

Leicester City Football Club - Fans Consultative Meeting - Training Ground Facility Wednesday 1 April 2015

Present:

Alan Digby (Foxes Trust), Ali Grimsley (Leicestershire Constabulary), Andy Gubbins (DSA), Angela White (LCFC), Chloe Dexter (East Stand), Cliff Ginnetta (LCFC Supporters Club), David Seddon (Fosse Club, Premium Seating), Frank Moss (Hospitality, Premier Lounge), Heather Wood (West Stand), Ian Clements (Spion Kop), Ian Flanagan (LCFC Commercial Director), James Challinor (Spion Kop), Jamie Tabor (LCFC), Jim Donnelly (LCFC), Jon Rudkin (LCFC Director of Football), Michelle McLean (Family Stand), Mick King (LCFC Community Trust Director), Nicholas Palmer (West Stand), Peter Hill (Family Stand), Richard Tullis (West Stand), Robert Maybury (East Stand), Simon Capper (LCFC Finance Director), Susan Whelan (LCFC Chief Executive Officer), Stuart Symons (East Stand), Yogesh Kholia (Spion Kop).

Apologies:

Andrew Neville, Peter Hill, Richard Lymbery, Simon Grindrod.

Opening Comments:

Jamie Tabor opened the meeting and everyone introduced themselves to the committee. The minutes from the previous FCC meeting held on 26 November 2014 were accepted.

Welcome by the Chief Executive Officer:

Susan Whelan apologised for the lateness of the meeting which was scheduled to have taken place in February and advised that the next meeting will take place at the end of May to put us back on track with our quarterly meetings.

SW asked everyone to address their questions through the Chair (Jamie Tabor).

A couple of questions that had been raised by members are not on the agenda which are as follows;

Team performance and the position of the Manager - we have 9 games left to play and 6 of those are at home. We are most definitely not giving up at this point and believe we have a good chance of staying up. The team themselves have asked for media coverage this week to emphasise their commitment to retaining Premier League status.

Every supporter will be given a hand clapper for the game on Saturday to really get behind the team and to make King Power stadium a fortress. We realise there is a mixed view between supporters regarding the clappers but we want to show our support and encouragement for the team and help to build the atmosphere in the stadium.

FFP and Trestellar - This story ran in the Leicester Mercury. We have made a compliant FFP submission and it is absolutely normal that the Football League take time to look at all the documents.

Most European Clubs use a separate commercial rights model and a lot of larger clubs separate their sponsorship arm from the Club. The Club has always been transparent regarding the deal and we have no concerns.

BBC Radio Leicester coverage - The only missing element of the coverage is a 5 minute interview between Ian Stringer and the Manager and the players at the end of each game. That is a matter between LCFC and the radio station. There is a great deal of media coverage across other communication channels and we feel that the Club is sufficiently accessible to supporters on all media platforms.

Premier League Shareholders Meeting – The Premier League have announced that they will give back £1 billion to the “football family” including parachute payments, from the UK TV revenues.

Action Points from the last meeting:

Media Survey – A wholesale review of the Club’s digital strategy is currently taking place, which will include consultation with all stakeholders. We are currently under contract with FLi in relation to our website which expires

at the end of the 2016-2017. This will then give the Club the opportunity to explore other avenues for our digital properties and assets.

Away Supporter Initiative - ideas from supporters are still welcome via fcc@lfc.co.uk.

Priority Ticketing System – The full away allocation details are now included in Club communications. JT advised that there are some complexities involved in taking a full allocation, if all the tickets are not sold there is a cost to the Club.

Drum in L Block/other areas - An additional drum is now situated in SK1.

Music before the game – We have received various ideas from supporters including one idea which was to have a players' choice and make a feature of this in the matchday magazine. There is a format in place for this season's matchday magazine but is something we will consider for next season.

Premier League Survey – Jamie Tabor thanked all the supporters who had completed the survey. We have just received the in-depth analysis and will feedback to everyone at the next meeting, once we have formatted the data.

Communication of FCC Members Details - Names can be found around the stadium concourses and on the Club website.

Community Trust Representation – Mick King, the Community Trust Director, has been invited to join the FCC.

LCFC Community Trust:

Mick King thanked the Club for inviting him to the meeting as he feels it is important for the Trust to engage with the supporters. MK also thanked the Club for taking ownership of the Trust and shaping the positive direction they are moving in, including full integration with the Club.

Both Susan Whelan, CEO, and Jon Rudkin, Director of Football, sit on the Board of Trustees, and ensure that governance is in order, with support from both the Finance and Commercial Directors.

MK explained that the Trust is made up of three strands:

Education, Sports Participation, and Community Cohesion.

Education – 3,400 participants per year:

Engaging with young people across a wide range of educational programmes which has included motivational speeches from the Academy and interaction with Nigel Pearson:

- BTEC Level 3 Futsal Education Programme
- Barclays Premier League Employability Project
- Football League Health Mentoring Initiative
- Reading Stars Literacy Intervention project
- Curriculum catch up weeks in Literacy and Numeracy
- Princes Trust Get Started Programme

Sports Participation – 9,500 participants per year:

Encouraging young players to pursue the player pathways in sport

- In School Curriculum PE Delivery
- Extended Hours Learning
- Holiday Courses and Soccer Camps
- Academy Satellite Centres – connected to Talent ID.

Community Cohesion – 1,800 participants per year (lower due to specialism):

Providing opportunities for disadvantaged young people to enable them to fulfil their potential in society

- Looked After Children Leaving Care Project
- Police/Samworth Brothers Community Champions
- Disability Football Project
- Kicks Social Inclusion Project

MK advised that the Trust were successful with their funding bids to the Premier League as they hold our Academy and the Club in general, in high esteem. Leicester City Football Club is making a very positive impression in the football world, and we hope the Community Trust remains part of that.

Yogesh Kholia asked if we could share some initiatives with the Tigers or other sporting clubs. MK said he would welcome the opportunity. SW explained that The Leicester Sports Partnership Trust was set up some years ago so that professional sports clubs could work together. It was ably chaired by Rory Underwood. Although the Trust no longer exists, the City Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, is building on the work, for the benefit of as many children as possible, that the LSPT instigated, and chairs a committee of CEO's from all the professional clubs in Leicester to share ideas and to develop potential projects together.

JR advised that the Club does a lot of work with all sporting disciplines including working with the Tigers in relation to Sports Science, e.g. power performance and analysis. We also work with Leicestershire County Cricket Club and exchange facilities. There is a very good working relationship between the Leicestershire sports clubs e.g. Tigers have trained at our training ground in the past.

We currently have 10 Community Development Centres plus 10 Academy staffed centres. There is a lot of positive work taking place in the city as well. JR can see a number of boys coming through from the Community into the Academy and players such as Liam Moore and Jeff Schlupp are huge role-models in this regard.

Supporter Engagement:

Stuart Johncock has worked at the Club for nearly five years and has recently been promoted to Head of Supporter Engagement and has been developing the strategy over the last few months.

Aims:

- To increase engagement with our supporter base and the wider community
- To increase the number and quality of junior initiatives
- To improve customer service
- To gain insight into our supporter base
- To create supporter groups who are representative of our supporter base
- To develop the Foxes Foundation
- To improve the matchday experience
- To develop the Club's relationship with the Community Trust
- To ensure our supporters are represented within the Club

SJ explained we have a large footprint with a varied demographic and the Club would like to develop our supporter base and create interest in LCFC in the wider community. A key element in this strategy is increased activities and initiatives for junior supporters.

We are always looking at new ways to improve our customer service and have just set up “#help” on twitter so that we can answer your questions speedily.

We are currently investigating new research programmes so that the Club can make more informed decisions going forward.

LCFC Foxes Foundation sits within Supporter Engagement and we would like to develop events and initiatives to raise funds for the local charities we are supporting. It's a great way of engaging with fans and if anyone has any fundraising ideas please send them to lcffoxesfoundation@lfc.co.uk

Planned improvements for the matchday experience:

- More entertainment outside the Stadium – encouraging player pathways and grassroots football teams

- Information point outside the Stadium
- Easily recognisable uniforms - going forward the team will be more visible
- 'Here to Help' team – feedback stream
- Information stations

Fanzone:

- Medium for supporters to voice their complaints, queries and compliments.
- Re-branding Fanzone to LCFC Help
- Increased levels of reporting and feedback
- Surveys of supporters – Fox Away Travel

Jim Donnelly manages Fanzone however “Fanzone” is not necessarily recognisable as a customer service part of the Club we would therefore like to re-brand Fanzone to LCFC Help, which will be introduced for next season. This will involve an increased level of reporting which will be available across the Club.

We will carry out more research and actively collect data going forward. Over 100 Fox Travel Away supporters completed a questionnaire recently and fed back some very good ideas which we will look to develop. There will be a focus group set up by the end of April for travelling supporters to voice their ideas.

Yogesh Kholia felt the Sky Ride event last year was brilliant and asked if there were any plans to have these type of events at the stadium in the future. SJ explained that he had been involved with the event last year and we had received great feedback from the organisers. There were 14,000 participants. We are in discussions with them again for this year's event but it is dependent on the dates of the home fixtures.

Cliff Ginnetta felt it would be worthwhile carrying out research with supporters who do not use Fox Travel. **SJ to follow up.** CG also felt that the Here to Help staff need to be confident and friendly. SW pointed out that we currently have 7 or 8 people in this role and we are going to double that number with immediate effect.

SW advised that the Premier League Away Supporter Initiative budget would ideally be spent on subsidising the ticket price but not every club is willing to agree to reciprocal pricing with us and therefore it is difficult to agree a ticketing discount across the board.

It was confirmed that Burnley have only offered the Club 2100 tickets for our away game. They are only obliged to offer away clubs 10% of their ground capacity under Premier League rules and are enforcing this for our game. This is despite offering most other away clubs a bigger allocation this season.

SW was happy to tell everyone that the Club would be providing all travelling supporters with a free t-shirt, at either the WBA or Burnley games. The committee was asked whether they would prefer the t-shirts at the WBA or Burnley game. The consensus was the WBA fixture as it is the most critical fixture at this moment in time. Cliff Ginnetta felt it was important to let supporters know how the money is being spent.

Discussion Points:

Season Ticket Campaign:

The rolling debit scheme has been very well received by supporters. In fact 45% of our Season Ticket Holders this season are registered on the Direct Debit Scheme. Everyone will receive individual letters with their payment details over the course of the next few days.

Richard Tullis asked if there will there be any mailing in relation to season tickets. JT advised that the season ticket information is currently on-line but there will be a postal mailing at the backend of the campaign which will be sent only to those supporters who haven't yet renewed.

Fosse Club Premium – David Seddon asked the Club to reconsider introducing concessions in this area if we are in the Championship next season. He felt that as season ticket holders have made a commitment and paid up front they should feel valued. SW advised that we are always very careful that season tickets remain the best value way to watch games and that match tickets will never be cheaper on a pro-rata basis. Fosse Club Premium has some

additional benefits such as reserved seating inside the Weller Lounge and we will not be re-introducing any concessions in this area.

All committee members should feel free to let us know of any ideas to add value to your season ticket and should e-mail fcc@lfc.co.uk

SW clarified the situation regarding supporters with disabilities renewing their season tickets. As they are already DSA members they will be able to re-new their season tickets directly with the Club. Once we go on general sale (Tuesday 26 May), any new supporters with disabilities will be asked to become a DSA member in the first instance, to assist with vetting. However if a supporter decides they don't want to join the DSA, the Club cannot force supporters to do so. When new season tickets go on sale DSA information will be included in the marketing communications.

As part of our business planning we, of course, have to consider a Championship budget scenario. The Club will consider offers for season ticket holders including hospitality clients as well as potential match by match ticket deals if we are in the Championship next season but we reiterate that we are fully focussed on retaining our Premier League status and we hope not be require any Championship contingency scenarios.

Matchday Atmosphere:

JT asked the committee if they have any ideas to enhance the matchday atmosphere. A general discussion took place.

SW asked James Challinor to pass on her thanks to Union FS for helping us hand out the clap banners for our game against West Ham United. JC wanted to thank Jim Donnelly and Kevin Barclay for their assistance this year, on behalf of Union FS. It has helped to create more atmosphere in the Kop (SK1).

JC advised that Union FS have regular meetings. They would like to put leaflets on the seats in certain areas. JT advised that it would be preferable if the Club carried out some targeted marketing on their behalf. **JC to make contact with JT to make the necessary arrangements; jamie.tabor@lfc.co.uk**

SW confirmed that to date we have not been able to source any Thai drums to use at the stadium on matchdays.

Away Tickets: Allocation/Priority Scheme:

It was confirmed that we allocate on a first come first served basis and therefore the supporters on the Away Priority Scheme will automatically receive the best tickets and consequently they are the most expensive. Going forward we will give the option for supporters to choose which price band they would prefer.

Chloe Dexter asked if the criteria will remain the same for next season. It was confirmed that all supporters will have to re-apply. We will have to re-assess the criteria based on applications and those on the scheme this season will take priority. We will contact all supporters who are currently registered on any Club schemes in advance of the general communication.

David Seddon felt it was great to choose your own seat at away games.

Jeff Astle Day:

How is the Club involved? - We have contributed towards their matchday programme and website story.

FCC Members:

Committee members were asked that as the end of season is approaching, would the group be interested in representing supporters for another season? It was unanimous that all members would like to remain on the FCC for season 2015/16.

Any Other Business:

A general discussion took place regarding next season's kit. It was confirmed that the PUMA deal is for 3 years.

If we are in the Championship when the website contract expires in 2017 would the Club have to re-new their contract with FLi?

Ian Flanagan advised that the Football League would prefer clubs in the Championship to use FLi however they would not enforce it.

Does it make life easier or harder with more high powered people being involved with the Club?

Susan Whelan feels that the Premier League is fantastic in so many ways, and how their structure and organisation is set up is incredible. It is a highly professional organisation. We look forward to working with them again next year.

Can the Club promote a car share scheme?

We can facilitate the scheme but it would work better if supporters liaised with each other in their respective areas, due to safeguarding issues. Simon Capper advised that the council are looking for matchday transport solutions in more detail to assist all professional clubs in Leicester.

Could you explain the news story regarding the bid to sell hot food outside the stadium?

Simon Capper advised that we had to apply for a street hawker license, as a formality, even though it was for selling food on the Club's footprint, and this was an historic license.

Is there scope to put up a tent around the back of the stadium to sell alcohol?

Susan Whelan advised that the Club is looking at this option, taking into consideration the context of the media requirements on the car park.

Everyone felt it would be a good idea, if feasible, to have an area for drinking, eating, somewhere to sit, and screens. Committee members felt that the area should predominantly be for adults although children would also be welcome.

Andy Gubbins passed his thanks to the Club for the refunds that pitchside supporters with disabilities had received.

A general discussion took place regarding the amount of wheelchair spaces that are provided for visiting fans around the country. It was noted that the capacity rule for visiting supporters does not include a specific amount of wheelchair spaces in the away end. In fact LCFC exceeds the guidelines for wheelchair spaces at King Power stadium. SW was not aware of the situation but advised that this could be brought up at a Premier League shareholders meeting. Ali Grimsley felt the onus should be on the Premier League to enforce a minimum requirement. The DSA is making representation to Level Playing Field.

What media coverage will be available if we are in the Championship next season?

.....

Cliff Ginnetta wanted to place on record his thanks to the football club for everything that was done for Terry Orton, the fan that passed away on the way to the Everton game, it is much appreciated.

THE NEXT FCC MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON WEDNESDAY 27 MAY 2015, 6.30PM AT KING POWER STADIUM.

