



West Ham United Supporters' Trust

Board Meeting Minutes

Date of meeting: 11 October 2023

Location: Virtual by Zoom

Present: Richard Elliot, Kevin Hind, Mark Inskipp, Robina Ahmed, Rachel McFetridge, Terry Reynolds, Sue Watson, Chris Wheal

Apologies:

1. Chair's welcome and apologies for absence

Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all present

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and matters arising

Minutes of 19/09/2023 agreed as a true record after one minor amendment. Issue of non-attendance at the board discussed. Rules says if three meetings missed action maybe taken. Also, apologies are currently automatically accepted not offered and either accepted or rejected. Attendance figures to be recorded and included for benefit of those facing elections. Two board members have missed three meetings. Board members are very busy and we need more people on the board who will do the work so the workload can be more widely shared. The board also has gaps in its expertise and replacement board members might fill those gaps. Proposal to remove one board member immediately. Another board member who has apologised but not attended may also not be able attend as much as we need. Decision was for MI to contact those members for an explanation and the board to discuss it at the next meeting based on the replies given. Board to take a tougher line on non-attendance. Records of attendance to be published in time for elections.

Away info from other trusts has come in.

FSE meeting booked to discuss Olympiacos

3. FAB Update

3 October was last update but there have been no further updates. Possible meeting with FSA on 31 October to talk about what we want from the FAB

Actions:
All

4 Member communications

Newsletter content discussed, agreed to focus on work we do for WHU supporters.

Actions: Produce and proofread newsletter
MI, CW

5. Media & Coms

Two gaps in board's knowledge: Marketing and Social media. A lot of the MCC work is actually marketing and we don't have that expertise. We are reactive on social media and we need to be proactive and planned. None of the board is, or wants to be, an influencer or knows what best practice is. We need to reach out to our membership or contacts to find help with marketing and social media. Media & Coms should come after marketing and be set by the marketing strategy. Can we find a young person who wants to do social media, or can we find a big name/influencer already who would work with us? Problem is influencers will want paying. We need to better use hashtags.

Actions: reach out to marketing or social media people
All
Examples of hashtags given

6. Diversity

TR had circulated the notes. He has since invited people to help resurrect the local community event. Premier League Fans fund has money for initiatives bonding clubs with local communities. TR to examine if an application can be put in. RA outlined plan to commemorate/celebrate every important calendar events. We need a template we can use on various social platforms. WHUST to compile a calendar. Should include days about West Ham not just religious or community celebrations and political/social events. Can we create a West Ham calendar and share it as the WHUST West Ham calendar? MI said it can be loaded onto our website. Start acknowledging the events even if we do not have the template.

Actions: Check if grant application possible / compile calendar and load to website
TR/ All

7. AOB

Blanket bans: Article 16.2 of UEFA rules makes clubs liable for the behaviour of their fans. Article 6 d. allows banning on sales of away tickets. All sanctions are on clubs and no sanctions exist on individual fans, so UEFA can never take action against individual fans but only collectively against all fans. Punishment is against the club, but it isn't – it against all fans. The home fans want away fans there, so it penalises the home fans as well as the away fans. Blanket bans are against natural justice. There is a group of football lawyer specialists. No quick win but let's get a campaign going to get this kind of ban overturned. Is it worth writing to MPs? The FA, PL? Will the FSA take this up or the FSE? Are we wasting our time campaigning on something that we cannot win? It is raw for us now but many others are or have been affected. The Freiburg fans made the best point and we should show solidarity with them. Lawyers need to look for ways to overturn the ban. Could be anti-competitive to prevent away fans buying tickets. Or for clubs within the EU preventing the free movement of people within Europe. Can we get support from broadcaster – they want there to be an atmosphere at match.

Action: KH to contact football specialist lawyer. KI/SM to speak to FSE.

FSA VAR group met. Ex-West Ham PR is head of coms at PGMOL now, wants to speak to supporter groups. PGMOL want to widen VAR group to cover all referees across leagues. Group wants to improve quality of refereeing. Is it possible to have fans score referees and that be used in feedback? In rugby, clubs have people who watch referees and then clubs train to play against the weaknesses of each referee. PL team probably do the same.

Action: SW to type up notes in full and distribute

Ticketing – last week's email had match and KO time wrong. This week people in the European scheme were sent an email saying to buy their tickets. A reply to that email solicits a response saying you must send this to ticketing. Why are ticketing emails still being sent from supporter services emails.

Action: CW to write to NK

Xmas meet-up: Provisionally 5 December, assuming match rescheduling.

Olympiacos ticketing. No information on the Olympiacos ticketing still at this late stage. Tickets go on sale tomorrow but no info on where to collect tickets or arrangement yet. Club claims it does not know.

8. Date of next meeting

7 November 2023

The meeting ended at 7:55pm