

Independent Supporter Committee –Executive Club Meeting Minutes

Date of meeting – 26th January 2022

Timing – 6pm-8pm

Representing Independent Supporter groups (ISC)

Jim Dolan (JD) (Pride of Irons)

Don Adams (DA) (Over 65's representative)

Steve Applebee (SA) (Bondholders)

Paul Christmas (PC) (West Ham United Supporters Club)

Cathy Bayford (CB) (Disabled Supporters Board)

Apu Vyas (AV) (Inclusive Irons)

Andy Byrne (AB) (Hammers United)

Sue Watson (SW) (West Ham United Supporters' Trust) Interim Chair

Sara Page (SP) Away Season Ticket Holders representative

Robina Ahmed (RA) Claret members representative

For the Umbro Presentation
Mason and Oliver (from JSB)
George Grey (from WSB)

For the Finance Segment
Mark Inskipp (MI), Alistair Holmes (AH) and Sunjay Chada (SC)

Representing West Ham United Football Club

Tara Warren (TW) Executive Director

Ben Illingworth (BI) Head of Operations

Nicola Keye (NK) Director of Ticketing

Jake Heath (JH) Head of Supporter Services

Graeme Ford (GF) Head of Marketing

Danny Francis (DF)

Sophie Lawson (SL) SLO team leader

Independent Observer

Ashley Brown (AB) Football Supporters Association, Head of Governance and Supporter Engagement.

Umbro - Bryony Coates (BC), Robin Dunn (RD) and Jonathan McCourt (JM)

Apologies for Absence - Karren Brady

1.0 Welcome and Opening Remarks

SW and TW welcomed Robina and Sara to their first ISC/Club meeting and the JSB and WSB representatives.

For Information

2.0 Umbro Presentation

JM introduced himself BC and RD. JM outlined kit considerations, home/away/third kit design strategy, kit detailing elements and the consultation plan for the 23/24 kit design cycle.

For Information

JM identified the players' needs, kit clashes with opposing teams, club crest/sponsors logos positioning whilst observing Premier League and FA requirements. JM added that "what the players wear - the fans wear".

For Information

RD shared the Umbro philosophy utilising knowledge from other sports including rugby and F1. RD also gave an overview of the differing approach to each of the home, away and third kits.

For Information

GF summarised the Club's long standing relationship with Umbro together with the themes for recent kit designs.

For Information

2.1 JH advised that for the 23/24 season kit design, the supporter engagement model will be similar to the 125 year kit consultation process and will commence early February 2022.

Responsibility JH

2.2 SP asked if the third kit could be made for women? Also questioned the durability of adhesive attached versus embroidered kit detailing.

PC reminded the meeting that the centenary of the 1923 FA Cup final appearance.

Responsibility GF

SW and TW thanked the Umbro team for their presentation.

For Information

3.0 Isla

TW advised that the very sad passing of Isla would be commemorated by an appropriate fashion and the Club are in communication with Isla's family.

Responsibility TW

4.0 22/23 Season Ticket Strategy

In response to ISC questions, NK gave the following response;

1. The Club are not yet in a position to comment on the season ticket pricing.
2. The Club recognise the need for zero percentage season ticket payment plan(s).
3. AA category matches will be determined when the fixture date and time have been confirmed.
4. AA category ticket pricing will be incorporated into ticket pricing information.
5. The introduction of the AA category will not impact season ticket prices.
6. The Club will retain all concessions for cup competitions.
7. West stand reconfiguration and associated season ticket bands have yet to be established.
8. The current match categories will be retained for next season.
9. 62,500 capacity implementation is awaiting sign off of implementation plans.
10. With Plan B covid measures coming to an end, upgrade of readers will support trials of NFC technology in the next fixtures.

Responsibility NK/SA

4.1 NK advised that the allocation of unsold season tickets will first go to those on the priority list (in order of who joined the list first). The Club is awaiting further information on the West Stand seating manifest and the new stand presents the Club with a unique close season. Following the closure of the Season Ticket renewal period there would be considerations such as seat relocation windows and the Club are still considering the new West Stand strategy. Supporters wanting a Season Ticket for 22/23 are likely to get one as the Club offered flexible options to Priority List members as a result of COVID last season and when considering the opportunity that will be afforded by the new stadium capacity.

Responsibility NK

Current and past covid related protocols will remain in reserve and will be reinstated should the situation demand.

For Information

5.0 Park and Ride

Due to meeting time constraints this topic will be followed up after the meeting.

Responsibility JH/SW

6.0 Mark Noble

TW placed on record the appreciation for Mark's loyalty and commitment to West Ham United and informed the meeting that the Club have been in discussions with Mark to consider what is important to him personally. The Club will also ensure that as many supporters as possible are able to show their appreciation for Mark across the Clubs channels and on matchday at this season's final home fixture against Manchester City. TW commented on some of the potential ideas to date, but invited the ISC to send their own ideas to JH after the meeting, specifically on how and where the Club could collate stories, memories and tributes, from across the entire fanbase.

Responsibility ISC Members

6.1 JD suggested a Mark Noble montage made of fan's faces.

Responsibility JH

6.2 SW will convene an ISC meeting to produce a consolidated list of ideas for further consideration.

Responsibility SW

7.0 Financial Presentation

TW presented the key points of the latest Club accounts published for season 20/21. These included the impact of covid on matchday revenue, net debt reduction, the £120m MSD funding, increased TV income and PL prize money for 6th place finish etc. TW also reported that the Club met the £28m 5 year commitment to the Players Project. It was noted that these accounts do not include recent investment by Daniel Kretinski which will be next year's accounts.

The following observations and questions were noted;

1. MI noted that the accounts were issued 2 months before the required deadline.
2. AH commented that the covid related explanations had minimised the volume of questions.

For information

8.0 West Ham Foundation

During the financial review TW commented that the £28m had not been compared with other London PL Clubs. But the foundation's achievements have been recognised by the Premier League and ambitious plans are being made for the next phase.

SW thanked the Club and the finance colleagues for their contribution.

For Information

The meeting closed at 20:00 hours.

BI added that stadium access and egress was good, transportation okay and operationally a positive experience with the Police Commander having a very quiet day.

Four issues were raised as follows:

CB raised the issue of exemption wristbands and lift assistance was inconsistent.

PC advised of a heavy handed approach of Newham Rapid Response teams.

JD reported that there was a shortfall in the catering.

CB added that there was no initial catering support for disability supporters.

Resp JH agreed to follow up with PC and CB and feed into steward briefings for upcoming season.

2. Plans for Next Season

NK advised that season ticket sales are progressing with seat reallocation and new sales the next steps. While COVID-19 protocols for next season remain to be determined, ticketing allocation priorities unchanged with loyalty points frozen from 2019/20 season. NK said the Club would not necessarily be continuing any protocols specific to Covid if not needed, but we will need to remain flexible to changes in guidance/processes.

BI advised steward training for next season is in progress for the return of 60,000 capacity.

KB confirmed safe pickup points will be trialled for away match coach travel.

Resp BI

The Club requested the ISC to participate in a joint submission to E20 regarding the addition of street vendors on the Stadium approach.

Resp TW & JD

3. Ticketing

KB/TW confirmed that the Club is taking up the ISC proposal to facilitate a process for fans to donate club cash to provide tickets to NHS staff. This will be facilitated through the West Ham Foundation. The ticketing subgroup will progress and agree the details.

Resp NK & KH

Furthermore it was agreed that in future all ticketing issues would be covered by the ticketing subgroup, with any major unresolved issue elevated to the executive committee on an ad hoc basis.

For info

£2 Ticketing Fee for Southampton Game

KB advised the booking fees from the Southampton game would be refunded. The booking fee refunds are to be made in club cash or the original payment method if requested and this will be done within 7 days.

Resp NK

4. Newham SAG ISC Representation

Whilst the club endorsed an ISC representative to discuss Club issues with the SAG alongside the Club, it was recognised that the SAG committee was already highly populated. BI raised the request with the SAG. An agreement between the SAG and SGSA was made to enable the Club, SAG Chair and the ISC to meet separately re: SAG matters to ensure our supporters are represented. The Club would also liaise with the ISC prior to SAG meetings.

The Club endorsed ISC representation on SAG matters via an ISC Subcommittee to meet with the Club, SAG Chair and ISC at key points throughout the season

Resp SW & BI

5. Updates/Overview of:

Owners Charter

KB advised a Premier League meeting will be held later this month.

For info

London Charter

Best practices to combat all forms of discrimination, hate crimes and online abuse etc. The London Charter has inputted and advised on a Premier League-wide initiative and has been put forward to pilot the scheme. The collective goal is that the initiative is Premier League-wide at the earliest opportunity.

Resp EDI Group

6. ISC/Club Engagement Calendar

It was agreed that future meetings should be scheduled to support key milestones. The ISC will revert back with a list of key milestones so that the club can align meetings in support of key decision making.

Resp JD & JH

7. Kit Design

Kit design milestones for 2022/23 season will be incorporated into future meetings scheduled (see also agenda item 7 above).

For info

8. Diversity & Inclusion

JF introduced herself as Director Safeguarding and Inclusion and outlined her role to promote an inclusive culture, a sense of belonging for all to have an enjoyable match day experience. JF will work with key stakeholders to develop strategies and action plans and looks forward to meeting all supporter groups.

For info

9. Fan Awards

KB advised that the trophies would be awarded at the end of season Player Awards as usual as agreed by the ISC and the Club, with the Supporters Club presenting the original HOTY trophy to the player at the first home match of the new season to enable as many supporters as possible to experience the presentation.

For info

AOB

TW confirmed the shortlist of names for the statue is under consideration, with the players families, before being put to a fan vote across club channels.

Away and Claret Members representatives election will require a 10-12 week lead time, following selection of the polling company.

For info

MEETING CLOSED