

**CHELSEA FOOTBALL CLUB  
SUPPORTERS CONSULTATIVE FORUM  
2007/ 2008 SEASON**

Meeting held at the Lord Attenborough Suite, Chelsea F.C. Hotel, at 11.00 am on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

**ATTENDEES/ group represented**

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Alexander, James   | (season ticket holder)                         |
| Beard, Neil        | (CFCUK)  |
| Brown, Toby        | (CFCnet)                                       |
| Fiorellino, Trizia | (Chelsea Supporters Group)                     |
| Gibbins, Jason     | (member)                                       |
| Goldston, Geoff    | (over 60 age group)                            |
| Gourlay, Ron       | (Chelsea F.C. Commercial & Venue Director)     |
| Greenberg, Simon   | (Chelsea F.C. Communications Director)         |
| Kemp, Pete         | (Chelsea Supporters Club)                      |
| Kenyon, Peter      | (Chelsea F.C. Chief Executive)                 |
| Law, Matthew       | (disabled section)                             |
| Lister, Simon      | (member)                                       |
| Marriott, Bryan    | (family section)                               |
| O'Brien, John      | (non-UK branch)                                |
| Regan, Andy        | (Electoral Reform Services, independent chair) |
| Smith, Graham      | (Chelsea F.C. Head of Ticketing)               |
| Smith, Ian         | (member)                                       |
| Sporle, Lee        | (branch)                                       |
| Trenter, Peter     | (home & away season ticket holder)             |
| Whalley, Elizabeth | (season ticket holder)                         |

**Apologies**

|                   |                                  |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Greer, Gary       | (branch)                         |
| Hine, Lenny       | (16 – 21 age group)              |
| Newby, David      | (Chelsea F.C. Marketing Manager) |
| Phelps, Mary      | (exec member/ box holder)        |
| Pickering, Trevor | (Chelsea Supporters Club)        |

(Action points are in bold and underlined.)

**INTRODUCTION**

Chair: Before we start, some ST holders on the Forum have pointed out that they too could have been offered a ticket for today's cup match, as their season ticket didn't cover this.

**Chair to check with the Club re non-members of the Forum not being offered tickets for today's match.**

**CHANGES TO THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING/ MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

*Club: As regards the list of action points from the last meeting:*

*"Fans to contact the Club detailing where they want to sit within a block (top, middle, lower etc). Club to then alter the away seat listing." Four requested to move position.*

Fans: All four are happy with that.

*Club: "Club to advertise that non-UK members can apply for away match tickets." That has now been advertised in emails to supporters' clubs.*

*"Club to ensure they are publicising how our stewards can help at away matches, and what aspects the local police may clamp down on abroad." When tickets are picked up at the ticket office, a letter accompanies them. There are also messages on the website and in the programme.*

*"Club to investigate incident in Valencia when fans were hit by police within view of Club stewards." We have a report on that which we can review later.*

**Club to provide details of Valencia report.**

*"Club to review circumstances of fan at Middlesbrough being temporarily banned." We don't know about this: there is no Club ban. Please provide further details.*

*"Club to explore if live commentary broadcasts can be carried on Chelsea TV." Unfortunately we can't show footage as it's a rights issue.*

**Club to investigate further whether radio commentary of matches can be covered on Chelsea TV.**

Fans: "Trizia to collate fan responses on Club media content." The report has been finished.

**Trizia to circulate report of fan responses to Club media content.**

*Club: "Club to review where members can eat in members-only areas of the ground on match days." We don't have the space at present.*

*"Club to consider selling Chelsea-themed videos shown on the screens in the ground." Unfortunately we can't use the music or some of the footage from the London Calling video, again, for rights reasons.*

*“Club to check on stewarding for gates 5 and 7 in the East Stand.” We think this is working quite well at the moment. There were long queues before the Newcastle game twenty minutes before kick-off, but all were through within four minutes of kick-off. Anyone who joined the queue five minutes before kick-off was in by kick-off.*

Fans: This generally doesn't seem accurate. The queue for one game was down the stairs, round the back and almost to the other end of the East Stand. It seems to vary from game to game. Can we use the corner turnstile?

*Club: Next season we will be changing the access to that stand. Turnstiles everywhere will change to the swipe card system.*

Fans: The email contact system for the Forum has worked well so far. Fanzine and website representatives have had upto 50, with a lot being junk emails. That number is manageable though. Some have been about supporters' clubs.

*Club: We can discuss supporters' clubs at a later point.*

## **TICKETING**

*Club: Please would you wait for the official minutes before publicising this section of the meeting. Please also remember that anything discussed in this section is taken away and considered, without any policy announced today.*

(The Club stated current policy on ticketing, and invited comments on each aspect.)

Fans: On the subject of the 90/10 split for internet/ ticket office sales for matches, this works for most matches but not the Cup Finals where many fans want to be sure of getting a ticket and are prepared to queue. Please can this be reviewed for Cup Finals. It could be a 75/25 split. How many go astray in the post?

*Club: We have had nine queries for the Carling Cup Final, which in most cases will be due to a sorting office problem. We can usually sort these out. There were a few stolen for the Cup Final last year. We have had one set confirmed stolen for the Carling Cup Final.*

Fans: Can fans pay extra for special delivery for regular match tickets if they want to? How many tickets usually go missing for home matches?

*Club: It's a very slow manual process, but we can consider it. We get anything upto 150 going lost for a home match.*

Fans: Thanks to the Club for making the administrative charge for Wembley on a per order basis. Spurs haven't done this.

*Club: Next year we will have a ticketing/ membership email going round which will help provide information.*

Fans: At present credit card sale tickets go to the billing address. Can there be an option for a different delivery address?

*Club: We plan to bring this in next season once it's tested.*

Fans: Can the dates for sales be announced early for away/ Wembley matches?

*Club: The problem is that we want to wait until we have the tickets or are at least sure when they'll arrive.*

Fans: On the subject of the 50/50 away ticket split:

Some fans definitely don't like the current ratio and feel it's unfair to season ticket holders. Members don't have to go to any home games to get an away ticket for a big match. Season ticket holders have put their money forward to commit to every home game and deserve priority. For the bigger matches certainly, season ticket holders should get first offer of away tickets, even if it's just for a day or two.

On the other hand, not all away matches sell out, so certainly wouldn't do if they were sold to season ticket holders only. Also, season ticket holders proportionately have a far better chance of getting tickets than members as there are far fewer. Surely we should be encouraging fans to go to away matches again. Some fans don't get season tickets as it doesn't fit into their lifestyles to go to every match, but they shouldn't be banned, in effect, from away matches.

How well does the split of tickets work for the Club?

*Club: We haven't had problems with the 50/50 split. Some matches sell out straight away due to demand anyway. We would also say that the numbers going to away matches are better and atmosphere is better in recent years.*

*We have to balance these competing interests and different definitions of loyalty. The Forum at least made a recommendation a year ago and we have gone with that. We get very few complaints at present.*

*The away season ticket scheme comprises 1,000 home season ticket holders and 200 members. The former did not sell straight away, whilst the latter did.*

Fans: We could always institute different tiers of loyalty for home season tickets based on how many years you have had that season ticket. Away match ticket sales could be prioritised according to this.

At Arsenal there is a separate away ticket scheme which you have to join for £10 if a member, but season ticket holders join for free. Members of that scheme accrue points for away matches

then get priority for the big matches according to that. Payment of the membership fee could be added as an option with the home membership forms.

Very few members go regularly according to statistics from a previous Forum meeting, around 2,000. Therefore only that group are likely to pay the extra £10.

Votes on away match ticket sales (out of a total of 15 possible votes)

1) To change the balance of away ticket sales from 50/50 to a 60/40 split in favour of season ticket holders:

In favour of the 50/50 split: 5

In favour of the 60/40 split: 6;

2) In favour of introducing a separate away match membership scheme: 13.

Fans: As there are some away matches in which we don't sell out, would it be possible for that away season ticket holder to buy extra tickets for friends at the end of the selling period?

*Club: This could be a possibility if fans take responsibility for those extra tickets.*

Fans: It would be a help to divide the season ticket payments into eight to make each payment less of a burden.

On the subject of the declaration forms, are they really necessary?

Did we take the full allocation for Olympiakos?

*Club: The declaration forms are part of how we manage our security. These are the rules that the local police lay down. We are happy to look at whether the declaration can be completed online in future.*

*We did take the full allocation for Olympiakos. We were hoping for more tickets to come in but that was the maximum we could take.*

Fans: On the subject of concessionary tickets for home matches, 16-21 year olds should have their own season ticket price available throughout the ground. It shouldn't only apply to students. It is unclear how much a 16 year old still at school should be paying for a ticket.

Please can the Club also introduce upgrading of child season tickets to an adult ticket for UCL matches? It means one adult can't take another adult instead.

*Club: The upgrade per match would be difficult to administer.*

*We will look at better communication for the 16-21 age group as well, and clarify whether the applicant is required to be a student.*

Fans: What's the cut-off date for qualifying for senior ticket rights?

*Club: 1st July.*

*There has been criticism that too many matches go on sale on a Monday but that fits into the 28 day selling period, as it stands at present. We will review the seven day periods for each element of selling tickets anyway. The problem is that we end up going on general sale or extending the number of tickets members or season ticket holders can apply for, towards the end of a selling period. Maybe that should be cut to five day periods for each type of sale. We end up not being able to post tickets out otherwise, which can lead to massive queues on match days.*

Fans: What is the situation with having kiosks around the ground for collecting tickets on a match day?

*Club: We are looking into that but there are licensing issues.*

Fans: For the Everton Carling Cup home tie, there were massive queues, which were exacerbated by tube problems. The police delayed kick-off for the other semi-final at the Emirates due to delays. This seems inconsistent. Fans who came to that match for their first experience for some time may be deterred from coming again soon. Registered delivery would have helped.

*Club: The kick-off time was a police decision. We can check the CCTV if there was an issue. There were no queues at five to seven at the ticket office.*

*Member sales were especially low for that match, and hence a lot were sold on general sale. There comes a point at which it is too late for registered post and we would have been dealing with many queries about obtaining duplicate tickets.*

Fans: If you buy one ticket initially as a member or season ticket holder then another later when on wider sale, do you get the additional points? Do you lose points when you sell a ticket on Viagogo?

Can fans check their individual points totals as well as how they are calculated?

*Club: You only collect your own points on your first ticket. Members start on a five point bonus anyway. That was why all Carling Cup Final sales were not on that basis. That bonus applies for renewing membership early.*

*You don't lose points when selling on Viagogo. It is a separate system to our loyalty points system.*

*We are looking into fans being able to check on the website how their points have been calculated.*

Fans: When are Thomas Cook loyalty points added?

Why is there only one loyalty point awarded for Olympiakos?

*Club: For the Thomas Cook sales, we check after each match and add them on.*

*For the UCL, we give five points for the group matches, then one point for the knock-out stage.*

Fans: In respect of membership points generally, members may lose out for big match tickets if, for instance, they can't come for a while to midweek matches.

*Club: We will consider having a rolling membership total over, for instance, three years. We have the records for this.*

Fans: You could always add a point for each year instead, going back as far as records are kept. So if you have been a member or season ticket holder for 20 years, you automatically earn 20 extra points.

*Club: We had about 4,000 requests for season ticket moves last year. Everyone seemed to want the halfway line! We can look at doing that again this year. We expect far fewer to move this year.*

Fans: The better atmosphere in the Shed End may attract more fans there this year.

If a family member season ticket holder dies, can it be switched to the name of a fellow family member?

*Club: There is no problem with that switch.*

*On the subject of call centre times, it will be open later for 5.15 kick-offs. We will also consider the ticket office opening at 7am (at the same time as web sales being available) for the first day of sales for a match.*

Fans: It still seems unfair for an administrative fee to be charged on each ticket.

How does the holding area work for website sales?

*Club: It is not a queuing system, as we would have to shut the website down and reopen it each time new tickets go on sale if we did implement one. For one match someone went into the site for next day sales at quarter to ten the night before. We would have to be earlier than that before the queues start. The problem then is that we sell so many tickets at once for different matches. We can hold millions in the holding area though.*

*For the Carling Cup Final, many fans logged in who didn't have enough loyalty points. This blocked fans who did have enough points. We couldn't stop the former group from applying as they may have been buying tickets for members who did have enough points. Hence tickets which are not on sale at, say, ten past seven, may be available for purchase twenty minutes later when re-released.*

*We average three minutes for a transaction, and can sell 5,000 in that time.*

Fans: Some fans who were moved for a cup game were given restricted view seats.

*Club: If you provide the details we will look into that. It shouldn't have happened.*

Fans: One member who has a credit card which he only uses for Chelsea matches found that it was cloned. How could that happen?

*Club: We don't hold card details online when payment is made. Season ticket renewal forms are destroyed in seven days. Again, if you provide details of that person to us, we can investigate.*

Fans: Please clarify how the disabled ticket scheme works.

*Club: We have two schemes in effect. We have 100 free season tickets. We also have 100 free tickets which are offered from person to person on a list. Match tickets are sold to non-disabled helpers to accompany them.*

*We have a couple of disabled away season ticket holders. We publicise what tickets are available for away matches. Sometimes allocations are very small, 5 to 7 for Olympiakos. There is no 50/50 split for these away tickets, but we can look into introducing it.*

Fans: At the Wigan cup match, about 300 fans travelled without tickets, expecting to be able to buy them at the ground. Wigan have sent an email to state that Chelsea had said they shouldn't be sold to our fans on the day. Yet there was plenty of room for more fans at our end.

That apart, there has been really good feedback about the trains the Club has put on for away matches.

*Club: We didn't say they couldn't sell them. It was their decision. Neither Graham nor Ron asked them not to sell on the day, and no one else would have given that request. Tickets for both the league and cup games there were sold on the day, as far as we knew.*

*On the travel issue, we are also conscious of our environmental responsibilities. The Club providing trains reduces the carbon emissions of so many travelling.*

Fans: For those season ticket holders who have to move from the Shed End for cup matches, please could we have one day pre-purchase to see online which tickets in the stadium will be available?

For sales generally, could the Club look into fans being able to select their block?

*Club: We can consider that first idea.*

*We will look into the issue of where members want to sit generally when we meet for the atmosphere committee. We can certainly consider having a button to select for purchasing in the singing area.*

Fans: For away matches including Derby and Portsmouth, their concessionary prices were for 60 year olds rather than 65 year olds.

*Club: We can't change the direct debit mandate for pre-paid. Four had Teamcard points added for loyalty for this. Let us know if they didn't.*

Fans: Can the Club announce whether there will be ticket price increases this year? When will renewals go out?

*Club: We are still looking into all these issues and will announce soon. We will try and announce to the Forum before publicising our decisions more widely.*

*Renewals will go out end of April as last year. We know there was a query last year about the timing clashing with the Cup Final.*

Fans: It seems very early to ask for fans to commit before the end of this season. This is especially true if we get to Moscow for the UCL final.

The Club should be congratulated on the way they sold Carling Cup Final tickets, by noting loyalty issues. Please could the Club be more detailed when stating there are "a few" tickets left though. This could mean anything.

*Club: "A few" means anything from literally a few, to around 200.*

Fans: Please can the Club review ticketing policy for overseas supporters' clubs.

*Club: A new policy will be emailed to supporters' clubs in the next month.*

Fans: Some fans came over on spec to buy tickets for the Liverpool match from touts last week. They were able to buy five of them.

*Club: They could only be members' tickets. We will look into it if you send in ticket details. Those members then face suspensions.*

(Forum members agreed to discuss Any Other Business by email. The meeting finished at 12.35pm.)