

MINUTES OF THE NINTH MEETING BETWEEN THE SUPPORTERS' COMMITTEE AND LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB ON **18 AUGUST 2013** AT ANFIELD.

Representing the LFC Supporters' Committee: Paul Amann (PA), LGBT Supporters; Sam Armstrong (SA), Female Fans; Jeanette Dodd (JD), Vice-chair and Disabled Fans; Karen Gill, Honorary President (KG); Bob Humphries (BH), Chair and Season Ticket Holders; Damien Moore (DM), International Fans (West); Abu Nasir (AN), Ethnic Minorities; Richard Pedder (RP), Fans in the Merseyside Area. **Representing Liverpool Football Club:** Ian Ayre (IA), Managing Director; Gill Derbyshire (GD), Head of Customer Service; Phil Dutton (PD), Head of Ticketing and Hospitality; Rishi Jain (RJ), Social Inclusion Officer; Yonit Levy-Sharabi (YLS), Customer Experience Manager; Ged Poynton (GP), Stadium Manager; Scott Richardson (SR) Head of CRM. **Facilitator:** William Montgomery (WM).

1. Welcome and introduction

- 1.1. Apologies for absence from the Supporters' Committee. BH apologised for the absence of James Benson (JB), Lewis Cubbin (LB) and Laurie Whitehead (LWh). BH confirmed that Nasser Aboobakar (NA), Tore Hansen (TH) and Steve Kelly (SK) had all stepped down and the process of finding replacements was underway.
- 1.2. Update from the Supporters' Committee. BH confirmed that, in accordance with the new Governance Handbook, the Committee held an election for its executive and that Karen Gill, Bob Humphries and Jeanette Dodd were duly re-elected as Honorary President, Chair and Vice-chair respectively.
- 1.3. Apologies for absence from Liverpool Football Club. IA apologised for the absence of Susan Black (SB) and Andrew Parkinson (AP).
- 1.4. Update from Liverpool Football Club. IA confirmed that ahead of this season the level of optimism throughout the club, and hopefully the fan base, is high. The Club had its most successful pre-season tour ever in terms of attendance, merchandise sold, distance travelled, and results on the pitch. This was great preparation for the team, including the new signings who have all settled in well. Over the coming weeks, and before the transfer window closes, more new signings are expected. Apart from success on the pitch, a key target for the coming season is to continue with plans to re-develop the stadium. With only a handful of properties left to acquire, the Club has made progress, and continues to do so.

2. Matters arising from previous meeting

- 2.1. Key actions from 22 June meeting. WM pointed out that the layout of the minutes had been enhanced following the last meeting, including a new numbering convention, summary of agreed actions, and an update of actions from previous meetings.
 - 2.1.1. WM confirmed that the meeting dates for the coming season have been agreed and IA confirmed that John Henry, Tom Warner and himself would each aim to attend at least one meeting.
 - 2.1.2. BH confirmed that the next meeting between the Committee and fans would take place on 9 November at the Supporters' Club on Lower Breck Road between 11:00 and 12:30. He confirmed that 100 places would be made available and requested the club's help in arranging the meeting. RP stated that a ticket would be preferable to a list of

named attendees. IA agreed that the club would assist in promoting and administering the event.

- 2.1.3. PD confirmed that he had met with SA and BH to discuss how youth tickets could be made available for cup games. There is a desire for the Club to make youth tickets available, but there are logistical challenges to overcome, particularly in relation to loyalty for future games. It was agreed that discussions would continue until the desired outcome was achieved.
- 2.1.4. The Governance Handbook was ratified prior in advance of the meeting taking place and a photo opportunity between IA and BH and the rest of the committee was arranged prior to the meeting.
- 2.1.5. The process for advertising and selecting committee meeting was a main agenda item for this meeting [see 2.2 below].
- 2.1.6. The Committee provided the agenda items, including information and raw questions in support of the main discussion item at least one week prior to the date of today's meeting.
- 2.1.7. PD confirmed that he had an initial meeting with LDSA representatives to discuss ticket pricing for disabled supporters and that a further meeting was planned prior to the year-end.
- 2.1.8. The Club confirmed that the Kick It Out mission statement incorporating the word 'tolerance' was no longer in circulation. The Club will look to either update or remove any old news items from the website archives. The Club stressed the importance of recognising the work that has been completed in the area of equality and diversity over the past few years and the demonstration that these go above and beyond 'tolerance'.
- 2.1.9. The Club has engaged, and continues to engage with Kick It Out about promoting its equality and inclusion campaign. The Club will update the Committee on new initiatives as and when appropriate.
- 2.1.10. The Committee and Club have yet to meet to discuss the promotion of the LFCSC motto.
- 2.1.11. SA stated that she did not believe that the profile of the ladies team had improved on the Club's website. SB explained the reasons for this at the previous meeting. SA confirmed that she would keep the dialogue going with SB in the hope that the situation could be improved.
- 2.1.12. The Club confirmed that arrangements to introduce members of the Committee to representatives of the LFC Foundation have yet to be made.

2.2. Recruitment and selection process for vacant positions

- 2.2.1. SR confirmed that he and AP met with JD and BH to discuss implementing a robust process for the recruitment of new committee members.

- 2.2.2. The Electoral Reform Services were approached to determine if they could help administer an online ballot of the fans, but their process was not feasible for this purpose. Consequently the Club will use Supporters Direct to assist with the online ballot, and oversee the voting process, and ensure that it is credible and stands up to scrutiny.
 - 2.2.3. The application process is now live and fans are currently registering their interest in the vacant positions. JD and BH compiled a comprehensive recruitment document explaining the role of the committee and contribution expected from individual members.
 - 2.2.4. The Club has been promoting the vacancies to specific groups of fans, namely away fans and international fans in the east. The Club has also contacted supporters clubs and notified them of the current vacancies
 - 2.2.5. To date, the number of applications has been low, but the quality is very high. Once the application date closes, a panel consisting of AP, KG and WM will meet to review the applications and shortlist a maximum of five to be put to an online vote by fans.
 - 2.2.6. BH raised a concern that information surrounding the election process was included in the live news feed on the club's website. Consequently, it was not easy to find. He asked if a dedicated link could be provided from within the Supporters' Committee area on the website. SR agreed to make the necessary arrangements for the link to be displayed at various vantage points across the club's website whilst balancing other commitments for the site.
- 2.3. Signing of revised LFCSC Governance Handbook
 - 2.3.1. The signing of the Governance Handbook, together with a photo shoot, was arranged prior to the start of the meeting.
- 2.4. Presentation on Families and Young Fans
 - 2.4.1. By way of background to the main discussion point, YLS gave a short presentation on the Club's current initiatives relating to families and young fans.
 - 2.4.2. In the past the Club lacked focus, so a Young Fan Working Group was formed, under the support of the owners. The Group has also met with members of the Committee to seek their input what needs to improve.
 - 2.4.3. With regards to the membership product, a good deal of liaison has taken place between the Club and Committee as well as research with our fans. Three products have been launched: Little Livers, Mighty Reds and Red Teams.
 - 2.4.4. A members open training session has taken place, which was attended by over 3,600 fans. There was capacity for 10,000 but bad weather severely affected attendance.
 - 2.4.5. Last season, the Club introduced the club mascot, Mighty Red, who has since attended more than 200 non-match day, LFC Foundation, and the pre-season tour events.

- 2.4.6. The Club has revised the old flat rate £15 for Premier League games to £15 for A games, £10 for B games and £5 for C games.
- 2.4.7. A limited number of extra adult/child tickets in the general sale for each game. These are sold around the ground, not just in the usual adult/child section. In addition the junior season ticket price was reduced by £200 in time for this season.
- 2.4.8. Last season, LFC became the first club to develop a Family Park where families could meet before a game. Between 900 and 1,200 people visited the park prior to each game.
- 2.4.9. This season, the Family Park now incorporates the Food Village. Informal feedback suggests that this idea has been well received, which attracts both home and away supporters.
- 2.4.10. In time for the current season, the Family Zone has undergone some timely improvements, including activities and the provision of youth ambassadors.
- 2.4.11. In addition, the Club is very active in engaging young people through social media and has a young fan TV show called Small Talk where local kids ask a player a question. It is hoped that this idea can be taken internationally so the Club can engage with young fans across the world, with local versions shown internationally. Furthermore, Kop Kids, the TV show presented by kids will be created for every school holiday, not just on an ad hoc basis.
- 2.4.12. BH expressed concern that as the Open Training Session was for members and season ticket holders only, therefore young local children who were not either members or season ticket holders would not have been permitted to attend. SR confirmed that some local kids did get the opportunity to attend as tickets were distributed through the LFC Foundation for local community groups and children's charities. A survey will be sent to all those who attended the Open Training Session to elicit more quantitative feedback. SR said that the first event was an opportunity to learn, build on its success and make it more accessible to the wider fan base in subsequent years.

3. Debate on provision for families and young people

- 3.1. Introduction to topic and expected outcome. BH confirmed that the idea to move towards themed discussions was working well. In light of the Club requesting more information in advance of the discussion point, it was decided on this occasion to provide the Club with a selection of questions as submitted to the Committee by the fans.
- 3.2. Presentation by LFCSC. JD gave a short presentation summarising the provision for families and young people.
 - 3.2.1. Some of the feedback provided by fans highlighted that kids should not have to miss out on seeing their heroes playing at Anfield and that families should not be priced out of the stadium.
 - 3.2.2. Other clubs recognise the importance of young people as LFC used to. Stoke City, for example, provided free travel to Anfield for the

opening game of the season and charged under 17s £5 per ticket. A selection of the questions submitted prior to the meeting follow. These are unedited and recorded in the same style and format as submitted by the questioner.

- 3.2.3. *RP asked: "Could you ask for each PL game how many child tickets are sold including season tickets and how many non-season Ticket adult/child tickets sold to L postcodes [sic]?"*
- 3.2.4. PD replied by saying that for the opening game with Stoke City, approximately 1,000 young fans attended and that around 50-60 per cent were from the Merseyside and North West area. IA continued by saying that the Club won't discriminate from fans coming from anywhere, whether this be locally or internationally as that goes against everything the Club stands for. RP said that the feedback he receives indicates that local people don't get tickets for games. BH expressed a concern that if the Club went through a prolonged period of not being successful on the pitch, then this could affect the number of national and international fans attending games. Without a core local support, the games may become poorly attended in future years. IA stated that approximately 60 per cent of season ticket holders are from the L (Liverpool) and CH (Chester) postcode areas. The second biggest tranche of tickets goes to the membership, which is open to everyone, whether they live in Liverpool or not. There may be people who can't get tickets, but they are no more disadvantaged than anyone else. PD agreed to provide the Committee with a full breakdown of ticket allocations, including local, national and international, to the Committee as soon as administratively possible.
- 3.2.5. *BH asked: "Stoke City are doing free travel to Anfield and charging under 17s £5 a ticket. Why not charge our under 18s £5 a ticket to see our home games? The more kids in the crowd the better. Let's attract the next generation and keep them following the club." Was it the Club's decision to charge £5 or Stoke City's, and who takes the financial hit?*
- 3.2.6. PD responded by saying that LFC's junior tickets were also £5 for the game against Stoke City. It is the responsibility of the visiting Club to administer their own ticket allocation. GP said that the principle reason for Stoke City offering cheap tickets was to increase the number of people attending. PD said that there is a PL initiative to reduce prices for travelling fans. Accordingly, LFC are looking at reducing prices across the board for travelling fans and an announcement is expected shortly.
- 3.2.7. *KG asked: "How about free travel to away games with reduced ticket prices [for young people]?"*
- 3.2.8. PD responded by saying that clubs, including Stoke City, have to be careful with youngsters potentially travelling to a game by themselves so any reduced ticket/travel has to be part of an adult/child package. IA confirmed that the any free travel offered by the club will be either reduced or free, but this will apply to everyone, whether they are an adult or a child.
- 3.2.9. *SA asked: "Can we make all LFC Ladies, Under 21, Under 18 and Under 17 games free entry for young people? For clarification, young*

people would be classed as under 18 and Reserve games should be included in this offer.

- 3.2.10. RJ responded by saying that LFC Ladies is free to staff, season-ticket holders, members and under 16s. GP stated that problems are compounded depending on where the games are played. If the games are played at Anfield then access must be controlled by means of a ticketing system. If games are played at the Academy, then spectator numbers are limited to 500, as the facilities can't accommodate any more. GP agreed to look at the issue further and report back to the Committee with his findings.
- 3.2.11. *BH asked: "Will the Club look at the possibility of introducing a lottery whereby one pair and one ticket for the season would be the prizes? Proceeds could then go directly to lowering the cost of junior/child tickets thereby a not loss of revenue to the Club."*
- 3.2.12. IA agreed that the Club would look at how this idea could be implemented, ensuring that the price paid for the lottery ticket was set at the right level and that the winner could be accommodated, whether they are or disabled or not.
- 3.2.13. *AN asked: "We need more local youngsters going to the match. Cheaper tickets and more easily available for different parts of the ground. How can this be facilitated?"*
- 3.2.14. GP responded by saying that Wembley has the clear advantage of having a stadium with near 100% availability, only have a small percentage of pre-allocated seating [Club Wembley]. Anfield does not have this luxury, having 26,000 season-ticket holders, together with allocations for sponsors, partners and away fans.
- 3.2.15. *BH asked: "Could consideration be given to family tickets? Even for cup games this would be a bonus for some families. Let's make it £50 for a family of four to see LFC play. One adult and 2-3 children or 2 adults and 2 children."*
- 3.2.16. PD stated that the majority of tickets sold on a match-by-match basis are single seats. Cup games are easier to manage and the Club's Carling Cup second round tie against Notts County provides an adult and three children to attend for less than £30 [£14 plus 3 x £5]. PL games are a different issue and offer many more challenges, but the Club is aware of the problem and is trying hard to address the issue. BH raised the issue of an adult and child sat next to each other, where the child pays the full adult price for his season ticket. Whilst the numbers affected are small, PD agreed to look into this with a view to reducing the season ticket price of those affected.
- 3.2.17. *KG asked: "How about doing a family day at Anfield once a month; free entry; meet the players, get autographs, have photographs with them etc., to bring people closer to the Club?"*
- 3.2.18. SR highlighted the challenges of including one such event in the calendar so the provision for a monthly event would be near impossible to arrange. Signing sessions are popular and the demand for such things is high. However, players have huge commitments in terms of the work they do for the LFC Foundation and Sponsors.

Having 3,500 people attend such events and obtain an autograph or two is something that is simply not feasible. The recent Open Training Session included 50 people who attended on the basis of obtaining signatures. The plan is to now build on the Open Training Session and make it bigger and better in the years to come. IA suggested that the LFC Foundation and Commercial Department give a presentation to the Committee on the level of non-playing activities and events the team already engage in.

- 3.2.19. SA asked: *I have seen some comments on social media about the engagement of young fans at the training day. Is there any way this could be improved for future events?*
- 3.2.20. IA responded by saying that the Open Training Day was a success and the Club is keen to do more, but it has to strike a balance and accommodate the needs, availability and training schedules of the players. However, it is the Club's intention to hold at least one such event each year and ensure that it meets the needs and expectations of all involved.
- 3.2.21. DM asked: *"How about erecting a stand at Melwood and once a month bring in local school kids to see the players train and allow them to build the bond between them and the Club?"*
- 3.2.22. GP responded by saying that there is already a small stand at The Academy, which can accommodate, say, 200 spectators. Melwood is not licensed to have a stand or temporary structure on being in a 'built up area' and that planning permission would likely be denied. There are only three pitches at Melwood so space is severely limited. The Academy offers the best solution in terms of available space. Neither of the Club's training grounds have licences for spectators so this offers an additional challenge, although the Club does invite small numbers of people to the grounds on a regular basis to experience training sessions. IA suggested that the Club could investigate a programme where local schools could be invited to watch a training session during term time at either Melwood or The Academy.
- 3.2.23. JD asked: *"It is important that family members and friends are able to sit alongside disabled supporters who require easy access seating and by the same token, wheelchair users should be able to sit with or near family. Given that one in four Europeans has a family member with a disability, what provision is in place to allow disabled supporters to sit with or near family?"*
- 3.2.24. GP responded by saying that the Club has, for many years, had open and frank discussions with the LDSA. He confirmed that the disabled facilities at Anfield are woeful. The Club needs to address the issues, but the time to do this is when the stadium is redeveloped when the Main Stand will have to pick up some of the shortfall in the existing facilities, along with additional regulatory requirements. The Club has a strong commitment to make the match day experience better for disabled fans and the problems will be addressed once the redevelopment commences.
- 3.2.25. JD asked: *Can amenity seating be added to the 'good practice' list for the redeveloped stadium? Easily moveable or flexible seating can facilitate families to sit together as flexible seats can be quickly removed to allow two or more wheelchair users to sit together, or*

allow more non-disabled family members or friends to sit alongside a wheelchair user.

- 3.2.26. GP responded by saying the Club will be working with the architects to ensure that every good practice possible, including provision for disabled users, will be incorporated into the design for the new Main Stand and Anfield Road Stand.
- 3.2.27. *PA asked: The Committee has received feedback stating that the Family Area being mainly just middle-aged blokes standing around. Think it could do with a re-launch to let people know it's still there and what's on offer. Can temporary shelters be provided to protect people from the rain?*
- 3.2.28. YLS responded by saying that temporary shelters were provided for the opening game of the season, but these had to be taken down on account of the windy conditions. The Club will re-assess with a view to ensure that shelter is provided.
- 3.2.29. *JD asked: I have received some complaints that there is no wheelchair access to the Family Park area on Anfield Road. There is a high kerb in front of the entrance, making it extremely difficult for young people in wheelchairs. Can some sort of ramp be provided?*
- 3.2.30. YLS responded by saying that there are two entrances into the Family Park and the Food Village. Both entrances accommodate wheelchair access. In time for this season, the whole area, and access to it, has been levelled to make it easier for wheelchair users to gain access. GP said that the access has not been levelled, but the severe gradient has been removed to make access easier. Prior to the next home game there will be a third access to the Family Park, thereby making access even easier for both wheelchair users and non-disabled people alike. The Club agreed to increase the signage leading to and around the Family Park to make fans aware of what is on offer.

3.3. Summary of discussion/output document

- 3.3.1. WM confirmed that the output document, including the existing numbering convention, action points and additional updates provided outside of the meeting, will be available within 24 hours of the audio being provided.

4. Any other business

4.1. Urgent matters arising

- 4.1.1. BH expressed his surprise that the Club advised before the meeting that they intended to deliver a presentation as part of this meeting. It is the Committee's belief that some fans may feel that the Club is being defensive in attempting to address the theme prior to the issues being raised. The Committee feel that it would be better if the Club makes any presentation at the beginning of the following meeting, thereby affording them the opportunity to not only provide additional information on what they are currently doing in the area discussed, but also advise on any actions or quick wins implemented since the previous meeting.

- 4.1.2. IA responded by saying that the Club's intention was to simply state its position upon hearing of the theme to be discussed, and to set the scene so the discussion could be presented in the knowledge of what the Club is actually currently doing. There is perhaps an opportunity to make the Club's presentation available alongside any information on the resultant actions at the start of the next meeting.
- 4.1.3. AN stated that he is concerned that the meetings are reverting back to Q&A sessions and less about strategic direction. The Club does not have to defend its position on the theme under discussion, but view the Committee as a critical friend. The Committee feels that the meetings are still a PR exercise for the Club, and the fans don't really see the true benefits of the role the Committee plays.
- 4.1.4. IA stated that the reason the Club prefers to receive an idea of questions in advance of the topic being discussed is to ensure that the Club has the right people attend who are best placed to answer the questions which, in turn, will guide the agreed actions and next steps required. He stated that he is very relaxed in how the Committee wants to structure the meeting. If the Committee would prefer to simply propose a theme and suggest to the Club who they would like to attend, this would be fine also. The Club is committed to help the Committee be a success. The alternative for the Club to engage with 30 or so other groups, all claiming to represent all fans, is not a viable option. The Club wants the Committee to be a success, and will do all it can to help make this happen.
- 4.1.5. BH raised the issue of the introduction of the new entry system that was put in place for the opening game with Stoke City the day before resulting in long queues being formed, particularly at the entrances to the Kop. No advanced communication was made to ward fans to arrive early because of the new entry system. He stated had received a number of emails, expressing concerns that the introduction was not well managed and improvements should be made in advance of the next home game. Stewards seemed to be unfamiliar with the new system and at a loss as how best to assist people.
- 4.1.6. GP responded by saying that every game at Anfield is managed and overseen by the Control Room. Traditionally, the first home game of the season causes problems with people arriving with the wrong access cards, or access cards that had not been activated on account of non-payment.
- 4.1.7. GP continued by saying that the turnstiles in use in the Kop are now electronic as opposed to manual, and this change was compounded with fans arriving shortly before the game not being aware that the turnstiles had been updated. Stewards did better on some areas than others and the Club will address this in the coming weeks.
- 4.1.8. GP continued by saying that the Club would normally expect around 17,000 fans in position 30 minutes before kick off. At the opening game of this season, only around 14,000 fans were in position. This can be attributed to an unusually high build of traffic on the approach roads to the stadium. In addition, the Club had rolled out a significant improvement to its Wi-Fi network and in some areas this had failed, compounding the access problems.

4.1.9. GP added that the build up of circa 3,000 fans not in the stadium coupled with the introduction of the new system meant that an unusually high number of fans were struggling to get in. However, 12 minutes into the game, everyone was in the stadium.

4.1.10. GP and GD both confirmed that they didn't envisage the same problems being experienced again as any improvement opportunities identified will be addressed prior to the next home game. The Club will learn from these experiences, will take the opportunity to better prepare the Stewards and communicate any changes to fans in advance of changes being implemented. The Club agreed to issue a communiqué advising fans what happened and what steps will be taken in advance of the next game.

4.2. Date of next meeting

4.2.1. The next meeting will take place on Sunday, 10 November 2013 when the theme under discussion will be the away fan experience.

KEY ACTIONS AGREED AT THIS MEETING

1. SR to make the necessary arrangements for the link to the advertised positions on the Committee be displayed at various vantage points across the club's website. [2.2.6]
2. SR to send a survey to all those who attended the Open Training Session to elicit more quantitative feedback. [2.4.11]
3. PD to provide the Committee with a full breakdown of ticket allocations, including local, national and international, to the Committee as soon as administratively possible. [3.2.4]
4. Club to make an announcement on initiatives for away supporters. [3.2.6]
5. Club to look at the issue of allowing young fans free access to LFC Ladies, U21s, U18s and U17s and report back to the Committee with his findings. [3.2.10]
6. Club to respond on the possibility of introducing a 'lottery' style prize of tickets for every PL home game to help fund tickets for young adults/children. [3.2.13]
7. PD to look into how many children pay for a full price adult season ticket with a view to reducing the season ticket price of those affected. [3.2.16]
8. Club to investigate increased involvement with local schools. [3.2.22]
9. Club to increase signage to the Family Park. [3.2.30]
10. Club to issue a communiqué advising fans what delayed access to part of the stadium during the opening fixture and what steps will be taken in advance of the next game. [4.1.10]