



West Ham United Supporters' Trust

Board Meeting Minutes

Date of meeting: 8th April 2024

Location: Virtual by Zoom

Present: Andrew Byrne, Nick Drane, Richard Elliott (Treasurer), Kevin Hind, Mark Inskipp (Secretary), Rachel McFetridge, Terry Reynolds (Chair), Chris Wheal

Apologies:

1. Chair's welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and matters arising

Minutes of 11/03/2024 agreed as a true record.

Actions: MI to record in minute book and publish on website

3. Event Update

TR is attending a Show Racism the Red Card event in 2 days' time where Shaka Hislop will be there and hopes to talk to him to see if he can attend. We have been publicising via Anwar Uddin (FA Diversity and Inclusion Manager) and Hannah Kumari (FSA Campaign Manager -Fans for Diversity), and others in the community and are expecting a sizeable attendance.

4. Co-opting of Board Member

Following a review of the personal statement of Sarthak Kumar it was deemed that he offered additional skills that complemented the existing board and that he should be co-opted on to the Board of Directors.

The Secretary proposed a motion to co-opt Sarthak Kumar to the Board of Directors, seconded by ND and was unanimously accepted by the members present.

Actions: MI to formally write to Sarthak and update Register of Directors and website

5. Restorative justice at West Ham

CW had submitted a discussion document on Restorative justice. CW had attended an RSA meeting that Pride of Irons was also attending talking about restorative justice.

At West Ham, Pride of Irons has trail blazed a fantastic restorative justice scheme for those accused of homophobic abuse. Instead of facing an immediate ban, the abuser meets with gay and lesbian supporters to realise the impact of their abuse on fellow fans and to understand why it is not appropriate. They are provided with the opportunity to reform. Only if this fails is further disciplinary action taken.

WHUST believes this approach should now be extended to all alleged offences, with accused fans being given a chance, through restorative justice, to learn why their behaviour was inappropriate and to mend their ways before any full disciplinary action is commenced or penalties imposed.

Discussion around different types of behaviour that this could be applicable to and those that it shouldn't be used.

Can we obtain details about what actions people have been banned for in the stadium.

Actions:

CW look to see if we could open a discussion with the club.

KH. Inform ISC as to our proposals

6. Ticketing

CW sent proposal about away ticketing suggestions to Nicola Keye. She mentioned this at recent ISC meeting and wants to discuss in further detail. The club wants to tackle people not using their season tickets – but they do want to consult with supporters to understand concerns and potential way forward. Withdrawal of concessions – no longer family friendly affordable football. Potentially not going to implement this season. We wrote to the club the morning after they'd made the announcement with some questions they didn't answer despite chasing. They said, we're going to put them in the FAQs, which they didn't when they launched them. So we chased them up on that. ISC considering whether to protest about concessions Seems to be co-ordinated action by all Premier League clubs Many issues with ticketing that need resolution – including away ticketing, transferring tickets Should have a board meeting soon specifically on ticketing. Actions: CW Will produce a discussion document for Board meeting scheduled for next week with ticketing main item.

7. ISC / FAB Update

KH reiterated that the ISC seems to be working well. The groups are working well together and Andy Payne is good as chair. Catherine Smith (Cat) has now started as Head of Supporter Services & Fan Engagement and feedback so far is good – it helps that she is a West Ham fan. Transition to FAB. Still not able to publish minutes of meeting with the club from 30th January 2024. Cat is actively working on the documentation about the establishment of the FAB. Club accepted our proposals on confidentiality, but have rolled-back on issue of independence and publications of minutes in a timely manner. The current ISC members wish to continue with the ISC and become a forum whereby supporter groups can meet independently from the club. Further meeting with the club to discuss documentation soon. Should a protest be planned about the season ticket changes then WHUST would support such direct action in co-ordination with other clubs. Discussion about individual ISC groups raising issues and should they deal directly with the club or should the ISC follow-up. As long as issues are copied into the other relevant groups. Still perception that the club are trying to divide and conquer with the individual groups. Whilst the groups are currently keeping everyone informed on issues that alleviates this issue, going forward we need to ensure all groups are aware of other things that they are working on.

8. Football Governance Bill

ND. Update on the Football Governance Bill. Next step is MPs are chosen to be on the committee. Nobody is expecting it to be a difficult passage – there is widespread support for it. ND is part of FSA group that is working closely with DCMS officials – dealing with issues of clarification – what do certain parts actually mean.

Only real issue of substance is the actual power of the regulator especially stepping in as to how money is shared across the pyramid. Uncomfortable with provisions for fan engagement – lack of quality measures about it.

Important is what the shadow regulator does with the draft regulations which provide the industry with the guidance of what they need to do. The Bill sets out the broad powers but still leaves a lot for the regulator to decide which is what everyone wanted.

There will be more meetings with DCMS, will get to see who is on the committee, FSA lobbying as they feel that there is ignorance amongst MPs about what the Bill covers.

The fan engagement standards are not satisfactory as they stand. The powers in the bill are OK but no detail about the quality of fan engagement or any real mention of consultation. Feel that Tracey Crouch and others will raise the subject of fan engagement when the bill gets its second reading.

Should we get people to write to their MPs. FSA will be preparing documentation that will help.

9. AOB

RE, KH and MI need to meet re banking

10. Date of next meeting

Monday 15th April

The meeting ended at 8:00pm