

Supporters' Committee

Meeting

Monday 29th October 2018

KCOM Stadium

Present: Vicky Beercock- Head of Marketing and Communications (VB), David Beeby – Club Secretary (DB), Kevin Hickson – Facilities Manager (KH), Ann Holland – Supporter Liaison/ Disability Liaison Officer (AH), Dan Clarke – CRM Executive (DC), Kathryn Townsley (KT), Barbara Wilkinson (BW), Jo Friend (JF), Bob Carroll (BC), Ben Andrew (BA), Mark Tomlinson (MT), Ash Durham (AD), Jamie Kelwick (JK)

Apologies: John Sherman, Mike Yardley, Melanie Dearing

Introduction

VB welcomed the members to the committee meeting and thanked them for attending. DB and VB introduced themselves to the committee followed by fellow members.

VB opened the meeting by relaying a message from the Vice-Chairman saying he very much appreciated everyone taking the time to attend today's meeting, and for everyone's continued support.

Matters Arising

Aims of the Supporters' Committee

VB asked if all Committee Members were in agreement with the 'Terms of Reference' document presented to them prior to the meeting and stated that it was based on guidance from the Football Supporters Federation (FSF).

All present members agreed to the above mentioned 'Terms of Reference'.

BW queried if supporters could be pointed towards their new stand representatives so that if they had any questions which they wanted to bring up in these meetings that it could then be passed on.

DC stated that there are emails addresses set up for each stand and these log in details can be passed onto relevant Committee Members. These emails, alongside the contact information for the Official Supporters Club and Senior Tigers, will be communicated to supporters in the matchday programme and through the Club website.

JF enquired whether there were any other supporter groups which were invited to this meeting and if the Hull City Supporters Trust (HCST) were invited to this meeting?

VB answered that we have 3 independent supporter groups represented in this meeting which collectively represent a large proportion of our supporter base, in addition to 2 representatives from

each stand. With regards to the one remaining supporter group out of our 4 groups, the Club would absolutely love to have the HCST on this committee and they more aware of this.

***(FURTHER TO THIS,** after numerous liaisons with the HCST, face to face and over the phone, with regards to numerous concerns, the Club leadership strongly feel they are unable to move forward in a meaningful relationship with the Trust whilst these concerns are not addressed.*

The Club values its constructive relationship with the Trust's Secretary and will continue to liaise with them in an informal capacity as to keep the relationship close.

We would welcome the opportunity to continue to liaise with the Trust in a formal capacity should these concerns be addressed.

We have been in continued conversation with the EFL regarding this, who understand our position and hope we move forward together with a compromise.

We are continuing to discuss how we can move forward effectively for both parties in the most constructive way possible, in the meantime, however, we feel there is a strong representation of the supporter base at these meetings so urge supporters to share their feedback with these groups and individuals).

1- GENERAL CLUB UPDATE

a. Club Sale

VB stated that as the Vice-Chairman has mentioned in a recent press interview, the Club is currently going through a sale process and are working towards having this completed by Christmas. Until such time as the sale has been completed, we are running the Club as business as usual. Once we have something to communicate to supporters, they will of course will be the first to know. However please understand we can't always control rumours and leaks in the media.

AD queried if the Christmas expectation is a solid date or if this could be moved back?

DB answered that the sale is currently in a due diligence process and this procedure does take a lot of time. So this makes it hard to state a fixed expectation date for a sale to be completed. KH adds that a lot of information has been passed on in this process and this again will take time to sift through for the 'buyers'.

BC enquired if the committee would have the opportunity to meet possible new owners swiftly after a sale had taken place?

VB responded that it would be very likely that prospective new owners would want to meet the Club's Supporters' Committee. If this was the case, the Club would organise an extraordinary meeting with this Committee.

JK queried if the sale process has been narrowed down to one preferred bidder.

VB answered that there are numerous bidders in talks with the Football Club.

b. Work in the Community

VB opened the topic by stating that the Club are committed to supporting the local community and we have recently led a grant programme for grassroots sports clubs in the area. We are also supporting the Contribution to Sports Award in the local area.

Furthermore, as a Club we are working towards an initiative over the winter months to support the homeless in the area and have a mental health awareness campaign launching in the coming weeks.

Hull College Partnership with Hull City Academy:

VB further added that the Club are now working with Hull College in a partnership to film U23s Academy home matches as part of their curriculum to offer experience to their students and also media training to the Club's younger players.

VB continued to give an update on the community arm, Tigers Trust:

- **NCS- The largest project working with year 11/12's on residential visits and social action to develop life skills. 2017/18- engaged 502 participants (108% of target)** Several groups collectively raised £3000 in social action project for Hull and East Yorkshire Mind charity.
- **PL Kicks- Engaged over 1800 young people and adults in free inclusive sport across 3 hub locations in Hull. Aimed at preventing anti-social behaviour around Hull.** 40 people gained accreditations and engaged over 300 females.
- **PL Primary Stars- Primary School programme aimed at developing core skills, PSHCE, and teacher training in a primary setting. Joined up with over 40 schools as partners working with over 3000 students in schools in all areas from Brough to Scarborough.**
- **BT Disability-** Working across a range of disability projects such as PAN disability, DS (Downs syndrome) Active, Forces Together, Tigers Together and so on. Worked with 206 participants delivering 66 qualifications. 302 people attended festival events after the positive work at a festival aimed at inclusion held at Manchester City with all PL clubs in attendance. Our coaches provided some of the practical workshops at this.
- **Secondary Hub Schools-** Commenced the delivery in secondary schools in Hull. Worked with 3 schools on a pilot programme engaging over 500 students. This has led to the establishment of 4 Hub schools as partners for the next two years with a full time officer working in each school to develop physical and emotional well-being. This tied with our PL Enterprise programme has engaged over 600 secondary school students.

BW asked that once John Davies leaves as the Tigers Trust Manager, will he be replaced.

VB answered that John Davies has done an incredible job for the Trust almost 30 years! And we're all incredibly sad to see him be moving on, that being said, we're also really excited about the future direction in store for the Trust under new Trust Chair, Sean Royce. The Trust board are currently in the position of recruiting a CEO, and we expect to see an announcement on this in the coming weeks.

BW asked whether the community will have access to the Arena under this new direction.

DB replied that the Club is looking at relocating its indoor academy to Bishop Burton (where the Club's Academy is based). If this takes place, it would free up time for more community activities to take place at the Arena.

BA queried who owned the Arena at West Park.

DB stated that the Stadium Management Company owned the Arena however they do sub-let the building to the Tigers Trust.

c. Club History

VB opens this section by stating that the Club, alongside The Tigers Trust, is looking to apply for Heritage Lottery Funding to hire a Heritage Officer. This would help the Club in archiving the Club's memorabilia and organising how best we can present our heritage. VB mentioned that the Club will also be setting up a Heritage Committee once the Heritage Officer is in place which would help in shaping how we go forward. The Club is creating a history hub onto the current website and hopefully working closely with third parties including Senior Tigers, potentially the Hull Daily Mail photo archive, and fan sites/supporter groups to populate it in the most effective and engaging way.

KT requested if a database could be included in this part of the website as the OSC often don't know where to go for certain information e.g Dates of players joining/leaving the Football Club.

VB responded that a database such could be considered for integration into the 'history hub'.

KT also asked if the Club was looking getting a new domain for the Club website given as its still currently using 'www.hullcitytigers.com'.

VB replied that the Club feel the correct url for the Club moving forward should be 'www.hullcity.com' due to it being the most natural fit for the Club's brand. Please also note that the Club's name has been changed on all other channels, and we now state 'Hull City' on all communications supporter facing.

Club Crest

VB stated that the crest redesign process has been completed with the new crest being voted in after two separate creative sessions with supporters. The aim is to reveal the new crest early in the new year (End of Jan/Early Feb time) to supporters.

MT asked if the Club was sold, would this affect the new crest being rolled out.

VB answered that we can't predict what decisions a new owner may make just yet so it could be possible they may prefer a different approach in the future. However, the Crest redesign was supporter led so we feel comfortable supporters will see the crest as an improvement. However, the Club is currently held to product deadlines with suppliers for the 2019/2020 season, so whilst we will hang fire until the last possible opportunity to press go, we also need to continue business as usual until notified otherwise.

KT questioned if the new crest is revealed in January 2019, when is the first time supporters would see the crest on products.

VB responded that it will be revealed late Jan/early Feb and the first time it would be rolled out would be during pre-season of the 2019/2020 season.

BW & KT both state that they would want guidance on how their supporter groups badges sit with the new crest and would appreciate any help they could get from the Club.

VB replied that the Club will help supporter groups with the design elements of the new crest if they wish to incorporate it into their image.

2) FACILITIES

a. Disabled Facilities

KH stated that the Stadium has just added an 'Adult Changing Place' to improve our disabled facilities and as a company are still striving to keep to the Premier League Standard. Also in relation to this, the Club are currently in the process of creating a Sensory Room within the Stadium to again improve facilities available to our disabled supporters. This is being planned to be completed in the first quarter of 2019.

b. Stadium Wi-Fi

KT asked whether the Club are looking into improving the Stadium WiFi due to the OSC receiving numerous comments about its poor performance.

KH answered that the Club realises that there is an issue with the Stadium WiFi signal on matchdays. We are currently on a project of collecting costs for a potential upgrade.

BW queried if the tannoy system has been looked at as she has received complaints of members struggling to hear the sound system.

KH responded that the Stadium tannoy system is a priority to be upgraded and is currently being looked at.

BW mentioned about a disabled supporter evacuation plan

KH responded that for every game there is a full stadium evacuation plan that is submitted to the Safety Advisory Group before a game can commence and all plans are then briefed in to supervising personnel.

BW mentioned that she believed the bag searches taking place around the Stadium aren't of sufficient quality

DB stated that we will take this feedback on board. The safety of supporters is paramount and security around the Stadium has increased in the past year with the introduction of bag searches and detection dogs.

BW highlighted an issue she had at the Leeds United fixture (2nd October 2018), with the pedestrian lighting around the Airco Arena in West Park being very low.

KH apologised for this issue and stated that he was aware of lighting issues on the 2nd October however not in this location and so he will chase this up.

VB specified that we encourage supporters to immediately pass on this kind of feedback to the Club through our Supporter Liaison, Ann Holland, so that we can act on them immediately and log any incidents.

Action: Contact details for AH will be passed onto the Committee and put out as a reminder to supporters on Club channels.

BW mentioned that the bollards in West Park can become dangerous when leaving the Stadium due to their low height and the large crowds walking towards Walton Street Car Park.

KH answered that he will look into this and see if a solution can be thought of.

MT queried when the last time the Stadium areas were cleaned.

KH commented that the last time the Stadium was fully cleaned by contractors was during the pitch renovations this summer. KH added that the Club is taking the issue of pigeon excrement seriously and all issues in this regard in the future be sent to Ann Holland immediately for this to be logged and followed up.

BW mentioned that she has received complaints of padding on executive seats starting to shred.

KH responded that new seats have been ordered for the Stadium and they are looking at adding new padding to these seats so that any seats with these issues can then be replaced.

BW & KT both mention issues with running/ hot water in stadium toilet facilities.

KH to look into this issue.

3) TICKETING

BC queried if anything in relation to ticketing will change before the possible sale of the Club.

DB answered that possible ticketing models could still be considered. However, in this current situation of a possible sale, it may be best to hold off on any possible ticketing changes until we have an update on sale progression. Note, these ticketing models wouldn't necessarily be inclusive of a concession price.

MT enquired what was wrong with offering concessions as he knows many adult supporters who would gladly pay more for a ticket/ Membership if it allowed for concessions to return.

DB stated that the flat fee for a ticket should be affordable for everyone at all points of their life.

MT believed that Zone One pricing could be affordable for the vast majority however it does force families and supporters to move away from areas in which they have previously sat for numerous years.

VB stated that finding a solution to ticketing is a constant conversation in the office and ideas are being considered by the current leadership. The Club have had a meeting with the Football Supporters Federation (FSF) in relation to the Club's ticketing, with the action of that meeting being that the FSF would source some key demographic data and share it with the Club for evaluation. This unfortunately did not materialise. That said, we have been working in the background on alternative ticket incentives.

KT mentioned if the Club would come out with ticketing news in October as was previously communicated to supporters.

VB replied that due no data being received from the FSF, the Club doesn't have any news to communicate to supporters currently but as previously mentioned we are still working hard to find a solution that works for all parties.

BC stated that if the Club would look at the cancellation data of their memberships, it would show this current ticketing system isn't working.

JF added that in previous seasons the Club has not needed matchday revenue with the majority of the Clubs income coming through TV revenue from the Premier League. However, in the coming seasons this is going to become more important and getting ticketing right will be a priority.

KT asked if Members would be considered as a first priority in looking at ticketing due to these supporters sticking by the Club.

DB stated that Memberships would always be considered as the cheapest way to watch Hull City.

BW asked why the HCST ticketing model proposed to the Club wasn't introduced.

VB stated that whilst we were in possession of the HCST ticketing model and took reference on the age splits, the model didn't settle some key issues which were mentioned in previous committee meetings.

BA queried why the away supporters were moved to the corner of the Stadium in previous seasons.

KH indicated that it was a decision made for the 2014/2015 season which was suggested by the management team at the time as to get the Club's supporters directly behind both goals. DB added that many clubs think that moving the away supporters into the corner of the ground gives the home team an advantage.

BA requested that under potential new ownership, where supporters are situated could also be considered if the ticketing was to be changed.

4- MARKETING

a) Tigers TV - Live

KT requested if contact information for supporters to use if they have an issue would like to claim a refund.

VB answered that they will pass these details on and plan to make these contact details more prominent on the Clubs Tigers TV website.

BW stated that she would like to thank VB and all who helped bring BBC Humberside back to match commentary for the 2018/2019 season.

VB responded that she hopes changes such as communicating the Club name, using the hashtag #hcafc on Twitter and bringing back BBC Radio Humberside for match commentary has helped towards rebuilding relations between the Club and its supporters.

VB added that a Club app is currently in the process of being created and this will allow supporters to be able to stream matches through mobile devices. VB added that this season has been a trial period for the Club and the EFL in relation to streaming and we are constantly looking at the best way to go forward for next season.

DB stated that numerous Clubs in the EFL are not happy with the current situation with streaming as Sky's red button product has reduced the amount of revenue to Club streaming products. Next seasons deal with the EFL in relation to streaming has not been signed by clubs and expects these issues to be brought forward.

AD asked if Members receive Tigers TV free of charge.

VB answered that currently this is not the case. But we are looking at bringing a Members+ option which would offer a package option with additional benefits for streaming for our Members.

b) Matchday Experience/Atmosphere

VB mentioned that the Club have just recently revamped matchday experience, which started from the Preston North End game (20th October 2018). This included bringing community project Beats Bus down to the stadium pre match, and also have a partnership with the Humber Street Sesh to have local artists play music around the stadium. Other activities which we have booked in for future fixtures are footpool, freestyle footballers, cage football, table football on the concourse and roaming face painters.

As a Club, we really want to increase the community led activities which happen around the stadium before kick-off. If any supporters have any suggestions for what the Club could do for its Matchday experience, please email Ann and we are happy to look into things.

JK queried if local beers could be served at the Stadium?

VB stated the Members bar does serve Atom brewery beer and we are pride ourselves on offering produce from local suppliers. As a Club local suppliers are key throughout the concourse and hospitality areas.

AF enquired if outside catering was possible before matches.

VB mentioned that we do have restrictions on what the Club can do in terms of catering contracts. However, we are still looking at possibilities to offer this quality of catering outside the ground.

AF commented that some concourse catering windows had been closed in the West Stand

VB to look into this.

BW questioned why the Club didn't play chart music and if the Stadium has a license to play music such as this.

VB replied that the Club is keen to promote local music which it is currently playing around the stadium on matchday and we're currently looking at options re being able to play chart music.

BW asked why the back gate on the Walton Street Car Park (near the artificial pitches) is closed after the away coaches have exited. JF added to this by asking why the Club couldn't put on any traffic measures to relieve congestion and through traffic after a match.

VB would look into the issue with regards to the back gate. KH stated that plans had been presented to Hull City Council around traffic on matchday, however these have been rejected.

AF asked if it was possible to show the added time clock on the big screen.

DB answered that this was not possible as it is EFL protocol not to show the clock during added time as this may cause a hindrance to the referee. VB mentioned the look and feel of the content on the big screens is also getting a revamp in the coming weeks.

c) Hall of Fame

VB stated that we are liaising with our commercial department on how we can effectively bring this to life this season. When the Club has any more information on this the supporters will be the first to know.

KT wanted to pass on the great feedback she received from the OSC members and that the night was a great experience for the supporters who attended.

NEXT STEPS

VB thanked all members for attending and stated that the Club will set up individual meetings with members in the new year.

In the meantime, please pass on any questions or issues to our Supporter Liaison Coordinator Ann Holland.

The next Supporters' Committee meeting will be in March. However, a meeting may be arranged if anything should progress with the Club sale.

Closure

Club staff thanked the Committee for their continued hard work and commitment and subsequently closed the meeting.