

Premier League Supporters Meeting

Tuesday 10th October 2017 (10am), Gloucester Place

Attendees

Ash Lord (AL) Premier League
 Ashley Brown (AB) Supporters Direct
 Bill Bush (BB) Premier League
 Dave Kelly (DK) Everton Supporters Trust
 David Little (DL) Swansea City Supporters Trust
 David Rose (DR) The Football Supporters' Federation
 Di Cunningham (DC) Pride in Football
 Duncan Drasdo (DD) Manchester United Supporters Trust
 George Mann (GM) WHUISA
 James Chisem (JC) Huddersfield Town Supporters Association
 John Fawell (JF) Watford Supporters Trust
 John Trippier (JT) Clarets Trust
 Julia Zuk (JZ) Stoke City Supporters Council
 Kat Allen (KA) Premier League
 Kat Law (KL) FA Council Member (Fan rep)
 Kevin Miles (KM) The Football Supporters' Federation
 Liz Costa (LC) Brighton & Hove Albion Supporters Club
 Malcolm Clarke (Malcolm C) FA Council Member (Fan rep)
 Martin Cloake (Martin C) Tottenham Hotspur Supporters Trust
 Michael Brunskill (MB) The Football Supporters' Federation
 Nick Illingworth (NI) The Ugly Inside fanzine
 Nick Noble (NN) Premier League
 Peter Fanning (PF) Newcastle United Supporters Trust
 Rachel Solich (Rachel S) Premier League
 Richard Scudamore (Richard S) Premier League
 Steph Jones (SJ) Spirit of Shankly
 Steve Moulds (Steve M) Leicester City Supporters Trust
 Sue Maisey (Sue M) Crystal Palace Supporters Trust
 Tim Payton (TP) Arsenal Supporters Trust
 Tim Rolls (TR) Chelsea Supporters Trust
 Tommy Guthrie (TG) Premier League
 Tony Maycock (TM) Cherries Trust

| Point | Comments | Action |
|------------|---|---|
| 1.0 | Policing and Security | |
| 1.1 | BB shared an executive summary of the latest UKFPU figures (see separate sheet) showing an increase of 36% in the number of overall reported fixtures with incidents compared to last season, and an increase of 45% in the number of fixtures with reports of disorder inside stadia | |
| 1.2 | BB stated that the PL would need to address this. Pyro and Pitch encroachment were of particular concern. BB felt the Pyro campaign would be revisited as a first step | BB – PL to address and to revisit Pyro campaign |
| 1.3 | There was discussion around the way the stats were presented, and collated, which differed from the norm. Could this have affected the way the results were reported? Malcolm C pointed out these were FIXTURES at which incidents were reported. Not incidents themselves, which was somewhat misleading | |
| 1.4 | BB confirmed these were pre arrest figures | |

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| 1.5 | Malcolm C also pointed out that several areas were down on last season, including carrying weapons and hate crime. It was a mixed picture | |
| 1.6 | DC questioned the 'sexual orientation incidents' being reported as zero | |
| 1.7 | A discussion followed around the handling of Brighton's visit to Leicester, in particular, which received praise | |
| 1.8 | BB updated on the latest Counter Terrorism discussions. All Clubs were engaged with the police and all had positive feedback. The Premier League now wanted to speak with fans regarding ingress and egress. There was a need to communicate well with supporters on issues such as bag policies etc. It was felt road closures would become more common, also | BB – PL to liaise and communicate with fans |
| 1.9 | TR suggested the inconsistencies at grounds at present were not helpful. For example, cameras are an issue at some and not at others; iPads and phone chargers are issues at some and not others. Much better communication was needed with away fans, especially. | BB to take on board and encourage better comms across Clubs |
| 2.0 | Standing | |
| 2.1 | BB explained that the EFL were keen to progress down this road and that the PL were happy for the EFL to make the running on this. The SGSA were looking at various options at present. They seemed to be moving from a position of opposition to being open minded. But they needed an evidence base to move this forward. The PL were about to embark on a series of technical studies they hoped would provide the evidence needed. What the PL were trying to avoid was an overly simplistic approach from the SGSA that introducing standing areas would lead to a successful clamp down on standing elsewhere in grounds. BB explained these studies would include the dynamic effect of away fans standing on home fans etc. How fans reacted to changes in the built environment | BB – PL to engage experts to undertake technical studies to gather evidence base |
| 2.2 | JC challenged how much more evidence was needed? We had Germany, we had Celtic etc.? BB countered that there was enough evidence of support from match going fans, but there was very little evidence or analysis of other areas such as safety. There isn't a safety report into the different types of seating/ standing areas, for example. BB confirmed the PL was still open on the style of standing | |
| 2.3 | SM asked how the PL was going to gather this evidence? BB explained that the PL would commit to using technical expertise here | |
| 2.4 | DD suggested there was actually no evidence that all seater stadia were safer. BB responded that the 'evidence' after Hillsborough pointed to that, but we now know that wasn't 'evidence' at all. Malcolm C clarified that the Government had been pushing to move to all seater stadia as a way to control hooliganism before Hillsborough, also | |
| 2.5 | Richard S felt that the current Government would want to see the evidence before making any decisions so it was prudent to carry out the work now | |
| 2.6 | Referring to the PL discussions with the Clubs, KM asked what the feedback had been? Richard S said that 4 or 5 Clubs were very keen, 4 or 5 were wary and the other 10 or so were open minded | |
| 2.7 | There then followed a discussion around the way in which Clubs currently allocate away seats to their fans. Some try to allocate the front rows to those who want to sit. Others aren't able to do so owing to the way the visiting supporter blocks are sold. Others give fans no opportunity to choose their own seats at all. At the heart of this was the problem that Clubs couldn't use the terminology 'standing' under current regulations and had to skirt around the issue with euphemisms such as 'Singing sections'. Martin C asked if BB could make the point to the SGSA that the current inability to indicate to fans which areas may be more likely to feature fans standing and which may be more likely to remain seated without risking | BB to approach SGSA for clarification |

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| | sanction didn't help deliver the kind of common sense crowd management of what is actually happening now. And that a more stringent application of the rule on seating would therefore make the situation worse. BB agreed to have the conversation. | |
| 3.0 | Fixture scheduling and kick off times | |
| 3.1 | TR opened up by recapping on the commitments from the last meeting in April. Richard S had agreed to speak with the broadcasters and if they were happy, arrange a multi stakeholder meeting. BB suggested the broadcasters did not wish to get everyone in a room as they felt this would confuse the lines of accountability and decision-making. KL suggested someone was being disingenuous in that case, as that was certainly not what the broadcasters had said to the KOTWG | KL to follow up with Sky |
| 3.2 | TR moved onto the next commitment regarding researching on sale dates and seeing if these could be aligned with TV pick announcements. TG explained that each Club had its own process that worked for them and that as there are different approaches he wasn't sure what the preferred approach was. TR offered to pull together a best practice guidance with KL which would be shared with the PL as a starting point | TR (and KL) to produce best practice guidance for selling home tickets in line with TV picks |
| 3.3 | TR reminded Richard S that at the April meeting, Richard S didn't feel there would be any support for mandating the Clubs to provide subsidised travel should a game being moved for broadcast mean no public transport home for their fans. Richard S still felt this should be voluntary and not mandatory and that he would encourage the Clubs to do what worked best for their fans. Richard S asked TG when was the last time they checked who was doing what? MB asked that TG share the data with the FSF as that was incredibly useful to understand which Clubs were providing transport etc. | TG to provide MB with data on Club travel initiatives |
| 3.4 | TR moved onto the topical issue of Christmas Eve fixtures. What were Richard S's thoughts on this? Richard S described sitting down with Mark Annett 4 years ago, with a 20 year calendar and looking at where Christmas Eve fell. 2006, 2017 and 2023. Both thought there was the prospect of playing matches on Xmas Eve in 2017. For Richard S, it's a working day. His staff would work Xmas Eve if it was on a week day. The idea it's suddenly a Bank Holiday is a strange one to him. 4 years ago, Richard S did not think there would be a toxic reaction to the suggestion. Richard S made the point it was his fault above Sky's on this occasion | |
| 3.5 | Richard S confirmed there would not be a 4pm match on Xmas Eve | |
| 3.6 | Richard S couldn't rule out a 1.30pm match on Xmas Eve, or one at another time earlier than 4pm | |
| 3.7 | Richard S couldn't confirm how many matches would be displaced to Xmas Eve | |
| 3.8 | Richard S did confirm that 4 slots would be used across that weekend, which may include a Friday night slot | |
| 3.9 | Owing to the difficulties pinning down these slots, the Dec/ January picks would be announced a week late – on Tuesday 19 October | PL to announce Dec/ Jan TV picks on 19 October |
| 4.0 | Future Broadcast Contracts | |
| 4.1 | Richard S and BB pointed out that this situation was not Sky's fault. That the PL had thought Xmas Eve football was a possibility | |
| 4.2 | Richard S noted that the fixture list itself made displacement to the 24 December problematic. | |

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| | Priority had been given to the 2 rounds on the 26 Dec and 30/31 Dec in terms of geography, and the 23 Dec round really wasn't ideal in lending itself to moves to Xmas Eve | |
| 4.3 | KM asked whether it was possible to add a caveat to future contracts? Richard S responded that it was very difficult to discuss contractual details in a group of this size and that, in his experience, situations such as this one were far better resolved through relationships than through contractual regulations | |
| 4.4 | Richard S confirmed that the PL Board did have the final say and had the power to say no to Sky in extreme circumstances. It was Richard S's feeling that Sky wouldn't ask for an Xmas Eve slot in the future | |
| 4.5 | TP asked for clarification over the number of games being shown in the 2019-2022 cycle and for any truth in the new slots being mooted for Sunday morning / Saturday evening etc. Richard S confirmed that Sunday mornings were a non-starter. They definitely would not be happening. Richard S also didn't believe there was any race to broadcast in peak Saturday night slots, either, when they would be up against Strictly Come Dancing and the X Factor etc. | |
| 4.6 | Richard S confirmed that the number of matches had increased from 168 to 190 for the next broadcast cycle and there was a commitment to televise the majority of midweek and bank holiday matches, meaning there would be broadcasting of multiple games at once without the need for lots of additional broadcast slots. Richard S urged caution around concerns of additional broadcast slots | |
| 4.7 | Looking ahead to the next broadcast contract, KM asked when would be a good time to raise our wish list from the proceeds of that contract? Richard S said KM could start discussing with BB any time from now. KM touched on an extension of the away price cap, reintroduction of the ASI etc. | KM to liaise with BB over 'wish list' from proceeds of 2019-22 TV deal |
| 4.8 | Richard S expects the new UK deal to be finalised by the end of Q1/ start of Q2 2018 | |
| 4.9 | Asked about the chances of retaining the away price cap, Richard S said he felt that the Clubs had realised this was a long term commitment when agreeing in 2016 and would be surprised if that was reversed | |
| 5.0 | Structured dialogue | |
| 5.1 | AB said that in the majority of cases, dialogue is happening, but with help from the PL, we can make this work better. AB asked for an update on feedback from the Clubs. BB felt that overall, the dialogue wasn't too bad. It was often more positive at Senior level; SLO's are closer to it. Aware certain Clubs are better than others. BB said the PL were in the process of reviewing all 20 now – BB asking the Clubs and TG asking the SLO's and Fan Groups | |
| 5.2 | AB wanted to regulate the level of information and topics being discussed and asked if the PL would be happy to help produce a template for this purpose? BB responded that some Clubs would have issues revealing certain information in the quasi-public domain | |
| 5.3 | TP reiterated a template was in the Expert Working Group recommendations and should be produced. BB said the PL would produce a best practice template, which TP said would be helpful, but no timelines were committed to | BB and the PL to produce a best practice template |
| 5.4 | BB felt the PL needed more than one season of getting this structure in place before they could produce the template. He was concerned about the push back on commercial sensitivities from the Clubs | |
| 5.5 | BB pointed out the provisions in the rule book already, reminding Clubs they had to publish Fans Charters and issues of concern to fans. They also had to commit to a Board level dialogue with fans | |

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| 5.6 | Martin C raised a question around asking Clubs to publish their accounts within 2 months of their year ends, not 9-10 months later when they are largely out of date. BB agreed to have a look at that | BB to explore whether Clubs accounts could be published sooner |
| 6.0 | Travel initiatives | |
| 6.1 | TG updated on the discussions with the Rail Delivery Group. Things were progressing and TG felt we were approaching the stage where fans would be needed for discussions | TG to advise when fans needed for meeting |
| 6.2 | KL expressed positivity at the upcoming meeting with BB and Richard S, ATOC, Sky, fan reps and hopefully BT Sport to discuss the Fan Fare initiative with Tom Watson MP. This was a great opportunity for getting all stakeholders in a room and really trying to drive this forward | |
| 7.0 | Premier League Project Updates | |
| 7.1 | There then followed a confidential discussion which isn't included in these minutes | |
| 7.2 | DC asked KA for an update on the Stonewall partnership, which KA agreed to provide outside of the meeting | KA to pick up with DC on Stonewall work |
| 8.0 | AOB | |
| 8.1 | There was no further AOB | |

Lunch was served and meeting closed at 12.10pm.