

SUPPORTERS COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY 19th February 2020

KCOM STADIUM

ATTENDEES:

- Senior Tigers: Barbara Wilkinson (BW)
- Hull City Official Supporters' Club: Kathryn Townsley (KT)
- Electric Eels: John Sherman (JS)

West Stand Representative:

- Lisa Champion (LC)

East Stand Representatives:

- Mike Yardley (MY)
- Ash Durham (AD)
- Ben Andrew (BA)
- Mark Tomlinson (MT)

South Stand Representatives:

- Jamie Kelwick (JK)
- Bob Carroll (BC)

APOLOGIES:

- Carol Raper – Ticketing Manager

CLUB REPRESENTATIVES:

- Ehab Allam – Vice-Chairman
- David Beeby – Club Secretary
- Kevin Hickson – Facilities Manager
- Joe Clutterbrook – Head of Commercial and Marketing
- Karen Clark – HR Manager
- Daniel Briggs – PR & Social Media Officer
- Henry Crane – Venue Catering Partnership Deputy Manager
- Ann Holland – Supporter & Disability Liaison Officer

INTRODUCTIONS:

JC welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Hull City staff introduced themselves to the Committee.

CLUB UPDATE:

BC asked EA if he was confident the sale would go through and if selling some of the key players had reduced the Club's chances of staying up.

EA said he felt positive about the potential sale and was confident the team would stay up. He explained the club had failed to make the top six in the past three seasons with the players that had been sold so there were no guarantees of a top six finish this season.

EA said on the subject of the sale of Jarrod Bowen, it would not affect the sale as the money is not paid up front but spread across three years.

EA advised there had been reinvestment with four new players coming in.

MY asked about offers the club had received for Jarrod Bowen and if there was going to be a more proactive approach to player contracts.

EA explained it was important to get the timing right when renewing contracts and the need to approach discussions at a sensible time.

EA, without breaching confidentiality, gave a brief overview of the Club's policy on contract clauses, out of contract players. He also explained the Club policy on sustainability.

DB advised the Club expected to finish higher than its financial ranking in the league this season.

BW said at the end of the day fans just wanted the players to play well so everyone enjoyed the match.

EA confirmed the focus was on the style of play and exciting players with a pathway for Academy players to come through to the 1st Team.

BW asked if there was concern on the number of injuries.

EA advised that recent discussions showed a better overall injury rate than the previous season, however the Club were looking into reasons and ways to rectify.

JK asked why EA was still planning to sell the Club when he seemed to be enjoying it so much.

EA said he was enjoying it and was passionate about the Club but his father's health and other business interests had contributed to the decision to sell.

BC asked if EA thought the uncertainty of a sale stopped players coming to the Club.

DB said he speaks to a lot of agents and they tell him their players want to come to Hull City as they see a pathway to the first team.

JC informed the Committee an interview with EA had been recorded earlier in the week and would be out in the next couple of days.

TICKETING:

HL gave an update on Memberships and sales:

New memberships since November- 466

Cancellations in the same period- 129 (compared with 1,000 cancellations the previous year)

12 game bundles sold - 14

6 game bundles sold – 200

Match ticket sales up over 100 per match with around 700 paying the full match price.

BC asked if enough had been done to inform fans of the cheaper prices by using match cards or memberships.

JC explained the Roar as One campaign has seen over 20,000 direct mails to local households, with adverts in newspapers, local cinemas and on radio, billboards and screens across the city, as well as digital screens and LEDs around the ground in addition to emails and web content.

BC suggested social media.

JC advised there is an ongoing targeted social media campaign and the Club were concentrating on lapsed fans and getting the message across that the best deals are on memberships.

JC also advised he was looking to recruit a CRM Executive to manage the data and be more proactive in that area.

DB gave the example of getting the price right for the Chelsea game which enabled the Club to capture the data as well as getting people into the stadium.

BW asked if there was data on the age groups of the 466 new members.

HL said she didn't have an exact breakdown with her but thought a lot of them were children.

BC asked what the Club were doing in relation to schools.

JC explained the changes Tigers Trust had gone through over the past year and the relationship between the Club and the Trust which meant they would be working together to engage with schools. He said he should have more information on this at the next meeting.

JC confirmed the 1st Team and the Management Team were fully supportive of the work the Club were doing to engage more with schools. A guard of honour before each game was one of the recent initiatives.

KT asked if it would be possible to pay once a year rather than monthly.

HL explained the Club are in the process of introducing a new ticketing system which they would look to develop. She also explained that regular monthly payments helped with cash flow from a business perspective.

MY asked for the timescale for the new ticketing system and what if the new owners wanted to change it.

HL said it should be installed by the summer.

BA asked why there seemed to be a lot of ticket checks in E2.

SC advised there were a lot of supporters sat in the wrong seats at the Chelsea game and the Operations Team are trying to prevent overcrowding in some areas.

JC confirmed there had been some issues in E2 which were caused by a small minority of fans in that area and incidents are reported to the FA so actions needed to be taken.

AD suggested the inconsistency of stewards didn't help.

SC advised SMC are trying to recruit more stewards and use less agency stewards which he thought would help.

LC asked if checks are going to be ongoing whether it would be a good idea to put up signs advising fans of this to avoid confrontation.

STADIUM:

BA asked if the signage could be improved on the concourses to highlight cashless/card only tills.

HC explained it was difficult with the way the digital signage was set up across the tills but training is taking place for concourse staff to educate and inform the customers on cashless and card only payments. The systems being put in place have so far improved the card sales from 37% up to 53%.

MY asked why the beer only booths were not used.

HC advised the decision was made due to a fall to only about 20 beer only sales per match as most customers want to make multiple purchases.

JC advised new chip fryers for the West Stand had been signed off and will be installed in due course.

HC advised vegan options would also be made available.

JK advised he had received an email asking about plaques being removed from the backs of seats.

AH said they were not removed but had fallen off after being on the seats for a length of time. If they are found they are reattached but sometimes they may be swept up during cleaning.

KH advised nine plaques had been refitted in the past couple of weeks.

JK asked why the stadium had not been cleaned.

KH said this had not happened as quickly as he would have liked and reported several companies had been in with their ideas on how to clean the seat backs and scrub the concrete areas clean. One company came in and did a trial in the South Stand which has cleaned up really well. We have pitch renovations in May which will cause a problem with dust so have booked in the clean for 18th May. EA wants it keeping clean so we will be having a steam clean and then follow up work to keep on top of it.

BA made KH aware of leaks in the South Stand in S6 rows N and M.

BA asked why the TVs on the concourses didn't work before the matches.

KH advised work to improve was in hand and the signalling is checked regularly and some of the TVs had been replaced. Also, an audit by a media company had been arranged to look for ways to improve.

MY said fans were frustrated at being held back after the games at the away fan end.

SC advised this was a police requirement which had worked and reduced conflict.

JS asked for action to be taken on those driving on the perimeters before the 15-minute delay at the end of games. He suggested leaflets as a reminder for all cars parking on the perimeters.

AH said all disabled fans are advised not to move until 15 minutes after but she would reiterate this to them all.

MY asked why the back gate was no longer used for leaving the stadium after a match.

SC said it was a decision made by SMC due to the speed some of the cars went but agreed he would feedback the question and review.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

KT said she would like to pass on to whoever was responsible for the Club's social media how improved it has been over the past few months.

DBr said he would look at adding events to Facebook as some fans had raised this.

DBr asked for suggestions on how the Committee would propose to change the Man of the Match voting as it had been suggested it come off Twitter.

It was agreed it should be the choice of fans not sponsors.

JK asked if the Club had thought of making Roary and Amber into cartoon characters.

JC said the idea had been discussed and did fit the remit for fan engagement.

AOB:

JS advised the Electric Eels would be playing in the National League in March ahead of a 1st team game and wondered if their game could be shown.

JC agreed to look into the feasibility and said he was happy to offer support for the Electric Eels.

DB said he thought some of the players would also like to offer their support.

KT questioned the reason stewards were giving priority to cars over pedestrians near the flyover after the matches.

SC explained stewards were told to shut the gate when it was overwhelming with pedestrians and changes in staffing should stop further problems.

SC asked if everyone was aware of the text reporting service.

AH advised that to report incidents, fans could text 60066 and start the message with HULL which sends a message straight to the control room.

MY asked if there were any plans for the Dugout Bar or plans for a fans' park.

JC confirmed the Dugout Bar would be improved for the new season but most of the marketing budget is spent on concourse activities rather than a fans' park. However, the fans' park would be considered for the warmer months.

BA asked whether it was possible to add a disabled fan representative to the committee.

AH advised it was hoped there would be a disabled fan representative in place for future meetings.

BW asked what had happened to the Club's big flag.

JC said he would arrange a new one which has the new club crest on.

KT asked whether the legends banners could be put in the North Stand.

JC said the Club would look into it and they could potentially be used as segregation between home and away fans.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.