

## **ISC/Club Meeting Tuesday February 21st 2023 at 18:00 hours**

### **Attendees**

ISC - Robina Ahmed (RA), Steve Applebee (SA), Cathy Bayford (CB), Paul Christmas (PC), Martin Clowes (MC), Sara Page (SP), Andy Payne (AP), Apu Vyas (AV) and Sue Watson (SW).

Club - David Chaplin (DC), Jake Heath (JH), Phillipa Cartwright (PhC), Tom Degum (TD), Ben Illingworth (BI), Nicola Keye (NK), Sophie Lawson and Tara Warren (TW).

FSA - Ashley Brown (AB)

Apologies for Absence - Don Adams

### **1.0 ISC Chair & Vice Chair**

SA welcomed the attendees to the meeting and formally advised the Club that SA is now the ISC Chair and SW the ISC Vice Chair.

### **For Information**

### **2.0 ISC Ticketing Motions**

AP introduced the two motions which had been forwarded to the Club prior to the meeting in respect of the pricing of tickets for the ECL Round of 16, the sale window timing prior to the draw and proposals for revised ticket categories going forward (for further details see attachment below for a copy of the two motions).

NK outlined the rationale for the sale window for season ticket holders to provide 2 months prior to the draw and the category B pricing, including a discount for accessibility supporters and that waiting for the draw would be only 2 weeks before the tie would be played. Opening sales in December provided supporters with more opportunity to budget and the option to purchase before or after the outcome of the draw. NK continued that only two Premier League clubs had previously played in this competition and that one named club were one and a half and two times more expensive for adults and juniors respectively and for another named club the comparison was one and a half and three times more expensive for adults and juniors respectively in terms of the overall customer cost journey for season ticket holders. NK outlined the reasons why ticket sale data is commercially sensitive, never provided prior to the fixture in question and that the Club will not provide a more detailed breakdown of ticket sales.

There was further discussion around affordability with contributions from AP and PC to which NK and TW responded that the points raised on ticket price tiering have been noted and will be taken into consideration for future. The Club will consult with the ISC their proposed tiering and pricing strategy for 23/24 season tickets at the appropriate time. PC added that the ECL group matches were attended by 35,000 to 40,000 and in his opinion lower ticket prices would have generated sell-out attendances. TW said the importance of getting the biggest crowd for these fixtures was fully appreciated and the Club will consider the ISC proposals including a more accessible entry level price without the Kids For a Quid and NK added that there are no standard categories allocated for European games.

### **Responsibility NK**

### **3.0 FA Cup Ticketing**

NK confirmed that the Club took 6000 of the maximum 9100 allocation which allowed all season ticket holders and claret members who applied to purchase a ticket. NK also advised that an extended deadline, provided the Club and fans with a longer sales window and larger ticket allocation.

#### **For Information**

### **4.0 Premier League Fan Engagement Standard & Government White Paper**

SW advised that the Prime Minister will announce the White Paper this Thursday February 23rd. AB added the White Paper was not expected to contain detailed fan engagement proposals, the FES would include the flexibility to accommodate the different requirements of individual clubs and that FSA negotiations with the Premier League were currently on hold pending evaluation of the White Paper. It was noted that full consultation with the ISC was required given that the Club and the ISC would need to evolve in line with the new requirements of a Fan Advisory Board. TW confirmed her understanding that through the collaborative working of ISC member groups, the FSA and the Club the ISC was already leading the way in terms of some of the recommendations the Club were expecting to see in the FES.

TW confirmed that following an internal club review of the FES and the White Paper the Club will commence full consultation and share their proposals with the ISC as soon as practicable.

#### **Responsibility TW**

SW advised that the Government White Paper will be discussed at the next ISC meeting on March 15th.

#### **Responsibility SA**

### **5.0 History & Heritage**

BI confirmed that the Club's memorabilia was currently stored in two locations and TW advised the Club are always keen to showcase our memorabilia, there isn't a facility at the stadium for a permanent museum, but there are opportunities to put on displays of historical artefacts for supporters. Following a question BI provided information of the museum created at the Boleyn Ground and commented that it was very rarely visited.

TW stated that, as had been agreed at previous supporter meetings past exhibitions have been held in the Club Store, for example, celebrating our legendary captain Bobby Moore and the 40th anniversary of the 1980 FA Cup win, and will continue to be held to commemorate specific Club anniversaries. In addition pop up exhibitions are planned to be held and more memorabilia added to augment stadium tours etc. TW suggested the ISC could support the Club in helping to determine future themes.

#### **For Information**

### **5.1 Potential Alternatives Exhibition Locations**

AP and SA suggested the loaning of memorabilia to other museums or establishments to allow their display and BI commented that security of the items is of paramount importance and consideration must also be given to the location of any display of

memorabilia so that items can be appropriately insured. It was agreed to investigate potential locations, AP suggested that the 1966 memorabilia could be loaned to the National Football Museum, and consider specific displays for upcoming anniversaries depending on the memorabilia held by the Club.

**Responsibility SW & JH**

### **5.2 School Visits**

SW suggested that exhibits could be used to illustrate the Club's history and heritage when the Club Foundation visits schools and youth centres etc. TW welcomed ideas that educate and showcase the Club's rich history to both new and young audiences.

**Responsibility SW & JH**

### **5.3 On Line Exhibition**

AP proposed that the Club could include articles e.g. in programme around items held. TW confirmed this had happened previously with supporter memorabilia historians involvement and was definitely something that could be revisited. AP raised more important exhibits could be the subject of 'short form content' e.g. on YouTube, to provide an opportunity for viewing and commentary of the origins and backstory etc. The potential for other interested parties to view, film and create online content and requested if a list of the memorabilia could be made available. RA added that this would be of particular interest to international supporters and TW agreed this was a good idea and something the Club would look into to tell the story of our heritage. AP agreed to share the example he referenced during the meeting and TW agreed to explore revisiting past Club articles and developing a digital showcase.

**Responsibility AP & JH**

### **5.4 Boleyn Ground & Past Players etc**

SA requested that the Boleyn ground should be celebrated where appropriate, possibly on the proposed banners on Bridge One and SP added that while Club legends were represented, past unsung players that may not have achieved international prominence should also be celebrated.

**Responsibility JH**

### **5.5 Short Club History Film**

JH advised that the Club have contacted Southampton and reviewed their short film which is shown as part of each home game entertainment. A project will be undertaken to produce a West Ham version for home games, social media and marketing initiatives.

**Responsibility JH**

### **6.0 Kit Design**

Following a question from SP, JH advised that a meeting is planned in March with the kit supplier to update on the progress of designs following feedback for 23/24 season and to kickoff the design process for 24/25 season. TW added that future kit design would feature in a planned fan survey to obtain wider feedback.

**Responsibility JH & SP**

## **7.0 New Season Ticket Holders Welcome Pack**

JH advised that the marketing department is working on a central digital package for first time visitors and welcome packs for new season ticket holders is under investigation for introduction for next season.

**Responsibility JH & RA**

SA suggested that a digital match program package for the upcoming Premier League season games should be offered for both new and existing season ticket holders.

**Responsibility JH**

## **8.0 Catering**

TW commented that significant inroads had been made on catering pricing since the beginning of the season although there remains an ongoing review versus the contractual agreement. PhC added that catering pricing and product offerings for next season will be advised by Delaware North in June of this year.

**Responsibility TW**

SA commented on the importance of early bird and post match pricing reductions to encourage a wider spread of supporters arrivals and departures to smooth out stadium ingress and exit flows rates. AP questioned the pricing for non alcoholic beer being the same as alcoholic beer, and three ISC members made suggestions regarding a kids happy meal at an affordable price, to include smaller portions and a healthy alternative. BI remarked on the benefits of past meetings of fan representatives with Delaware North and proposed a further meeting is held.

**Responsibility JH & SW**

## **9.0 Coaches for Away Fans**

NK advised that the Club are supplying three coaches for the Manchester United FA Cup tie and continues to supply heavily subsidised coaches in line with the anticipated demand on a match by match basis.

**For Information**

## **10.0 AOB**

SW commented that the next SAG review meeting (including safe standing) needs to be scheduled and will liaise with JH subsequent to the meeting.

CB advised BI that some accessibility search lanes were poorly managed to the detriment of accessibility supporters at the recent Chelsea game.

Following an observation from SP, BI advised that 16 Chelsea fans were ejected from home fans sections and reminded all fans should report any instances to the stewards or the matchday reporting help line.

**For Information**

## **11.0 Next Meeting(s)**

PC reminded the meeting of the importance of face to face meetings (as minuted at the previous meeting on August 7th, 2022) and SA added that every effort must be made to schedule meetings to provide the maximum time and opportunity for attendees to schedule work and other commitments to attend, especially if they are to be held face to face at the London Stadium. TW acknowledged that both her and KB would like at

least one meeting to take place in-person at London Stadium, considering the requirements to meet with all other supporters' groups such as the DSB, JSB and WSB. NK detailed some of the logistical considerations particularly while the Club playing in Europe.

The next meeting will be arranged once the Club has formulated proposals for the evolution of the Club and ISC relationship after reviewing the contents of the Government White Paper and the Premier League FES.

**Responsibility JH & SA**

**Meeting Closed at 19:50 hours**

### **Attachment**

The ISC believes that the prices for the knock-out rounds of the Europa Conference League games, which are inferior to the Europa League games, are too high. The ISC notes that there is too great a gap between ticketing categories C and B and the Club has already set a precedent for additional categories by adding a higher priced AA category in the past. The ISC believes the club should have a five-tier pricing structure with a new mid-level price range between the current B and C levels, or to consider a European C level that mirrors the Premier League C-match ticket pricing but does not offer 'Kids for a Quid'. Moving forward the Club should consult with the ISC on future ticketing categories, and the match prices for each. The opposition competing in each competition are known by August each season, therefore it could be handled in 2 tranches. Firstly, for the PL season, consult in February, giving the club time to announce in April, followed by for Europe, consult in August and announce the same month. Accessibility discounts should apply to all ticketing tiers.

Furthermore, the ISC, calls on the Club to share renewal rates on season ticket sales, take up rates on cup fixtures, and specifically, using the next European game as a guinea pig, identify which groups of supporters have purchased a ticket order to help the club understand the key pricing points for tickets and allow the balance of the two elements of helping supporters in difficult times as well as the need to maximise club revenue. This will support the above from a fact-based decision making process.

We would need to ensure we had access to data on these areas as a minimum:

- How many ASTH bought a ticket for the home European game?
- How many Bondholders
- How many STH
- How many by Claret members
- What was the ACTUAL attendance ( not tickets sold) for this game and every other game.