

MINUTES OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MEETING BETWEEN THE SUPPORTERS' COMMITTEE AND LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB ON 12 APRIL 2016 AT ANFIELD.

Representing the LFC Supporters' Committee: Bella Ainsworth (BA), Supporters Under 25; Paul Amann (PA), LGBT Supporters; Anna Burgess (AB), Away Fans; Lee Foley (LF), Official Supporters' Clubs; Yunus Lunat (YL), BAME Supporters; Katie Price (KP), Disabled Fans; Graham Smith (GS), Supporters in the Merseyside Area.

Representing Liverpool Football Club: Susan Black (SB) Communications Director; Julie Harris (JH) Head of Human Resources; Andy Hughes (AH) Chief Operating Officer; Yonit Levy-Sharabi (YLS) Customer Experience Manager. **Facilitator:** William Montgomery (WM).

1. Welcome and introductions:

- 1.1. WM opened the meeting and welcomed all present, particularly Julie Harris and Andy Hughes, respectively the Club's Head of Human Resources and Chief Financial Officer, who had not previously attended meetings between the Club and the Supporters' Committee.
- 1.2. SB offered apologies on behalf of Ian Ayre, the Chief Executive, who was away on business. She also offered apologies on behalf of Andrew Parkinson, the Operations Director, who was also unable to attend. She felt, however, that the Club was well represented at this meeting with her, JH, AH and YLS, all interested and accountable for the subject under discussion.
- 1.3. GS said that the Committee was well represented, but with the timing of the meeting it was difficult to get all members present. He continued by saying that anyone who isn't in attendance, either personally, or via the conference facility, had given his or her apologies.

2. Matters arising from the previous meeting:

- 2.1. As this was a meeting specifically to look at Equality and Diversity and was not an official supporters' committee meeting, it was agreed that any matters arising from the last official meeting 28 November 2015 would be addressed at the next meeting on 8 May 2016.

3. Q&A covering equality and diversity:

- 3.1. PA, who was elected as chair of the meeting, began by saying that it was good that the Club had agreed to meet with the Committee today on the topic of equality and diversity. He continued by saying that it has, however, been a strain to achieve the meeting on a weekday given people's personal and business commitments.
- 3.2. PA continued by saying that the Committee had a conference call a few weeks previously and it was unanimous that the Committee wanted to give all members an opportunity to contribute to the discussion and debate on equality and diversity because it's a cross-cutting issue and theme that does impact every constituency. It is therefore a shame that the Committee had not been accorded the opportunity for all members to meet with the Club and contribute to the discussion on the usual weekend, rather than a weekday evening. Putting that aside, the Committee is pleased to be having the meeting.
- 3.3. PA continued by saying that equality and diversity is one area where the Club and Committee had achieved some notable successes over the years. Individual members have benefited from the opportunity to have dialogue with

- the Club and to represent issues that are key to all supporters' groups, whether it be disabled, family and young, black and ethnic minority, LGBT supporters, and so on.
- 3.4. GS said that the cancelled committee meeting scheduled 27 February was going to address equality and diversity, so it would have been good to have the opportunity to address the subject then, but this opportunity is still very welcome.
 - 3.5. JH said that she agreed that it had taken some time to get to the point of meeting, but that she welcomed the opportunity to discuss the subject more formally.
 - 3.6. JH circulated copies of the Premier League's brochure on equality and diversity. She continued by saying that the Club was about to be assessed again and is hopeful of securing 'advance' level recognition. She invited comments on suggestions on how the Committee thinks the Club is performing against the 'standard' contained in the brochure.
 - 3.7. **Q1 from YL:** Can the Club clarify how job vacancies are circulated? The driving force around this question is to try and get the public face of the Club more reflective of its fan base and the community it serves. It would appear that all vacancies are not being notified to the Committee, and the fans are questioning if all vacancies are being advertised, particularly those at senior management level.
 - 3.8. JH responded by saying, the profile of the employees at the Club is an absolute match with employees in Liverpool in terms of gender, age and ethnicity. This is based on data provided by Liverpool City Council. In terms of executive vacancies, the Club has not had any in the past 18 months. The only departure during this time was the position of Legal Counsel, which is a position that the Club has decided not to fill. The only time the Club would not advertise a position is if it was confidential. Other than that, the Club advertises every vacancy which are posted on the Club's website, and often LinkedIn as well.
 - 3.9. JH continued by saying that in terms of making vacancies more widely available the Club is looking at improving its community relationships. The Club is also reviewing its preferred suppliers for agency recruitment, and the Club has chosen as one of its partners Executives in Football on the basis that they are represented on the Football League working party on diversity in football. The Club is committed to only working with partners that share the Club's commitment to equality and diversity.
 - 3.10. PA said that he would challenge the statistics provided by Liverpool City Council as, based on experience, senior positions were the domain of white males. He asked if that was same here, and if the Club had done a structure analysis?
 - 3.11. YL challenged the staff demographics from a BAME perspective, and the exercise of collating statistics, as to what steps the Club had taken in the intervening years between the intermediate level and advanced level applications of the PL Equality Standard to attempt to address under representation. YL pointed out that whilst significant progress had been made within football from a gender perspective this had unfortunately not carried through to ethnicity.

- 3.12. JH responded by saying that in management positions, the Club has an equal split between male and female. The one area where the Club needs to improve is in operations, such as facilities, maintenance, etc., where employees are typically male and white.
- 3.13. VP asked for information on the number of disabled fans employed at the Club.
- 3.14. JH responded by saying that it was just under 3% which is higher than other workforces in the Liverpool area. Interestingly, in terms of casual recruitment, the Club has done well in terms of attraction. The Club is exploring opportunities for employing a disabled chef and potential employees suffering from autism. The Club is content that it is doing all it can to reach out and make adjustments where necessary, particularly with the introduction of a new HR system. This will enable the Club to notify vacancies more easily, handle speculative enquiries more effectively, and create a talent pool of potential employees.
- 3.15. **Q2 from YL:** What are the Prayer Room arrangements for the redeveloped main stand?
- 3.16. JH said that the plans for the new stand are in the public domain and accessible to those who want to view them. These have been available since April 2014 and approved by Liverpool City Council and others. The Prayer Room will be simple, unfurnished, and accessible from the public realm. Everyone will be able to gain access. In terms of size, it will be between 15 and 20 metres square.
- 3.17. YL said that whilst it would be acceptable without a small wash area, many fans would appreciate this facility being included, and positive feedback would be received. YL also stressed the importance for engagement and consultation during the planning process to ensure suitability.
- 3.18. **Q3 from YL:** What food arrangements are in place for ethnic minorities in the redeveloped main stand?
- 3.19. JH said that all food types and preferences would be accommodated for in the new main stand, including Halal and Kosher. Any special dietary requirements can be accommodated for if known in advance. Fans also have access to street vendors that offer a diverse range of different cultural food options.
- 3.20. YLS confirmed that, from next season, the new Main Stand will have facilities to offer a range of different food options. She also confirmed that the Family Park currently offers Halal meat in the L4 outlet and that all meat provided in the hospitality areas is Halal.
- 3.21. YL said that the feedback he receives indicates that if there were sufficient vegetarian provision, this would meet the needs for most ethnic minorities.
- 3.22. **Q4 from KP:** Is the club part of two ticks campaign? This campaign allows for disabled applicants to be guaranteed a job interview if they meet certain criteria.
- 3.23. JH said that the Club is progressing its application. The reason the Club can not implement it at the moment is owing to the drawback of its current HR system, which is about to be updated. The Club needs to understand that the applicant may be disabled and therefore may qualify for a guaranteed

interview. The Club has a commitment to adopt the 'two ticks' process, and support the campaign.

- 3.24. **Q5 from KP:** What percentage of corporate spaces would be available for wheelchair users when not used in a corporate capacity?
- 3.25. JH said that the simple answer is 100%. Every seat that is not taken up can be adapted for wheelchair use. Levels 3 and 5 will have full accessibility, which has been part of the planning application, but not included in the overall numbers. If a wheelchair user needed hospitality, then this would be brought to them, instead of the requirement to visit one of the lounges.
- 3.26. **Q6 from KP:** Will the Club recruit a Disability Liaison Officer as part of the UEFA requirement?
- 3.27. JH said that the Club is committed to recruiting a suitable Equality and Diversity Advisor as soon as administratively possible. It has taken longer than hoped, but it's critical that the Club recruits the right person. The Club is currently at the second short-listing stage but, in the meantime, JH will cover the requirements of the Disability Access Officer and Disability Liaison, as it will now be known. This arrangement has been shared with both the Premier League and UEFA. We can now update that an offer has gone out and we hope to welcome the new appointee into the role by the end of May
- 3.28. **Q7 from KP:** Will the Club engage in the Level Playing action campaign between 2 and 17 April?
- 3.29. JH said that the Club did engage with the campaign during the home gain against Stoke on 10/04. The Club is also exploring the possibility of interviewing some disabled fans for LFC TV, and it is hoped that this will be achieved in a matter of weeks.
- 3.30. **Q8 from PA:** Will the Club change people's title [Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Mx] on request following gender reassignment?
- 3.31. JH said that in principle the Club has no issue with this at all, but it's a case of system challenges. The Ticketing Office has made provision for people to use such titles as they wish. In terms of other departments, such as retail and tours, the Club needs to understand how they can make this change happen, and comply with the Data Protection Act.
- 3.32. **Q9 from PA:** Will the Club allow the use of Mx as a gender-neutral title?
- 3.33. JH said, as per the answer to Q8 above, the Club will apply such changes on request, ensuring that it complies with the Data Protection Act.
- 3.34. **Q10 from PA:** Will the Club allow an LGBT Supporters' Club, in line with a large number of other Premier and other Football League clubs?
- 3.35. PA circulated a map of the world displaying the 79 countries around the world where homosexuality and same-sex intimacy is illegal. In some of these countries it is illegal to be an ally; additionally in Lithuania and Russia, there are laws against propaganda of homosexuality. 10 governments have the death sentence in place for same-sex intimacy.
- 3.36. PA continued by saying, LFC has Official Supporters' Clubs in many of these 81 countries and some in the other areas with governments having a death sentence for same-sex intimacy. It is therefore somewhat naive for the club to

- think that Official Liverpool Supporters' Club can be respectful and supportive of LGBT rights. In some countries, being respectful and supportive of LGBT rights is illegal; this affects our OLSCs in Russia and Lithuania. Our OLSCs in Saudi Arabia and Iran are in countries where the death penalty is enforced.
- 3.37. PA continued by saying, the position for transgender supporters is particularly important, and that he has had several transgender supporters outline their fears of attending the match in safety. This is backed up by UK research: Morton (2008), found that 62 per cent of respondents had experienced transphobic harassment from strangers in public places who perceived them to be trans. Whittle et al (2007) also found that a majority of respondents had faced harassment in public spaces. They noted that 73 per cent of respondents experienced comments, threatening behaviour, physical abuse, verbal abuse or sexual abuse while in public spaces. Tackling transphobia must be a priority.
- 3.38. The Club's support for the LDSA is welcome and does help facilitate the particular needs of disabled supporters; LGBT supporters would welcome an arrangement that similarly supports the needs of LGBT supporters.
- 3.39. JH responded by saying that the Club's policy is that all OSCs should be inclusive and that the Club does not have OSCs representing separate groups of fans. She acknowledged that PA raised some points and presented data that the Club is not aware of, and that will need to be considered.
- 3.40. GS said that if the Club were going to take this matter away for further consideration, it would be useful to revisit it again at the next official committee meeting on 07/05. This will ensure that the matter remains current and the issue is given full consideration. As an update to the meeting Paul , Julie and Scott Richardson Head of Customer Marketing and who has the Supporters Club organisation in his area are to meet on the 9th May and will update further post this meeting
- 3.41. **Q11 from BA:** Involvement with events related to different diverse supporters has been waning. Will the Club reverse this trend? Examples include: Level Playing Field, Football versus Homophobia, Black History Month, etc.
- 3.42. JH circulated a document highlighting the planned events covering equality and diversity. She said that the document covered both past and future events, as it is important to share with the Committee what the Club has been doing to support the equality and diversity agenda.
- 3.43. JH said that the Club was not fully effective in communicating all the good work it is doing with equality and diversity. However, the Club does continue to demonstrate its commitment to ensuring that equality and the principles of inclusion are embedded into all areas of the Club.
- 3.44. JH continued by saying that the Club has taken positive steps to promote its stand against discrimination and intolerance both on and off the pitch and the circulated calendar outlines some of the activities the Club is proud to be part of and promote.
- 3.45. JH said that the fan engagement strategy was vitally important for the Club, and, as part of that, young fan engagement is crucial. She took the opportunity to highlight some of the work the Club has planned going forward, including, but not limited to: Level Playing Field, Positive about Disability, International Women's Day, Show Racism the Red Card; Kick It Out; Football v Homophobia; Black History Month; Inter Faith Week; and World Aids Day.

4. Any other business:

- 4.1. YL asked about an update about the two fans who were racially abused on Twitter during the home game against Blackburn Rovers.
- 4.2. JH responded by saying that the Club to contact the supporter who sent the Tweets. The supporter did not have a season ticket, or any form of membership or affiliation with the Club. Consequently, banning him was not a workable option. The Club spoke to the supporter via their solicitor and made clear the terms and conditions of attending Anfield, and what behaviour was expected of all fans and supporters alike. This is were the Club left matters.
- 4.3. AB raised the concern about the number of female stewards available to search female fans upon entering stadiums, particularly in Europe but across England also. On many occasions, her male friends have needed to wait inside the stadium while she queues to be search by one of the limited number of female stewards available. She is keen that Liverpool FC has sufficient female stewards available.
- 4.4. JH said that she understood that the Club had sufficient female stewards available at all games, but would investigate further and provide details of the number available and the specific process for searching female fans upon entering the ground.
- 4.5. The next meeting between the Supporters Committee and Liverpool Football Club will take place on Saturday, 7 May 2016.