

## **Notes of Sheffield Wednesday Supporters Engagement Panel**

Date: Tuesday 4 July

Time: 7:15pm, Hillsborough, in person and via Zoom

### **In Attendance**

Panel Groups: Dave Higgins (Wednesday Ladies), Paul Holmes (Wednesdayite), Jon Wakefield (South West Owls)

Panel Individuals: Dave Buttery, Philip Rushforth, Saif Salih, Alan Smith

From the club: Dejphon Chansiri (Chairman), Liam Dooley (Chief Operating Officer & Chair), Trevor Braithwait (Director of Communications).

### **New Business**

DC welcomed everyone in attendance and reiterated he was pleased in-person meetings can continue following previous restrictions. JW joined the meeting via Zoom for geographical reasons. The panel requested the meeting and LD confirmed the club were happy to debate the agenda points of order.

### **Panel constitution**

The club agreed to PR's request for more diversity on the panel. The panel would revert with a strategy to introduce new nominees. DC said he would welcome to the panel any individual or supporter group who can bring something tangible to the process and can be relied upon, and if the panel agree, this can be pursued. DC asked the panel to look at the contributions of existing members and if any members are inactive, request if they wish to continue. The final decision would be with the panel, not the club. PR said he will forward a list of nominees to the club in the interests of diversity.

### **Panel role**

PR suggested the panel have more of an active role from this point, throughout the new season and moving forward. He said the panel would request more communication with the club and perhaps occasional articles in the matchday programme. TB said his door is always open for any level of communication and would be happy to provide space in the programme. PR asked if the panel could offer assistance regarding the sale of Season Tickets and phasing periods, and both parties debated the subject. DC said he explained his policy in detail at a recent fans' forum, followed by a clear statement on the club's website, which was acknowledged. He reiterated the club is always open to suggestion and feedback, good or bad.

### **Matchday experience**

PR asked for any updates on enhancing the matchday experience. LD explained a new access system is in place for the new season which will ultimately phase out print at home tickets and Season Cards. A significant investment has been made to implement the system which will ensure a smooth ingress into the stadium in the

long term. LD asked for patience in the first instance as any such new system is not infallible and may take time to implement the transition. DC said the system has taken time to install but represents a positive change for the fan experience in the long term.

### **Away tickets**

JW put forward a potential change to the allocation of away tickets for certain games in that could a small percentage (circa 100) be allocated to SWFC supporters living locally to the respective game? With a timeframe of say 24 hours to purchase so not to hinder the sales process? These supporters could be either Season Ticket holders or Members. DC said if 100 tickets were sold under such a scheme, it would reduce the regular allocation by the same number for supporters with the relevant Ticket Priority Points. DH suggested it may work better with larger allocations. LD said those fans who have accumulated points should have priority over long distance fans who may struggle to attend games. PR also pointed out that some fans are buying tickets and selling them on, citing games at Forest Green and Cheltenham last season. DC said if supporters buy tickets but cannot attend the game they should be returned to the club for a refund and put on sale for supporters who meet the points threshold. JW said to get young people to support SWFC while living outside Sheffield can be difficult so this is a way to potentially get people on board at an early age. JW said he took his young children to a Bristol City away game and they were hooked. DC said he would be happy to debate further and it was agreed a mutually agreeable solution would be proposed and decided upon.

### **SWFC Ladies**

DH said he is open to suggestion for the Ladies' team moving forward but the current perception is one of separation from the club. He said with the upsurge in women's football, now is the time to embrace so not to miss an opportunity. SWFC Ladies currently have 12 teams of all age groups, a tight ship working under one umbrella, DH said the organisation is voluntary and would remain so in the future. He said the current cost is circa £45,000 so reliant on subscriptions, funding and support. All training has moved to the new Community Programme facility on Claywheels Lane and the Ladies are actively seeking sponsorship. DC said he is happy to support where possible and would explore the potential of the Ladies moving 'in-house' but the organisation would have to adhere to SWFC policies. DC requested a business plan to which DH agreed.

### **Any other business**

With there being no further business, the panel were thanked for their attendance and contributions and the meeting was closed.

Next meeting

TBC