



West Ham United Official Supporters' Board meeting minutes

Meeting 1 – 2019/20

Date: Tuesday 8 October

Time: 6:00pm – 7:30pm

Location: 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

Jake Heath (JH) – Supporter Services Manager

Julie Pigeon (JP) – Disability Access Officer

Other Representatives:

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

Peter Swordy (PS) – Director of Health, Safety and Compliance, LS185

Elliott Moore (EM) – General Manager, Delaware North

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

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

Greg Smith (GS) – 1966 Season Ticket Holders
Steve Applebee (SA) – Bondholders
Don Adams (DA) – Over-65s
Danny Proctor (DP) – Club London
Ben Leak (BL) – Junior Supporters' Board
Sam Bluck (SB) – Junior Supporters' Board
Cecilia O'Herlihy (COH) – Women's Representative
Jack Cooper (JC) – Ticketing Subgroup
Wayne Baldacchino (WB) – Sir Trevor Brooking Stand

(SW had discussed with the Club prior to the meeting that he may stand down as a member of the OSB due to a conflict of interest with Claret & Hugh, a matter that he confirmed during the meeting. At the time of sharing, SW was still considering whether to remain on the OSB until the end of the season or step down).

KB opened meeting at 6.07pm

Opening address to Supporter Representatives from Karren Brady.

KB says good evening and welcome to the first meeting of the Official Supporters' Board for the 2019/20 season.

KB explains there is a packed agenda tonight;

I am pleased to say we have some exciting updates on supporter and Stadium initiatives that I will present later in the meeting. KB welcomed Elliott Moore General Manager of our catering partner Delaware North along with his colleague Richard Craig, Head of Concessions, who many of you will know from our last meeting.

We are also pleased to have Peter Swordy, London Stadium's Director of Health, Safety and Compliance and Andy Sheldon our Dedicated Football Officer at the Metropolitan Police here with us this evening. We work very closely with all of them in respect of our matchday operations and they have made it clear to us that they welcome your feedback and will assist us wherever they can.

We've made a lot of progress since we last met, which is great news. We have held eight subgroup meetings to help progress our discussions outside of this meeting and I know that you all have a very close dialogue with our Supporter Services team.

As with all new things there is bound to be a period of development and I think we can say we've come a long way in less than 12 months. We hope to build on that progress together over the coming season.

We have a shared responsibility to create and amplify positivity around the Club and all the good work that goes on here and I count this forum, the subgroups and DSB as integral to that aim.

I hope when I take you through some of (what we believe to be highly positive) initiatives that we are looking to move forward with, fully cognisant of your feedback to date, you will see evidence that we are always working hard in the background to respond to your feedback and improve your experience. My dedicated team here tonight are always keen to help and will ensure that any issues or concerns are resolved in the right way so encourage your fellow supporters not to let issues drag on but to report them straight away as if we can solve them immediately – we always will.

We thank you all for giving up your time to be here on behalf of your fellow supporters and we look

forward to a positive meeting, with plenty of items on the agenda.

Terms of Reference

The matter of the upcoming OSB term for the coming season was raised.

TW says the current OSB started in late 2018, took time to get up and running, particularly in terms of agreeing the administrative aspects such as Terms of Reference and setting up and forming the sub-groups. Tw says some OSB members want to see some of recent projects developed through and given the fact that DB and JD have raised the election process for the Supporters' Board as an important matter it is proposed the current OSB members roll on until the close of the current season (19/20)

TW confirmed - following discussion with DB and JD who had raised the matter of the election process - the importance of ensuring that the process is properly considered and done at the right time, including feedback from the current group about how best to run the process to make it fair and democratic to all fans, ensuring equal representation.

Therefore, after embedding the board for the first year and now having set up the subgroups, it was proposed to continue with the current group, ahead of launching the new process next summer.

JD agreed that the current OSB members should continue to ensure that stability but added he would like to work to agree the new process and announce in advance of the summer.

DB says the election process for the next OSB should be in place for the end of the season. Says the group has worked very well together, both as an OSB and in sub-groups, as has the WhatsApp group, which has been very informative at times.

JD says Supporter Services do a fantastic job but take a lot of stick. Stopping mid-season is not a good idea as the group has a good flow.

SW says that the process needs more credibility and that supporters outside of the OSB do not like the selection process.

DA disagreed on the credibility point and added that every current OSB member had to write a statement, be proposed and seconded by five supporters and that the current election process was democratic as every fan had the opportunity to stand. This was echoed by other members of the OSB.

SA added that he was selected to represent the Bondholders. TW confirmed this was true of others e.g. PR who represents the Supporters Club and others are also selected by the groups they represent.

KB suggested that the OSB should hold elections themselves if this would help convince all supporters that this board was truly independent from the club.

DB says the club should do it, as it possesses the relevant data, as long as the process is open.

JD says supporters could vote for the relevant representative (e.g. O65s for O65s, Trevor Brooking Stand fans for Trevor Brooking Stand rep).

SW said supporters claim the OSB members do not speak for the fanbase.

DB said should extend term for now, then look at timescales and process for electing the next OSB.

KB asked OSB members who wished to change that election process. Five of the 17 members voted in favour of changing the process, the majority voted against.

SW and DB say they have concern with the current selection panel as they seen as linked with the Club. DB said fans will be brought closer together if the selection process was more democratic.

KB says she and her colleagues want to meet with supporters who want to improve things for the majority. KB says it is important those on the board are constructive as her team works full time to continually improve things and drive the club forward, and she has a responsibility to them to ensure they are treated respectfully which has not always been the case in the past.

JD says the main gripe is the use of a selection panel.

GS says other groups are welcome to be part of OSB process.

KB agrees the Club will look at the process in conjunction with the OSB and try and find a solution that can be agreed by all members. She confirmed that the Club was happy to go along with what they wanted.

SW says Terms of Reference need to be updated as the current OSB were originally due to expire in 2019. TW repeats the earlier proposal.

Vote held to extend Terms until the end of the current season so current OSB can remain in place. Vote carried.

Update on actions

- Confirm date for kit design subgroup and co-ordinate attendees

JH - Completed. Follow up meeting to be discussed.

- Finalise agenda for Ticketing subgroup

JH - Completed. Two Ticketing subgroups have been held since OSB launch.

- Finalise agenda for Matchday subgroup

JH - Completed. Meeting held in July 2019.

- POI and WHU to provide training to searching staff

JH - Completed. Jim Dolan and Alastair Holmes from the Pride of Irons attended the pre-match safety briefing, presenting to senior stewarding staff. Jake also attended to discuss reporting processes and the vital role that stewards play in ensuring a successful outcome to any incidents.

- Create catering subgroup

JH - Completed. Tasting session held in July 2019 before the start of the season and OSB has just completed a twitter poll to find the fan favourite pie fillings! The winning pie fillings will be in place for Sheffield United match on 26th October 2019.

- OSB to attend Everton match and view catering facilities

JH - Completed. Two catering subgroup meetings have now been held.

- OSB to meet DNC before 2019/20 season to test products

JH - Completed. As above.

- Further communicate catering offering, promotions and locations of kiosks

JH - Completed. Two new catering maps have been created, including locations of halal, gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian products. The maps are publicised on Hammers Help, @WestHamHelp on every matchday. Links to the Matchday Guide are located in the pre-match email sent to all ticket holders.

- Place signage above lowered counters

JH - Completed. DNC placed signage above all lowered counters on the concourse.

- Detail the lowered counters on club channels

JH - Access map updated to include lowered counters and is now available online on Hammers Help and will be tweeted on matchday via @WestHamHelp.

- Explore option for more wayfinding signage on the concourse

JH - The Club, DNC, LS185 and Vinci have all stated a needed for maps on the concourse and would like to take a joint proposal together to E20. A map combining catering and toilet facilities has been produced and we're currently refining the design to produce it in the appropriate format. Next step is meeting with Delaware and LS 185. Map will be examined by all and every stakeholder is united in ensuring it will be installed around the Stadium for the benefit of all supporters and visitors to London Stadium. We will update supporters as soon as we have any further information.

DNC have introduced new branding at kiosks around the concourse which has provided a greater sense of place.

- Introduce eco-cup scheme

JH - Completed. A trial was held at the last four matches of the season to assess the impact of using reusable cups. Our ambition is to make this permanent, currently working with Stadium partners through plans to deliver this all year round.

- Further communicate halal and gluten-free products around the Stadium

JH - Completed. As above.

- Statue update with OSB

JH – Says Tw will update later in the meeting.

- Explore option to introduce music in second outer bar area in East Stand/Champions Place

JH - Completed. Introduced at the end of last season following OSB meeting and feedback from supporters. Both outer bar areas have been extremely successful and it's great to see the fans arriving

early and staying behind to enjoy themselves!

- Further communicate achievements of the OSB

JH - Completed and ongoing. The Club has communicated the outputs of each subgroup on WHUFC.com. We have also tweeted live via @WestHamHelp at the last meeting in February 2019 and we are doing so again this evening. A pinned tweet features on the @WestHamHelp twitter page and we have linked to the @WHUOSB twitter handle in articles on WHUFC.com to direct people to fan experience polls.

The OSB link has also been on the pre-match email and will now feature as a permanent banner.

We have also committed to a Twitter Q&A between the OSB and Supporter Services and a walkaround with the OSB to be filmed at a future match, with OSB members and Supporter Services staff discussing and showcasing the enhancements made to matchdays and clarifying any rumours that won't seem to go away – one example being that away fans specifically given preference to exit the Stadium first which holds up the shuttle buses, which is untrue.

- Invite International supporters' group representative to OSB meetings

JH - A place on the OSB is reserved for International Supporters and we will look to invite a representative to the next meeting in line with the current process, ahead of the review at the end of this season.

- Install handrail at accessibility toilet at Rush Green Training Ground

JH - Completed. This was already in place.

- Explore solution with Stadium Store toilets on matchday

JH - Two portaloos have been positioned in the car park nearest the Stadium Store. This has helped to alleviate queuing at the toilets inside the Stadium Store, particularly for those supporters with young children or accessibility needs.

KB says there is complaint from supporters that because Stadium is not open when external bars are open, there is nowhere to go to the toilet, and there is a concern that these bars will have to close unless LS185/Delaware can find a solution. LS185 to meet Delaware on Weds 9/10 to discuss the issue and either agree to open the toilets or close the bars until the toilets are open as this was a real health and safety concern.

- Main twitter account to retweet more @WestHamHelp and OSB communications

JH - Completed and ongoing.

General Updates from the Club

Bobby Moore and Sir Trevor Brooking Lower Tier seating configuration

KB says good progress has been made in partnership with E20. The work is currently out to tender and on track to be installed over Summer 2020 and therefore the new stands should be installed for next season. The plans show that after the installation the new distances between the stand and the pitch will be very similar to the area behind the goals at the Emirates and much closer than Wembley.

KB explained that there would be about 300 seats (of about 3,600 each end, Bobby Moore and Sir Trevor Brooking stands) where the seats would not be covered by the roof and that all season ticket holders in the stand will be offered the closest like-for-like seat but if their seat was now not covered by the roof and they wanted to move they will have the opportunity to relocate. General view of OSB members was that they expected all seats including wet ones to be popular. KB said the SAG had a concern that fans in uncovered area may move when game is on if it rains and therefore a proper management plan will be in place and 300 supporters moving during a match would cause issues. KB says the Club expects the seats near the front to be highly desirable. The meeting agreed.

KB says she and PC have spoken to companies who have submitted tenders and the new stands should feel more permanent and an enhancement of what is there now.

KB says the Clubs interest is always to improve supporter experience.

DB asked about the future of athletics at LS. KB says the UK Athletics has a 25-year lease and as far as she was aware had shown no interest in moving out of the Stadium.

KB says the government needs to look at the cost of transforming the Stadium from football to athletics, especially when it is extremely expensive and generates such low income for the Stadium. Athletics attendances are dropping but costs not so it may be that a future away from London Stadium is contemplated in the future.

Stadium Wi-Fi

KB says she has been informed by E20 that the infrastructure for Wi-Fi is being installed currently and she has been told it should be ready in January but stresses that this is just the information she has been given. The Club is making a significant contribution towards the cost so supporters can have access.

Statue

KB thanked OSB for feedback and confirmed the Club was proceeding with the proposals that had been presented at the last OSB following which following feedback had 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. This was in the process of being commissioned. The next stage was to consult with players'/ their families, get their feedback and then it will be erected.

Family section

NK discussed an enhanced family stand and discussed the option of block 221. This area is 250 seats which are part of the existing 60k capacity.

In respect of the family stand existing Season Ticket Holders will be communicated to, to find out if they are interested in moving to an area with more families and children, to assess demand.

If there are 500 fans interested, then Club will speak to Season Ticket Holders and the family area could be further expanded if demand is there. Changes will not be made without first consulting with supporters in those areas should we consider expanding the family area at any point in the future.

Delighted to say OSB brought this up four meetings ago and when we increased capacity a designated area would be introduced, and this is now moving forward.

NK said the area in 221 is covered and while it is near the visiting supporters section consideration has been given to appropriate segregation and the order in which tickets will be allocated to visiting clubs, providing a safe environment for families. It is commonplace; with other Premier League clubs operating the same process, and it was also the case at Upton Park and this setup will be very similar.

The family area, when implemented, will have a dedicated Supporter Information booth, signage, in addition to recruiting a Family Area Supporter Liaison Officer team with safeguarding training. The Club will also be reviewing the catering offering in this area with DNC ahead of the family area opening.

The Club is reviewing the location of the new family area in order to provide enhanced offering and experience to families and juniors. Feedback provided by supporters at the meeting will be considered and the Club will revert to OSB members as soon as possible.

Subgroups

JH said the ticketing subgroup seems to be the biggest topic amongst supporters at present, so we have set this at two meetings per season. A meeting had taken place the previous week with some great feedback for the OSB to consider. It is proposed that follow up discussions are held between OSB members and the Club to finalise the feedback and agreements made at the recent OSB Ticketing Subgroup. This is so that some ideas arising from the Subgroup can be implemented at the earliest opportunity. Both matchday groups will recur annually as we look to prepare between each season. In the interim, we will continue to work with the OSB, DSB and JSB on any feedback we receive as always.

There are follow up meetings planned for the Kit Design and Equality Subgroup, after which the Kit Design Subgroup will have concluded its course. The Equality Subgroup will then recur once or twice per season. Catering one per season.

KB praised the feedback received from the subgroups and explained that Umbro and the Club had been very happy with the quality of ideas received by the kit subgroup. She gave particular praise to those participating in the recent Ticketing and EDI groups. She thanked Lee Vehit for driving the EDI subgroup.

SA says there should be more meetings for subgroups. Safety and Operations should meet more than once a season.

DB says there are enough meetings, but members must do their work between meetings.

JD says all meetings should be formally diarised. KB asked JH to formalise a calendar based on the discussions this evening.

Equality – We Are West Ham. United

JH says equality is very important to the Club. PL assessors have recently visited.

We recently held our first Equality Subgroup as the Club aims to achieve the Advanced Level of the Premier League Equality Standard.

We are delighted that we're working closely with our supporters to highlight the Club's commitment to the values of equality, diversity, access and inclusion with a new Equality video featuring younger supporters, as the OSB had requested.

New equality campaign – video (featuring JSB), reporting and inclusion posters. Posters – Tackling incidents and promoting equality, diversity inclusion to be posted around the Stadium. JH stressed the importance of reporting any concerns at the time of them occurring via the reporting mechanisms the Club provides. This includes contacting the nearest steward, SLO, police officer or by using the SMS reporting service. All text messages sent to 07860 404 069 are received directly to the Control Room and are treated in the strictest confidence. For the Safety and Operations team, it's far easier to monitor any incidents and act at the time that they happen.

JH discussed how the Club and group was focused on looking at equality positively. He showed the new posters that had been amended following feedback from the subgroup. Positive posters have been created by the content team, using genuine matchday images of our fans in order to humanise the message, which the Club feel is more powerful.

DB and LV believe the WE ARE WEST HAM. UNITED campaign is fantastic. KB thanked them both for their input.

Other topics for discussion

- Segregation barriers (outside away end) too high for wheelchair users

PS says this issue is outside Turnstile D. The mechanism underneath holding all the barriers together is the reason it is a little higher. CB says her motorised wheelchair finds it difficult to get over the barriers and this can cause damage. KB says this issue should be easy to fix. PS says he will endeavour to get it changed and safely implemented for the next home match.

- Catering at Rush Green for accessibility supporters (women's matches)

JH confirms the club is looking into this issue. KB says catering there is very limited.

As a supplementary question, Don Adams says the condition of the Ladies toilets at Rush Green is bad. PC will designate a cleaner to keep the toilets clean before, during and after women's matches.

- Increase in price of beer

JD says the price of beer at £5.15 was raised last season and now it has been again as the price has increased to £5.30 and £6 for premium beer.

Elliott EM said they reduced the price to £5 at the final home game of last season and saw no significant increase in sales. It was pointed out that many fans departed for the women's FA Cup final at Wembley at half-time, so this was an anomaly fixture.

EM says beer is cheaper at LS than at Arsenal and Chelsea. EM say Spurs subsidise their beer through their deal with caterer Compass but only serve £4 beer at 30% of taps.

SW asked for Delaware to share their intelligence with the OSB, so it can be shared with supporters.

EM said the two-pint cup and increase in cashless tills had been introduced to speed up sales process.

KB asked Delaware to look into a cheaper beer option more comparable with Spurs to match their offer (as contractually we were entitled to ask them to do this) and EM said Delaware could introduce a beer like Fosters at a cheaper price. It was agreed by the meeting that this was a good way forward. EM to look into option and pricing for Fosters or cheaper alternative.

EM says two-pint cup, cashless kiosks and introduction of entertainment outside the Stadium has seen sales increase.

EM says price increases are based on a variety of factors. Says connected Stadium will help speed of service. MuchBetter partners could see e-wallet introduced.

KB asked EM to confirm prices will not rise again this season and that he would look at introducing a lower-price lager and to inform the Club of the outcome. EM confirmed he would.

JD asked if more outside areas could be opened at half-time, particularly outside the West Stand. PS says the space outside is needed for a potential evacuation in an emergency.

KB suggested Delaware and LS185 should discuss opening more areas as they could potentially sell more refreshments, and whilst the Club does not benefit from catering/beer revenue we want our supporters to have as much access as possible and asked them to work together to open more areas.

- Safe standing

SW claims his unnamed source has told him the Club is in discussion with LS185 over the possibility of safe standing.

KB says this is not true and that even if the law did change, the Club would need to have detailed discussions with LS185 over where it would be situated.

KB says the Club is not against safe standing, but it cannot be delivered at the moment because it's against the law.

- Family Fun Zones on the Community Track

TW says two events have been held so far this season ahead of the pre-season friendly and women's match. LV asked for more to be held on matchdays as most entertainment is geared for adult supporters.

TW says the track has been used for many other events including for the Walking Football team that has gained great support.

LV asked if Foundation inflatables could be placed elsewhere, potentially on the Olympic Park
KB asks PC /PS to look into it.

- Away fans in home sections

KB says there is a zero-tolerance policy to having away supporters in the home end but asked that supporters understand there is a difference between away fans in home sections and tourists who come and sit in the ground, as they do at every Premier League ground.

JD says the text number for equality can also be used to report away fans in home areas.

PS said 18 fans were ejected from home areas at the Manchester United fixture

- Memorial Garden

KB says we visit biweekly and it is in very good shape.

JH says groundstaff will soon visit weekly as the garden sits under a deciduous willow tree and Supporter Services staff cleaned the area of leaves this week.

The Club wrote a letter to families who have loved ones remembered at the Memorial Garden back in July 2019. KB said the feedback from family members was extremely positive some saying they were 'in awe' of the new designs. The Club will be writing to families again in November 2019.

OSB members confirmed they have received no further negative feedback.

- Searching process for young supporters

JD raised an observation at the Man Utd match where younger supporters were being physically patted down by a steward and this was seen again at the women's fixture at London Stadium.

PS said this is not the guidance given to stewards and the relevant people have/will be warned. PS said all supporters are subject to search prior to entering the Stadium in accordance with Premier League issued Ground Regulations. Minors will only be searched with a search wand, with no contact. Only a child's guardian can search them in presence of staff. Bags will be searched, and Quality Assurance teams monitor steward quality.

PS said some fans are using youngsters to bring alcohol into the Stadium [visiting club, not West Ham supporters]. It sounds terrible, but it's unfortunately true.

KB urged LS185 to reiterate the messaging to stewards to ensure the right processes are followed. PS said every Crystal Palace fan was thoroughly searched and prohibited items were found on home and away supporters ahead of that fixture.

AS also been viewing CCTV, alongside the Club and London Stadium, to identify fans who threw missiles.

Don Adams provided his own feedback regarding the search process on a matchday.

PS responded by saying that is useful intelligence, and thanked DA for raising.

Any Other Business

- 125 anniversary celebrations

TW said JSB have been consulted about the kit for 2020/21.

TW suggested the creation of a 125th anniversary subgroup to develop further potential themes for matchdays.

- Club Museum

KB says the club has delivered promise to hold regular historic exhibitions in its designated areas. She pointed to the current 1980 anniversary exhibition in the Club Shop.

KB says the club would welcome a proper museum which is part of the Stadium tour and explained some of the issues surrounding putting the World Cup winners' medals on display which is prohibitive due to insurance premiums.

KB says tours need to be improved and a drive was being led to do this and as a result some of the £2 million worth of memorabilia will be put on show to improve tours to enable supporters to see the collection the Club holds.

KB closed meeting at 7.47pm

Actions to take forward

Action	Owner
Review election process for 2020/21 season	JH/OSB
Update Terms of Reference	JH
DNC and London Stadium to review issues with lack of toilet facilities by Fan Zones	DNC/LS185
Create and publish full calendar for OSB meetings, including Subgroups	JH
Include 'Away fans in home areas' on SMS reporting communications	JH
Provide solution for shallower ramps at segregation barriers	PS
Review accessibility of catering facility at Rush Green Stadium	PC
Establish cleaning programme for toilet facilities at Rush Green Stadium	PC
Explore option to provide cheaper lager on matchday	DNC/PC
Commitment to not increase food and drink prices during the season 2019/20	DNC
Catering prices to be shared with the OSB before they are finalised for 2020/21	DNC/PC
Create 125th year anniversary Subgroup	TW
Review options across the Olympic Park for more regular Family Fun Zones	PC/PS/JH
Reiterate search processes for younger supporters amongst all safety staff	PS
LS185 and DNC to meet to review outside bar area in the West Stand (turnstile C)	DNC/LS185