

**Tottenham Hotspur Fan Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

**Time:** 6-8.30pm

**Venue:** THFC Boardroom, Lilywhite House

**Attendees**

**Supporter Representatives**

Chuck Hoffman (CH)	International Official Supporters' Clubs (virtual)
Chris Paouros (CP)	Proud Lilywhites
Dee Bright (DB)	SpursAbility (virtual)
Jonny Tindal (JT)	Season Ticket Holders of the Men's team
Hemali Patel (HP)	One Hotspur Members
Paul Pavlou (PP)	Domestic Official Supporters' Clubs
Rachel Martin (RM)	Tottenham Hotspur Supporters' Trust (THST)
Sachin Patel (SP)	Spurs REACH
Sian Wallis (SW)	Season Ticket Holders of the Women's team
Steve Cavalier (SC)	Tottenham Hotspur Supporters' Trust (THST)

**Club Representatives**

Donna Maria-Cullen (DMC)	Executive Director
Katie Reed (KR)	Director of Legal Administration (virtual)
Levi Harris (LH)	Head of Supporter Engagement
Luke Clarke (LC)	Associate Legal Counsel

**1. Chair**

In the absence of a Supporter Representative Co-Chair (who will be appointed in due course), DMC was appointed Chair of the meeting.

**2. Quorum**

Quorum was present.

**3. Declaration of interests**

No FAB member declared any personal interests where a conflict could arise.

**4. Welcome and introduction**

After introductions, where members provided a brief background on their history and experience, DMC thanked the group for joining the Fan Advisory Board (FAB), explaining that the Club is excited to be launching this new, structured forum for fan engagement,

which is representative of the wider fanbase and its diversity. DMC also welcomed KR and LC from the Club's Legal department who would be available for any questions on the framework of the FAB.

## **5. FAB governance**

### **Fan Engagement Standard and Fan Advisory Board**

- 5.1. LH gave a summary of the [Premier League's Fan Engagement Standard](#) (FES) which includes the FAB and is designed to ensure long-term meaningful engagement with supporters and largely focused on communication between the Club and fanbase.
- 5.2. Following a request from SC that a Q&A event with Club Senior Leaders and a wider group of supporters could take place so they could hear from the Club on its goals, ambitions and direction, DMC confirmed such an event is part of planning for the forthcoming season.
- 5.3. CP noted that the FAB should exceed the FES, in the spirit of the Government's Fan Led Review and subsequent White Paper. CP also raised the point that fans should be at the heart of everything when considering items at FAB meetings. DMC underlined the amount of work that had gone into setting up the FAB which was an indication of that and that this was the beginning of what would be an iterative process to ensure best practice.

### **FAB elections and communication**

- 5.4. DMC outlined the process used for the FAB elections and stated that Civica Election Services (CES) were used to ensure a clear, transparent and democratic process.
- 5.5. DMC explained that the candidate who received the highest number of votes in the election for Season Ticket Holders of the Men's team (including Seasonal Premium Members) was not progressed due to the potential for perceived conflicts of interest. In the shortlisting process, DMC explained she had abstained from scoring the candidate's application due to their involvement with Club partners and the relationship that had developed.
- 5.6. SC felt the issue should have been dealt with earlier in the process. DMC said it was not the Club's position to prevent anyone from applying, however it was important that nothing was perceived to undermine the integrity of the FAB.
- 5.7. The Club consulted CES who confirmed that the nomination should be awarded to the second placed candidate.

## Term lengths

5.8. To ensure that the terms of all FAB posts do not end at the same time, the initial terms for each post will be for either three or four years. Lots were drawn to confirm the length of each post's initial term:

Season Ticket Holders of the Men's team:	4 years
Season Ticket Holders of the Women's team:	4 years
One Hotspur Members:	4 years
International Official Supporters' Clubs:	3 years
Domestic Official Supporters' Clubs:	3 years
Tottenham Hotspur Supporters' Trust (1):	4 years
Tottenham Hotspur Supporters' Trust (2):	3 years
Proud Lilywhites:	3 years
SpursAbility:	4 years
Spurs REACH:	3 years

## FAB induction and schedule

5.9. SC asked for a presentation on the Club's strategic vision and objectives. It was agreed that the FAB induction day would include presentations on the following topics and discussions with relevant department heads, followed by the next FAB meeting. The induction and meeting will take place in early September:

- Club's strategic objectives
- Off-pitch performance updated, priorities and plans
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion
- Marketing
- Matchday operations
- Retail
- Ticketing and Membership
- Tottenham Hotspur Foundation

5.10. The schedule for future meetings was agreed, with exact dates to be confirmed:

- a. Induction day and FAB meeting in week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023;
- b. FAB meeting in week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023;
- c. FAB meeting in week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024; and
- d. FAB meeting in week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024.

**Action for all to send availability to LH to coordinate a suitable date.**

## 6. Match ticket price increases

6.1. FAB members stated their opposition to the price increases. SC felt there should have been consultation with the Trust and discussion with the FAB before any decision. SC believed there should have been more transparency making clear that

prices were increasing, a point supported by CP. The Club had briefed the Trust ahead of the announcement and had responded publicly to media enquiries.

- 6.2. CP felt that the Club's approach on this issue had not been fan-centric, something the FAB is supposed to be and that there is a significant risk to matchday atmosphere if fans aren't able to attend matches regularly due to the cost of tickets. CP also explained that a number of Proud Lilywhites members had contacted them to say they would now be priced out of attending matches.
- 6.3. PP asked how price rises could be justified and if it was possible to review the new pricing structure, giving an example of ticket orders he was placing for Yorkshire Spurs for upcoming matches to highlight the impact on all OSC members. CH pointed out that Official Supporters' Clubs (OSCs) were impacted as they could only buy tickets in two blocks from eight in any given matches, leaving them fewer options on alternative seating in the stadium.

**Action for Club to check with Head of Ticketing PP's analysis and look into ticket allocation areas for OSCs.**

- 6.4. JT asked if the increases were a result of the Club not qualifying for European competition. DMC explained that it is not as a result of one specific reason, but rather a combination, which included rising costs.
- 6.5. HP noted that the scale of the increase, combined with the merging of seating categories, including the removal of one of the cheapest blocks which has now been moved to the next price point and the recategorisation of Newcastle United to Category A and Nottingham Forest to Category B will make it very difficult for some One Hotspur Members to continue to attend matches. There was also a discussion on the availability of concessionary tickets in certain areas and pricing for Cup games. Club confirmed that a long-term review of the Club's ticketing strategy is to be undertaken and that the FAB will be asked to be part of that planning.
- 6.6. RM expressed concern as to how families could be expected to attend matches given the current prices.

**Action for Club to look once again at pricing Cup games attractively.**

- 6.7. The Club re-iterated its response that match day ticket prices were comparable to other London clubs and provided a wide range of price points and choice. FAB members did not agree. SP noted that the Club plays in one of the most deprived boroughs in the country and suggested the price rises would make it even more difficult for members of the local community, particularly those from under-represented communities, to attend matches. The Club was aware and had given out 12,374 tickets to the local community since January 2022 for both football and third-party events.

- 6.8. DB noted that the increase in membership prices compounded the price rises on match tickets. The Club noted that membership benefits had also increased.
- 6.9. FAB members pointed out that the increases were significant for fans but the extra revenue for the Club was only a small percentage of total revenue. The FAB referred to the increases in the broadcasting deal and asked the position on Stadium naming rights. DMC confirmed that delivering sponsorship was a priority.
- 6.10. JT and HP urged the Club to review and reverse the pricing decision. This was supported by all other FAB members. The FAB members were unanimously opposed to the increase.

**Action for DMC to discuss feedback and request to review with Club Board. FAB to be part of long-term ticketing strategy review.**

**Update to action: The Board has confirmed the rise in matchday ticket prices. Matchday ticket prices have been frozen since we opened the stadium over four years ago, despite significant cost increases in our supplier chains and high inflation. The Club continues to absorb the majority of these cost rises.**

## **7. General**

- 7.1. Communications amongst the FAB and with the Club was discussed.
- 7.2. CP proposed that 'radical transparency' was required for the FAB to work effectively in representing the fanbase with an emphasis on the Club being open and sharing information in order to put fans at the heart of everything the Club does. DMC said she hoped that the discussion in the first meeting demonstrated that the Club was committed to the FAB.
- 7.3. It was agreed that consultation on a range of issues will take place between quarterly meetings and that FAB communications outside of meetings will take place via dedicated email addresses, Teams meetings and WhatsApp groups.

**Action for Club to include dedicated FAB email addresses with the minutes of this meeting so that supporters can contact their representatives directly.**

## **Interaction with current fan group workings**

- 7.4. SC and CP both noted it will take time to work out how supporter groups and the FAB will work together and that dialogue on this issue would be important.

## **Working Groups**

- 7.5. The group agreed that once inductions had taken place, they would discuss the option of forming working groups but that it was not necessary at this stage. DMC explained that working groups will be an important part of the FAB as it will allow

members to specialise in particular areas and allow the group to focus on areas that were most important to them and the fans they represent.

- 7.6. DMC suggested that the creation of a working group on the Y-word would be beneficial and that there will be a discussion regarding the Club's Flags and Banners Policy.

## **8. AOB**

- 8.1. FAB to have appointed the Supporter Representative Co-Chair within a few weeks.

**Action for LH to arrange a call to elect the Supporter Representative Co-Chair and discuss the proposed locations of the Bill Nicholson gates in August.**

- 8.2. SW raised the issue of the Club's Women's season tickets being released with a one week renewal period.

**Action for LH to discuss with SW on a pre-arranged call with LH and colleagues from the Women's team on Wednesday of this week. This has now taken place.**

- 8.3. CH and PP asked if the Club would assist in increasing the awareness of all OSCs throughout the world by leveraging THFC communication platforms, non-sensitive membership data and the Spurs shop.

**Action for LH to arrange call with CH, PP and the Supporters' Club team to discuss 8.3. and whether Domestic and International OSC committees could be created.**

- 8.4. DB offered to work with CH and PP and the Club to enable Access Scheme Members in OSCs to sit in close proximity to the rest of their members.

**Action for LH to arrange a call with DB, CH, PP and the Access team to discuss.**

- 8.5. CH asked for assistance from FAB members and the Club in hosting International OSCs the night before matches when they visit.

**Action for LH to discuss with Supporters Club team and report back to CH.**