

Meeting Minutes of the All Together Town (ATT) Panel - 10.12.2020

7pm 23rd September 2020

Hosted Online

Note: These minutes were taken by the Huddersfield Town Supporters' Association (HTSA), not Huddersfield Town Association Football Club.

Present

Club representatives: Andy Booth (Club Ambassador); Mark Devlin (CEO); David Threlfall-Sykes (Marketing & Communications Director); Andy Ward (Commercial Director); Ann Hough (Operations Director); Robyn Kennerdale (Supporters Services Manager); Dan Cooper (Ticket Office Manager);

Also present were Rachel Taylor (Supporter Services Executive); Brian Slater (KDSL Stadium Safety Officer); 11 members of the Voices Panel (includes fan groups) were in attendance.

Fan Groups: HTSA (4); Cowshed Loyal (1); Huddersfield Town Disabled Supporters' Club (1)

Agenda

Outstanding items from 23.09.20

1. Supporter Representation/Input on the Safety Advisory Group (SAG)
2. Governance Reform ('Sustain The Game' Proposals)
3. Stadium Shares

New items:

4. Return to Stadium Protocols and at-risk fans
5. Disability Access Officer
6. iFollow
7. Virtual Crowd Noise

1. Supporter Representation/Input on the Safety Advisory Group (SAG)

Ann Hough explained that, as the stadium safety licence is in the name of KDSL, the Club (and also the Huddersfield Giants) are guests and it's not within the club's control to be able to invite other parties (such as a fan's representative). She also advised that there is confidential information discussed within the meeting that wouldn't be appropriate to share with supporters (security/anti-terrorism issues, for instance).

HTSA said that a lot of other clubs have fan's representatives at SAG meetings and if anything needs to be discussed that isn't appropriate to certain parties then the relevant representatives can leave the meeting. HTSA further raised the point that fan representation would benefit all parties through better communication and greater transparency, something which the Chairman, Phil Hodgkinson, has been particularly vocal about via the national media in September, when discussing the lack of communication from the government concerning the decision they suddenly

made about stopping test events for getting supporters into grounds.

Mark Devlin agreed to provide meeting minutes going forward (with any sensitive items redacted).

Brian Slater also said he would raise the issue of fan representation at the next SAG meeting.

2. Governance Reform ('Sustain The Game' Proposals)

HTSA asked for any feedback as to whether the Club is supportive of the campaign. Mark Devlin advised that there is currently nothing to report, other than that the matter is with the Chairman at the moment.

3. Stadium Shares

HTSA asked whether the current Chairman will be putting the stadium shares into a trust, as was originally proposed by the previous Chairman, Dean Hoyle. HTSA are aware that the current Chairman is under no obligation to do so but are keen to know either way.

Mark Devlin advised that he can't guarantee that the stadium shares will be put into a trust, although he believes that it's the direction that they're currently heading towards.

4. Return to Stadium Protocols and at-risk fans

Dan Cooper said that all season card holders will be asked to provide various information via e-mail or phone to help the club coordinate the return of fans to the stadium, which is likely to be 2,000 supporters initially once Kirklees has restrictions relaxed to Tier 2 levels. Season card holders will need to provide information regarding members of their support bubble and whether they have specific accessibility re-

quirements or not. It was also confirmed that those supporters that live outside Kirklees which are in Tier 3 will be manually blocked from applying for tickets until the area they live in is in Tier 2 or lower.

HTSA asked which parts of the stadium are likely to be open first and if the platform for disabled users will be part of that. Brian Slater advised that the Riverside Lower and the entire South Stand will be used to accommodate the first 2,000 fans. These areas were chosen to best ensure social distancing as well as efficiency related to stewarding. The Kilner Bank platform will not open initially.

5. Disability Access Officer (DAO)

Robyn Kennerdale advised that the Club doesn't have any plans to appoint a dedicated Disability Access Officer at the moment. One was previously provided when we were in the Premier League as it was an EPL requirement. However, the responsibilities of a DAO are currently covered by existing employees and there are plans to appoint a Disability Liaison Officer in the future.

6. iFollow

Panel members raised the issue about how the BBC Radio Leeds commentary can be out of sync with the visual game. David Threlfall-Sykes advised that it's due to the way that radio commentators commentate on the game rather than any technical problem with iFollow. He also advised that the most recent game (Sheffield Wednesday at home) was the first so far this season that no issues were reported by any supporters and that the biggest difficulty initially was getting codes out to season card holders at the start of the season and helping supporters navigate the iFollow system.

HTSA asked whether if stadiums aren't permitted to be full next season are there any plans to improve iFollow. Also, whether there are any measures to stop fans paying for the cheaper international package and using a VPN.

David Threlfall-Sykes advised that there are currently no expectations that iFollow will be needed next season although it's being constantly looked at for ways to improve. He also advised that iFollow have a way of policing and preventing fans in the UK from using the cheaper international iFollow package.

Andy Booth asked if supporters will still be able to watch away games via iFollow next season even if all stadiums are operating as normal.

David advised that the current broadcast deal was amended slightly due to Covid to accommodate fans being able to watch all games from home via iFollow or similar. Although not 100% sure he said that he suspects that will revert back to the original terms of the broadcast deal once stadiums are fully open. Mark Devlin says it is a topic for discussion for a future EFL meeting as a couple of other clubs have already raised that issue.

Panel members suggested a compromise would be to allow supporters to watch away games via iFollow or similar only when the ticket allocation for away fans sells out. This would also avoid the risk of away fans trying to buy tickets in the home fans areas for matches where away tickets are over-subscribed.

7. Virtual Crowd Noise

Andy Lister asked whether the club had considered adding artificial crowd noise while the stadium has restrictions on fans attending.

David Threlfall-Sykes advised that there has been no crowd noise in any of the stadiums so far this season and he hadn't been made aware of any supporter demand for it at the John Smith's, which Mark Devlin confirmed. In addition, David noted that Carlos Corberan would probably prefer less artificial noise as he likes to constantly communicate and direct his players throughout each match.

Any Other Business

The ATT Terms of Reference are due to be published on the website in the coming weeks. Also, Andy Booth asked for any members to volunteer to resign from the panel to ensure that the requirement of a 25% turnover of panel members every year is met. A lot of other supporters are keen to join the panel in future.

The next meeting is likely to be the end of February/beginning of March 2021, although Brian Slater suggested another meeting after the first game involving fans (whenever that may be) to ensure supporters are able to feedback their experience of being back in the stadium to the Club.