

CHELSEA FOOTBALL CLUB HOSPITALITY FORUM SEASON 2018-19, 1st MEETING MINUTES

*Millennium Suite 8, Chelsea FC
Saturday 15th September 2018, 11.00am*

Attendees (suite represented/ Club role)

Bowen, Steve – Centenary
Daine, Nav – General Manager of Levy UK
Financi-Smith, Elif – Captain's
Garrett, Chris – Executive Chef for Levy UK Restaurants at Chelsea FC
Glinwood, Mark – Manager's
Grant, Patricia – Harris
Hamilton, Nicholas – Clarke
Harkin, Gareth – Head of Client Services, Chelsea FC
Hunter, Simon – Head of Venue and Brand, Chelsea FC
Levy, Eddie – Ossie's
Morgan, Patricia – Bonetti
Nixon, Dominic – Under The Bridge
Powell, Luke – Head of Hospitality & Event Catering at Chelsea FC
Regan, Andy – Forum Chairman
Thomas, Stephen – Canaletto's
Wilkinson, Lee – Hollins

Apologies for absence

Langton, Tim – Champions

(Action points are underlined.)

The Forum Chairman welcomed new and returning representatives. It was noted that meetings are recorded and only the minutes should be considered to be the formal record. Sometimes the Club will request that discussions are kept confidential and representatives are asked to respect that.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES

There were no changes to the minutes. Matters arising were as follows:

Fans returning to their seats for each half

The Club said that this is discussed a lot and the proposals put forward last time – including illuminated signs, clearer signals and specific tables being approached – were all considered. This is something of a firefighting issue as different customers have different expectations. Some just want to watch the match whilst others consider corporate entertaining as the priority.

The Club will continue encouraging attendees to be in place for the start of each half, including banners on televisions, bells and/ or announcements in the suites. It is not appropriate to have the tennis/ cricket systems of taking seats only in the breaks in play.

Hopefully the success of the team will encourage supporters to take their seats earlier.

The Club focuses on new attendees in particular to get into good habits. Representatives are requested to tell their account managers if they consider a quiet word would help with some groups of fans in this regard.

The Harris representative commented that this has improved this season.

Global activation

The Club commented that this will be discussed at the next meeting. It will be interesting for the Forum to hear the Club's plans alongside its major partners.

Specific seats used by away fans in Canalettos

The Club said it had spoken to those who owned them. Another representative said it happens in Bonetti too. The Club added this is a complicated issue as seats are used for corporate entertaining so there will be away fans sometimes. Away fans are expected to respect the fact they are in home areas but our fans can text the hospitality team on the day if there is a problem and they will follow up immediately. Away fans shouldn't stand up during the game and if they do then they receive a warning firstly and can then be ejected. The Greek match is going on general sale but we only have a small number of match by match tickets so away fans hopefully won't be a problem in the hospitality areas.

Drinks vouchers for those displaced in European matches

These will be provided as a matter of course. Some were displaced for the Barcelona match and it could happen for other big matches. It's not an issue for the Europa matches. We lose a number of seats for outside broadcast cables in Champions League matches which then affects access and egress issues for the stadium, which leaves us with a smaller capacity. We aren't compensated directly for the lost seats but receive a lot for broadcasting that match.

Bright floodlight in Matthew Harding Stand

The position has been altered.

Stewarding around Captain's

The Club was asked about the relative lack of stewarding between away fans and that area. Although the away fans can't reach home fans, items are thrown on occasion. The Club will review the matter.

The Club reiterated that it should be told straight away about incidents rather than wait for our next meeting. There is extensive CCTV that can help identify culprits.

Staff awards

In response to a question the Club said there is an awards system for staff so positive feedback is welcome.

AGENDA TOPICS

CATERING AND SERVICE

Staffing standards and consistency

It was raised that staff in Centenary don't always know their roles well. The Club responded that staffing reached a high standard last year but training is ongoing this season and there should be a significant improvement today. Also, connectivity issues with the till didn't help. A representative commented that there was an improvement for the Bournemouth game.

As regards staff generally, we give them some 25-30 days of work per year so it's difficult to ensure the same staff attend consistently. We provide loyalty bonuses and incentives. The Club will review match day service standards.

Canalettos' table preparation

A representative commented that although tables are prepared for the next match at the end of the previous one seemingly, salt cellars and sugar trays etc aren't stocked up again at times. Staff who are waiting for customers should be checking all this. The Club will ensure this happens.

Draught beers

In response to a question regarding the lack of them in Harris, the Club commented there are problems with the cooler but will escalate the repair time.

Half-time drinks in Centenary

The Centenary representative raised the issue of the difficulty of getting drinks there at half time. The Club responded that as a result of this issue arising previously, bars at both ends including Manager's can be used. There should be a hostess in place moving customers down to the end of the corridor. It will recheck this is happening.

ADMISSION AND RE-ADMISSION

A representative commented that guests have to wait for the ticket holder to bring them in and the ticket holder can't leave a suite to collect someone. The Club responded that in a full stadium we have to be strict about ticket checks, which are conducted by bar code. Hence there is no readmission. There is the facility to leave a duplicate for a guest.

From Monday there will be an opportunity to email guests with their tickets. Electronic ticketing partly arose from this Forum and both technology and security

concerns had to be resolved first. In the future it should be possible to download your ticket from the hospitality App onto your phone. Some box holders have 24 seats so the new options will make the process of ticket distribution much easier.

In response to a question the Club confirmed it shouldn't be a problem for a guest to collect a ticket from reception at present.

LADIES' TOILETS IN CENTENARY

In response to a question the Club confirmed it is fine for ladies' toilets in the Hotel to be used due to the demand in Centenary. The Club will remind stewards of this.

FORUM MINUTES

In response to a question the Club confirmed the main Forum minutes and the Hospitality minutes are published on the website.

OWNERSHIP/ NEW STADIUM

In response to a question, the Club reiterated that the stadium rebuild is on hold. It is hoped that the project will continue at some point.

A representative asked if a simpler rebuild is possible on the current site instead. The Club responded that the idea of building down a sizable distance, as with the current plans, is the only cost-efficient way of improving the stadium. The additional seats from a limited rebuild would not be cost-efficient.

In response to a question the Club said that priority will generally be given to fans who move with us to a temporary stadium and then back to Stamford Bridge, as regards assigning season tickets. However, we will have an increase in capacity so we will hopefully be able to assist those who don't move to the temporary ground with us but want to return to Stamford Bridge after the rebuild. The priority is to stay here in the long term. We are flattening the entire area here and digging down about 4 ½ metres. There will be a truck leaving the building site about every 90 seconds for some of the process.

A representative suggested a debenture to tie in fans and the Club said that may be a possibility. It is too soon to look at specific plans. The aim will be to replicate hospitality standards here at a temporary ground. Concessions will continue to apply. Family areas will grow as we want to encourage a new generation to come along regularly.

There is nothing to add about ownership.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Pictures in Ossie's

The Club confirmed that after the repainting there, the black and white photos will return. Pictures will also go back in Clarke. The Club recommended that representatives see Harris as to how much better suites will look.

TV subtitles

The Club responded to a question that subtitles aren't shown as they get in the way of scores. Another representative commented that scores are available on phones instead. In a vote, 6 out of 10 were in favour of subtitles being shown. The Club will therefore revisit the issue.

Factsheets

The Club was congratulated for the factsheets. The Club said they are intended to provide information for non-regular attendees in particular and to provide a conversation point. The aim will be to print them on the back of the team sheets.

Player appearances in suites

In response to a comment the Club said it is trying to rotate former players. Representatives commented that seeing Colin Pates, Ron and Kerry were particularly welcome.

“Thrilling” slogan

The Club confirmed that is no longer continuing. It was a campaign and not a slogan.

Europa League

The Club commented that take up has not been great, particularly in Bonetti, Drake, Harris, Tambling. The opposition may not be big names but even so supporters should be encouraged to come and watch our team. There is a very attractive mini-season ticket on offer, for under £600 in some areas. It has been heavily discounted but the standard of facilities will be as good as usual.

It would be greatly appreciated if representatives publicise that seats are still available.

A representative commented that the offers were not clear for the various price bands publicised, as it wasn't explained what the packages were in detail or which suites they covered. The Club will ask account managers to resend that email with a clearer explanation included.

Megastore

The Club was asked about the relative lack of options in the Megastore now that Nike have taken it over. It responded there is on-going dialogue between our merchandise department and Nike to hopefully improve the range on offer.

Another representative commented there is nothing specific for women to buy.

Chelsea App

The Club was asked about the Club Chelsea App and whether it's meant to work on all phones. It responded there was a problem publishing on the Android system, which is now being fixed. A new App and website for hospitality are being developed though, which will hopefully be rolled out in the New Year.

Wi-Fi

As regards connectivity in the stadium as a whole, it is being Beta-tested. There used to be exclusive Wi-fi available for hospitality but a wider service has been rolled out. This works on CFC Open. A representative commented that connectivity is better in Harris this season.

The Club added that it's a far better network now, in tandem with Ericsson. It is high on the Chief Executive's priority list.

Hospitality supporters should report back regarding Club Chelsea directly to their account managers. In non-hospitality areas the contact address for reporting Wi-fi problems is Supporter.services@chelseafc.com.

The meeting finished at 11.50am.