

MINUTES OF THE 17TH MEETING BETWEEN THE SUPPORTERS' COMMITTEE AND LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB ON 30 AUGUST 2015 AT ANFIELD.

Representing the LFC Supporters' Committee: Bella Ainsworth (BA), Supporters Under 25; Paul Amann (PA), LGBT Supporters and Co-Vice Chair; Anna Burgess (AB), Away Fans and Co-Vice Chair; Ian Byrne (IB), Family Match Goers; Karen Gill (KG), Honorary President; Tara Fisher (TF), Female Fans; Tony Fitzgerald (AF), Season Ticket Holders and Hospitality; Lee Foley (LF), Official Supporters' Clubs; Yunus Lunat (YL), BAME Supporters; Katie Price (KP), Disabled Fans; Matthew Selby (MS), International Fans; Graham Smith (GS), Fans in the Merseyside Area. **Representing Liverpool Football Club:** Ian Ayre (IA), Chief Executive; Alan Allison-Hughes (AAA), Head of Customer Experience; Matthew Baxter (MB), Chief Media Officer; Yonit Levy-Sharabi (YLS), Customer Experience Manager; Matt McCann (MM), Press Officer; Andrew Parkinson (AP), Operations Director; Scott Richardson (SR), Head of CRM; **Facilitator:** William Montgomery (WM).

1. Welcome and introductions:

- 1.1. KG apologised for Roy Heaney (RH), who represents Non-Season Ticket Holders & Official Members, who could not attend for personal reasons.
- 1.2. KG continued by thanking Bob Humphries (BH), the immediate past Chair, Sam Armstrong, Damien Moore and Laura Woodcock who left the committee on rotation at the end of last season. "BH was a very effective Chair, and he will be missed".
- 1.3. KG continued by advising that the Committee had opted not to select a new Chair in advance of this meeting in order to allow the five new Committee members a chance to get to know the existing members in advance of a vote taking immediately prior to the next meeting. Until this time, KG, PA and AB will co-ordinate all matters on behalf of the Committee.
- 1.4. KG also expressed her thanks to YLS for her continued support in ensuring that the pre-meetings, official meetings and all related matters run smoothly and efficiently.
- 1.5. IA said that there is no set team of executives that attend these meetings. The Club attempts to match the representatives attending to best reflect topic[s] to be discussed. Therefore, there are no apologies on behalf of the Club.
- 1.6. IA said that, since the last meeting, the redevelopment of the new Main Stand is progressing to plan, the Club had been active in the transfer window and that the operations team had been very busy during the summer refurbishing the Centenary Stand, Melwood and the Academy. He continued by saying that Club was in good financial health, and is in a good position from a facilities perspective.

2. Matters arising from the previous meeting:

- 2.1. WM referred the members to item #5 from the previous minutes, covering the key actions, and invited the co-Chairs to raise any specifics with the Club about the eight agreed actions.
- 2.2. KP advised that the process for determining what to do with unused wheelchair bays in new main stand (#5.4) was still to be determined. AP said that in the next couple of months the Club would re-engage with the Committee on the facilities for disabled fans in the new Main Stand.

- 2.3. PA reminded the Club of its commitment to update the Committee on, and involve them with, plans for the facilities for the new Main Stand (#5.2). AP said the focus to date had been on the construction, but focus would now shift to the hospitality spaces, concourses, communal facilities etc. and there will be a process for involving the Committee in these discussions. BH, on behalf of the Committee, had already been involved in the early discussions on the plans for the new public areas and open spaces.
- 2.4. With regard to item #5.6, SR said the Club had received some suggested designs for the stadium personalisation, for which the Committee will be invited to give its input. YLS said that Tom Doyle, the project director, is keen to meet with members of the Committee and would welcome a date and time for him to do so. PA welcomed this and would liaise directly with YLS to arrange a meeting, perhaps with the new 'local' sub-committee.

3. Discussion on the Club's relationship with its supporters:

- 3.1. AB said that the Club's relationship with its fans is something that the Committee feels very strongly about, as do the fans themselves. The topic covers a very broad range of subjects, and is a topic appropriate for the first meeting of the new season.
- 3.2. AB continued by saying that within the Committee there are a number of sub-committees, including communications, ticketing, equality and a new local sub-committee, which has replaced the one that previously focussed specifically on international matters. Improving the experience of "local" fans will be a key strategic goal for the Committee during the coming season.
- 3.3. Q1 from AB: LFC has as always had a special relationship with its local fan-base. However over the years this seems to have been eroded as the popularity of top-flight football has grown. Does the Club have any concerns about this and what does it plan to do about it?**
- 3.4. IA responded by saying that people seem to think that less local fans are attending home games, but more than 80% of season ticket holders are local fans. This is not to say that the person actually attending the game is from outside the local area, but the season ticket is registered in the name of a local resident.
- 3.5. IA continued by saying that in the 80s the Club could not fill the stadium and people were offered opportunities to take additional season tickets, and fans from Ireland and Scandinavia, and other areas, took up the opportunity. The Club would welcome ideas on how to get more local fans in the stadium as long as it doesn't discriminate against international fans. The Club has to find the right balance between local fans and what is now its global reach.
- 3.6. GS said that the Committee has made a real statement that addressing the needs of local support is a major theme for the coming season. There is a feeling that the Club is losing the culture that was established by a local fan base, and this needs to change. The Committee believes that if the debate for a local bias were opened up, there wouldn't be as much push back from the international and traveling fans as one might expect. The Committee believes the Club should take some positive steps to get more local people in the ground by, for example, setting aside blocks of tickets to be sold in local schools. The Committee is prepared to give the Club the necessary cover to implement such a policy as it believes the mandate from the supporters is there and such an

agenda would gain wide approval. MS and LF stated that even though their constituencies are non-local they are in support.

- 3.7. IA said that the Club would recognise the need to have more local support in Anfield and would welcome any ideas put forward by the Committee that would help solve the problem. The Club has no problem with creating a bias in favour of local fans as long as it is what the majority of fans want. The Club will identify some proposals that might address the issue and will share with the Committee for comment.

3.8. Q2 from GS: In his recent statement, FSG President Michael Gordon stated that all options for funding expansion of Anfield remained open, including 'outright investment'. In light of this, will FSG consider a partnership with a properly constituted and regulated supporters' trust to raise investment for the stadium expansion through a 15% supporters' stake in the Club?

- 3.9. IA responded by saying that as he'd had sight of the question in advance of the meeting he took the opportunity to speak with the owners about the suggestion. In response, FSG are not looking for direct investment in the Club, but are looking for sponsorship partners for the Main Stand. If, for example, one of those partners brought a strategic opportunity in addition to a naming rights deal, then the Club would not rule out giving up some equity if this meant securing the right deal. However, the Club is not actively looking for equity investment in isolation, as it would only be considered as part of a strategic partnership.

- 3.10. GS challenged the response by saying the fans could bring more than just money. To which IA said that whilst the supporters bring a passion and love for the Club, the Club would only consider an equity sale if it forms part of a strategic investment, for which it is not actively looking in any case. GS said: "So the short answer is that the Club would not consider supporters taking a stake in the Club?" To which IA said: "No."

3.11. Q3 from IB: The number of local young people attending home games is a blight on FSG's stewardship; the atmosphere is suffering as a consequence. So where are we going as a Club?

- 3.12. IB mentioned that upon speaking to his son in advance of the meeting, it transpires that none of the children in his class at school attend live games at Anfield, despite there being a desire to do so.

- 3.13. IA responded by saying there isn't anyone around the table who would not agree that we'd like more young fans to attend home games. But it's about finding the right solution. For everyone we let it, someone has to stand aside. Once the New Stand is built it will increase capacity at the stadium to some 53,000 fans and provide the opportunity to look at getting the right balance of corporate tickets, season tickets, general admission and young fans.

- 3.14. IB responded by saying that we need to get more young fans to the games for them to experience the atmosphere. The youth of today should be the lifeblood of the Club, and they should have the opportunity to attend games and have the match day experience. If LFC becomes a mid-table team, it would bring into question the strategy for filling the stadium.

- 3.15. IA responded by saying that the strategy for filling the stadium is finding the right balance of match goers. It's been suggested that the stadium could have

been increased to 70,000+, but the reality is that it would be difficult to fill the stadium on every occasion. The Club is keen to get more young supporters attending games is a soundly based strategy for the Club, but the right balance of supporters needs to be achieved.

- 3.16. IA continued by saying one of the key challenges for the Club is the fact that season tickets are rarely returned and are just passed on through the generations. The Club is considering conducting a season ticket amnesty but only after the reallocations within the new Main Stand have been implemented. The culture needs to change so that season tickets are returned once the registered user no longer has a need for it. The policy for this will need to be thought through clearly, before it can be implemented effectively.

3.17.Q4 from PA: The Youth Ambassadors Scheme from Liverpool City Council was hugely popular until budget cuts necessitated its demise. Could LFC adopt the program?

- 3.18. IA responded by saying that the Club recently appointed Andrea Cooper as Head of Foundation who has reviewed the Foundation Strategy, which will be presented to the Trustees shortly. This includes a complete review of what programmes the Club is involved in, or might be involved in in the future. One of the learning points for the Club is that it has not been effective at communicating the Foundation's successes, and having a bias to running to many initiatives internally. The strategy going forward will focus on a few initiatives that the Club administers, but have many more that it will contribute to. The Youth Ambassadors Scheme could easily be one such initiative that the Club could support.

3.19.Q5 from AB: Will the Club engage the Committee more with designing surveys. The Committee would also like to also send their own surveys to their constituency. Will the Club support?

- 3.20. SR responded by saying the Club is in the process of recruiting to fill a new research position. The Club is happy to have the Committee involved in shaping the structure of its surveys and for it to understand what the Club is trying to achieve from its comprehensive survey programme.
- 3.21. Following a suggestion from IA, it was agreed to share with the Committee wider research findings, such as the 'heat map' of from where in the country fans travel.
- 3.22. AB suggested that a "live" survey could be used at one of the fan forums to engage the fans, for example in the process for the ticket amnesty and how the fans would perceive this. She also suggested that a Club official should attend to answer questions directly.
- 3.23. IA responded by saying that the Club is not opposed to having an official at such meetings, particularly if it is about a specific topic and not just an unstructured Q&A.
- 3.24. GS suggested that the facility should be made available for members of the Committee to attend the various hospitality lounges on match days to conduct surgeries, and field questions from fans. The Club was in support of this idea, although the Family Park was suggested as an alternative venue.
- 3.25. AB asked about the season ticket amnesty to which IA responded by saying that this will now be considered the season after next once the allocations for

the new Main Stand had been determined. AB suggested that the STH have surveyed to determine what would be the right approach for adopting a season ticket amnesty.

3.26.Q6 from YL: The Committee would like to understand how the Club deals with equality issues, particularly in relation to offensive behaviour. Who is responsible for equality matters at the Club? What training have they had?

3.27. AP responded by saying that the Club does have an Equality and Diversity Policy and that the Club is committed to it, which covers all areas of the Club's operations. The Club engages in on-going training, particularly for the stewards employed at the ground. Issues, when reported, are taken seriously and follow-up action is in place. Most reported cases have resulted in a satisfactory outcome.

3.28. YL said that there is evidence that complainants are not having their complaints dealt with satisfactorily and that the Club is failing to contact individuals with an update or resolution. He said that there are still issues outstanding that he previously raised. He acknowledged that something may have been done to resolve them but pointed out that he was not included on the outcome.

3.29. AP responded by saying that it would be inappropriate to deal with individual cases in an open forum and that such cases would need to be looked at on a case-by-case basis. He continued by saying that the Club has various mechanisms for reporting issues, such as the hotline available on match days. The Club is also considering introducing a texting service, and using the LED boards for highlighting offences. YL agreed to forward all outstanding issues and complaints to AP for consideration and action.

3.30.Q7 from KP: Will the Club review how the members' sale works in terms of how priority is decided. As an example, a member had a heart attack last season and therefore lost his loyalty.

3.31. SR responded by saying that the Club is reviewing the membership scheme, both in terms of what it is and how it works. The loyalty scheme, and how it works, is part of this review.

3.32. IA continued by saying this should form part of a bigger debate about how loyalty is earned and how tickets are allocated. He continued by saying that he'd be surprised that if the person affected had not got in touch with the Club at the time, someone would not have dealt with the matter to his/her satisfaction.

3.33.Q8 from IB: Will the Club engage with the Anfield Neighborhood Forum?

3.34. IA said the Club has a Community Liaison Officer employed throughout the build project and she would be the best person to contact for such matters and initiatives. Part of the agreement with the Club purchased the nearby houses is that some of the money would be used in the local community to benefit local residents.

3.35.Q9 from GS: With the disruption of the work on new Main Stand why is one particular member receiving less of a service, yet the price of his season ticket has increased by £600.

3.36. AP responded by saying that the Club would need to look at the individual case and determine what, if anything, has gone wrong.

3.37.Q10 from AF: What is the timetable for communications for fans in new main stand?

3.38. IA responded by saying what the Club is effectively trying to do is work backwards from the first game of next season when the new Main Stand will be occupied. As soon as the Club knows the seating plan of the new Main Stand, there will be a communications plan put in place to inform all those affected, and it is expected that this will happen before the end of the year. It was agreed that a communiqué will be issued informing the wider fan base of the Club's intentions

3.39.Q11 from PA: What resources are the Club deploying to deal with the problem of ticket touts?

3.40. AP responded by saying that the problem is a protracted one, not only at home games, but away games also. The Club engages in operations with the Police throughout the season, which has resulted in prosecutions, and banning orders. The Club has employed a new member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking at this issue, and identifying measures to counteract the problem.

3.41. IA said that he would be interested in understanding the fans reaction to deploying 'smart' systems to identify the allocated holder of the ticket to ensure that only they are permitted into the ground. There was some mixed views on the use of technology, but it was generally considered useful if it was combined with an extended ticket scheme, where by legitimate ticket holders could pass their ticket to a nominated friend or family member should they be unable to attend a game.

3.42. It was generally accepted that the person purchasing the ticket should be the one attending, but that there needed to be some flexibility in this interpretation. The Committee was asked to consider the approach that might be taken.

3.43.Q12 from MS: Can the Official Supporters' Clubs be given more trust in relation to assisting during pre-season tours?

3.44. IA said without knowing the specific details, it would be difficult to comment. The Club engages with official tour operators when it comes to the pre-season tours and it would be difficult, albeit not impossible, to liaise directly with individuals from Supporters' Clubs.

3.45. SR continued by saying that it's not a case of the Club not trusting Official Supporters' Club, but more to do with the complexity surrounding putting on events of such a grand scale. The Club needs to be involved and it is simply easier and more effective to liaise directly with the official tour operator.

3.46.Q13 from LF: What is the long-term vision for Liverpool FC and its Official Supporters' Clubs?

3.47. SR responded by saying that the Club recognises the importance of OLSCs as a forum for like-minded fans to come together and share experiences, both at match day and non-match day events. The Club see the OLSCs and the membership scheme inextricably linked, although not specifically about access

to tickets. Over time, the Club expects the number of OLSCs to be significantly greater in number than they are today.

- 3.48. IA said the Club is looking at how it can empower its supporters' clubs so that they are better equipped to assist in running projects where the Club has an interest. So if the Club wishes to create a legacy following the pre-season tour, the Club should be engaging in activities that the supporters' club has an active interest in so continuity is achieved.

4. Any other business:

- 4.1. PA advised that the theme for the next meeting is young supporters. IA said that although the owners are not always available of official meetings with the Committee, they are nevertheless committed to meet with the Committee, or members of the Committee, whenever they are visiting the Club.
- 4.2. KP said that with Thomas Cook no longer being a sponsor, does the Club have another partnership with an alternative travel partner. AP responded by saying that the sponsorship with Thomas Cook has ended, but the Club had split the services previously provided by Thomas Cook across a number of different providers. KP asked if there was to be any organised travel for the away game against Bordeaux. The Club advised that no plans were in place at the present time, but would issue a communiqué shortly.
- 4.3. TF asked if there was potential to display the silverware won by LFC Ladies in the Official Museum. AP responded by saying that this was good idea and would be looked at, along with a plan to refresh the layout and periodic displays. IA said that a relocation of the Museum was under review, which might offer greater opportunities for what can be displayed in the future.
- 4.4. The dates of the next meetings for this season are on the weekend of Saturday, 28/11 [Swansea], 27/02 Everton and 07/05 [Watford].

5. Key actions from this meeting:

- 5.1. PA to advise the Club of suitable dates for sub Committee to meet with Tom Doyle, the project director for new Main Stand. [2.4]
- 5.2. Committee to provide the Club with ideas from their constituencies on how to get more local fans in the stadium. [3.5]
- 5.3. On receipt of (5.2), Club to identify proposals that might address the issue of getting more local people to attend games, such as seats in the new Main Stand and managing the "churn" of season tickets, and share with the Committee for comment. [3.7]
- 5.4. Club to consider supporting the Youth Ambassadors Scheme as part of its Foundation Strategy Review. [3.18]
- 5.5. Club to involve the Committee in shaping the structure of its surveys and to assist in the understanding of aims of its survey programme. [3.20]
- 5.6. Club to share with the Committee, wider research findings such as the 'heat map' of from where in the country fans travel. [3.21]

- 5.7. Committee to work closely with Club to identify facilities for Committee to conduct ad hoc surgeries on match days for fans to put questions to their Committee. [3.24]
- 5.8. Club to connect Community Liaison Officer with IB to discuss Anfield Neighbourhood Forum. [3.34]
- 5.9. Club to issue a communiqué informing the wider fan base of the Club's intentions with regard to seat allocations for the new Main Stand. [3.38]
- 5.10. Committee to consider the approach that might be taken with regard to the person who purchases the ticket being a) the only one permitted to attend and/or b) permitted to pass it on under agreed guidelines. [3.40]
- 5.11. The Club to issue a communiqué on travel plans for the Europa League game against Bordeaux. [4.2]
- 5.12. Club to consider displaying the silverware won by LFC Ladies in the Official Museum. [4.3]