

Meeting: Fans Forum
Date: 4th September 2014
Venue: Bartrams Bar

Those present: **Fans Forum Representatives (FFR)**
Bromley Addicks - Ian Wallis
CADSA – Tony Garrett (joined the meeting at 6.35pm)
CAS Trust – Bernie Razzell
East Kent Addicks – John Commerford
Eltham Addicks – Carl Matthews
Group Rail Travel - Syd Cheeswright
Hastings and Bexhill – John Bennett
Maidstone & The Weald – Keith Blair
North-West Kent Addicks – Jean Huelin
Reminiscence Group – Christine Lawrie
West Sussex and Brighton CASC – Matt Ring
Valley Away – John Bennett
Valley Express – Vernon Roper
Valley Gold – Wendy Perfect
West Country – David Wood

CAFC Representatives

Katrien Meire
Tony Keohone (joined the meeting at 7.26pm)
Andy Curtis
Iain Liddle
Lisa Squires

Apologies

Apologies had been received from CAFC representative - Ben Kensell (BK), VIP Season Ticket Representative - Craig Parrett (CP). CP had recently got married and John Commerford (JC) passed on everybody's congratulations to CP and his new bride. Lisa Squires (LS) would take the minutes of this meeting and circulate as advised. JC also wanted to put on record his thanks to Steve Bradshaw (formerly COO of CAFC) for being instrumental in getting the Fans Forum meetings back up and running.

Action: LS

Expanded Fans Forum, Confidentiality and Minutes

Katrien Meire (KM) explained that this expanded Fans Forum was designed to listen to all groups that supporters were involved in. KM reiterated that this was a confidential meeting and that minutes would be published to reflect the discussions at said meeting. KM asked that until the minutes were published that this was not discussed on public forums or with anyone outside of this meeting.

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CAFC Website

This was being revisited as Steve Bradshaw at a previous meeting, had suggested that a sub-group would be formed to discuss the problems fans were having with the website. Iain Liddle (IL) was happy to meet to discuss this further if necessary but felt that if specific problems were submitted to him then he could (where possible) action these. IL pointed out that the changes that had been made most recently to the website had taken into consideration the views from fans collated in the survey that Communications had carried out at the close of last season. IL reported that there had been an increase in "hits" on the site over the last six months and that growth is being seen month to month.

Action: IL, FFR

Pitch and Ground Improvements

All present congratulated Andy Curtis (AC) on the transformation that had been seen at the Valley over the summer including the pitch and the renovation of the ground. AC advised that this was ongoing (90% had been completed).

Action: AC to report back as necessary

Carl Matthews (CM) raised the issue of the acoustics in the North Upper not being very good and asked if anything could be improved on this? AC advised that audibility tests had been carried out during the summer and these tests had been passed. Supporters should advise Fans Forum representatives re. affected areas/seats. Fans Forum to collate the area/seats information and liaise with AC.

Action: FFR, AC

Barnie Razzell (BR) asked about the netting that was currently being used in the South stand. AC advised that this was not his area, Matchday Operations was Mick Everett's (ME) remit. AC to discuss with ME and advise accordingly.

Action: AC

CAFC Development

Club Development Manager

KM introduced LS formerly as the newly appointed Club Development Manager for CAFC. Christine Lawrie (CL) asked LS what her remit was and LS explained that she was tasked with increasing the support. LS advised that she would be more than willing to listen to any suggestions on how best to achieve an increase in support. She couldn't promise that all suggestions would come to fruition but she would certainly look at each one on an individual basis. KM suggested that a working group of supporters be set up with the task of increasing the supporter base (20k). Fans Forum representatives to suggest best placed supporters that could help with this working group and email suggestions to LS.

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Football for a Fiver

JC asked if Football for a Fiver was going to be repeated this season and he was advised that it would but later in the season. Wendy Perfect (WP) suggested that as CAFC had had such a good start to the season that it might be a good idea to offer two such games one very soon and one later in the season. WP suggested that if there is only to be one Football for a Fiver game this season that it take place before Christmas in order to take advantage of the facts that the team are doing well and the Valley is looking so fantastic. KM was concerned about devaluing season tickets by offering two such games and stressed that she wanted to ensure loyalty to the season ticket holder. All committee agreed that as long as the balance was correct, that season ticket holders would relish the opportunity of seeing a capacity crowd at the Valley and would not see it as devaluing the season ticket holder. KM to look into.

Action: KM + Ticket Office

Valley Express - Maidstone

Keith Blair (KB) raised concerns that last season Maidstone had been provided with two Valley Express coaches and this season this had been limited to one with a waiting list being collated. KB advised that 35 regular passengers use the service and this leaves limited amounts of space and some passengers are unable to book the service. WP suggested that although revenue may be lost on that second coach, you can counteract this if people are purchasing matchday tickets and that it is a good idea to have matchday tickets and VEX travel under the same budget so that this can be utilised. KB suggested that some season ticket holders rely heavily on the Valley Express and that they may not renew if this service is restricted. WP advised that it is not a good idea to look at increasing the amount of pick up points one coach covers and this ideally should be limited to a maximum of four as some routes will take two hours to get to the Valley, which is not practical for users. KM to take this matter up with the ticket office.

Action: KM + Ticket Office

Secondary School Interaction

JR questioned interaction with Secondary Schools as he felt that this was an area that could be utilised more. LS and BR to discuss further.

Action: LS, JR

Catering/Hospitality

Millennium Lounge

JC advised that he had eaten in Harvey's at the Wigan game and found the food to be extremely good. However, he was disappointed with the standard of service and the lack of any choice for the main course. JC advised that he had received complaints about the Millennium Lounge introduction of charging for pre and post match teas and coffees (£2.00 per cup). JC suggested that any changes be communicated going forward and then this would defuse the situation. JC said the food in this lounge was predominantly good. JC read out one complaint letter that was typical of those he had received. Tony Keohane (TK) advised that he had attended a meeting with BK/Ravi Patel (RP) where the issues had been discussed and that an update would be communicated shortly.

Action: TK

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East Stand

Ian Wallis (IW) said that the catering in the East stand had been received well and although expensive was of a good quality. IW was particularly happy with the real ale being served and although it is 20p more than a pint in a pub, it was brilliant that this was now available.

Use of Executive Boxes on Non-Matchdays

CL advised that the Reminiscence Group have held weekly meetings from 2.00pm – 4.00pm on Thursday's in one of the west boxes, free of charge but with the introduction of DNC (new catering company) they have been advised that this will cost £70.00 for room hire and £3.00 per cup of tea/coffee. They have been offered the use of Bartram's free of charge as an alternative but asked if anything could be arranged. BR also advised that the CAST had moved location for their meetings due to the costs involved. TK to work with BR to facilitate a solution for these users going forward.

Action: TK, BR

CAFC Fan Day

BR advised that he thought that the Club Day that had taken place in August 2013 had worked well and that this format was going to be built on going forward. He advised that the Fan Day event this year was not received as well by supporters. KM advised that with the refurbishments that had taken place ie. with the pitch and the ground, she had wanted to build anticipation for the start of the season and invite fans along to a preview of the stadium. This was never intended to be along the same lines as the previous year. Given the refurbishment/renovations at the time we were limited in the spaces we could open up for the Fan Day. CL suggested that making announcements so that people were more aware on the day would have been better.

Action: FFR – ongoing

Customer Service

Jean Huelin (JH) had received complaints about poor levels of service. She highlighted three such cases:-

VIP/Valley Gold member had not received their £15.00 vouchers, telephone the club to ask where they were and advised that they would be sent out. These were sent to her sons address and not her own.

Complimentary ticket issued to lapsed season ticket holders for the Wigan Athletic game – one season ticket holder received the letter but not the complimentary ticket.

Season ticket booklets arrived after the deadline day for the "Win a signed shirt" closing day.

KM explained that the ticket office was under a lot of pressure these last days and she apologised for the "human" mistakes.

Action: No further action required.

Young Player of the Year Award

Fans Forum currently organise the Player of the Year Dinner and WP asked if it was possible for Valley Gold to sponsor the Young Player of the Year Award. This was agreed.

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Brentford Wheelchair Pricing

It was raised that Brentford had charged an extra £1.00 for wheelchair users at the recent away fixture. David Webb had spoken to the disability liaison officer at Brentford and they had advised that this was their pricing structure. Ultimately CAFC are unable to question other clubs pricing but this is something that could be taken up with the Football League. Tony Garrett (TG) to take forward and advise accordingly. Special praise was given to David Webb for his work with disabled supporters.

Action: TG

CASC/Independent Groups

JC raised the issue that the look of the CAFC's website in respect of supporters groups looked disjointed. JC suggested that representatives discuss with their members a way of making it look more jointed. Representatives to discuss and forward comments to JC via email.

Action: FFR

CAFC Museum Update

IW advised that it had taken 12 months in getting the museum ready in the North West Quadrant and they were now pleased to announce the opening night (by invitation only) of Friday 7th November 2014. This will be open to the public from 8th November 2014 and opening times will be advertised.

Action: IW

Transport

Syd Cheeswright (SC) advised that rail travel was going well and that with the reduction in the train prices to Rotherham from £64 to £32 this season had seen a good take up by supporters. SC handed over the Valley Away responsibilities to John Bennett (JB). JB advised that the majority of passengers are happy with the service and that changes identified in the VA questionnaire had now been addressed.

Action: No action required.

Red Red Robin

KM advised that the team will still exit the tunnel to Red Red Robin. KM realises the heritage and will not be changing it.

Action: No action required.

Beambacks

IL is aware that the Football League are now able to offer beambacks for certain games and CAFC will look at this facility once they have the correct cabling installed. IL to keep FFR updated.

Action: IL

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Anti-Social Behaviour

JC read out an email he had received from a supporter in respect of anti-social behaviour at the Valley. FFR agreed that this is something that needs to be addressed and actions by the club communicated. KM to look at

Action: KM

Any Other Business

Inconsistency of Stewards

FFR asked that stewards were more consistent in their approach with fans. AC to discuss with ME.

Action: AC

Fans Forum Financials

IW issued everybody with a copy of the financials. FF have a total of £4,759 currently in their bank account.

Action: No action required

Date of Next Meeting

4th December 2014