

ISC Meeting Monday 12th February 2024 at 17:30 hours, held on Zoom

Attendees

Cathy Bayford (CB), Paul Christmas (PC), Andy Payne (AP), Kevin Hind (KH), Apu Vyas (AV) Robina Ahmed (RA)

Apologies for Absence - Martin Clowes (MC)

Primary focus was on the issue of agreeing a way ahead on all outstanding fan concerns with the Club following a period of inactivity from the ISC given the FAB negotiations.

AP opened the meeting and asked if anyone had any objection to utilising the updated Zoom AI companion to see if that helps with the writing up of the meeting minutes. It was agreed to try it out and review to see if it is helpful. If it isn't helpful, we agreed to try alternative tools to help the process. AP confirmed he would also take written notes just in case the AI Companion didn't work.

AP confirmed that he copied everyone in today on a mail, by way of a chase up, to Nicola Keye, asking for who is the key contact for ongoing issues, given we have been told that 'Club London is nothing to do with West Ham' on more than one occasion, confirmed by AV. This was first sent in response to a note from Club London on Thursday 8th February 2024 which informed season ticket holders that Club London had changed their half time complimentary drinks offer for season ticket holders with zero notice.

AP confirmed that Club London members do pay West Ham not a third party. AP also confirmed that there were plans to form a representative fan group.

AP confirmed that as of now, there had been no response to either mail.

AP then went on to discuss the key agenda items establishing that we had two broad sections to discuss, namely, **history and heritage**, and **match day experience**.

History and heritage - AP asked if anyone had seen any of the Trailblazer exhibitions? Did they ever happen? No one had seen or heard of anything so it was agreed to ask the Club for confirmation of what Trailblazer exhibitions had been put on and when.

AP then raised the issue of the ECL commemorative medals – Club London members have been promised these time and time again and the latest promise was that they would be with them all within 3 weeks. It seems like all other season ticket holders had received theirs.

AP raised the issue of memorabilia. After much chasing over 12 months, the ISC got a very, very short list of memorabilia including the 1964.65.66 Hurst, Moore and Peters medals. This was despite the promise to be sent the full catalogue of what the Club held by Karren Brady at the meeting 18th July 2023. It was agreed that the ISC would continue to press for more detail from the Club.

RA confirmed that she had been working on alternative plans around history and heritage for the ISC. AV felt the Club had just closed off any activity around history and heritage. RA said the Club had made it clear that it was not possible to have a museum. All agreed.

AP summarised action points

- 1) Confirm Trailblazers - AP
- 2) Press more on memorabilia – AP to do that with new fan rep person at the Club
- 3) Sir Geoff Hurst – AP will contact him about his medals

AP went on to discuss **match day experience**

Ticketing is a key issue for fans– pricing/sales windows – Club London members were told that there was a key date by which they had to take up their EL Round of 16 option for their seats which went against the dates published on the West Ham website. This was challenged and Club London confirmed the dates on the website were correct. Yet lots of season ticket holders believed what they were told, which was wrong.

AP felt that lessons may have been learned from last season with the Larnaca ticket debacle and this season the Club changed their approach allowing season ticket holders a few days after the draw before taking up their option. PC agreed that the ISC should take this as a victory and publish it.

AP reported that he had been asked about season ticket renewals. CB asked if the person was a Club London employee. AP said he had no idea and talked about the debacle of the new voucher system for complimentary half time drinks and how that was not fair on staff or season ticket holders.

AP suggested the ISC write to Nicola Keye about season ticket renewal details and also bring up the issue of the age concessions which the ISC did not believe has been properly dealt with. West Ham and Aston Villa are the only clubs who moved concessions from 65 to 66 years old. PC commented that he had evidence from his members' survey who felt that this change was unreasonable. KH also agreed with this and felt there was a wider issue around the levels of customer service which were just not good enough. We need to know what the Club's customer service strategy is. The published WHUST ticketing manifesto covers these areas of concern.

AP said we have to ask the Club questions that they can answer with certainty either a yes or a no. PC added that the ISC have let the Club get away with their attitude over a period of time and things have drifted. We must communicate to fellow fans with more regularity and certainty. RA added that we must communicate more and we must ensure fans know what we have done, what we have tried to do every step of the way. Our questions must be answered. RA went on to question why the relatively small amount of revenue was pursued by the Club around the issue of over 65s concessions. AV stated that we should state every time we have a discussion with the Club that 'we know that the Club will settle for the bare minimum' and make this our default position.

AP said that the ISC Twitter account needed to be more proactive around communications with the Club. CB stated that all Tweets should be shared/published for approval by the ISC before being issued. AP apologised for moving fast and everyone agreed on the way ahead.

Catering – AP had produced a comparison between the prices offered by Delaware North and Chelsea, Arsenal and Spurs which was on our shared Drive. Non-alcoholic Heineken is sold at £11.50 a pint. AP asked what we should do about this situation. Discussion around further and sustained boycotts of the bars/food outlets. PC was sure there was an uplift from Delaware North for pitches rented out on the site. AV had heard that the Club were not going to pursue this legally as they had inferred as it would not be economically viable. AV suggested that the ISC should advocate a sustained policy of boycotting and that fans don't visit food and drink sellers on the stadium estate until West Ham take it seriously. PC mentioned that Peppermint have taken over the Last Drop

where the WHUSC had been last season. Everyone agreed that the prices of food and drink inside and outside the stadium were expensive. ISC agreed that the engagement with the Club so far on this has been a total waste of time and we should take it that the Club will do nothing. We will recommend to fans to do their own thing and use local establishments outside of the Delaware North orbit. RA said we should do a longer run, sustained campaign to boycott the bars and put forward suggestions to promote local businesses as an alternative for fans.

Sellers and Fan Zone – AP said that these issues had become opaque and we had not achieved anything against these issues. He noted that there were plenty of local ad hoc sellers now – scarves, pin badges, touts. PC said the Club were looking at schemes but got distracted by issues around ‘family friendly’. PC felt that there were always problems given that it is all private land.

Club Cash – AP stated that the renewal/use it or lose it restrictions were not fair to fans. Examples of tickets resold by fans in return for Club Cash which were then re-sold at a premium by the Club. Further examples of tickets resold at a very high premium by P1 Travel. ISC agreed that Club Cash must be revisited after some more research. AP had done a comparison with other PL clubs – West Ham by no means the worst in terms of what they take as a commission/fees, who are Fulham, the best being Man City who take no commission/fees. AP stated that the Club have a right to take a small percentage for the resale but all agreed that given fans had paid in cash, they should be able to get their resale paid back to them in actual cash, not ‘Club Cash’.

SAG issues – post match stop go and the quality of stewarding were key issues for fans. ISC took the view that we were treated badly when we were invited to attend the SAG and had decided to stand away from this. Should we now look to re-visit this position given that the Premier League’s fan engagement guidelines are coming in? CB said the ISC had taken part in an ISC SAG and we were talked over and closed down and even Julie Pidgeon (JP) is not allowed on the SAG and the right people were not being represented. JP represents the Accessibility supporters whose unique Health & Safety needs can often be neglected. The possibility of wheelchairs being knocked over in the crowds and wheelchair users and those with learning difficulties feeling overwhelmed in the crowds, many of whom are left waiting for the Go sign has often been raised, it is therefore essential for there to be proper fan representation on the SAG going forward and any West Ham United FES must make allowance for this.

RA confirmed she had tried to contact the leader of the SAG and had got nothing back.

RA had to leave the meeting at 18.30 and was thanked by all.

KH – confirmed that he had also had a poor experience with the leader of the SAG. WHUST and FSA reps were patronised and it was unhelpful. So much of the experience of going to and from the ground are not within West Ham’s gift. We need to understand what we want and who we need to work with outside of the Club. Who is responsible for what? AP said we should not ask the Club questions for things outside of their responsibility and instead let the Club know that we will seek clarification from other parties all the while letting the fans know what and who we are asking for. PC said as the FAB becomes a reality we have to make it clear we want to work with the right parties. AP said we just have to keep communicating with fans and listen to what they want.

AP said he would get minutes out for review as soon as possible.

AV had to leave at 18.38.

PC said that there were people on social media who did have closer connection with the Club and they may well be able to influence the Club unofficially. All agreed that we need to communicate with the fanbase more frequently and more succinctly.

Meeting ended 18.42

Immediately after the meeting PC raised the issue of the wall, away ticketing allocation/balloting and cup schemes. It was agreed to seek clarification from the Club on these issues.