



## **Supporter Advisory Board meeting minutes**

**Date:** Wednesday 24 May 2017

**Time:** 6.00pm – 8.00pm

**Location:** Press Conference Room, London Stadium

### **Key personnel:**

- Tara Warren, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, West Ham United
- Nicola Keye, Head of Ticketing, West Ham United
- Steve Gotkine, Operations Director, West Ham United
- Julie Pidgeon, Disability Access Officer, West Ham United
- Nick Kendall, Head of Concessions, West Ham United
- Michael Temple, Head of Commercial, London Stadium 185
- Jake Heath, Supporter Services Manager, West Ham United

### **SAB Members present:**

- Barbara Adams (East Lower – nominated to represent Bondholders)
- Steve Applebee (Betway Upper - nominated to represent Bondholders)
- Cathy Bayford (Betway Lower – nominated to represent ambulant disabled supporters)
- Trevor Bright (Betway Upper – nominated to represent wheelchair-using supporters)
- Brendan Burke (Betway Upper – nominated to represent Bondholders)
- Steve Burton (Bobby Moore Lower)
- Norman Collins (Supporters Clubs - UK and International)
- Bev Cornell (Online Supporters Clubs)
- Ken Hill (Betway Upper)
- Carol Hinvest (Representing Pride of Irons; LGBT Hammers)
- Stacey Housego (East Lower)
- Nigel Khan (Representing West Ham United Independent Supporters Association)
- Patricia Lamb (East Upper)
- Cecilia O'Herlihy (East Lower)
- Sebastian Pearse (Bobby Moore Lower)
- Chris Sheppard (1966 member)
- Lee Vehit (Bobby Moore Lower – expertise in Transport/stadium egress, member of WHU Deaf Supporters Group)
- Sean Whetstone (West Stand Lower)

### **Apologies:**

- Lee Dobinson
- Paul Hobbs
- Sherrie Goldsmith
- Kevin Radley

## **AGENDA**

1. Update on the SAB going forward
2. Disabled supporters update
3. Stewarding
4. Update on actions from last SAB
5. IAAF information
6. Transport update
7. Ticketing renewals and relocations

## **UPDATE ON THE SAB GOING FORWARD**

Tara Warren (TW) opened the meeting by thanking everyone for making the effort to attend and for their commitment to the SAB, before introducing the other representatives on the main panel.

Before proceeding with the agenda items, TW gave a presentation to provide an update on the positive progress of the SAB and the plans going forward, particularly with regards to the structure of the SAB and the groups that members represent.

With the current SAB - whilst representative - containing a number of people who joined via the Founders Feedback Forum and perhaps had individual issues to debate, it has always been the Club's aspiration that the SAB would evolve to have more members who represent a larger group or section of the overall fanbase. Those members will then be tasked with bringing forward the two or three core issues for agenda that the Club can focus on and if necessary invest in and champion for the year ahead, along with the various day to day issues that crop up.

### **Aims and objectives**

- To provide the broadest representation possible of the West Ham United fanbase, representing key groups within the fanbase rather than individuals
- To have a base that ensures the best possible representation of our supporters from both geo / demographic perspectives
- To create a constructive forum for supporters to discuss and put forward key subject matters affecting our fanbase with the West Ham United Board
- To initiate and continue a direct, open and two-way communication between the Club and supporters.
- To allow the Club to provide clarity and context on any key decisions that are made.
- To enable fans to play a key role in improving the supporter experience and shaping the future of West Ham United.

### **Our mission**

- Working together to develop and maintain a positive relationship and the best supporter experience for all West Ham United fans.

### **Structure**

- From consultation, all members have agreed to a smaller, more representative format going forward, with members speaking on behalf of much larger groups and sections of the fanbase.
- The SAB will meet on a minimum of three occasions per season.

- The SAB, and its processes, will be constantly reviewed to ensure the views of our fanbase are fairly and appropriately represented.
- Members should offer relevant experience and advice to deal with current agenda items.
- A call will go out for new applications during the summer providing the opportunity for new supporters to join the SAB.

### **Proposed evolution**

- Supporters who represent larger groups will hold their place on the SAB for the 2017/18 season, to ensure that collectively we maintain the largest representation of West Ham supporters possible.
- New constituencies will be represented for the 2017/18 season and beyond.
- A completely fresh application process for the 2017/18 SAB.
- Fans can apply to represent a particular constituency.
- Those on it to have a public profile on West Ham United platforms, in order that supporters who wish to raise an issue know who they should contact to get their views aired.

TW reiterated West Ham United's commitment to ensuring the SAB continues to evolve and confirmed that, ahead of the 2017/18 season, the Club will be encouraging new applicants to represent, share and discuss the views of our supporters in the following areas:

- Youth (under 25)
- Senior (over 65)
- Women
- Supporters Clubs UK
- Supporters Clubs International
- Non-geographical Supporters Clubs
- 1966 Season Ticket Holders
- Season Ticket Holders from each stand
- Away match-goers
- Families
- Club London

TW added that a lot of new non-geographical supporter groups were beginning to develop and grow, and said the Club had been contacted by a group who represented a section of Asian supporters, which would bring further perspective, and had been in contact with some other groups carrying large representation that we were not previously aware of.

SW asked how large some of these groups were and if individuals would need to demonstrate that they did indeed represent the groups they claimed to. TW confirmed that the Club had also discussed this and agreed that groups representing large sections of the fanbase would need to demonstrate their representation as part of the application process.

### **DISABLED SUPPORTERS UPDATE**

The next item on the agenda was an update following the launch of the Club's Disabled Supporters Advisory Board, which had its inaugural meeting at the stadium last month. TW stated her pride that West Ham United are leading the way in the Premier League for accessibility issues, and explained some of the measures in place helping to achieve that:

- Creation of the Disabled Supporters Advisory Board - the inaugural DSAB meeting was held on April 19 2017 chaired by SAB representatives Cathy Bayford and Trevor Bright
- We have now increased the number of shuttle buses available on egress to 18 in order to cater for demand and to minimise queuing times.
- There is now a pick-up and drop-off point at the official Coach Park at Pudding Mill Lane.
- Highest number of WAV spaces in the Premier League - 253
- One of only six Premier League clubs, and the only one in London, whose number of WAV spaces exceed the minimum requirements set out in Accessible Stadia Guide.
- No limit to number of seats available for ambulant disabled supporters
- There are 45 accessible unisex toilet facilities at London Stadium available on all levels, 50% are currently fitted with radar locks and all will be by start of next season
- West Ham United are one of only two Premier League clubs that meets the minimum number of wheelchair spaces
- Also meets requirements for number of Amenity Easy Access (AEA) seats: 613
- 25% of ticket counters are at an accessible height for wheelchair-users and include induction loops to support hearing aid users, exceeding the requirements for accessible ticket counters set out in Level Playing Field's guidelines.

The Club has reviewed and submitted all information regarding its accessible facilities and services to EHRC and to the Premier League for the Accessible Stadia Guide, which the Club are absolutely committed to achieving. TW added that one of the main reasons the Club are working so closely with the new DSAB is because we really do want to be leading the way, and a team of people are working on every element of that goal – to be the very best.

London Stadium already exceeds or comfortably meets all recommended guidelines in terms of:

- Step-free access into the Stadium
- The number of passenger lifts and parking spaces
- The accessibility of ticket-counters
- Toilets and kiosks
- Three Changing Places facilities
- Rest areas for ambulant disabled supporters (which are in existence at 50m intervals across the Park)
- Colour-coding for visually-impaired fans
- The location of and sightlines from WAV spaces

TW then asked Cathy Bayford (CB) and Trevor Bright (TB) – as the chairs of the DSAB – to provide an update on the progress made in that area and their goals and aims with the DSAB.

CB gave a full explanation of the DSAB launch and process, how it was formed and is represented by a wide cross-section of ages and disabilities. CB explained that the initial meeting had centred around three main issues of concern for disabled supporters, namely the Shuttle Bus service, post-match segregation and car parking facilities at London Stadium.

CB confirmed that those subjects sparked off further subjects for discussion, including the route through the Westfield shopping centre, rest points on the Olympic Park, and the arrangements for

visually-impaired supporters using the headsets for matchday audio commentary, which is a situation that should be resolved for next season.

CB admitted that the walk from Westfield on matchdays is a particular concern, and added that the DSAB are looking at ways to work with Westfield to create a system for the benefit of disabled supporters.

Finally, CB mentioned that a BBC report had come out the day after the DSAB meeting naming Premier League clubs who hadn't supplied their supporters with access statements about their stadiums. CB was happy to report that the issue had already been identified and discussed at the DSAB and that plans were already in place with Jake Heath to launch an interactive map that could also become a mobile app, to help disabled supporters on their route through the park and around the stadium. CB expressed her pride that the DSAB had already begun to make a positive difference in this sense.

Sean Whetstone (SW) asked the panel to clarify a current job advertisement for an apprentice Disability Liaison Officer (DLO), and where that apprentice would fit into the current set-up, or was it the case that Julie Pidgeon (JP) was leaving her role?

JP confirmed that this was not the case, that she had in fact stepped up from being a DLO to becoming a Disability Access Officer (DAO), and that another member of staff, Joanne Dexter, was now a DLO, with the Club recruiting two apprentice DLOs to add to the team.

TW reiterated that, not only was JP not leaving, but that she had been promoted to DAO, and the DLO team had been significantly boosted. The apprenticeship appointments are only to add to that further, so this claim was categorically wrong, and West Ham United will only seek to increase and grow that department.

Nicola Keye (NKey) confirmed that, under the terms of the government's new Apprenticeship Levy, the Club have the opportunity to bring in a number of apprentices, creating career paths and further strengthening the work force. The apprentice – who doesn't necessarily have to be of school-leaving age - will be working in a team of four, headed by JP, with matchday DLOs adding to the team even further.

SW then asked Michael Temple (MT) if LS185 employ any DLOs.

MT confirmed that they do not, but added that accessibility is very important to LS185, and they work closely with Julie, Jake and their teams at all times.

## **STEWARDSHIP**

TW provided an update on the positive work that has taken place in partnership with LS185 to improve the standard of stewarding at London Stadium following the issues that were identified earlier in the season, particularly in relation to the core objective of making stewards feel more a part of the West Ham family.

TW praised the involvement of the SAB and the fan bloggers, who have both been instrumental in helping to inform and report, leading to a hugely positive improvement in the quality of stewarding, with the following actions put in place to achieve that improvement:

- The Club have worked collaboratively with LS185 to introduce a West Ham United section in the steward briefing notes, educating them on the club's history, heritage and traditions.
- West Ham United's Ben Illingworth attends the senior manager and supervisor briefings to provide updates and discuss the importance of being a part of the West Ham Family.

- Supporter Services Manager JH attends the senior managers/supervisor briefing to discuss the role of an SLO and encouraged both teams to work together to ensure our fans experience a consistent, friendly and unified service on matchday.
- Stewards are more West Ham United in appearance and have e.g. the Club crest on their jackets.

### **Improvements to stewarding**

- A steward is stationed at each exit gate to ensure that supporters cannot enter the Stadium via exit gates during the second-half.
- Complaints are now minimal and SLOs are being used as a reporting mechanism back to the Board
- It is vital that steward numbers are noted in these instances as they are now isolated issues – it is likely the steward requires additional training.
- Since the additional security wands were purchased, the Club have received only three complaints regarding the searching process in all. That includes reports to SLOs on the day.

### **Evolution of stewarding**

- The Club and LS185 will be collaboratively reviewing the stewarding service over the summer ahead of the 2017/18 season

One member voiced the opinion that there was just a general lack of empathy and understanding of football crowds remaining among some stewards at the stadium, citing an incident at the recent home match against Liverpool.

Steve Gotkine (SG) emphasised the fact that there had been a big improvement during the course of the season, and assured members that plans are in place for the summer to work even more closely with LS185 and look at re-training and re-inducting stewards to further educate them about West Ham United and their fans. SG also confirmed that, in conjunction with LS185, a new stewarding strategy would be implemented for next season.

MT added that the stewarding standards had come a long way since the start of the season, and that there had been a huge reduction in the number of isolated incidents that had occurred early on.

TW again reiterated the need for all supporters to continue to help the Club and LS185 in reporting incidents should they witness any involving poor levels of stewarding, as there is a process in place for both parties to work together in thoroughly investigating such matters and that, generally, if a case of poor stewarding is identified, the steward in question will not return to London Stadium for West Ham United matches.

TW added that the presence of the SLOs had been a huge positive in that sense, and that the Club would be talking to LS185 over the summer about some significant new measures that will only improve the level of stewarding even further.

SW acknowledged the fact that the measures taken around blocks 113 and 114, next to the segregation line, had worked very positively thanks to a consistency of stewards, many of whom had previously worked at the Boleyn Ground.

Nigel Khan (NKh) said that a survey conducted among WHUISA members resulted in a large percentage of comments giving the positive opinion that stewarding had improved greatly over the course of the season.

TW asked if there were any specific issues relating to stewarding that any group might want to put forward, enabling the club to look into other ideas that could help to continue the improvement.

SH asked about the use of the ABC – Acceptable Behaviour Contract – policy, what its format actually consists of and if the process could be made clearer to supporters.

MT explained that the ABC is used when a supporter has been accused of unacceptable or anti-social behaviour in the stadium. Rather than issue an immediate ban, the Club will invite the supporter to a meeting and, in effect, issue the ABC as a final warning. Where possible the Club and LS185 will always attempt to deal with any such situations in an understanding and amicable manner, but in the event the supporter fails to adhere to the warning and breaches the terms of the ABC, a standard tariff stadium ban is likely to be applied.

NKey added that the ABC is effectively a ‘yellow card’, and MT added that it has been a very effective process.

Cecilia O’Herlihy (CO) asked if it was something the police would be involved in, and MT confirmed this generally wasn’t necessary.

TW added that the entire process was a very fair and transparent one, and that quite a lot of supporters who had been banned earlier in the season had seen the bans rescinded on appeal.

NKh agreed it was a very fair and positive idea.

NKey added that it was important, as part of the ground regulations, to deal quickly and fairly with anti-social behaviour, and that the club would always look to open up clear dialogue with any supporters accused of such behaviour – at times showing them evidence, being lenient when we can, and working together with individuals so that they understand what is not acceptable. NKey expressed satisfaction that the process is working very well.

NKey also mentioned that the Club are already in the process of talking to supporters who were banned earlier in the season on a season long ban and are therefore due to reach the end of their bans in the summer, and will be offered a fresh start.

One member asked who decided what constituted unacceptable behaviour and if it was correct that supporters had been banned for swearing.

MT confirmed that a team of people led by the Safety Officer would make that decision.

TW clarified categorically the fact that not a single person had been banned solely for swearing. TW added that such issues and incidents had largely disappeared as the season wore on, and praised the development and progress of the Club’s Supporter Services team – with much help from SAB members. A new club charter is currently being worked on to be released over the summer, and TW praised it as the best charter she had ever seen at West Ham United, adding that she hoped supporters would be pleased at the level of detail contained within it.

SW asked if stewards under the control of LS185 were due to be paid the London Living Wage in line with SLOs, and following the London Mayor saying he will review pay for sub-contractors.

MT confirmed that the Mayoral investigation is ongoing, and that LS185 have also begun their own investigation with contractors in line with that.

TW confirmed again that Karren Brady had written to the London Mayor supporting the pledge for all sub-contractors at London Stadium to be paid the LLW – in the same way that all full-time and part-time West Ham United staff are – and added that the Mayor had replied to the Executive Vice Chairman confirming that this would happen.

TW added that another huge positive had been the Club’s work in ensuring that stewards felt part of the West Ham family – with the club and London Stadium offering to fund training for any stewards

from the Boleyn Ground who may not have received it and were therefore seeing development and training as a barrier to move. TW again emphasised the need for supporters to report any issues relating to stewarding on a matchday to the nearest supervisor or SLO or directly to the Club thereafter. She stressed action could not be taken if incidents were not reported to the Club. MT backed up that stance and confirmed that if supporters took the number of a steward and reported an incident to a supervisor or Jake Heath and his team, an investigation would be carried out in confidence.

## **UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM LAST SAB MEETING**

TW provided an update on the many actions that have been completed following the previous SAB meeting in January:

### **Accessibility**

- Fixing and maintaining the lift outside of turnstile D - London Stadium 185 have ensured that a lift maintenance engineer is available at the lift at each match since our last meeting and the Club are pleased to report that there have been no further issues – supporters verified this was the case  
Status - action complete
- Increasing the number of radar locks on accessible toilets – At the last meeting it was confirmed that 50% of the accessible toilets on the concourse are fitted with radar locks with the additional 50% to be installed in time for the 2017/18 season
- Status – action complete
- Shuttle Bus service improvements – The Club have now increased the number of shuttle buses available on egress to 18 in order to cater for demand and minimise queuing times. A ticket queuing system was trialed and tested at the Everton match and the Disability Access and Supporter Services team will continue to monitor the service after each game.  
Status – action complete
- Established a pick-up/drop-off point at Pudding Mill Lane station - There is now a pick-up and drop-off point at the official Coach Park at Pudding Mill Lane. Supporters with accessibility needs travelling on coaches or using Pudding Mill Lane station are welcome to utilise this service before and after the game. The service travels between the Coach Park and Car Park 1A  
Status – action complete
- Julie Pidgeon wrote to all disabled supporters with an update on accessible services in January and will further update ahead of 2017/18  
Status- action complete

### **Catering and concourse facilities**

- The 'Ribman' was assisted in finding a plot on Stadium Island – Status – action completed  
The Club will continue to help facilitate any requests between interested former Green Street traders and caterers Delaware North.
- Shelving installed in the concourse area - Shelving has been installed in the concourse areas of every stand. Shelves are positioned in the North, East and South Stands under every second staircase and in the West Stand around the glass walls surrounding the staircases to the Upper tier. Phase two of installation is planned for the new season.  
Status – action complete however supporters stated further shelving was required so status for further enhancements remains open



- Adjusting the ratio of male/female toilet facilities - There are two circles of toilet facilities on the concourse area, an outer ring (nearer turnstiles) and inner ring (nearer gangways). All female toilet facilities on the outer ring have now been changed to male and signage has been covered. This was communicated in our recent 'Feedback Article'.  
Status – action complete.

### **Routes to and from London Stadium**

- Changing routes on matchday for 2016/17

TW explained that egress routes may change for higher category matches depending on the policing and safety operation. E.g. the Police may be present at Bridge 3 after the match to support safe walking routes for both home and away supporters.

There have also been some unprecedented situations that have required the alteration of routes such as the gas leak at the Aquatics Centre that forced Bridge 5 to close. The Club will continue to keep fans reliably informed of any changes and as early as possible across all channels – particularly the Matchday Guide.

### **Entry and exit to London Stadium**

- Solutions to ease congestion at East Stand turnstiles. Emails and text messages were sent to all East Stand ticket holders on a match by match basis to advise of the turnstile that would provide quickest means of access to their seat. A prominent arrive early message has also featured in the Matchday Guide and pre-match email.
- Additional security wands to speed up efficiency of search process
- Revised process is more family friendly
- Founders Wall visit can be arranged if required

TW confirmed Brendan Burke and Jake Heath went to view the Founders Wall at Brendan's request. Anyone experiencing the same issue can contact Jake for further assistance. Status – action completed

- Improve egress - Keeping late kiosks open and communicated their location. Status – Action completed.
- Permitted and prohibited items featured in Matchday Guide. Status – action completed

### **Supporter Liaison and Flag initiative**

- Continuing the expansion of the full-time Supporter Services team and Matchday SLO initiative - Team will play a key role in the supporter experience next season  
Status action completed
- Locations for flags to be displayed are being explored but flags will remain on 'the ears' until a Naming Rights partner is found unless otherwise advised by LS185

SW asked about the average queuing time for the Shuttle Buses.

TW confirmed that since 18 shuttle buses had been added in egress, there was no queue at all to get on to the buses. The average waiting time for segregation barriers at podium level to open this season had been 20 minutes – however, JH confirmed that this had been reduced to an average of nine minutes since January.

JP added that the feedback on the shuttle buses recently has been phenomenal and that the service has come on leaps and bounds.

Brendan Burke (BB) asked why shuttle buses couldn't go to Pudding Mill Lane previously and JH confirmed that construction works meant that it had not been possible previously to access it which is now no longer the case. TW added that as infrastructure continues to develop the journey is improving daily.

One member raised an issue about the shelving that has been erected around concourses and suggested that more was needed.

Nick Kendall (NKen) confirmed that shelving is present in all concourses, but that phase two of the project was still to be finalised and the Club are working with LS185 to have more shelving agreed in time for the new season.

NKen added that health and safety issues had to be considered when installing shelving – particularly to ensure that the height and location of the shelving wouldn't be a risk to children, but that suitable areas had been identified and the Club would continue to work with LS185 over the summer to complete phase two.

One member asked how the club communicate with supporters about public transport closures or issues before matches, and JH confirmed that such information is always provided in a travel update article on the official website and added to the Matchday Guide.

JH then added an update on steps that had been taken to ease congestion at East Stand turnstiles, including emails and text messages sent to supporters reminding them to arrive early, particularly for midweek matches.

On the subject of viewing the Founders Wall, JH and MT both confirmed that before and during matches it is possible to walk around the concourse to view the wall.

TW again confirmed that all information is available in the Matchday Guide, including what kiosks are open after the game if supporters wish to buy refreshments.

TW added that the Matchday Guide is published on every matchday, while it is also emailed to all match-attending supporters, and encouraged SAB members to share with fellow supporters and friends.

SW asked about the segregation barriers on the podium and if they were likely to be removed at some point in the future. MT confirmed the situation is under constant review.

TB asked if it was possible for the ramp across the barriers to be made easier for wheelchairs and mobility scooters to navigate, as suggested by Pete Smith of LS185 at the DSAB meeting. MT confirmed he would raise the matter with PS immediately.

On the flag initiative SW asked where the flags will be located next season.

TW confirmed that given there was currently not a Naming Rights partner it was her understanding that the flags could remain adjacent to the big screen.

MT confirmed that the mid-tier flat fascias around the stadium will have digital wrap screens installed on June 5 but that, with a naming rights partner yet to be confirmed, the flags can continue to be hung across the 'ears' of the scoreboard big screens. Should that situation change, supporters would be advised as soon as possible.

CB asked about the screens on the concourse and asked if the early lunchtime match or other sports channels could be displayed in order to encourage supporters to get into the stadium earlier.

TW explained that the Club had bought the licence from Sky and passed to MT who accepted that the content on screens is far from ideal for supporters and that the situation is under ongoing consideration.

## **IAAF INFORMATION**

TW provided an update ahead of the IAAF World Athletics Championships taking place this summer at London Stadium, confirming it is likely that the first couple of Premier League fixtures might be played away from home, but that nothing can be confirmed until fixtures are known.

TW also emphasised the fact that this year is a one-off situation as part of the contract, with the 2017 World Athletics Championships a once-in-a-generation event, which West Ham United have embraced as a celebration of the Olympic legacy at the stadium. It is the only event of its kind contracted in this way she confirmed with the Clubs priority to play its matches always taking precedence for the next 98 years.

A clean stadium is required for the event, however she confirmed that the Stadium Store and Ticket Office remain open for business as normal throughout the summer.

Supporters asked whether the retractable seats would be improved in near future.

TW confirmed that in relation to the retractable seating at London Stadium, with the issue of how quickly it moves in and out being an issues for the events outside of football and the number that could take place in the summer due to turnaround times but added that it was not an issue for West Ham United . In its permanent format throughout the football season, the seating is in the position it was originally designed to be. There was a discussion around the quality of the sightlines and the fact there are no restricted view seats and members made positive comments around the sightlines.

It was later asked what happened to the skate to move them quickly TW confirmed that skate system had been used at start of the 2016/17 season to get seats ready in time for the Club's first match in the Europa league.

The issue was raised as to whether the Club would ever see a match on Boxing Day again whilst at London Stadium. SG said this was ultimately a decision for the Premier League.

It was suggested that this was a Club decision and TW confirmed that the decision was ultimately that of the Premier League taken on advice from all stakeholders and that it was unlikely that West Ham United would always request to play away from home on Boxing Day. The league's final decision would take into account the views of other stakeholders, but most importantly the police, who would always consider the public's safety as a priority in the context of the high volume of traffic at Westfield on that day.

SW added that the Premier League will always take into account the views of all stakeholders.

## **TRANSPORT UPDATE**

TW gave an update on actions that had been tasked to the Club regarding transport links for supporters travelling to and from London Stadium:

- The Club had met with TfL at Stratford to discuss the station layout and operation on matchdays. The ticket barrier and hallway barrier systems raised at the last meeting were discussed.  
TW confirmed and improvements were taking place and would soon be finalised.

The supporter journey through Stratford is dynamically assessed and is designed to alleviate congestion

- EVC Karren Brady has written to Abellio and South Eastern Railway to request more services for our supporters on matchdays

SW asked about the Last Mile Strategic Group set up by LLDC and asked what impact it will have.

SG confirmed that any impact or changes to the last mile of transport routes will be via consultation with us at the football club, and we support any changes that make the travel experience quicker and more efficient.

Norman Collins (NC) asked where the club were in relation to the stadium capacity increase. TW confirmed that West Ham United are still hopeful that capacity will be at 60,000 for next season.

### **TICKETING – RENEWALS AND RELOCATIONS**

TW provided an update on Season Ticket renewals and explained in detail the process and priorities for supporters wishing to relocate their seats for 2017/18:

- Relocation process will take place between 1st June – 16th June
- All requests are subject to seating availability – with renewal figures reaching a record level it is vital that supporters are clearly aware of this.
- Priority will be afforded to those with accessibility requirements and supporters who have previously contacted us during the season with particular issues, including the supporters moved from block 114 through out of necessity in order to widen the segregation line.
- Season Ticket Holders will receive further information later this week.

SW asked about the current percentage of renewals ahead of next week's deadline.

NKey confirmed that, while it would be wrong to announce numbers while the renewal period is still open, the average across the Premier League, is an 80% renewal rate. TW confirmed that the Club will exceed this and added that this makes it very important to manage expectations on relocations. With such a large number of people renewing – and those Season Ticket holders wishing to remain in their existing seat obviously having the right to do so – relocation options may be limited.

SW then raised an issue regarding telephone calls coming from the Ticket Office without any club official on the end of the line. NKey confirmed this was an issue caused by an automated dial-up technology, and urged any supporters experiencing the problem to contact the Ticket Office immediately and make them aware.

SW asked if the renewal deadline would be extended if the online facility crashed on deadline day as it has done in the past.

NKey confirmed that the deadline could be extended if such extraordinary situation did occur, but added that steps had been taken to avoid the problem, including increasing the bandwidth on the Ticketmaster system and ensuring additional IT support.

One member enquired about the concessionary rates for younger supporters, based on the fact that some – including his son – are still in full-time education beyond the age of 21 and therefore are having to pay full adult prices for their season ticket despite not yet having a working wage as income.

NKey assured the member that ticket pricing strategy is something that is constantly reviewed, but added that the Club's commitment to affordable family football means that an adult season ticket in band 5 is available for £289, offering value for money in comparison across the Premier League.

TW added that the under 21 rate was introduced to expand beyond university students solely so any young people, whether they be apprentices or trained in the workplace with limited income could also benefit. The length of the concession however is under review.

As the meeting drew to a close, members raised a few other points outside of the main agenda items.

SW asked about pre-season fixtures and when they would be announced. TW confirmed that the full schedule should be released shortly.

SW then asked for an update on Champions Place stones.

TW confirmed that 12,000 had been installed and that all stones purchased after April 2016 were always due to be installed this summer as weather conditions and footfall would make it very difficult for installation to take place during the season.

Despite the fact this was widely communicated, TW accepted it hadn't been very well understood. TW also acknowledged that the Club could understand the frustrations of supporters over the inability to confirm an installation date. The Club she added, have been pushing for this on a daily basis.

TW confirmed that, where this had been unacceptable to supporters, refunds had been given and the Club were happy to do so if this was required. However, she hoped supporters would bear with the Club and that the situation would hopefully be resolved during the summer.

Lee Vehit (LV) asked if there was an update on the potential naming of bridges approaching the stadium on the Olympic Park.

TW confirmed that the Club were continuing to put forward proposals and request clarification over the situation, as the Club are aware that it is something very important to supporters.

NKh asked about the Champions statue currently located at the Green Street-Barking Road junction.

TW confirmed that, to the best of her knowledge, the Champions statue would be coming over to London Stadium in the future. This had also been confirmed by Newham Council in a different context at a meeting with Barrett when discussing the legacy of the Boleyn Ground.

## **CONCLUSION**

TW ended the meeting by thanking everyone for making such a valuable contribution and providing such constructive feedback and ideas that West Ham United could act upon quickly, and reiterated the club's absolute commitment to the SAB format and moving it forward in a positive fashion.

All members will be invited to reapply for the 2017/18 season, and the hope is that the SAB will continue to grow, with future members representing wider sections of the fanbase, in order to identify and resolve the major issues that affect a larger number of supporters.

TW also mentioned how pleasing it was to have members on board who are representing larger supporter groups, including Nigel Khan from WHUISA, Carol from the Pride of Irons group and Bev Cornell, who represents a number of large Facebook fan groups.

Bev spoke about the four groups she represents on Facebook, including the Claret and Blue Army that has 12,500 followers and Come on You Irons with 3,500 followers. The groups are very much focused on families and used by parents bringing children to matches.

TW added how proud the Club were to see Pride of Irons representing West Ham United at *Pride London*, while Carol spoke about how closely the group are working with the Club on issues affecting them, including looking ahead to the fixture against Brighton next season and how supporters can be educated on the issue of homophobic abuse, which is something that Brighton fans sadly face more than any other club. Pride of Irons have already presented to the SLOs and have had some fantastic feedback from that.

TW finished by expressing her pride at how the SAB had developed into such a positive initiative, and her hope that going forward it becomes a truly representative forum for the largest number of supporters possible, with members representing large groups and each bringing their absolute top two or three issues to the group that can be used to set the agenda and lead to the club investing time, effort and money into improving the overall supporter experience for the benefit of all.