

Supporter Advisory Board meeting minutes

Date: Wednesday 28th February 2018

Time: 6.00pm – 8.00pm

Location: Press Conference Room, London Stadium

Key personnel:

- Karren Brady, Vice-chairman, West Ham United
- Tara Warren, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, West Ham United
- Nicola Keye, Head of Ticketing, West Ham United
- Julie Pidgeon, Disability Access Officer, West Ham United
- Ben Illingworth, Head of Matchday Operations, West Ham United
- Jake Heath, Supporter Services Manager, West Ham United
- Gavin Stanley, Head of Retail, West Ham United
- Joe Lyons, CEO West Ham Foundation

SAB Members present:

- Debbie Hoffman (Treasurer of Hammers Supporters Club)
- David Baker (West Stand)
- Sean Whetstone (Claret and Hugh)
- Bev Cornell (Claret and Blue Bubble social media platform)
- Steve Applebee (Nominated to represent Bondholders)
- John Beavis (Chair of Bondholder committee)
- Don Adams (Representing Over 65s supporters)
- Cecilia O'Herlihy (East Stand)
- Lee Vehit (Bobby Moore Lower, member of WHU Deaf Supporters Group)
- Trevor Bright (Representing Wheelchair using disabled supporters; co-founder of DSAB)
- Paul Turner (Vice-Chair of West Ham United Independent Supporters Association)
- Sue Watson (Secretary of West Ham United Independent Supporters Association)
- Alistair Holmes (Representing Pride of Irons)
- Jim Dolan (Representing Pride of Irons)
- Jodie Crane (Representing women)
- Brian Gale (Club London Restaurants)
- Alexander Middleton (Scandinavian Hammers-International Supporters Club)
- Martine Dodwell-Bennett (Representing Bondholders)

Apologies

- Colin James (1966 Season Ticket Holders)
- Joshua Dodd (Youth Supporters)
- Anthony Rosenthal (Away match goers)
- Jose Sanchez (Club London Bars)
- Thomas Hickey (South Stand)
- Aaron Watkins (North Stand)
- Sunil Karir (Families)

AGENDA

1. Working with Fan Groups and the SAB
2. Actions from last SAB
3. Our football Club is for everyone
4. DSAB update
5. West Ham United Look and Feel
6. Ticketing update
7. West Ham Help Centre
8. Agenda items submitted in advance
9. What happens next?
10. A.O.B

WORKING WITH FAN GROUPS AND THE SAB

Karren Brady (KB) thanked everyone for attending in the bad weather and stressed how important these meetings are when making key decisions and enhancing the supporter experience. KB introduced her team and explained the absence for LS185 and the Metropolitan Police due to the bad weather.

ACTIONS FROM LAST SAB

KB introduced JH who ran through the actions from the previous SAB. JH said that Sky Sports News was now shown on the TV concourses pre-match and the away ticket allocation process was trialled for four games with more to be explained later in the meeting. JH said that additional shelving has been put in on the concourses, especially in the North, West and South stands since the last meeting. Ben Illingworth (BI) added that additional shelving for the East stand has been approved, and will be installed shortly. Sean Whetstone (SW) asked for the amount invested in shelving. BI confirmed £40,000 in total.

Tara Warren (TW) introduced the Club's plans to celebrate the history and heritage around the Stadium, including the Bobby Moore exhibition, held in the Club Shop. TW explained that additional Bobby Moore imagery had been added to the exterior of the Stadium, and asked the group to contribute their ideas to improving concourse design. KB added how important it is that the Club gain a consensus of how supporters would like us to celebrate history and heritage, rather than the Club deciding independently. KB explained the plan is to create some themes, such as Bobby Moore and the history of the crests, and create some visuals for the SAB to feedback on.

CHAMPIONS STATUE

Steve Applebee (SA) asked KB for an update on the Champions Statue. KB said that the Council must sanction the move and that a Cabinet vote will decide the next action. KB further explained that the junction was due to be demolished for a new housing development, it was originally dictated that the statue must move at some point, and we would prefer it to be moved here. David Baker (DB) asked for further information on the ownership of the Champions Statue. KB clarified that the Club own it with the Council. SW added that the Arts Council contributed £400,000 and the Club paid £325,000. TW said It was always intended that the statue would move to London Stadium and the developers have a section 106 commitment to replace the Champions Statue. This was agreed with them when the ground was sold as we were always mindful that the Boleyn site required a legacy, as well as moving key elements with us to our new home for our supporters but the decision was now

political and due to be determined at a cabinet meeting scheduled for 22 April so Club were waiting info pending that.

KB asked JH to update on the Hammers Supporters Club. JH explained that the Club have agreed to sponsor the new venue at Stour Space for the remainder of the season.

SAB MEMBER PROFILES

JH explained that, to increase the profile of the SAB, SAB member profiles would begin to be in place from the Burnley matchday programme onwards, as well as placed on the website. DSAB profiles of Trevor Bright (TB) and Cathy Bayford (CB) have already been included in the matchday programme, to publish the launch of a dedicated DSAB email address. KB asked TB how successful the email address had been. TB explained that he felt more people needed to be made aware of the service. KB actioned Julie Pigeon (JP) and JH to produce business cards and leaflets showing the DSAB email address.

CHAMPIONS PLACE

JH provided an update on Champions Place Stones. JH confirmed that 1,200 stones, as part of the second phase, were installed at the end of October 2017. Each supporter was contacted by email to confirm which phase their stone was to be included in. JH added that some concerns had been raised over the clarity of the stones, JH said that the stones are made of granite and are hard wearing, with the clarity affected by the cleanliness of the stones, despite them being regularly jet-washed. JH confirmed that the Club are looking at long-term solutions to enhance the clarity of the inscriptions, and there is now an inhouse team working on that, which had previously been run by an external company. SW asked how often the stones are cleaned. JH confirmed the stones are cleaned in advance of every home game.

MEMORIAL GARDEN

JH said that Barratt have a team on site to clean up litter and debris at the Memorial Garden, but anything further than that, such as maintenance of trees and shrubbery, is now managed by the Club as we were dissatisfied with the way it was being maintained. BI confirmed that the maintenance team will now visit the Memorial Garden weekly. SW asked for clarification on ownership of the Memorial Garden land following the development of the area. KB confirmed the Club have committed, in partnership with Barratt, to speak with the families to act on their wishes. SW asked if the Club would be maintaining the Memorial Garden in the long-term. TW confirmed that the long-term aim is to landscape the area, in accordance with the families' wishes, and potentially return the land to the public realm. KB reiterated that the Club's commitment is to the families, as their views are more important than anyone else. KB is committed to maintaining the area now and in the future, should it not be maintained to the level the Club would expect.

JH provided an update on displaying flags in the Sir Trevor Brooking Upper Tier, confirming the Club were still considering further spaces to display supporter flags. TW added that the Club had shown digital versions of supporter flags on the LED screens during games.

Joe Lyons (JL) was invited to speak about the Premier League Equality Standard. JL said the Club were awaiting confirmation of achieving the intermediate level award. JL highlighted the positive work of the DSAB, and how the equality standard is down to a whole Club approach to diversity and inclusion. JL confirmed as soon as the Club have been awarded the intermediate level, there would be a further 18 months of working towards the Advanced Standard. JL raised how important it was

that the Club communicated their work to a wider audience and explained that the home fixture against Everton has being the designated Kick It Out match.

DB asked if the departure of Tony Henry had any impact on the award of the standard. KB confirmed this had no implication on the Club, and the only measure the Club places on players is whether they are good enough. SW asked if the FA or the police had launched an investigation into the comments. KB confirmed there is an FA investigation.

DSAB UPDATE

KB commented on how positive the relationship is with the DSAB, explicitly highlighting their determination and desire to get things right. TB firstly offered his apologies for CB's absence. TB said how educational being on the DSAB is, and how positive the response had been. TB noted the launch of the dedicated DSAB email address, allowing supporters to contact TB and CB directly. KB said how wonderful it was to receive the first email to the address which was overwhelmingly positive regarding the accessibility facilities offered by both the Club and the Stadium. KB revealed herself and many the staff present were about to take their BSL level 101 exam. JP added that 7 other staff at the Club had started their level 102 and 103 BSL training.

JP introduced the launch of an accessibility pass for any supporters with non-visible disabilities, which will be in place from the Burnley fixture. KB said the DSAB is one of the best examples anywhere of how a group of people working with a football club can benefit all.

Sue Watson (SW) asked if the Club provided facilities for supporters with visual impairments. KB said the Club have a number of audio headsets available. SW further asked about the facilities for supporters with sensory impairments. KB said the Club are looking into the introduction of a sensory room. JP added that the Club were working with the Sheppey foundation and the National Autistic Society.

WHU LOOK AND FEEL

KB asked TW to speak on concourse design. TW asked the committee who would wish to be present for a design focus group. Full committee indicated an interest in attending so TW said would cover at next SAB.

TICKETING UPDATE

Nicola Keye (NK) confirmed Season Ticket prices for 2018/19 would be frozen. Band 5 tickets would continue to be the same rate when sold on a two-year term. SW asked if those who did not initially purchase the two-year deal would be the same rate. KB confirmed they would pay the same as they paid for the previous season if purchasing for 2 years. NK added that any supporter who is currently a band 5 Season Ticket Holder would be given the opportunity to purchase a two-year ticket, but they are mindful that for those who do not wish to make the two-year commitment have the option to purchase for a single season, at £320. SW asked for clarification on the prices for band 5 Season Ticket Holders who were not Founder Members. KB said Band 5 Season Ticket Holders will be frozen at £289 if they renew for two-years. KB added if they renew for one year, they will pay £320. SW asked the price for new Season Ticket Holders. NK said supporters on the Season Ticket Waiting list who purchase a band 5 Season Ticket will pay £320. NK confirmed that renewing Season Ticket Holders in all bands will renew at the existing price, with new Season Ticket Holders also paying the existing price. Founder Member U16s will continue to pay £99, with pricing structures continually reviewed season by season.

DB asked if the Season Ticket seat move process would be the same as the previous season. NK confirmed this would be the case, with 8,000 seat moves processed last year. She added that the Club do not anticipate the same volume of seat moves. KB added that the moves are subject to availability and asked SAB members when the renewal process should open. Committee agreed this should be as soon as possible. NK confirmed June 1 would be the deadline for Season Ticket renewals. MDB asked if fans would have to pay upfront. KB confirmed there would be a finance option available. NK added this would be over a 10-month or 4-month period. Paul Turner (PT) asked for the APR on the finance plan. NK said the details were still being finalised, but said that the deal would be favourable.

Brian Gale (BG) asked for Club London renewal details when the initial 3-year period ends next season. KB said this was still under consideration, however, there would be some changes made in Club London. KB commented this does not mean prices will increase. DB suggested a fan survey to gain opinions on Club London. KB confirmed the Club is regularly surveying fans, and there is a large waiting list for corporate hospitality.

SW asked for the specific number on the Season Ticket waiting list. KB confirmed 48,000. PT asked how supporters know their specific place on the waiting list. NK answered that the Ticket Office would be calling the first couple of thousand at the top of the waiting list to confirm interest, as well as writing to all supporters on the waiting list to confirm the process. SW asked if the 48,000 on the waiting list is purely supporters who have paid £10 to be on the list. KB confirmed this is the case, adding the £10 charge is a one-off payment redeemable against the season ticket purchase.

NK provided an update on the away ticket trial. NK identified a significant amount of negative feedback as a reason for the trial, stating that 43,034 fans have 10 Priority Points or less, effectively locking those supporters out of getting an away ticket. The aim of the trial was to ensure the Club could take the full allocation for away fixtures, and increase the opportunity for new fans to attend away games, as well as improving physical attendance at games. 1583 tickets sold during the trial matches went to Season Ticket Holders, with the rest selling to Claret Members. NK said the Club would be looking into feedback from the trial to plan future actions. Jim Dolan (JD) asked if Supporters Clubs would be eligible for an allocation of tickets. NK answered that at the current time our 52,000 Season Ticket Holders would take priority.

NK said the small number of tickets available to the 10%, should the trial system be implemented fully, still allows for Season Ticket Holders with the largest number of Priority Points to take priority. DA raised that there would always be extenuating circumstances that stop supporters attending away games. KB replied the Club would be looking at identifying patterns where supporters are not attending regularly. TB asked how long a period Priority Points were accumulated over and NK confirmed this is the previous season and the current season. MDB asked if supporters could return away tickets should a commitment stop them attending. NK confirmed the Club would be looking into creating a facility for this. KB added it was difficult to find the perfect solution as supporters views generally reflect their own circumstances but the Club was trying to satisfy the majority.

PT raised that WHUISA had conducted a ticket survey amongst their members as to the KB asked for results. PT chose not to share the results with the group, instead saying they would be released publicly the following day.

Lee Vehit (LV) raised that it is increasingly difficult for young supporters to attend away games. DB added that the Club should offer a facility to encourage more young people to attend away games,

as the Club have done with home fixtures. KB said it is very difficult to find a system that pleases everyone. Alexander Middleton (AM) commented that international supporters appreciated the new scheme because it allowed them to attend away fixtures. KB highlighted how important it is any scheme is fair and gives all supporters a chance.

WEST HAM HELP

JH introduced the West Ham Help Centre with accompanying screenshots of the facility. The Help Centre is a dedicated fan website full of FAQs, assisting supporters in finding their answer as quickly and conveniently as possible. All key fan information and enquiries will be centralised using West Ham Help, with an additional mechanism for contacting Supporter Services available directly through the Help Centre. There is also a most popular articles section which would be continuously updated and Jake stressed how important fan feedback will be as the driving force to the Help Centre's success. A focus group will be planned ahead of the next SAB meeting to enable some of the members to take a look at the site and provide feedback ahead of its launch. JH introduces the Fan Journey Video. Video duration: 1 minute.

AGENDA ITEMS SUBMITTED BY SAB MEMBERS

KB said there have been improvements in stewarding. There are over 1,000 stewards working on a matchday, and the Stadium has moved from using one stewarding company to four companies. KB added that some key roles in the Stadium have been filled by key personnel from the Boleyn Ground, and the Club have continued to proactively search for more former Boleyn stewards, with former Boleyn stewards also being hired as Supporter Liaison Officers. KB said the Club have offered to pay for any additional training required. KB confirmed the number of complaints has fallen, and the Club have made good progress, but there is still some way to go.

BI echoed KB's comments and said he continues to actively speak to stewards regarding the heritage of Club. SW asked for the four stewarding companies now hired by the Stadium. KB confirmed G4S, CSP, Wise and Expedia. BI added he has asked the four companies to confirm the number of former Boleyn stewards they have working for them. BI confirmed 2 of the 4 quadrant managers are former Boleyn stewards.

DA asked about the opening of exit doors following the home fixture against Shrewsbury. BI confirmed he is aware of the incident, and added that the Safety Officer at the Stadium is responsible for the opening of the main exit doors. The Safety Officer monitors the egress level from the control room, and for the Shrewsbury game the Safety Officer was not ready to allow a full egress until nearer the conclusion of extra-time. BI clarified that should supporters wish to leave the Stadium before the exit doors are opened, they can use the (single exit) mushroom doors, which are all manned by stewards. DA added that following people leaving, supporters using the Shuttle Bus Service were not permitted to exit the car park. KB explained that shuttle buses cannot exit the car park until the safety officer declares it safe to reopen the surrounding roads. This is due to 57,000 people leaving the stadium at once at using the surrounding roads to get to their onward destinations. KB actioned BI to monitor the opening of exit doors at future matches.

Jodie Crane (JC) raised the lack of facilities in women's toilets, from hand-driers to bag hooks. KB actioned JH to complete an audit of all toilets.

THE STADIUM

SW asked KB about the relationship with LLDC and the London Mayor. KB discussed ongoing conversation with the Mayor of London's office and her willingness to meet Sadiq Khan. KB said she had recently met new CEO Lyn Garner that day and who was interested to hear about the issues West Ham had been facing. KB said she stated her frustration to Lyn Garner that LLDC had left West Ham out of seating solution discussions.

MDB asked how the Club could resolve the actions raised by a number of fans, when many of the issues were under the control of the Stadium. KB added the Club were in talks with E20 regarding renaming one bridge 'The West Ham Way'. E20 confirmed the decision is with LLDC. SW asked if this would be one or two bridges. KB confirmed the current discussions are over one bridge. MDB raised the possibility of relocating the Green Street vendors to the Stadium. KB answered that one idea was to invite the vendors to sell on the West Ham Way bridge if a solution could be found with E20.

SW asked for a preview of the Club finances. KB confirmed income controlled by the Club went up £9 million. SW asked about the role of retail. KB identified passing trade as an issue. DB asked about car parking. KB confirmed that when the building works for the local school is finished, the car parking issue would be resolved. KB added that the accounts would include an explanation of the headlines.

TB raised the number of fixture changes for TV scheduling. KB answered that the value of the contract allows TV companies to pick and choose any game.

LV raised the lag between the live match and the big screens inside the Stadium, as it can cause sensory issues for supporters with neurological disorders. KB answered that you cannot show full live coverage as the FA does not permit contentious incidents to be shown. JH added that there is always going to be some form of delay. KB actioned JH to monitor the delay at the next three home fixtures.

DB asked for an update on Stadium WiFi. KB said the WiFi was meant to be installed with the naming rights sponsor, and the cost of installing WiFi is £1.1million. The Stadium have said they cannot afford the installation without a sponsor. KB added that the Stadium have spent money on a temporary enhancement for mobile phone coverage.

SW commented on the showcasing of Club memorabilia. KB answered that there is currently the Bobby Moore exhibition and added that the Club have conducted research into a potential museum, as the previous Club museum at the Boleyn Ground was closed due to lack of interest. KB said there is some interest in temporary exhibitions, or adding items to the existing Stadium tour. TW expressed that the Club are determined to introduce something following extensive supporter consultation.

DA added that the Stadium PA system was extremely loud, but in the same stand, pitch-side interviews cannot be heard clearly. BI confirmed that audio comes through the same system, so it is something which can be rectified. JD asked if announcements could also be played outside the Stadium during half-time for the external area on the East Stand. TW actioned JH and BI to monitor audio levels at the next three home fixtures.

KB again thanked all SAB members for attending, particularly in the heavy snow and explained that JH would be in touch to discuss any outstanding queries.

Full equality and Diversity Video played (Duration: 8 minutes).

