



West Ham United Official Supporters' Board meeting minutes

Meeting 2 – 2018/19

Date: Wednesday 6 February 2019

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Location: Stadium Store Coffee Shop, London Stadium

Club Representatives:

Karren Brady (KB) – Vice-Chairman

Tara Warren (TW) – Executive Director, Marketing and Communications

Philippa Cartwright (PC) – Projects & Stadium Operations Director

Nicola Keye (NK) – Head of Ticketing

Ben Illingworth (BI) – Head of Matchday Operations

Jake Heath (JH) – Supporter Services Manager

Julie Pigeon (JP) – Disability Access Officer

Austin Hughes (AH) – Community Sports Manager, West Ham United Foundation

Other Representatives:

PC Andy Sheldon (ASh) – WHU Dedicated Football Officer, Metropolitan Police

Graham Harris (GH) – Deputy Safety Officer, London Stadium

Elliot Moore (EM) – General Manager, Delaware North

Richard Craig (RC) – Head of Concessions, Delaware North

Observers:

Sheila Roberts (SR) – Strategic Enforcement Manager, London Borough of Newham

Alan Skewis (ASk) – Director, E20 Stadium LLP

Supporter Representatives:

David Baker (DB) – Chairman/West Stand

Jim Dolan (JD) – Vice-Chairman/LGBTQ+ Supporters

Gary Lawrence (GL) – Billy Bonds Stand

Stephen Bush (SB) – Bobby Moore Stand

Paul Richman (PR) – Chair of West Ham United Official Supporters' Club

Sean Whetstone (SW) – Claret and Hugh

Cathy Bayford (CB) – Co-Chair of the Disabled Supporters' Board

Lee Vehit (LV) – BAME supporters

Trevor Bright (TB) – Co-Chair of the Disabled Supporters’ Board
Louise Fry (LF) – Under-25s
Greg Smith (GS) – 1966 Season Ticket Holders
Steve Applebee (SA) – Bondholders
Don Adams (DA) – Over-65s
Matthew West (MW) – Families and Juniors
Danny Proctor – Club London
Alex Wilcock – Claret Members

KB opened meeting at 6pm

KB thanked attendees for coming and welcomed all to the second Official Supporters’ Board (OSB) meeting of the 2018/19 season.

KB welcomed special guests from catering partner Delaware North, specifically general manager Elliott Moore, Sheila Roberts from the Safety Advisory Group and Alan Skewis, E20 Stadium LLP.

KB said the meeting would feature a packed agenda centred upon the progression of actions since the last meeting, updating Supporter Representatives and presentations on a number of exciting developments at London Stadium, before closing with questions from Supporter Representatives.

KB said a lot of progress had been made since Meeting 1 and JH would provide the group with an update later in the meeting.

KB said it was vital the OSB and Club continued to work together to drive West Ham United forward. KB said the OSB and Club had a shared responsibility to create and amplify positivity around the Club and all the good work that goes on here and that she counts the OSB and Disabled Supporters’ Board (DSB) as integral to that aim.

KB reaffirmed that the OSB is the only official supporter group that the Club engages with and that the Club’s core objective is to ensure that the OSB provides a constructive and meaningful platform between supporters and the West Ham United Board.

KB said a number of tweets would be posted on the @WestHamHelp account during the meeting to in the interests of transparency and to further communicate the work of the OSB.

UPDATE ON ACTIONS

1. OSB Leaflets

JH said leaflets featuring profile photos of all OSB Supporter Representatives and their official contact details were distributed at the home match with Arsenal on 12 January and would be distributed at every home match for the remainder of the season.

JH said profiles will also be emailed out ahead of every home match so OSB member contact details can be shared with the wider fanbase.

JH said contact details were also available in every Official Programme, on whufc.com and via the @WestHamHelp twitter account.

It was agreed that the main twitter account would circulate more @WestHamHelp and OSB communications moving forward.

2. Terms of Reference

JH said the OSB Terms of Reference had been updated following feedback from Supporter Representatives at Meeting 1 and are available on the OSB section of whufc.com. They will be circulated post meeting by email.

3. Kit Design sub-group

JH said the OSB Kit Design sub-group would be meeting with technical partner Umbro at end of March 2019. JH will speak to DB and JD about which OSB members would be involved in February in preparation for the meeting with Umbro.

4. Matchday sub-group

JH said the Matchday sub-group is broad and will be divided up into sections. JH is liaising with David and Jim in the first instance.

5. Ticketing sub-group

JH said DB and JD were working on the Ticketing sub-group regarding attendees and that JH and NK will assess the feedback that is required from supporters and then liaise with the OSB. The date for the Ticketing subgroup meeting has been set for Thursday 21st March, 2019 at London Stadium with Home and Away Ticketing on the agenda. Attendees will be a mixture of Supporter Representatives from the OSB and those who were unsuccessful in applying for a position on the OSB.

6. Search Process

JH said he had received a question regarding the search process for transgender supporters. JD and the Pride of Irons have agreed to come in and work with GH and BI to deliver training to bridge managers and their search teams.

DELAWARE NORTH/CATERING

KB explained that the OSB had compiled a report for Delaware North with the aim of improving catering provisions at London Stadium.

KB advised that she had agreed with Delaware that a Catering sub-group would be created and members of this sub-group would be taken on a tour of catering facilities at London Stadium at the Premier League fixture with Everton on Saturday 30 March to better understand the offerings in place and put together thoughts and ideas for the future.

KB said members needed to see the whole stadium as, at present, many supporters only know about the offerings in their individual areas.

KB invited DB and JD to put questions collated from Supporter Representatives to Delaware North representatives EM and RC.

EM said Delaware North were grateful for the OSB report into catering offerings and that it would help ensure the company were offering customers the provisions they want. EM said the report was very useful and would encourage further such reports and feedback from the OSB.

Communication/Special offers etc (1)

EM said pricing queries formed a large part of the report. EM said Delaware North worked very closely with BI and his team and that prices were benchmarked against similar stadiums in London before being set at London Stadium.

EM said he appreciated London Stadium prices higher than High Street pubs but that Early Bird offers, such as a pie & pint for £7.50, a burger or hot dog for £4.00 and a pint of Amstel for £4.40 are in place pre-match from turnstiles opening until 30 minutes before kick-off. EM said that, after speaking to JD, it is felt offerings can be better communicated by all parties. JH agreed to work with EM and RC to communicate these offers more widely.

EM said he felt a lot of the issues raised in the report – such as special offers, late-opening bars and food offerings, breakout areas, smoking areas and music after games – were already things Delaware North were doing, but that awareness needed to be raised through better communication that these offerings were available in other areas of the stadium, which supporters were not aware of.

EM said he is happy to meet with OSB and JH to discuss how to communicate offerings better in future.

DB says Delaware North want best for fans, which will result in better sales, so win-win for both parties.

EM says Delaware North are not perfect and that it is a challenge to provide all fans with everything they want, but insisted they are 100 per cent committed to communicating their offerings and getting things right going forward.

Beer pricing

DB said another issue that came up in the report is the beer price being set at £5.15, which means staff often need to give change and this slows the speed of sales.

DB said prices should be rounded to speed up process, with the suggestion of £5 instead of £5.15.

EM said Delaware North is a business and naturally they exist to make a profit. EM said £5.15 is the price which the company budgeted for and, over 20 home games in the course of the season, a £5 price point would reduce revenues.

KB suggested Delaware North try the £5 price point for one game to see if sales are sped up, and therefore volume increased meaning DN would actually increase revenue, or alternatively introduce a one-off '2 for £10' offer.

JD restated that the extra 15p creates hassle for fans.

EM said Delaware North are more than happy to look at it, probably for the final game of the current season.

SW says concession agreement means the price of beer cannot be more than Arsenal, Tottenham and Chelsea, and asked if prices are comparable favourably with other Premier League clubs in London.

KB said London Stadium prices benchmarked against other London clubs with a stadium capacity above 40,000.

SW asked how West Ham compared with other London Clubs

KB confirmed that BI checks weekly to ensure it is comparable. SW asked if West ham is not the most expensive. EM confirmed it is not.

BI said Delaware North's research had shown West Ham United physically serve beer to fans quicker than at some other London clubs, e.g. Arsenal.

RC said the club had opted for a premium beer which has a higher price point.

JD said some fans want premium beer and some want cheap beer.

KB asked whether Delaware and OSB should ask supporters what they want. For example, if they prefer a non-premium beer at a cheaper price would they deliver that. She asked Delaware to confirm that if supporters are asked to make a choice that their choice is respected and implemented. EM confirmed Delaware would consult with supporters.

JD pointed out that bottles of beer cost nearly as much as a draft pint of beer and asked why.

EM said it costs virtually the same for Delaware North to buy a bottle of beer than the cost of a draft pint.

DB asked if a written response would be provided to the OSB's report. EM said he is happy to provide working with West Ham and JH agreed.

Expanding offerings

DB said the lack of cider available in certain areas of London Stadium had been raised as an issue. DB said the West Stand is essentially 'landlocked' between Club London and away supporters, so the choice of offerings there is smaller than at other parts of London Stadium. DB asked if there was an opportunity to increase choice, as there had been a lot of complaints in the West Stand.

EM said the upcoming walk-round at the Everton fixture will show what can be done in the future. EM said pop-up bars and kiosks could be installed to provide more cider, different food offerings etc in certain areas.

JD asked if there was any other positive news Delaware North could share.

EM said Delaware North were talking to the stadium operators about opening another bar area outside the turnstiles on the Podium level. The proposed location is outside of the West Stand to

provide a better space and environment for supporters on the opposite side of the stadium to the current outer bar areas.

GH said two outside bars were now open, with the second opening following the rise in capacity to 60,000 in January. GH said any new third outside bar area would need to be agreed by the SAG, as it would need to be opened properly and safely.

EM said Delaware North were also looking at introducing an App at London Stadium.

Accessibility

CB said condiment tables were not accessible for wheelchair users and also that there is currently no signage to show which counters have low-level service, creating an issue for accessibility supporters. EM says wayfinding and signage are issues that had been raised and were on Delaware North's agenda.

BI agreed and said everyone concerned is working on a better solution. Action taken forward to explore signage options around the stadium at catering units.

EM said catering staff are now being paid the London Living Wage and this had led to more consistency in staff retention and, in turn, a better service.

EM said Delaware North had also appointed a recruiter whose sole role is to recruit for concessions staff locally and to make sure same staff man each kiosk at each home match. All stadium partners aim for consistency of staffing across the board, however, this is a challenge that is shared by all PL London clubs, with such a large-scale operation.

Reducing use of plastic

EM said Delaware North were looking to introduce multi-use eco-cups and replace single-use plastic cups in conjunction with Sky's Ocean Rescue, West Ham United and E20. EM said there would be no deposit required and that cup bins will be installed for collection will be placed around the stadium. EM said this should be in place by the end of the current season.

TW said West Ham United would become only one of four Premier League clubs and second in London to launch the multi-use cup scheme.

EM said Delaware North will move to cardboard straws and removing plastic cutlery and stirrers as well, which they also implementing at Arsenal and Wembley.

Communication/Special offers etc (2)

EM said Delaware North had introduced new special offers around London Stadium, but that these offers may need to be more widely communicated. JH to take action forward with DNC.

JD asked if post-match offers could be put in place. RC said beer is served at £4 for early bird and late bars already.

EM said official West Ham United channels are the best way of communicating these offers.

KB asked the OSB if they felt supporters would prefer receiving an SMS outlining offers before each home match. OSB confirmed that they would. KB asked JH to organise.

DA suggested putting information in the programme or out via twitter ahead of each match.

This was agreed.

Dietary options

JD brought up dietary options and said supporters had claimed there are few options for vegetarians, vegans and those who follow religious diets.

EM said Delaware North had developed a brand which ticked all those boxes which they hope to put into London Stadium before the end of the season.

LV said some supporters with special dietary requirements may feel disenfranchised if they don't know where these options are available.

EM said gluten free and halal foods are part of offerings and this will form part of our communications following the meeting.

Summary

DB asked for timescale as to when Delaware North will respond to the OSB report. DNC will work with JH and come back to DB as soon as possible. DB said supporters need to be reassured about quality and consistency of food and drink offerings.

EM invited the OSB to help Delaware North create some products for next season. Em proposed that the OSB members visit London Stadium ahead of the 2018/19 season and work with the chefs on taste testing products to decide the type of burgers, pies etc fans want. Delaware North will then know the products they will put out will be of sufficient quality.

KB said catering is a big issue, so it is important that they are resolved.

KB said the most important point of OSB meetings is to make progress by listening, understanding and most importantly acting.

BILLY BONDS STAND

KB said the Club was delighted the Billy Bonds Stand announcement had been made on Tuesday.

KB said there was nobody more fitting to have a stand named after them than Billy Bonds.

KB showed the announcement video, followed by visuals of how the new stand will look with Billy Bonds Stand branding.

KB said the branding will be going in ahead of the Newcastle United fixture, when the official naming ceremony will take place before kick-off.

KB said that next season, each Season Card will carry a photo of the relevant legend, depending on which stand that supporter is sitting in.

KB said Juniors and Concessions Season Cards will be neon in colour to speed up the process of entering the stadium and avoiding misuse.

CLARET PITCH SURROUND

KB said the Claret Pitch Surround had been ordered in January and will be installed later in the season with a firm date to be confirmed and will be composed of 4G artificial turf.

STATUE

KB said given that Billy is now due to be officially recognised in such a visible way here at the Stadium, in line with your feedback, we have been considering the other areas to focus our attention in order to continue our commitment to ensure that the Stadium looks and feels like home and fittingly reflects our heritage. One such subject has been the statue – an issue which has been discussed in this forum.

KB said planning permission has been granted and that the Club had set aside substantial funding for this project. KB asked the OSB their views of what the Statue should include

TW said initial feedback suggested that the statue must pay homage to the West Ham greats of that golden 60's era who feature in the Champions statue so that we maintain the link to our Boleyn Ground heritage and those legends honoured there.

TW said a number of fans had suggested that the players there featured in the Champions Sculpture could be replicated in a West Ham context, or the Statue could represent West Ham's 1960s heyday.

KB asked whether we needed a wider vote.

DB said he thought not as no-one could argue with that.

JD said the West Ham players should be replicated from the Champions Sculpture which is situated outside the former Boleyn Ground

This was overwhelmingly supported by the group.

TW advised that the Club had met many companies and were in discussions with the organisation who had installed statues at Emirates Stadium and in Parliament Square to bring together some initial thoughts.

KB said if the group agreed the sculptors will be asked to put together some visuals which could be shared at the OSB.

KB said based on the feedback around the existing West Ham players in Champions statue being honoured TW and her team will go back and ask for images which can be shared before the next meeting.

TW added this group and the wider fanbase will be instrumental in helping to ensure we have a fitting unveiling with supporters at its heart.

NORTH AND SOUTH STAND SEATING

KB said the Club is always looking at ways to improve the matchday experience for supporters at London Stadium and updated supporters that KB and her team along with E20 we have been working on changing the configuration of the two stands behind the goals.

KB said she was mindful that seating is something supporters wanted us to explore and we have listened. As such together with E20 we have come up with a concept that we would first like to get your initial feedback upon. KB said this is intended to benefit all supporters but will be most relevant to the representatives of the North and South stands and said she wanted to get then OSB feedback. KB stressed that following tonight's initial feedback – if this concept is positively received her priority first and foremost is to consult with fans currently seated in those stands on both the concept and then the proposals that follow.

KB showed how the North and South Stands (Sir Trevor Brooking and Bobby Moore Stands) currently sit and the proposal is to square off the front of the lower tier stands and bring them closer to the pitch in line with a more traditional football stadium configuration rather than the current oval shape seen in the two stands which are situated behind the goals.

KB explained that the front rows in each stand whilst significant closer to the pitch did have considerations around matters such as some 300 seats at the front would not be covered by the roof and hence potentially getting wet if raining if the seat configuration were to be changed as the roof follows the line of the current stand configuration, and whilst the stands can move closer, the roof cannot move.

KB said, from a licensing point of view, it is important that people in those seats are accepting of getting wet. The plus side is those fans would be sitting closer to the pitch, but the downside is that they could get wet if it rained.

KB said those people would have to agree they would not attempt to migrate to other areas if there was a downpour as this could cause safety issues.

KB said the new seating configuration could be in for next season if that is what supporters want, if a licence is granted and if it can be procured in time. This is a multi-stage process of which we are only at the start and there can be no guarantees about timing at this stage.

KB said that, if the OSB think it is a good idea, the Club will contact the Season Ticket Holders who would be affected.

KB said the new configuration would create approximately 700 new seats between the two stands closer to the pitch.

KB said anybody sitting in a seat in the existing North and South Stand lower tiers will remain in the same area if they choose to and could be up to four metres closer to the pitch. KB said the small number of supporters in seats in areas which are impacted and do not wish to stay will have first choice to sit in the newly created seats closest to the pitch or priority to move within current stand or other stands within the Ground. KB said the Club will work with E20 to ensure the company procured to install the new stands knows what supporters want, that supporters know the full scope of the new configuration and ensure the majority are in favour of doing it.

LF asked if Season Ticket prices in those areas would change and if the new configuration could also be put in place in the East and West Stands. KB said pricing had not yet been determined as obviously this is only at concept stage and in respect of implementing the new configuration on the East and West stands, this is not possible at this present time.

SW asked if capacity would go up with the new configuration.

KB said it would remain at 60,000 for now but within it the seats that change to make up the 60,000 would be closer to the pitch. KB said the current proposal would mean more seats nearer the front of the stand and less at the back.

KB confirmed the step up in capacity which the Club is currently looking at is 62,500.

TB and CB said it was a good idea and fans were used to getting wet at the Boleyn Ground.

PR said the atmosphere is affected by spaces between the stands and the pitch and the gaps between the upper and lower tiers, with the latter being the next issue the Club should look at.

JD said the proposed changes will make London Stadium look more like a traditional football stadium.

GL asked about the possibility of introducing standing areas stating that supporters want to stand up.

KB explained standing areas are not currently on the agenda.

DA and AW endorsed the proposal. SA and LV agreed the proposal is great.

SA asked if the proposals will affect the flow of supporters coming into the stands and number of places for accessibility supporters. KB said no in both cases.

KB said the proposal is not a done deal as there were a number of steps to be followed, consulting supporters in those stands, planning permission, a licence and company to procure it all needed to be finalised.

KB said both ends of the stadium must be done at the same time and the Club had already confirmed to E20 they would only consider proceeding on this basis.

KB said lots of hurdles still needed to be overcome, but OSB is sounding board as to whether to go keep progressing with this initiative.

DB asked how it would work with the annual change to athletics mode.

KB said it would make this process faster and more cost-effective so would be good for West Ham United and its supporters as well as E20. KB said this, the pitch surround, statue and Billy Bonds Stand all represent the progress made over the last three seasons.

KB said it is right and proper that the OSB get to see what the Club is proposing and was delighted at the overwhelmingly positive response but stressed that the priority now was to consult with fans currently seated in those stands on the concept.

KB closed stressing that the Club and E20 are committed to working together to ensure we have a home that our fans deserve and can be proud of.

MATCHDAY FAN ZONES

JH said the Club and stadium partners had begun introducing initiatives to enhance supporters experience in and around the including the new Heineken Bar outside of the East Stand, which featured a live DJ at the Birmingham City, Arsenal and Brighton & Hove Albion fixtures and a live band from the local area at the Liverpool match.

JH said the Club planned to trial Hammer Legend interviews and post-match live bands at future matches.

JH asked the OSB for types of entertainment they would like to see in the outside bar areas.

JD said he feels like there is more of an atmosphere with the live music, but volume needs to be turned up to generate more of a 'festival' feeling of going to an event, rather than it being background music.

KB says the Club and E20 want more Fan Zones, but sites have to be within London Stadium for E20 to be able to capture under existing arrangements. KB said the Club was always pushing E20 to create new suitable spaces.

GL asked if announcements can be made over the PA system and big screens as to when live bands are going to be performing on matchdays. GH agreed.

LV asked if the variety of acts could be increased and local acts promoted.

DH, BI and TW all agreed that the aim and the Club is looking into options to attract more local performers.

DP asked if big screens could be installed in the outside bar areas to show the early Premier League kick-offs.

GH said it cannot be done at Outside Bar 1 but could be explored at Outside Bar 2. However, GH said big screens would attract large number of fans and E20 had to be careful not to overload the stadium island, as supporters do not need a ticket to come onto the island itself, only to get into the stadium. LV Asked if there was an opportunity to create the type of matchday fanzones that the Club had zone in the past with the Foundation inflatables and activities etc outside London Stadium.

KB said the Club wants to do much more around the approach to the Stadium and fanzones and felt there was a fantastic opportunity also for E20/Delaware to expand their offer beyond the Stadium and improve supporter experience. It would be great to attract smaller local traders in the approach to the Stadium as an initiative that would work for both community and fan experience.

DP asked about The Rib Man and why he is not trading on the stadium island any longer.

SR said a licence had been issued to The Rib Man on Carpenters Road.

QUESTIONS FROM SUPPORTER REPRESENTATIVES

Communicating the work of the OSB

KB asked SK to respond to questions about communicating work of OSB.

SK says club will communicate the positive work of the OSB internally and externally.

TW says promoting @WestHamHelp and profiles of OSB members is important to raising awareness of the OSB's positive work.

DB says OSB want to communicate achievements and stimulate response from fans and be more representative.

KB confirmed that the Club does not officially communicate with any other groups.

KB says the Club and OSB are working together and anything the Club can do to show that hard work and collaboration is good news.

INDEPENDENT SUPPORTERS GROUPS

SW said there have been claims that an independent supporters' group was refused access to OSB, which he does not feel is true and he asked for clarification. KB said that claim is completely untrue.

All groups were able to apply however the group in question declined to do so.

JD and DB confirmed they met with an independent supporters' group after they chose not to join the OSB and asked them to constructively represent their group on OSB, but they had declined that opportunity as well.

CB said that others are taking credit for the achievements of the Disabled Supporters' Board as their own on social media. It is the DSB who has worked so hard with the Club to improve the service and facilities available to our supporters.

SW asked the Board to verify if the OSB was the only conduit between the supporters and the Board of Directors. KB reaffirmed that is was and that the Board was not in contact or dialogue with any other group.

DB said OSB should be representing the Club at Premier League meetings. KB asked JH to make the request with the Premier League that the OSB are represented on their structured dialogue forums.

AS added that he will ask if the OSB can be invited to future Met Police Independent Advisory Group meetings.

INTERNATIONAL FANS

JD says a new place on OSB should be created for an International Fans representative, who could take part in meetings either remotely via Skype or be transported to take part in person.

KB agreed and asked JH to action for next OSB meeting.

MEMORIAL GARDEN

JH gave an update. The Club and Barratt London held four consultation events in the summer of 2018 with many family members in attendance. Family members were asked for their views on the proposals for the future design of the Memorial Garden and were able to quantify their feedback through the forms provided. All feedback was considered and each of the families have been sent a letter detailing the outcome of the consultation events and their feedback on the Memorial Garden. CB says one fan claims he represents a number of families and has spoken to David Gold and Barratt London regarding the future of the Memorial Garden.

JH says that the Club and Barratt London will be communicating more widely in due course, however, the thoughts and feelings of family members are the Club's main priority.

OSB COMMUNICATION IN BETWEEN MEETINGS

DB said communication between group members in between meetings had proved effective and meant a huge amount of matters were able to be resolved immediately working with JH rather than waiting for the next meeting.

STEWARDING

SW asked what E20 taking over LS185 means for stewarding at London Stadium.

KB said the streamlining of ownership and management of Stadium will benefit the relationship going forward for both parties.

SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (SAG)

SW asked if OSB could be made members of the London Stadium SAG.

KB said it is a licensing authority and it exists for emergency services to discuss the operations around events at the stadium and the body which grants the capacity license.

KB has personally asked to attend certain SAG meets in the past and been refused because she is not the Operational lead at West Ham United, so she felt it unlikely that supporters would be allowed to attend.

SR said it was not possible for OSB members to attend SAG. SR said London Stadium and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park represent a very complicated site with lots of interested parties, so the SAG is already a very large group with 40-plus members.

SR said confidential and safety issues which cannot be discussed outside the group were another reason OSB members could not attend.

SR said minutes are issued after SAG meetings, but attendance at OSB meetings and dialogue via email (to be co-ordinated by Jake) means issues can be taken to the SAG via a different process.

RUSH GREEN

DA said Rush Green is becoming increasingly popular for Sunday women's team matches but there is a lack of suitable public toilets – without a handrail – and this is an issue the Club needs to address.

BI said there is a separate car park and toilets for supporters with disabilities and he has carried out an audit of the site due to the increased use of Rush Green Training Ground with West Ham Women now playing there.

BI said massive amount of work has been done and further improvements will be made, including the installation of the handrail.

COFFEE SHOP TOILET

CB said the queue is getting very long for the toilets in the Coffee Shop on matchdays as it is the only one that can be used before matches outside the turnstiles on the stadium island. CB said supporters with disabilities have complained about this. CB suggested toilets are needed for Fan Zones, as the only toilets available outside turnstiles are those in the Coffee Shop.

KB says a security staff member could be placed at the head of the queue to ensure disabled fans are given priority.

DP asked if the door could be changed to one of the two toilets, so only supporters with a radar key could gain access.

TB said there needed to be a balance as there are only two toilets, so it would exacerbate the queue issue. KB will speak to retail operations manager Kerry Patterson about the situation.

MASCOT PRICING

DB asked about the subject of mascot package pricing.

DB said one place is available per match to charities and community initiatives for free but asked if the pricing of packages would be reviewed.

KB said there weren't plans to change currently given the availability of free places for good causes. KB stated that the package was a once in a lifetime experience (mascot package includes complimentary match tickets in the West Stand, a visit to the changing rooms to meet the players and get their autographs, photo opportunities on the team bus, dugout and with the captains before the match and an exclusive mascot goody bag. Refreshments are also laid on for the mascots throughout the day). The mascot experience will feature on whufc.com through the Like My Dreams initiative.

The KB confirmed there is currently a two-year waiting list for mascot places and restated that 20,000 fans pay £289 and £99 which are Season Ticket prices which help the majority.

KB added that the Club also offers pitchside packages via the community and to young supporter competition winners that were also once in a lifetime that were free of charge to make these types of experiences more accessible.

WI-FI

AS said E20 has spoken to a Wi-Fi provider and will provide an update as soon as possible about installation at London Stadium. Discussions can now progress further following the change in ownership of stadium management, with E20 leading the talks on network providers.

JD said it is great that we have Reporting Mechanisms in place, but it supporter's complaint that you cannot connect to the internet to use the service.

JH stated that stewards are also present as an additional reporting mechanism if a supporter is struggling to obtain connectivity.

CAPACITY

LV asked if capacity of London Stadium will rise from the current 60,000.

KB said the Club is looking into raising the capacity to 62,500, but that these conversations are in early stages.

ABUSIVE SUPPORTERS

DB said the actions of supporter who abused Mohamed Salah are reprehensible.

KB said club will not tolerate it, will find the individual and will ban them.

AS said when reports come in of this sort of behaviour, they are thoroughly investigated by the Club and Police working together, so supporters should be encouraged to use reporting mechanisms and that CCTV footage is the best evidence to take to court.

AS said, it is positive that fans are reporting abuse, which is a reflection of wider society rather than West Ham United, with the aim of taking action against abusive supporters.

KB said the Club has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

JD asked about the issue of away fans sitting in home areas at London Stadium.

KB said any away fans identified as being in the home areas will be removed. It is generally tourists who do so, many of which come from other countries who may not be aware of the segregation. It is extremely rare that an away supporter deliberately enters the home section. NK said she and BI look through the names of all new supporters who buy tickets in the home areas, speak to away clubs and

use software to monitor names to keep the number of away supporters who could potentially purchase a ticket in the home end to a minimum. TW stated this was an issue at all Clubs and not specific to West Ham.

KB thanked everyone for attending and for their continued contributions to the OSB.

KB closed meeting at 8.05pm

Actions to take forward

Action	Owner
OSB profiles to be emailed ahead of every home match	JH
Confirm date for kit design subgroup and co-ordinate attendees	JH/DB/JD
Finalise agenda for Ticketing subgroup	JH/NK
Finalise agenda for Matchday subgroup	JH
POI and WHU to provide training to searching staff	JD/BI/GH
Create catering subgroup	EM/RC/JH
OSB to attend Everton match and view catering facilities	EM/RC/JH
OSB to meet DNC before 18/19 season to test products	EM/RC/JH
Further communicate catering offering, promotions and locations of kiosks	DNC/JH
Place signage above lowered counters	DNC/BI
Detail the lowered counters on club channels	JH
Trial price of pint at £5.00 for last match of the season	EM/RC
Explore option for additional pop-up kiosks for cider and different food offerings	EM/RC
Explore option for more wayfinding signage on the concourse	EM/GH/JH
Introduce eco-cup scheme	EM/RC/BI
Further communicate halal and gluten-free products around the stadium	RC/JH
Share images of statue with OSB	TW
Explore option to introduce music in second outer bar area in East Stand	EM/BI
Further communicate achievements of the OSB	SK
Invite International supporters' group representative to OSB meetings	JH
Install handrail at accessibility toilet at Rush Green Training Ground	BI
Explore solution with Stadium Store toilets on matchday	KP
Main twitter account to retweet more @WestHamHelp and OSB communications	JH/Asi

This report has been compiled by the West Ham United Official Supporters Board on behalf of West Ham United Supporters and is for the attention of London Stadium Caterers Delaware North. The aim of this report is to give honest feedback to Delaware North with the aim of making improvements to the West Ham United match day experience.

The feedback herein is compiled primarily from supporter feedback via Twitter between the 7th and 8th of January 2019 and is an honest representation of the feelings on West Ham supporters.

All feedback is given in good faith and any candid commentary is included verbatim to highlight the feeling around issues encountered.

All answers to supporter questions below will be published by Friday 15th March, 2019.

Food

Sizes of food such as burgers and hotdogs seems to fluctuate. When we first moved to the stadium it seemed our choices were limited to more gourmet burgers and huge hot dogs rather than those traditionally aligned to a football stadium. Opinion around size and quality vary, however what is clear that although there is demand for both traditional "burger van" style food as well as the fancy, they should not be charged the same. Many comments have been made about food portion size and quality deteriorating while the prices remain high.

Feedback has revealed that people would also like more variety of food than just burger, hot dogs and pies with some mentioning that American stadiums should be used as an example:

Plus better selection of food. Again at American sports stadiums there is more than just a pie, burger or a hot dog. Bit of imagination wouldn't go amiss

While there are more options on the East side of the stadium with outdoor vendors, people notice that things they like are introduced and then disappear. One fan said:

Personally, I used to like the minced beef pie, mash and liquor/gravy combo they did last season. Not sure why they withdrew that?

Pies seem to be a hot topic as people feel there is not enough variety. As pie are a staple in football stadiums up and down the country, people who travel away get to try a lot of different types. This might be something worth investing more time researching.

On a separate note, people in the West side of the stadium would like an outdoor food and drinks area with music similar to the East stand.

People with various dietary requirements have commented that they are either not adequately catered for or that those options are not properly advertised. To date we have heard mention of Vegetarianism, Veganism, Kosher, Halal and Gluten-Free. On Tweet we received read:

...Also some gluten free option for my daughter who struggles to find something hot apart from the pasty stand outside which is a lottery as to if they have anything.

Others have commented that there needs to be more healthy options as most of the food they encounter is either fried, cased in pastry or full of sugar.

Condiments have been mentioned a few times, specifically that there are inconsistencies in whether or not condiments are added. For instance two people have mentioned that chicken burgers sometimes have mayo and sometimes don't. By the time they have realized, it's too difficult to get back to the front to ask for the food to be changed. A simple solution would be to consistently not add any and leave out bottles or sachets for customers to apply themselves.

The general and consistent commentary from fans is quite simple; the food quality is not great (some complaining of being served cold burgers etc.) and is too expensive. Indications are also that as quality and portion size decrease, people are less likely to eat at the stadium, preferring to get something on the way to or from a game instead.

Soft Drinks

Feedback suggests that supporters are generally not fans of the soft drink sizes or the temperature suggesting they're too cold to hold and too big to finish quickly and sometimes quality is poor. From too watery to too syrupy to too much ice. Some have suggested that they would prefer bottled drinks as the volume is more sensible and the distribution of the drinks themselves would be much faster. Others have expressed their frustration at having to queue with those wanting beer to obtain a soft drink and suggested there may be appetite for vendors which only sell non-alcoholic drinks or even vending machines.

As water is taken away on the entrance to the stadium, many feel that the pricing in the stadium is not only expensive but unfairly so. One fan questioned why free drinking water is not available in the stadium.

Tea and coffee has also been mentioned as expensive and low in quality with some asking why we have no well-known brands with proper barista stalls such as Costa or Starbucks.

Alcoholic Drinks

The two biggest issues for fans when it comes to alcoholic drinks are the speed of service and the pricing. In terms of speed, many fans have asked the same question; "Why are kiosks not prepared with pre-poured beers, ready for half time?" We feel this is a fair question as there must be sales numbers recorded so there must be a way to calculate average sales and pre-pour 70-80% of that amount in anticipation. Others have enquired why the stadium doesn't use the faster pumps that pour from the bottom as used at Wembley, Tottenham's new Stadium, Goodison Park and many others. Some recall there was talk of fans being able to pre-order drinks for half time and have enquired what happened to that? Some have suggested more stalls selling bottles only would help speed things up and if they were allowed to take the bottled rather than having the contents poured into a cup, further time savings could be achieved.

Another very popular subject amongst the fans we spoke with was cider. It seems that draught cider was previously available in the stadium but has since been removed. It would seem that if draught cider were to make a return, it would be very welcome.

Could we please go back to having strongbow cloudy pints on the smaller beer stalls and/or including them as available from food desks? They used to be on smaller beer stalls then got taken away for some reason

Although not popular with the beer drinkers in Block 134, the spirits and mixer bar is well-received by many non-beer drinkers. However the mandatory inclusion of ice seems bizarre and unnecessary - especially with the recent cold weather. I can understand that it represents a saving to yourselves to not fill glasses to the top, but there is no need to disguise it with ice. Let alone insist on it being included because it's "policy" even at customer request to not include it. Another disappointing factor for those who prefer spirits is the limited pre-mixed can options at some bars. A broader variety that G&T and JD and Coke would be very welcome.

Other suggestions include:

- Individual stalls for each beer brand
- A broader selection of beers, ciders and spirits
- Microbrewery/craft beer (noted that Tottenham's new stadium has a Beaverton Bar)

Pricing and Payment

I'm sure it comes as no surprise that pricing makes up a big part of the feedback. Generally people feel the price of food and drink in the stadium is simply too high across the board, but additionally the lack of consistency has also been raised, such as:

- How can bottled beer be charged at nearly the same cost of a pint?
- Different beer prices in different kiosks
- Portion sizes change yet prices remain the same
- Competitive pre-match pricing is offered, but due to the slowness of service, people can get to the front of the queue after the cut-off time - shouldn't the promotional rate be honored?

By far the greatest gripe in terms of pricing is the lack of round numbering. The most quoted example being the £5.15 beer. The feeling is that the rummaging for change (from both staff and customers) causes delays to service. There is acknowledgement that the extra 15p no doubt represents a significant amount across thousands of sales, however there is belief that you would actually sell more pints and make up the difference and more without the unnecessary delays looking for and handling change. Some comments on the matter:

Beer should be £5 a pint not £5.15 as staff always ask for change and it slows down the process.

Agree cash bar needs to be a five - staff take too long when it is 5.15 a pint.

Round the prices down to £5 a pint. Every time I order a pint for £5.15, I'm asked if I have change. Would speed up the whole serving process, and even more if more poured in advance.

Make pints £5 not £5.10. Takes forever and an age for the staff to deal with this

Aside from generally believing that the prices are too high, fans also feel that meal deals in the stadium are not competitive enough, especially when compared to other stadiums.

Some have suggested that the pre-match beer pricing needs to be better advertised as many aren't aware. It also seems that not all stalls have this arrangement so perhaps some clarity there would be a good idea. It has also been suggested that a similar, post-match promotion would be popular if implemented and advertised well. Not only would there be more custom for the caterers, but this could also reduce the post-match congestion between the stadium and Stratford station if people hung back for a drink or two.

Inconsistent payment methods have also been raised as an issue with some bars being cash only, others using contactless etc. Consistency or more signage here would be appreciated. Is there perhaps the possibility of introducing food/drinks tokens that are available throughout the season from the club shop? These could be purchased in bulk and save a lot of time with transactions for items with high sales volumes such as pints of beer.

Staff and Customer Service/Engagement

Unfortunately, supporters are not impressed with the staffing at London Stadium. There is an overall consensus that the staff are inexperienced, unfocussed and, quite frankly, not very good. One quote that has come up several times from different people is "You ask for a pint and they look at you like they're surprised". Although I'm sure there are many members of staff who do not fit this description, the fact is the large number of youngsters left to fend for themselves in the kiosks leaves many with this view. One simple example is if you were to go to any pub in the country you would find staff who can pour two pints on the go whilst still engaging the customer. In the London Stadium people feel like a lot of the staff struggle to pour a single pint or worse, in some cases where it takes more than one member of staff to pour said pint. As you'd perhaps suspect, it's when simple things not being done properly that really frustrated people. Such as:

- Sudden barrel changes at half time - why weren't they checked before the busiest period?
- Running out of simple things like cup holders, condiments, sugar or - unbelievably - burgers!
- Is no one keeping an eye on stock levels?
- Out of date milk
- Cold food

Some feedback from Twitter:

Customer Service needs to be improved, seems every game it's different staff who haven't got a clue!

The staff at the 132 beer stall are unorganized again, they fail to have the beers ready at halftime and fail to check the ale barrels.

Employ staff who actually understand how to serve food and drinks.

Fans in Blocks 112, 113 and 114 have expressed disappointment in being, what some describe as “The poor relations of the stadium”. They don’t have draft real ale or bitters unlike other areas of the stadium and they seem to only hold a limited number stock of food and drink leading to it regularly selling out.

A lot of general frustrations come from lack of clarity or information. For instance, people being denied a certain number of drinks. We have had complaints that individuals have tried to order five pints only to be told that they can only be served four at a time. It sounds ridiculous until it is explained that its four to be carried by any one person to stop spillages. If people were made aware of this via signage etc., they could better prepare and not end up frustrated. Similarly, many fans complain about the Stop/Go signs on the way back to the station, however many seem unaware that some vendors remain open after the match and they have the option of hanging back for a drink to avoid the rush. This would be beneficial to all; increased revenue for yourselves and less frustration and an improved match day experience for fans. Even those who are aware that bars are open post-match are unsure which ones are from match to match and whether they can rely on them or not. One fan told us:

At the end of the Arsenal game I went for a beer after the game to find half of the bars had closed. This is the main bar under the big TV screen by the Bobby Moore stand. There were hundreds of people wanting beer and the queues were very large.

Accessibility

Although there are kiosks with lower counters available for wheelchair users, it has been brought to our attention that the signage is inadequate causing inconvenience. In a stadium that was given much fanfare around its levels of accessibility, this is over area where is lets some disabled supporters down.

Waste

Some conscientious fans have raised concerns with both the amount of plastic used and the how the different waste bins are ineffective meaning a lot of the plastics won’t be recycled. Is there any appetite to introduce reusable cups or perhaps even compostable starch-based plastics?

One fan stated:

I recently went to a game in the Czech Republic where, to get a beer, you had to pay a deposit (2 quid each) on a reusable plastic cup. Each time you got a new beer they swapped it for a fresh cup. This seemed like a great idea for cutting down on waste.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider the feedback of the match-going supporters and we hope you can see benefit in receiving it.

Should you require more detail or further feedback around specific areas, we'd be more than happy to continue working with you.

Regards,

West Ham United Official Supporters Board