider the consequence of persistent standing. The Club receives complaints every match from fans who can't see the pitch due to this. Fans are also in breach of local authority rules and stadium regulations by persistent standing.

CCTV review

An action point from last season was to review the footage of an incident discussed at the last Forum of last season but the supporter in question has not provided further information so no further investigation has been possible.

Smoking in toilets

The Club commented this is a difficult issue to monitor. It is launching a new action plan which will be publicised in due course. One supporter commented that a female member of staff was not able to monitor this in male toilets when on duty last season.

Safe standing

The Club commented last season that it had received a briefing from the road show. The Club better understands the issues but a change of law would be required. The Club's position on the issue remains the same.

Stewarding in the West Lower

One supporter commented this had improved substantially in the past season. The Club will ensure this is passed on internally.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

There were no changes to the minutes.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Positioning at away matches

The Club is still considering whether domestic away ST holders can specify upper or lower tiers from next season. One possibility is for fans to pick their own seats so the Club doesn't have to keep communicating with away fans as to their preference for each match. In the past it's been assumed that the better seats are in an upper tier. There are 600 in the scheme again this season. It's impossible to please all fans due to the different seat configuration in each away ground.

Cobham

The Club is aware that fans want to have their visit when the players are training. It's hoped that a date can be found in October for fans on the Forum last season and in November for current Forum members.

Forum meetings

The Club considers that three meetings per season is sufficient. As regards the proposal for a Forum member being allowed to represent two organisations the Club considers that the outcome of the vote on the subject should be respected and that each Forum member only represents one organisation.

CATERING

Food quantity in Matthew Harding ("MH") Upper

The Club commented that there were problems for the first game and the Club had the most complaints it has had. Since then quantities have been adjusted particularly in the MH Upper. There is a senior manager in place for matches to administer the logistics in that area. One supporter commented that in the Sociedad match there was only one pie left at half time. Midweek games especially during colder weather are going to result in higher demand. Another commented that the same occurred for Sociedad in the Shed Upper but food was restocked later.

The Club commented there are about 1,000 staff on a match day. Inevitably even though staff are trained they will only be fully used to the serving facilities when they gain match day experience.

The Club has added new types of catering outlets and considers there is now an excellent variety, including wraps under 500 calories and fruit being sold. Fans are more health conscious although burgers and pies are still on offer. Vegetarians are better catered for. The Club will try and obtain feedback during the season to further develop products. There are wraps and special cake bars appropriate for celiacs. This is publicised on the concession stands and in emails.

It was requested by one supporter that roving sales points for some products such as hot drinks in winter would be appreciated. In the East Lower in particular this would ease congestion around the kiosks. The Club commented it's limited with space but there are some roving sales points. The Club will look to trial a roving sales point in the south side of the East Lower.

The Club was asked if all sales points are aware of the pre-sale voucher scheme. The Club responded that the issue is speed of service and it tries to optimise a quick turnaround.

COMMUNICATIONS

It was requested that supporters are better consulted on content for internal media platforms.

As regards the new website, the Club is listening to feedback from fans and is working to rectify any errors. One supporter requested that the Foundation link be more prominent on the home page again which the Club will consider.

One supporter asked if there are plans for Chelsea TV to be provided free or at least cheaper to ST holders and members. The Club said there were no current plans but noted the question.

The Club commented that a lot of work goes into Chelsea TV and it is imbedded in the first team operations, unlike at some clubs. As regards production, improvements are always considered. The Club will continue to look at other technological advances for website, digital and TV products.

Another supporter commented that overseas fans have had Chelsea TV removed from the international membership. American fans have complained in particular. The Club noted this.

LORD ATTENBOROUGH

The Club commented that there will be a minute's appreciation before today's match. On the day of his passing there was a lengthy tribute on the website. Hopefully supporters appreciate

what the Club has done and he also features in the magazine and programme as well as there being other tributes such as black armbands being worn.

Supporters raised the issue of whether the Club should make a more permanent gesture such as renaming the East Stand , given his association with it. The Club is aware of supporters' views and understands his importance to the Club. The Club will consider options in consultation with the Attenborough family.

An indicative vote was held with 14 voting in favour and 2 against.

One supporter commented that social media can quickly gain a head of steam about an issue and that naming a stand may be excessive.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Travel to away games

One supporter asked whether more assistance can be provided to groups who always have long journeys to matches such as supporters' groups which are based in the south west. It would be good to encourage more fans to travel bigger distances with some kind of subsidy. It may not even be a financial gesture. Another member proposed that different supporters' groups are helped on different weeks.

The Club responded that in a vote last season the Forum wanted a combination of ticket and travel subsidies. Therefore there will be a mix of the two this season. An FAPL initiative encouraged away support which the Club was assisting with anyway. There are 129 supporters clubs so the fairness and logistics would be hard to coordinate. Three games will have tickets subsidised this season.

Stadium development

In response to a question, the Club has no announcements at the present time. The constraints at the stadium are only going to increase. We are within the top five or six clubs in Europe for turnover but outside the top forty as regards stadium size. We are therefore having to work ever harder on the commercial side to address this. Last season it was announced that a firm of architects was engaged to consult local stakeholders about redevelopment possibilities in the area between the ground and Fulham Broadway tube station, should a decision to redevelop the Stamford Bridge site be taken. Other sites are not an option at present.

One supporter commented that the location is of such importance to the Club that it should not be sacrificed.

Retro shirts

In response to a question the Club commented that it switched from Toffs to Score Draw in September 2010. We are about to extend for a further two to three years. The main reason for changing was better distribution channels.

Online sales

One supporter asked if the Club could avoid overcrowding by not selling two matches at the same time. The Club responded that during a recent sales period, new members were unsure how to use the system so were getting locked in and others couldn't access it. The solution is that anyone who has not purchased will be excluded after five minutes from now on.

18-21 year old ticket reductions

In response to a question the Club said this should be raised at the ticketing discussion at the next Forum. The Club has previously said it would review this on a seasonal basis but that any reductions offered to home supporters must also be offered to away fans. Prices have been frozen over recent years by and large.

Floodlights

Two supporters raised the fact there had been problems in the MH Upper with the brightness of the new bulbs and positioning of the lights. There was also a problem in the West Lower. The Club commented that the new TV deal last season included brighter floodlights illuminating the front 12 rows. Our previous system only just complied with UEFA rules anyway. We and the majority of the FAPL installed new systems over the summer and we worked hard with consultants to plan for this. On a positive note, it is easier to see the game now, not least on television.

The Club has received some comments but not many. It requests that fans judge the system once they are used to the changes. If there are continuing issues we could speak to the FAPL if other clubs are receiving negative feedback. Leicester have mentioned that the issue has been raised there.

Free Wifi

The Club was asked why free Wifi isn't available throughout the stadium as it's available in some areas only. The Club responded that although they don't currently have WIFI in the stadium bowl (only in hospitality rooms) this is something they are monitoring. A few other competitor clubs are only just starting projects and the Club wants to be sure that if and when they install that they do so with a robust and cost effective solution.

Turkish Airlines

One supporter commented that Greek Cypriot fans have expressed their displeasure at the possibility of a tie up with Turkish Airlines. The Club responded that the opinions of our fans, whether positive or critical, are very important to them and are taken into consideration as much

as possible. The Club said as supporters can appreciate, they would never publicly comment on confidential business matters. However, they assured members that all decisions taken by the owner and the Board are made with the best interests of the Club's future in mind.

Maribor home game

One supporter commented that she hadn't received the email advertising ticket sales. The Club will check that individual's details and added this had happened with some other fans. The email definitely went out.

Advertising boards

It was mentioned by one supporter that the boards seem to be higher in front of the West Lower this season. Consequently photographers have higher stools with them. The Club will investigate this as the new boards are lighter but not higher and would talk to photographers to alert them, particularly to the disabled seating area behind them.

Teamcard

In response to a question, the Club commented that Teamcard doesn't operate for any club any more. The Club will introduce a new system in due course.

(The meeting ended at 11.55am.)