



Fans Consultative Committee

24 July 2024

Present:

**LCFC:** Susan Whelan, Anthony Herlihy, Anthony Mundy, Imogen Ward, Louise Hollingsworth, Jim Donnelly

**Members:** Paul Angrave, Malcolm Carter, Samantha Guyler, Phil Simms, Emily Burditt, Amy Ginnetta, Linda Ginnetta, Alan Digby, Ian Bason, Peter Wilson, Shaun Jackson, Becky Taylor, Judith Smoraczewska, Quym Greaves

**Apologies:** Nick Heard, Joshua Malam, Adrian Neale, Dinesh Prajapati, Naresh Patel, Dominic Palmer

### **Susan Whelan – Introduction**

- Chief Executive Susan Whelan opened the meeting and was pleased to announce that First Team Manager, Steve Cooper would be joining the meeting, to talk about his vision, his first few weeks at Leicester City and preseason preparations.
- Recapping on last season, SW expressed the Club's appreciation from the fans for their support, despite relegation. The structure and standards of the Club didn't change, there were no staff redundancies, which means the Club is ready to be back in the Premier League.
- Leicester City Women retained WSL status and have confirmed their attendance at the Perth International Cup, in September for a pre-season tour.
- SW confirmed there was no further information that can be shared on PSR at this time, but there is commitment to continue to challenge, and establish the Club's position going forward.
- The Club is aware of the level of frustration among some sections of the fan base, especially around communication relative to PSR. Last season, the Club's published communications had to be legally approved, which may have resulted in a greater degree of formality. SW assured members that the Club wants to work with supporters on a broader basis and it is committed to implementing its Fan Engagement Framework, which will be headed up by Anthony Herlihy, Communications Director and Imogen Ward, Head of Fan Engagement.
- SW spoke about what the Club aims to achieve next season – 1. Continue to strengthen the squad, already positive signings, with more to follow. 2. Commitment to investing in our young players and their pathway. 3. Continued investment and growth of the Club's affiliation to Women's and Grass Roots football. 4. For the Club to be relevant in its own community, as we have been and continue to aspire to be.
- Digital ticketing conversion wasn't received as well as the Club had hoped. The Premier League have a forthcoming announcement around digital ticketing, with reasons for implementation the same as the Club had communicate during the roll-out.
- SW wanted to address any concerns over the new front-of-shirt sponsor for the men's team. The two highest value proposals for the new front-of-shirt partnerships were both in the Betting section. BC Game is a two-year deal, and the biggest in the Club's history. Extensive due diligence was undertaken to ensure suitability with the Club's values and BC Games commitment and Community programmes.



- An update on the stadium development outlined the need for re engagement with architects and planners to establish value in budget. SW confirmed that the development would not start in 2025 or 2026. The implementation of safe standing would continue to be considered in parallel with the stadium development, with consultations being re engaged this season.

#### **Actions from the last meeting (11 December 2023)**

- Supporter representation on the SAG – AH briefly spoke about how the Fan Engagement Framework and Fan Advisory Board will be able to move such requests forward and make recommendations.
- Clap Banner Distribution – The Club confirmed that all stewards/staff have been debriefed to ensure this isn't an issue for the forthcoming season.
- Sanctions Committee – SW and AH explained that supporter representation on the Club's Supporter Sanctions Committee would form part of future discussions within the Club's Fan Engagement Framework, which would be further explored later in the meeting.

#### **Member Agenda Items-**

##### **Digital Ticketing:**

- The Club's aim was to try and convert as many people as possible to digital tickets, but the Club expressed recognition that this objective may not have been entirely clear at the start of the process.
- Next steps for implementation will be discussed through the Fan Engagement Framework.
- Information on the charity donations were shared with the FCC, prior to general announcement. Total of £247,000 to be distributed amongst four charities the VS Foundation will be working with this year: LOROS, Rainbows, Heartwise and Leicester Children's Hospital. Supporters who paid the £25 physical card fee, will be able to select one of the charities and this will be processed through the ticketing system.
- SW stressed that the charge wasn't a money-making exercise for the Club and that digital tickets are still the easiest way for Season Ticket Holders to legitimately share their ticket with friends and family.
- AM confirmed that some visiting teams are requesting, and will one hundred percent utilise digital tickets for their supporters at King Power Stadium and that forthcoming Premier League rules on the subject would affect home and away fans.
- An FCC member asked what contingency the Club has if there is an IT failure? AM confirmed that it would be dependent on the issue, but the NFC technology would still work, there is also back up on the ticketing and turnstile system.
- The Club have been offering appointments for supporters to look at the digital ticketing system and to date only 38 people have made a booking.
- SW confirmed that the Club will be increasing the number of Here to Help staff to assist on matchdays to 30.
- FCC member asked how the Club will accommodate Season Ticket Holders who share/split their season ticket with another family member, especially with the limit on number of transfers and resales the Club has implemented.
- The Foxes Trust expressed the need for the Club to reduce or remove the limitations. The Club responded that the limit of 5 transactions must stand.



- FCC member queried if you had to contact the Club to transfer your ticket. JD explained that there is a functionality to transfer on your mobile season ticket.
- FCC member asked why the appointments were only available to book online, with most of these supporters not being tech savvy, JD explained that the Club were available to be contacted on the phone or email if they were having difficulties with the online booking system.
- FCC member asked if the Club could provide the breakdown by age for those that opted for a physical card **ACTION: Data included in appendix 1.**
- The DSA confirmed that the majority of their members have opted for a digital ticket, despite being able to have a physical card with no additional cost. The only concerns raised were around the PA's ticket being loaded onto the phone of the Supporter with a disability and them having to pass the phone back once through the turnstiles. Positive feedback received to date. **ACTION POINT: The Club to find a solution to this.**

#### **Match Ticket Prices:**

- AH said the Club were aware of some adverse supporter reaction to the announcement of match ticket prices. The benchmarking comparison was against Premier League club's 2023/2024 pricing (as not all Clubs have released their pricing for the 2024/2025 season at the time of sales communication launch)
- One FCC member thought that benchmarking shouldn't be used as a selling point in Club communications and felt the fans are paying for the Club's financial error.
- AH explained the Club's commercial strategy was designed to ensure the Club is run sustainably, in compliance with the laws of the game, while continuing to invest in its team, its facilities and its supporter experiences.
- FCC member thought that entry level pricing was well received, and it was important that the Club worked with community groups and schools.
- The Club confirmed that there is an allocation of match tickets accessible to community groups for men's and women's games.
- Some FCC members thought the points system and ticket accessibility was one of the main issues, not necessarily the price.
- AH said the Club is aware the points system needs to be addressed in the long term. **ACTION POINT: Incoming Head of Venue Sales to review new ticket priority structure).**

#### **General Sale:**

- Three games last season went to general sale, it is anticipated that in the Premier League, the majority of games will sell out to members and season ticket holders.
- The Club has identified some fixtures, with the potential to go to general sale, taking into account the date, kick off time and expected away attendance. The Club recognised it is important to maintain access to new audiences, but ensure the stadium is secure and protected from risks associated with not knowing who is using tickets.
- The Club will seek fan input as part of the Fan Engagement Framework.

#### **Principal Partnership:**



- Over half of Premier League clubs having a similar category front-of-shirt sponsor.
- The Club have collaborated with BC Game on safer gambling messaging.
- Club have retained King Power as front-of-shirt sponsor for Leicester City Women, with King Power committing to women's football in Leicestershire with facilitation of free kit for over 350 local girls grass roots teams.

#### **Safe Standing:**

- The Club's first Your 90 Minutes will be focused on Matchday Experience, where this will be a discussion point. **UPDATE: The meeting was held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.**
- Safe standing will be revisited as part of the stadium facilities development.

#### **AOB:**

- Remembrance Service - The Club will confirm a date before the start of the season. This will be towards the end of September. **UPDATE: Available dates currently being discussed with Club Ambassador, Alan Birchenall**
- FCC member asked how drastic the change in plans would be for the stadium expansion – SW said this has not yet been determined but in principle it remains the same.
- There was a concern raised over the Union FS Tifo at the Blackburn match blocking the views of many other supporters. The Club is aware of some of the issues, and this will be discussed as part of the Matchday Experience Your 90 Minutes.

#### **Fan Engagement Framework:**

- Presented by Anthony Herlihy and Imogen Ward as per attached documents.

#### **Steve Cooper Q&A**

Susan Whelan closed the meeting and thanked the group.



**Appendix 1:**

**Season card breakdown by age:**

	<b>FREE</b>	<b>£25</b>
Adult	366	9,020
Seniors	3,855	
Under 22	41	887
Under 18	488	
Under 16	705	
Under 12	269	
Under 8	29	
PA	492	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,245</b>	<b>9,907</b>