

Points of Blue

Minutes of Meeting – 15th September 2009



Club represented by **Vicky Kloss**, Chief Communications Officer, **Danny Wilson**, Head of Supporter Experience, **Peter Fletcher**, Head of Safety & Security, **Neil Worcester**, Catering & Operations Manager and **Steven Robinson**, Ticket Sales Manager.

Catering

Can the concourse bars stay open longer after the game (30 minutes rather than 20)?

Club response: *There is no restriction in the licence to prevent us from doing this. We will trial and gauge demand.*

Why is Singha Beer now £3.70 a pint? Other complaints of soft drinks at £2.20 and £3.25 for John Smith's in the new Supporters Club.

Club response: *Singha Beer is shipped from Thailand. It is not brewed in the UK under licence. This is the final season of the existing agreement with Singha. Pricing is constantly under review.*

Why can't we have someone pouring beer and a different person serving and taking the cash?

Club response: *The bar layout restricts the number of staff that can work behind the bar; this also means that it's not easy to switch staff from bars with no queues to assist with queues at an adjacent bar. The lack of cellar space in the stadium prevents multi-pourers or other fast dispensers being installed in a lot of areas. We have discussed this with the brewery to try to find a solution. We are exploring a number of initiatives which will potentially reduce queuing times including the reintroduction of backpack sales. We have also looked at queuing rails but the City Council objected. All buildings are used in unexpected ways, and adaptations to reflect changed use (or changes in demand) are not always easy. External outlets (e.g. a marquee) could only be licensed for up to 28 days.*

No pasties?

Club response: *We have undertaken market research, including a consultation/tasting event with supporters at the stadium in June. Due to space restrictions and to speed up service we can only carry a limited number of items. We'll review putting pasties back on the menu.*

Deals: A "Fans' Feast" deal of £12 for 2 pies and 2 beers was no deal at all with one variety of pie, as the total price was under £12.

Club response: *We'll look at that one!*

Staffing?

Club response: *The caterer has ongoing problems with recruitment, training and retention of 300-400 catering staff who work for four hours every other week. All staff should have been vetted for spoken English during the recruitment process.*

For the outdoor screening of the game in South Africa, stewards were taking bottles of water off people on entry, and stopping people taking photographs of family members.

Club response: *Security at this event was provided by the event promoter. For any future events we'll discuss this with the promoter.*

Ticketing

There were many complaints about trying to find ticket information on the new website.

Club response: *The new ticketing section of the site has now gone live and should make things much better. Future developments will include the sale of tickets for away matches and the opportunity to sign up to Cup Games Direct online. (There were subsequent problems integrating the old and new systems.)*

Bring a friend (difficulty in swapping usual seat to sit with guests).

Club response: *As a result of the increase in Seasoncard holders, finding lots of seats together is not easy and the functionality to change the location of your seat is currently not available. We'll explore the introduction of this functionality with the website developer.*

Why are some 'blue stewards' able to scan people in to the stadium, whilst others are not?

Club response: *This shouldn't be the case. All staff receive training. Where new staff are drafted in, we try to pair them with an experienced PDA operator.*

3rd tier closures, and allocation to other tiers.

Club response: *The future plan for online sign-up to the Cup Games Direct scheme would include the provision of a field to record the respective supporter's preferred seat location.*

20 loyalty points for the Celtic home pre-season game and only 10 for Rangers away; likewise Aston Villa on a Monday night only 10 points.

Club response: *Aston Villa is 20 points. The original web story was amended. Allocating points is an "inexact science": loyalty points are not only to reward difficult journeys, but an incentive for less attractive fixtures.*

For away match tickets, could priority be given to Citycard holders with a lot of points rather than new Seasoncard holders?

Club response: *There are very few away matches where all tickets will sell out only to Seasoncard holders, and priority for important games is one of the selling points/benefits of a Seasoncard. It was emphasised that loyalty points are personal and are retained even if switching between a Seasoncard and other cards.*

Other Items

Merchandise. General lack of merchandise in the Citycentre, especially for women and children.

Club response: *The main supplier of clothing for women/girls was a victim of the recession. A new women's/girls' range, comprising 18 product lines, will become available during October. Demand for some lines (infant kit, training kit) significantly exceeded our greatest expectations. A delivery of home and infant replica kit arrived on 23rd September.*

Garden of Remembrance. What's the Club's policy on the up-keep and maintenance?

Club response: *The staff who maintain the garden have had to combine this with a number of other projects over the summer. It will be attended to. Volunteers to help keep it tidy would be welcome.*

Signage. Better signage for the new ticket office in the Citycentre when entering from the stadium side.

Club response: *Good point. We are aware of this and we are looking into different options.*

Customer Service. Long wait time; why no local number rather than 0870?

Club response: *We have recently installed a new telephone system which allows us to monitor call volumes, wait times and abandoned calls. This information will be used to balance staffing levels and improve the service. The 0870 number is under review.*

B of the Bang. Access from the south-east corner now B of the Bang is gone?

Club response: *Once the area is resurfaced, the gate will be re-opened; uncertain whether this will just be for matches (to be discussed with Sportcity management).*

Press and Publicity. Discussion of coverage of Adebayor incidents.

Club response: *Policy is to cultivate good relationships with north-west journalists first who cover all of our matches and to widen out and collaborate with wider media including London press as much of the negativity comes from London-based press and feature writers. (There was also a discussion about alleged FA inconsistency in who gets charged for offences apparently not seen by the referee.)*

Museum. Any new proposals?

Club response: *Alternative arrangements are being worked on.*

Bert Trautmann. Some recognition at the stadium (e.g. stand name)?

Club response: *We are unlikely to rename a stand, but we may look at some other recognition.*

Club Badge. Any plans for revision?

Club response: *There are no plans to change the current crest. No change would be made without consultation with fans.*

Armed Forces. A soldier who'd won the Military Medal was a City fan; could he be recognised?

Club response: *We'll investigate, and we will also look at whether tickets could be specially available for serving personnel.*

Royal Visit. When will Sheikh Mansour attend a match?

Club response: *There are security issues involved, but it is hoped that he will attend soon. It will not be announced in advance.*

Other items discussed: policy on standing, reserve game parking, public address "gaps", employment policies ("passion for City" as a condition of employment).