

Fans Forum

Match Day Experience

Online Teams Meeting

18:00 – 19:00 23 August 2023

In attendance from LFC: Paul Cuttill, Vice President Stadium Operations; Chris Markey, Director Safety & Security; Bryan Denny, Digital Research Manager; Yonit Sharabi, Supporter Liaison Officer; Amanda Jacks, Director of Supporter Engagement

Fans Forum: Roy Bentham, Supporters Board Chair; Geoff Jones; Andrew Hudson; Jon Lewis; Pamela O'Donnell; Gary Evans; Jayne Page

Apologies: Danny King

The meeting opens with Paul Cuttill giving the Forum an update on the Anfield Road redevelopment. Of course by now the news about Buckingham's is very much in the public domain.

Paul stressed that it was very important to remember that contractors will have lost work and that we should not lose sight of the human element.

At the time of the meeting, it was very difficult to advise the Forum what the future may look like but contingencies are being prepared and everybody involved in the project is working extremely hard to get the stand open and minimise disruption to match goers.

As and when the club are in a position to confidently share plans and timescales they will although it was shared that the plan to phase the opening is still in place.

The Forum was advised that there are some elements of the remaining work that we can plan and carry out and this will include urgent repairs to the Sensory Room with the aim of having it ready by mid to late September.

Work is also being undertaken to tidy elements of the site including the car parks to free up bays.

Chris Markey gave the Forum a presentation outlining changes to security procedures that the club are implementing this season. Primarily the main ones that will be noticed by supporters will be an increase in the searching of home supporters and a reversal of the policy that had banned bags. Match goers are now permitted to bring bags to the stadium providing they are no bigger than an A5 piece of paper ((148.5 x 210 mm / 5.8 x 8.3 inches).

The primary drivers for the changes are in preparation of the imposition of "Martyn's Law" (Martyn was a victim of the Manchester Arena bombings and his mother campaigned for various changes to work towards making events safer). You can see Figen Murray being interviewed by the Sports Ground Safety Authority about the horrendous loss of her son and how it propelled her into become a safety campaigner [here](#).

Chris went on to explain that historically supporters were searched before entering football stadiums to mitigate the risk of public disorder and prevent supporters from taking prohibited articles into stadiums.

While this is still the case, more recently, however, searches (which are a condition of entry) are carried out to as a preventative measure against Terrorism. Anfield, a globally famous venue is consistently assessed as a high risk possible target and we are required to have Counter Terrorism plans in place by the Sports Ground Safety Authority.

The Forum was broadly understanding and accepting of the steps that the stadium operations team must take (which differ little from every large venue – or publicly accessible space as they're more formally known) in the country) but questions were asked about bringing European matchday programmes into the stadium as they are larger than the A5 bag size currently allowed. A commitment was made by Yonit Sharabi to investigate this further.

With regard to bringing in flags and banners Chris Marky emphasised that the club stewards should take a common sense approach but if the club are informed in advance of an intention to bring a flag/banner then generally that will be accommodated.

The Forum asked about the consultation process which led to rail seats being installed in the Anfield Lower. Chris explained the sole reason for the installation was to improve the sight lines which could on occasion be impacted if away fans stood persistently. There is no intention, formal or otherwise, for this area to become a licenced standing area and the standing/sitting practices will be monitored.

It was emphasised to the Forum that the club remain absolutely committed to tackling Tragedy Chanting with positive action.

The policing of the Chelsea fixture away at Stamford Bridge was raised with questions asked about why individuals chanting murderers weren't arrested. It was suggested that the Spirit of Shankly contact their counterparts at the Chelsea Supporters Trust who are participants of London's Met Polices' Football Policing Independent Advisory Group. This feedback could be fed back via that forum for the Met Police to comment.

Finally, it was confirmed that the Food Banks would be hosted at Anfield on every Match day and the Forum expressed its approval and thanks for involving local children for the launch of the new kit in conjunction with Boss Mags.