

## Fans Forum

### Match Day Experience

### Online Teams Meeting

18:00 – 19:00 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**In attendance from LFC:** Paul Cuttill, Vice President Stadium Operations; Bryan Denny, 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; Jon Lews

**Apologies:** None received

Yonit opened the meeting, welcomed all and thanked them for their attendance.

**Paul Cuttill** gave the forum updates on various aspects of Stadium Operations:

The recruitment drive has been successful seeing a shift towards 65% of match day staff employed directly meaning 35% of staff are agency.

The number of bars on the concourses used for training have increased with positive feedback.

The Club are introducing "Foundation Taking" initially with just one bar. The concept is that the Foundation will provide staff and the club will donate a proportion of the takings to the Foundation. This will help with consistency of staff.

Tap and Pay has been trialled in the away end and upper Kop. This helps towards getting draft and chilled beer our faster.

Bus Pick Ups: This was raised with the Transport Working Group. No changes/additions can be made for the remainder of this season but we could look at the 917 service and the Soccer Bus next season.

Cleanliness around Anfield: Our cleaners are going out both at half time and post game. An increased number of supporters means more rubbish. The Club are speaking to the Council about the bins currently provided as not being fit for purpose. The Club have a solution in mind and will be discussing this with LCC in the future.

### Premier League Match Day Survey

Bryan Denny will provide full information on the outcome of the Survey at a future meeting but in the short term in can advise that our stewarding and catering were top of the league within that survey.

### **Draft Beer in the Upper Kop**

The Forum asked when that would be trialled and ready. In response, the Club advised that we have trialled and that the outcome wasn't great. However, we are looking at alternatives and hope to have a system to trial in the away end at the last game of the season that we hope will offer a vast improvement. It would be a good addition to the Upper Kop where there is a demand for cold, draft beer.

### **Anfield Road Update**

With the exception of one small section in the away end, the stand is now mostly open. We have to hand the stand back to the contractor after every home game so we are still limited as to what we can do but after every game we are a step further forward. External areas are almost complete from a landscaping perspective and we have draft soft drinks in with draught beer hopefully being in place by the end of the season. Practically complete in all areas by the end of May.

Over the summer there will be some remedial works to the roof with the work starting after the concerts. Work will also commence on the accessibility platform, and it is anticipated that this won't be ready until early September but we are working hard to improve this programme.

We hope the away end – AL9 – will be ready by the Spurs game but if not, we should have a full away section by the end of the season.

We are nearly there! The feedback is largely positive, and the atmosphere has gone up a notch.

All being well, we should be done by the start of the new season give or take a week or two.

The Forum noted for their own experiences that the atmosphere is great, and the stand looked good but clearly is still a work in progress.

### **Rail Seating**

Ahead of the installation of further rail seating in the Kop the Forum were assured that all fans will be communicated with and that any questions they may have will be properly addressed. Everybody impacted will be contacted and options provided.

It is anticipated that works will commence in July but it was not felt that they would be completed by the start of the new season. The picture would be clearer once works commence.

It was confirmed that the Hillsborough families were consulted with as they have been throughout the process.

The Forum asked how those specifically impacted be dealt with and were told that they would be contacted and options provided

Roy asked again about a 2007 style migrations so standers/sitters could be accommodated as the mention in the Atmosphere Report. It was clarified that the subject was on the agenda for the forthcoming Supporters Board meeting.

## End of Season Update

The club were planning for Jurgen Klopp's farewell and what the last game of the season will look like. Although the final picture isn't clear, plans are in place.

Roy thanked Paul Cuttill for the report and update.

## Club Website

The Forum asked about IT and the club website stating that some hyperlinks don't work and that finding certain information could be confusing; some features worked on ipads but not iphones. In one case, help with ticketing could not be provided over the phone so a visit to the ticket office became necessary on the day of the match.

It was further felt that not being able to contact the Club by phone could be frustrating at times and that the only way of doing so on the call was through the disability line. It was raised as an idea that fans should be part of the testing on the website to allow for user user feedback. Yonit committed to take the feedback to the relevant departments and feedback. She also encouraged fans to feedback as much detail as possible.

## Holdback at Old Trafford

A Forum member raised concerns about the nature of the hold back at Old Trafford following the game there. He had been in plenty before but this time [it](#) got a 'bit angry' in places. He does not see the point of being held in seats and wondered why the concourse could not be used. He also went on to state that the behaviour of some GMP officers was not the best, that you are made to feel like a criminal and that in their view, there is no need for a hold back – it causes trouble. Ultimately, who agrees on the hold back and how long it lasts for:

Yonit advised the forum that we hold a fan engagement meeting with [a](#) fan rep on a pre match call together with reps from both police services, and clubs. Hold backs are discussed as [a](#) potential at post match and whether to impose one is decided on the day. Many factors are taken into account and the decision ultimately lies with the police match commander and the safety officer. [Once](#) a decision is made, it is announced to all fans on the stadium tannoy and LFC also send a social media message.

With regard to not being allowed access onto the concourse en masse, [Amanda](#) explained that the reasoning used to be that there was a concern that a lot of supporters could potentially overpower stewards and make their way outside. She clarified that she wasn't sure if that was the current reasoning.

With regard to the conduct of GMP officers, it was clarified that the policing pre match briefings Are advised of the fan behaviours. As always, we encourage feedback if you've been met with any issues.

Finally, on access to the toilets it was raised that the police stand in the vomitories making it very difficult for anybody to get past and that generally the holdbacks were not well managed.

Yonit opened the invitation to one of the members to get an insight into the discussion pre-match / post-match call for the next game.

The conversation about the Old Trafford experience ended on a positive; it was noted that Tragedy Chanting was significantly less and that it looks as though the messaging is finally getting through and the threats of banning orders and fines were having an impact.

Yonit confirmed that pre match briefings observed at Old Trafford with the head stewards were also very good and thorough with regard to Tragedy Chanting. Sharing the video made by the Premier league and the information prepared by LFC on the matter.

### **Atalanta**

It was confirmed that a pre match briefing for supporters would take place the following week.

A member of the Forum advised that Atalanta had been described as the Napoli of the North and there were some concerns among fans that needed addressing as there was potential for issues.

Yonit advised that her number could be given to anybody with concerns for a call or meeting on the and that she will also be available on the day of the match. The Atalanta local police had offered to join a pre match call with fan groups to go through their operation and what fans can expect on the day. It was further advised that following a recce which was completed ahead of the fixture, security matters were discussed as well as operational matters and that the Club is satisfied with the measures planned by Atalanta.

### **Television Fixtures**

The Forum felt that LFC should champion their supporters concerns about late announcement of fixtures and advised of the logistical nightmare it is for travelling fans.

LFC should not just accept delays but really push and lead the way to ensure that fans are not inconvenienced any more than strictly necessary. There was a feeling the club should be more publicly critical of late announcements, and could make away tickets cheaper (£10) and offer free coaches to assist supporters.

PC said he would take this feedback to his colleagues.

### **AOB**

Thanks were expressed by Roy for the match day experience walk around before the Burnley game. It was a great way to see how the club operates pre game and he hoped that LFC would extend that invitation out again to those who couldn't attend last time. PC confirmed he'd be happy to arrange similar in the future.

The meeting then closed.

