

CHARLTON ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB

FANS FORUM

Thursday 16th February 2017 @ 7.30pm

PRESENT: Charlton Athletic: Katrien Meire (KM), Jack O'Sullivan (JOS), Tom Rubashow (TR)

Supporters: Steve Clarke (SCL), Richard Wiseman (RW), Christine Lawrie (CL), David Wood (DW), Tony Farrell (TF), Peter Catlin (PC), Syd Cheeswright (SCH), Ian Wallis (IW), John Perkins (JP)

APOLOGIES: Craig Parrett, John Bennett, Vernon Roper, Keith Blair, Rob Harris, Heather Robertson, Matt Ring, Sharron Sherress, Metin Afiya

MINUTES FROM MEETING

Agenda item	Discussion
1. Attendance / Introductions / Minutes	<p>Introductions made by Supporter Representatives.</p> <p>TR introduced himself as the club's Head of Communications.</p> <p>JOS confirmed that he would take minutes from the meeting and send them to RW for approval before going online.</p>
2. Fans Forum reform discussion	<p>JOS presented a proposal for a reform of the current Fans Forum setup. [attached]</p> <p>JOS noted that a lot of points raised at Fans Forum also arise in supporter group meetings and Target20k meetings, so streamlining the club's meetings is worthwhile as the same conversations are being had across different platforms.</p> <p>KM said she feels Fans Forum meetings are not regular enough and under new proposals there would be meetings every two months.</p> <p>TR commented that one idea is to have meetings of the new group on a matchday to make them more accessible, but this is open to discussion.</p> <p>RW asked why the need is to change. CL said she feels the group has lost its way and many groups are now not represented.</p> <p>TF asked for clarification on how supporters would be selected to take one of the general seats. TR confirmed that the planned supporter consultation event would enable the club to listen to everybody and that the selection process can be finalised.</p> <p>TF asked what the final number of attendees would be under the new proposal. TR advised suggested number was 25 but this is open to discussion and can be lowered if considered appropriate. SCL commented that 25 attendees would be too many. SCL raised a concern around the general seats (i.e. STH's) and that any issues they raise may be more personal rather than representative of a group of supporters. IW agreed with RW and SCL that 25 would be too many.</p> <p>JOS noted that if everyone due to attend Fans Forums did then the meeting numbers would not be much less than 25.</p> <p>TF asked how points raised would be identified and actioned from each meeting. KM confirmed that JOS maintains a spreadsheet outlining all action points raised from supporters group meetings and this would be continued so a record is kept.</p>

	<p>JOS noted that the Apologies list for each Fans Forum is often too long and that under new proposals commitment would be required in order to work more effectively. JP questioned why those who do not attend Fans Forums, and have not done so for a period of time, are part of the setup. JOS proposed that the minutes from Fans Forums are only distributed to those who attend.</p> <p>SCL suggested that the proposed timetable is very tight and should be extended.</p> <p>RW advised that EFL structured dialogue discussions would not be possible with such a large group. RW suggested that, if having a larger meeting of supporters on matchdays was deemed appropriate, then there should also be a separate smaller group looking at more strategic issues – funding, development, philosophy etc.</p> <p>RW advised that supporters who do not feel represented or feel they do not have a voice should join a supporters group.</p> <p>Action: KM confirmed that the club will look at the proposals and specifically the number of planned attendees.</p>
<p>3. Player of the Year dinner</p>	<p>TR presented a proposal discussing the current POTY dinner and improvements that the club feel they could assist with to make it a more successful event. [attached]</p> <p>TR advised that the club feel these changes would make the event more accessible, affordable and family-friendly.</p> <p>KM commented that the club are not looking to take over the event but want to help improve it. KM noted that the suggestion of an afternoon event was up for discussion and at this stage is just a proposal, and the club's preference to attract more children to the event.</p> <p>KM confirmed that the POTY dinner could not take place on the originally-proposed date (April 23rd). KM commented that the request should not have been sent to Keith Peacock, instead it should have followed the correct process of going through JOS. IW later confirmed that he has organised this through Keith Peacock in previous years.</p> <p>KM advised that the women's team are playing on April 23rd and the club would like them to be involved in the proposed plans, so the original date should not have been agreed.</p> <p>KM advised that under the new plans, Valley Express coaches could be arranged for after the event if there is a demand for this.</p> <p>KM noted that with regards to raffle and auction prizes, the club could assist with prizes for these which would help to generate additional funds for the Fans Forum and the Charlton Athletic Museum.</p> <p>IW raised concerns about the proposals and stressed that the POTY dinner is a supporters' event and not a club event, and it is the supporters who own the POTY trophy. IW said he feels that the club are trying to take over the event and turn it into something different, and that a similar discussion was held last season. IW noted that a lot of the suggestions/improvements the club want to make could be accommodated, but not the actual format of the event.</p> <p>IW noted that the current format is an evening event and primarily an adult-only event. IW said that the event has been a success every year he has organised it, even in difficult seasons. IW suggested that a less formal event could work at a different time, i.e. Christmas.</p>

	<p>IW stressed that he wants it to remain a formal evening event. IW advised that in anticipation, he contacted other members of the Fans Forum and received an overwhelming response that it should stay the same. IW proposed a motion, worded 'I deplore the actions of the club in transforming the POTY dinner in favour of their own event and I urge them to reconsider and allow this much loved event to continue as it is.' CL seconded this motion.</p> <p>JOS asked for clarification on how the club's idea was proposed to other members of the Fans Forum by IW in advance of the meeting, as the original motion included the word 'banning' instead of 'transforming', which is not what the club ever planned to do.</p> <p>TF advised that he had discussed a change to the event with members of CADSA and that the majority wanted it to remain as it is, however accepted that the club's proposals were not put forward to them at the time.</p> <p>IW proposed a vote over the changes and it was voted 8-1 in favour of keeping the event as it has been previously.</p> <p>RW noted that, apart from the timing, the proposed changes are relatively minor but that the timing is the most important issue.</p> <p>JOS stressed the club's thinking behind the changes – making it more affordable, accessible and inclusive.</p> <p>Action: Club to discuss internally the way they would like to proceed and will discuss in further detail with IW and other supporters group representatives.</p>
<p>4. Shirt Sponsorship</p>	<p>IW raised the issue of shirt sponsors not receiving much promotion. IW suggests that the number of shirt sponsors is lower than in previous seasons and makes reference to a programme in the AFC Wimbledon programme where their kit sponsors are displayed. KM advised that more promotion for kit sponsors can be done on the website.</p> <p>Action: Club to look at promotion offered to kit sponsors.</p>
<p>5. Hall of Fame</p>	<p>IW explained that 3 new players are elected every year into the HoF and they are almost ready to announce the names for this year. IW advised that voting will take place from middle of March until middle of April and IW will liaise with Ollie Groome to promote this being publicised. Responding to a question from TF, IW confirmed that there would be the usual three age groups.</p>
<p>6. Training ground – update on progress and funding</p>	<p>RW acknowledged this issue is very detailed but asked for a brief overview on the latest developments at the training ground.</p> <p>KM explained that there have been delays caused by lawyers from all parties. KM stressed that the club is fully committed behind the plans but there are delays.</p> <p>KM confirmed that Phase 1 has been completed. KM confirmed that the scheduled finish date remains the end of 2018, however as with many construction projects, this is subject to change. KM confirmed that Phase 1 was funded through a cash injection from the owner. To date £2.3m has been spent on the training ground redevelopment.</p> <p>KM noted that Phase 2 will cost £1.5million and commented that some of this will be funded with monies raised from the sale of Ademola Lookman, now that this cash is available.</p> <p>Action: Club to provide a full update on the current status to assure supporters that good progress is still being made. TR to speak to Tony Keohane to work on this. RW requested that he be included in this.</p>

<p>7. £2.50 administrative charge</p>	<p>RW raised the issue of the £2.50 administration charge being levied when tickets for Millwall were not available to be purchased online.</p> <p>JOS advised that the administration fee on telephone bookings has been in place for more than a decade, and that tickets for the Millwall game went on-sale on 13/12 to allow fans attending either of the previous two home games to purchase in-person and avoid the fee. JOS also noted that the ticket office is now open 6 days per week.</p> <p>JOS acknowledged that this still was not ideal for every supporter. JOS advised that following feedback from supporters and after discussions with our provider, an upgrade has now taken place so moving forward, tickets for restricted sale fixtures will now be able to be purchased online.</p> <p>TF noted that disabled supporters are not able to purchase tickets online and therefore any admin fee is waived for them when they call the ticket office.</p> <p>Action: Club to speak to provider to establish if disabled tickets could be available online.</p>
<p>8. Abuse enquiry</p>	<p>RW recalled when this first came up, an announcement was made saying that an internal enquiry would be held. KM confirmed that discussions are taking place with police and lawyers, and meetings have been had with the FA and the EFL. She said that the club are working with lawyers to help us with this case. KM advised that immediate concerns were to focus on current situation and ensuring current procedures are effective.</p>
<p>9. Board members</p>	<p>CL asked if there were any plans to appoint new member(s) to the Board on the playing side. KM confirmed that Richard Murray is still involved and still a Board member, and has regular meetings with herself and management. KM said if they see the need for someone additional to get involved then this could be discussed but no plans currently.</p>
<p>10. Premier League ambitions</p>	<p>CL said she feels that the owner is happy with League One status and no longer has Premier League ambitions. KM said that the aim is still for Charlton Athletic to play football the highest level and that the first stage of this means getting back to the Championship as soon as possible.</p> <p>KM noted that reinvestment is being made into facilities, that money has been invested into the team and that money was planned to be spent in the transfer window but these deals fell through because of reasons previously explained by the manager.</p> <p>KM feels that the deals done were good value, and that money will be available to strengthen the team in the summer.</p>
<p>11. Medical budget</p>	<p>CL noted that the club have suffered a lot of injuries and asked if the medical budget has been cut. KM confirmed it has actually increased. KM advised that there are now additional physios and medical staff at the club, as well as an extra strength and conditioning coach.</p> <p>KM noted that Josh Magennis' injury was well-handled and the player returned to the side earlier than anticipated. KM also noted that of the injuries suffered, a number were historic.</p> <p>SCL asked about the status of Ahmed Kashi. KM confirmed he is still rehabilitating in Qatar and will return to London once he is able to start training on grass. KM said he may be back in time for April but we must remain realistic and be patient.</p>
<p>12. Sale of the club</p>	<p>CL asked if a selling price has been quoted to a potential buyer. KM said she was aware of the rumour around Red Bull but this was not true.</p>
<p>13. Matchday experience</p>	<p>CL asked for it to be stressed to the owner that what happens on the pitch is the most important aspect of attending matches for most CAFC fans. CL feels that the owner's ethos about what a matchday should be seems different to supporters in England.</p>

	<p>KM advised that the owner is very aware of the importance of results, and that everyone at the club is disappointed with the last few results.</p> <p>KM said that the owner's comment that the function of football is to have a great evening with friends was made in the context of Belgian football.</p> <p>CL requested that KM makes it clear to the owner that those currently protesting about the running of the club are not a small minority but a large number of long-standing supporters.</p>
<p>14. Charlton Athletic Rail Travel Group</p>	<p>TR confirmed that he had met with SCH before the meeting to cover points around the Rail Travel group. SCH noted that the process for the recruitment of a new CARTG secretary has not been successful and asked for an update on the situation. TR advised that he will speak to the club's HR department and look at options. Action: TR to liaise with CAFC HR and get a job description produced.</p> <p>SCH advised that progress has been made around updates for earlier publication of Away Travel Guides to enable rail users to secure cheaper advance tickets to matches. Action: TR to look at implementing plans as discussed with SCH.</p>
<p>15. Any other business</p>	<p>a) Ticket office: JP said he has received complaints that supporters are unable to get through on the telephone to the ticket office. IW and SCH noted they have not had any issues. JOS asked to be made aware of further incidents which can be investigated.</p> <p>b) Hot water: JP advised that he has been told there is no hot water in the ladies' toilets in the East Stand. KM advised she is aware of this situation. Action: Club to look to resolve issue.</p> <p>c) Ticket priority/allocation: JP raised concerns around this process, and that regular away supporters are not given any extra priority for away tickets for high-demand games. JP acknowledged the value of Valley Gold but requested ideas to be looked at to cater for this. SCL noted that Valley Gold members are rewarded for putting money into the club. Action: Club to look into possibilities to accommodate. JOS to follow up with JP about any other ticket related issues.</p> <p>d) Wimbledon away: CL asked why the club did not take up the full allocation of seated tickets for this fixture. KM confirmed that we did not have a seated allocation for this fixture.</p>
<p>16. Date of next meeting</p>	<p>To be confirmed.</p>