

Fans Forum
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
Online Teams Meeting
03 December 2024
18.00-19.00

In attendance from LFC: Yonit Sharabi, Forum Chair and Supporter Liaison Officer; Rishi Jain, Director of Impact; Amanda Jacks, Director of Supporter Engagement; James Wood Digital Research Manager.

Fans Forum: Cassie Rattray (temporary) Supporters Board Representative, Ross Hovey (representing Disabled fans), Rabbi Marc Levene (representing faith & culture) Riaz Ravat (representing faith & culture) Attendance in part Marie Linger (representing Overseas supporters)

Apologies: Collette Armitage (representing LFCW) Yunas Lunat (representing faith)

Other Absences: Sandra Walton (representing LGBT fans) Anna Orlinski (representing LGBT fans)

Update from Yonit Sharabi

At the last meeting the 917 bus service was discussed and it had been highlighted how beneficial this service is, especially for disabled supporters. It was asked if we had reduced the number of coaches after moving locations. It was explained that we had checked with the transport working group, and the same number of coaches are still being used. The reason for changing the location was to position the coaches outside the road closure area. This allows each bus to leave as soon as it's full, so the next one can be loaded. It's a quicker and more efficient system.

The club have been working on improvements to the text line for supporters who need to report behavioural problems at home games. When the new service goes live, reports will be received in real time allowing for an immediate response and reaction.

The club aim to launch the improved service in the new year.

Update from Rishi Jain

LFC had marked the International Day of Disability with heartwarming footage of young Issac Kearney visiting the AXA Training Centre and meeting the players. He went on to be a mascot for the game v MCFC to a phenomenal response. Isaac was fully deserving of the recognition.

LFCW put out a short feature film about Sally Garster, a life long supporter of the club. Her love for LFC shines through in the film and we are grateful she trusted us with what is a really empathetic piece. Her friend, Gemma Bonner, featured in the film giving us the opportunity to to align both the mens and womens team in marking this important day.

Rainbow Laces: The club supported the campaign as we have done for many years at Anfield v Fulham and at St Helens v Everton. Kop Out members were invited to join the club to watch the game.

We will continue to focus on LGBT+ History Month and Pride as part of LGBT+ inclusion.

A Forum member noted the controversy (elsewhere) surrounding rainbow armbands and that they were really pleased the club can continue to stand up and own who we are.

In response, RJ stated that this is a topic that comes up every year. For some players it isn't as simple as wearing an armband. We have to have the right conversations internally and avoid telling people what to do.

A second Forum member asked if, on the day, there was any kind of sense it was unappreciated.

RJ responded confirming that that wasn't the case on the day and there were no issues connected with the rainbow laces.

A Forum member thanked RJ for actioning the suggestion that the club provide explanatory comments when marking a religious celebration.

They went on to express disappointment at how the club, in their view, did not acknowledge nor dissociate themselves from online hate they received when posting anything E, D & I related. In their view, the club needed to come out and say something and distance itself from such commentary. The club silence is, they said, very upsetting.

In response, RJ explained that the club had not yet reached a point internally where it agreed we will respond in such a way; there is a concern that any such statements may provide provocative and encourage more hate which would, of course, be counterproductive.

The Forum member felt that statements could be prepared in advance and was not expecting all comments to be responded to but equally some type of response is an imperative.

RJ committed to taking the feedback to the comms team for a further review.

A Forum member raised the fact that this year Hanukkah and Christmas coincide and that it would be an opportunity to celebrate the Jewish community, perhaps with candlelight on the pitch.

RJ said that a note in the programme would be a great first step but the timing was both unfortunate and fortunate insofar that the fact we have a game presents a challenge! However, he would take this away and speak to colleagues about what could be done.

In the future, RJ advised that we would like to look at dates for inter faith celebrations. It would be helpful to hear from the forum about significant dates on which we could bring people together.

A Forum member said that it would be great to do something together. Faith and culture are intertwined – celebrating LFC in different continents. To be able to tie these together would be excellent rather than operating in silos – not that there is anything wrong with silos - but being together is one of the biggest things we could celebrate within LFC.

A Forum member mentioned that a supporter has asked to use the Multi Faith Room but had been told by one steward it was shut. On approaching a second steward, he was informed that it was actually opened and was escorted there.

Yonit apologised for this and advised that she would take it to the stewards.

A Forum member advised after he water ran out, he went to get more but found all the kiosks closed and there was no where to get water. They asked if at least one kiosk could be kept open per stand so water bottles could be replenished.

Yonit explained that that the kiosks close on 70 minutes but we will look into this and come back. Maybe an option is to make it clearer when the kiosks will close.

A Forum member asked if there could be clearer signage near the accessible toilets that you can stand there in view of the pitch while holding alcohol.

A Forum member said that the move to St Helens was positive and helped by the parking facilities. The organised bus was problem free too.

Meeting Closed at 7.00pm