

Wigan Athletic Supporters Club
Minutes
Friday 22nd September 2023

Present;

Marie Brookfield, Deb Chapman, Caroline Molyneux, Jason Taylor, Jeff Taylor, Eddie Earley, Norma Unsworth, Adam Pendlebury, Rachael Davies, Adam Pendlebury, Jess Grundy (FSA), James Lintin (Sodexo)

Apologies;

None

- Sodexo

James Lintin joined the meeting to discuss the experience in the South Stand Bar. The Football Club had invited CM to attend a meeting this week about making the South Stand Bar more engaging and family friendly. One aspect of this is to aim to improve the food offering in terms of food and drink as well as looking at the room setup and making it more modern with poseur tables and stalls around the edge of the room. James said he was aware of requests from the club this week but that whilst everything is possible, it needs to make good business sense and be given reasonable advance timing to be actioned.

The committee asked what could be put in place for next Saturday for the Portsmouth game, as the Chairman Ben Goodburn had asked for this game to be the first to trial more use of the indoor spaces including the south stand. James stated that the chicken curry and pie and mash now offered on the concourses could certainly be offered in the south stand bar. He advised that if fans want burgers etc. then they should. Go to Whelan's Bar and that the Second Floor lounge where there is a hot fork buffet is underused therefore if fans want a sit down meal they can book for the second floor. The committee asked about the availability of pitchers of beer, similarly to Whelan's in order to cut queue times in the South Stand Bar. James stated that this could be done, but currently there aren't enough plastic pitcher jugs on site to offer this in Whelan's and the South Bar so this would be a few week off.

The committee asked whether soup or a special could be offered as happened pre-Covid. James stated that soup could lose money as it might not sell. Instead of a special, curry/pie and mash as on concourse or the sides offered in Whelan's could be offered In the South Stand.

A pop up prosecco bar or gin bar for special games was suggested. At the moment Sodexo don't have the equipment to do these.

JT asked about the kitchen at the back of the South Stand Bar and whether this could be upgraded to provide a more varied food offering. James confirmed that the kitchen does not currently contain all the necessary equipment to do this, but it could be one for the long term.

James stated that he is always willing to talk to us about the offering in the bar and happy to come to meetings to discuss any issues etc.

After leaving the meeting, CM raised concerns that Sodexo were not going to be able to provide much difference in choice for the Portsmouth game. CM to speak to Andy Birch at the club to keep them informed. Andy was liaising with the Head of Sodexo on the offer for next Saturday.

- Trust Update

Jess Grundy from the FSA was welcomed and she addressed the committee about her role and the work of the FSA. Currently they are focused on Fan Advisory Boards linking with the Government White Paper and drawing up a rubric for what these should look like.

CM confirmed that the Official Supporters Club is now formally a Supporters Trust. JG updated the committee on free training that is offered by the FSA on running a Community Benefit Society (CBS) and the role of Secretary in a CBS. CM encourage the committee to sign up for these as it will familiarise us with the protocols required by WASC going forward.

JG was thanked for her attendance and invited, along with any other FSA board members, to attend the official announcement of the Trust on Saturday 30th October v Shrewsbury.

- Coaches

JT updated that we are currently approximately £100 up on coaches for the season. We have taken 28 coaches so far this season, with 1300 passengers travelling with the SC. Members have had the option of very inexpensive buses to local games, value for money executive coaches and now we are able to offer VIP luxury coaches for longer journeys at a premium cost.

- Club update

Since our last committee meeting CM has met with Ben Goodburn (Chairman) and also with club staff to update on our projects and offer support to club initiatives.

Recently the sound issue on the TV screens in the South Stand Bar has been resolved as a result of our liaison with the club, we supported with promotion of the Fan Zone and distributed 1500 sweets to families as well as running a successful family quiz in the fan zone.

The Past Players Association is in progress and we are awaiting a date from Jamie Allen. The first meeting will be done prior to the open Fans Forum and we will invite all past players who want to attend. They will hear from Shaun Maloney and Ben Goodburn as well as signing up to the association. CM showed the committee a new logo that has been commissioned for the association.

- Heritage Project

This was held last night in Whelan's and had been very successful. Next steps had been actioned and Stephen Grundy, a member of the group, had offered to coordinate the collation of data.

On 30th September in the South Stand Bar, members of the Heritage Project have been invited to bring memorabilia to "Show and Tell" to other fans in the bar.

- Events - past and upcoming

The dinner is pencilled in for 8th March 2024 – Springfield Park – 25 years ago theme. At the Portsmouth game, Gregor Rioch will be coming into the South Stand Bar to receive £5000 raised this season for the Academy. He will be interviewed by Barry from PWU Podcast on stage. In addition, there will be a DJ with the aim of improving the atmosphere for families and young people.

- AOB

EE added Terry Knowles – it was discussed that TK from the WAFC Travel Club had posted a tweet after the Cambridge game about Philip Schofield joining the WASC committee. On investigation, he was referring to EE going to the front of the queue at the bar after the game when others were queuing. EE denied this and said he was collecting drinks that had been stored earlier as they had not been finished. CM reminded committee that in a position of responsibility we had to be careful that our actions don't bring the football club or WASC into disrepute. However, it was fully acknowledged that TK comments were exaggerated and unnecessary, particularly as the reference to Philip Schofield could be misinterpreted. EE requested that it be minuted, that he requests that if TK wishes to join the SC, that he be refused.

DBS Checks – as the South Stand Bar will welcome more families in the coming months, CM had requested that the club carry out DBS checks on all committee members. They had agreed and require a full name and email from all committee members in order to process this. Please send to CM asap.

Meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Next Meeting – Friday 10th November – 6pm