

Premier League Supporters Meeting

21st March 2019

Attendees

- Akhil Vyas (AV) - Arsenal Supporters Trust
- Ash Lord (AL) - Premier League
- David Chidgey (DC) - Chelsea Supporters Trust
- Duncan Drasdo (DD) - Manchester United Supporters Trust
- Gerry Pim (GP) - Fulham Supporters Trust
- Goronwy Brookes (GB) - Spirit of Shankly
- James Chisem (JC) - Huddersfield Town Supporters Association
- John Fawell (JF) - Watford Supporters Trust
- John Ratomski (JR) - West Ham United Independent Supporters Association
- Kat Law (KL) - Tottenham Hotspur Supporters Trust
- Keith Morgan (KMo) - Cardiff City Supporters Trust
- Kevin Miles (KMi) - The Unified Football Supporters' Organisation
- Liam Hallinan (LH) - Claret Trust
- Michael Brunskill (MB) - The Unified Football Supporters' Organisation
- Nick Illingworth (NI) - The Ugly Inside fanzine
- Richard Masters (RM) - Premier League
- Robbie Daniels (RD) - Blue Union
- Robert Goddard (RG) - London Wolves
- Rohan Banerjee (RB) - Newcastle United Supporters Trust
- Steve Mould (SMo) - Leicester City Supporters Trust
- Sue Maisey (SMa) - Crystal Palace Supporters Trust
- Tommy Guthrie (TG) - Premier League
- Tony Maycock (TM) - Cherries Trust
- Bill Bush (BB) - Premier League

Apologies

- Alan Wares - Albion Roar
- Allan Galley - Manchester City Supporters Club

1. VAR

- a. BB spoke of the challenges regarding simultaneous kick-off times on the final day, six on any given Saturday. Requirement for it to be of a very high standard in the Premier League. Asked fans for views, fans shared experiences, emphasising the importance for in-stadia communication. BB agreed with this. BB reiterated the 'clear and obvious' line and that VAR couldn't be used for every single decision.
- b. Discussion around potential PGMOL or PL Football Relations department engagement towards the end of the season. KL queried how promoted teams will be supported in terms of facilities. BB said it is a pitch and stadium requirement from the Handbook, and Championship clubs are engaged from the new year onwards.

- c. SMO asked whether the PL would be monitoring statistics for VAR. They had previously said they expected it to be “outcome neutral” over a season. BB confirmed they would indeed be tracking data and would report back.
 - d. More on IFAB protocol: bit.ly/IFAB-VAR
 - i. ACTION: TUFSO and PL to arrange a session for fans to discuss the impact of VAR and its application with Mike Riley and the PGMOL.
 - ii. ACTION: PL to track VAR data and update TUFSO on progress.
2. Brexit
- a. BB spoke of FA’s proposals to refine quotas. BB said there was no evidence that quotas work.
 - b. Discussion around U23 loans which would have development components including pastoral care, training requirements, while limiting the number of loans between clubs.
3. Structured Dialogue
- a. Both PL and fan guidance documents. PL document is finished. The accompanying fan guidance to be sent out with the PL document to SLOs and Club Secretaries.
 - b. KL asked for reassurance that detailed minutes would be respected. TG explained clubs will use the portal system to upload club meeting minutes and noted KL’s request.
 - c. KMi highlighted exceptional cases where standards aren’t being met. RB spoke of NUST issues with club, though the club SLO Lee Marshall has agreed to meet. RB welcomed this as encouraging, though noted no club board member would be present. BB asked that the PL be kept informed as to how that relationship is progressing. KMi reiterated that he believed this should be an ongoing work stream for the PL.
 - i. ACTION: TUFSO AND PL to draft covering email to SLO’s and Club secretaries
4. Standing
- a. BB updated. DCMS had commissioned a review which is now broadly complete. The PL has not had sight of the report. It is likely that clubs will be required to gather standardised data and to record that in a uniform manner over a period of time. The DCMS report is unlikely to be released until after the Hillsborough verdicts.
 - b. KMi had met with the SGSA and had attended the FSOA conference recently. The SGSA’s position was that their main priority was keeping people safe, not keeping people sitting.
 - c. SMO felt the latest Green Guide seemed to be moving more towards risk assessment than to enforcing seating. The relevant section had been completely rewritten.
 - d. TG asked for thoughts and experiences of club’s sending their own stewards to away games and asked for the group to share any insight with him on email.
 - i. ACTION: Fan groups to contact TG re: the above.
5. Fan Behaviour

- a. BB said in light of recent incursions, stewarding would have to be tightened whilst still keeping things in perspective. Noting the majority of disciplinary matters lie with the FA, BB said any investigation will only punish clubs if they fail to provide a safe environment for players, and how the club handles any incident that occurs. KMi supportive of measures preventing incursions but proportion never goes amiss. KMi argued none of the recent incidents would have been prevented by an increased police presence. Fans oppose collective punishment; disproportionate and counter-productive. Marginalise and isolate perpetrators but keep public on-side. BB agreed, reiterated importance of self-policing.
- b. GB asked about recognising positive impact fans can play in realm of policing, not just portraying fans as a negative. GB said fans and police worked together before the MUN-LIV game with positive results – more detail [here](#).
- c. KL praised Amanda Jacks (TUFSSO) for her role in establishing Football Independent Advisory Groups across the country, where fan reps had direct access to police and could build relationships.
- d. On Bournemouth, KMi spoke of over sensitive response from stewarding given the recent high-profile incidents. 'This has led in some cases to unnecessary arrests.' BB said it was important to keep local police knowledge, 'no one-size-fits-all approach,' while noting the responsibility that clubs and stewards have towards safety of players and others. TM claimed it was the 'fourth or fifth time' that this has happened, saying, 'The club's attitude is that the behaviour is illegal and they must enforce the law.'

6. Concessions

- a. SM outlined the research he had done in regard to pricing comparing to TG's data. SM acknowledged the two documents were broadly the same. In proposing a league-wide away ticket price structure for age bands and prices, SM said, 'Senior (over 65) £20, youth (18-22) £15, kids (18-) £10.' BB thanked SM for the proposal, but after speaking of the difficulty in obtaining the £30 away ticket price cap, felt this wasn't currently a viable option but that the PL could prompt clubs to have discussions in this space. BB suggested to raise the feedback with heads of ticketing at the next club meeting.
 - i. ACTION: PL to raise feedback with Heads of Ticketing at next club meeting.

7. Travel

- a. BB said there had been years of discussions with the rail industry without much progress, though BB and KMi agreed a recent discussion was more encouraging. BB said a railcard for fans seems feasible but wary of raising hopes so soon. BB confirmed the aim would be for advanced ticket savings to remain valid if a service is still available after a match has been moved. BB acknowledged the shift in kick-off times would affect PL clubs and fans more than it would EFL clubs. The PL want the railcard scheme to offer a loyalty element which would accrue with the use of the card over a given period - this should also be more attractive to fans in EFL. BB also thought the scheme would need to be linked to a fan behaviour charter clubs would need to do more to monitor behaviour (e.g. clubs stewards on trains), enforce and commit to sanctions for proven unacceptable behaviour. KL commented any new card scheme needed to work in conjunction with existing railcards.

- b. KL welcomed the introduction of Charlotte De Brito, a new project manager for football on rail (RDG) who has improved the communication with fans. KL stressed the importance of consulting with fans, who were the end users and familiar with the current booking system, before agreeing on any final product.
- c. BB suggested that an optimistic conclusion was that a pilot system could be in place towards the end of next season.
- d. BB said train operators could put on more coaches for certain services for matches but highlighted logistical issues. BB did hope that timetables might be amended to provide trains after the final whistle but highlighted how critical it was for train companies to have their trains in the correct location the following morning.
- e. RB said he felt northern fans were penalised by Monday night fixtures, noting that Newcastle United had been selected as an away team for the past 13 Monday Night Football fixtures they featured in.

8. Kick It Out

- a. BB said it was a 25-year anniversary event, and that clubs should take responsibility for integrating their own campaigns. The tag would be “No Room for Racism”.
- b. KMi reiterated the importance of maintaining a balance between protected characteristics. BB agreed, noting the overarching ‘This Is Everyone’s Game’ campaign.

9. AOB

- a. KM noted a continuing pattern of kick off times being moved at short notice. FA Cup semi-final weekend sees two empty Sky slots as a result of postponed matches, including Sunday at 4.30pm. Six other sets of fans were nervously waiting to learn if their games would now be moved at only two weeks’ notice.
- b. KMi also referenced previous examples, such as Manchester City vs. Everton being selected by BT Sport despite Manchester City holding a 9-0 advantage over Burton Albion in the League Cup semi-final. BB argued it was difficult to write a rule that would deal with exceptions.
- c. SM referenced the recent New Zealand attacks, and asked the PL how they approach decision-making towards paying respects to such incidents. BB confirmed there was a process, but also said tragedies are very emotional issues and it is difficult to have fixed rules on these. BB referenced the PL links to the France attacks (which happened at football stadium where PL players were playing) and noted the reasons behind rugby union matches paying respects to NZ were the historic links between the country and the sport.