

Notes of Sheffield Wednesday Supporters Engagement Panel

Date: Thursday 12 October

Time: 6:00pm, Hillsborough, in person and via Zoom

In Attendance

Panel Groups: Dave Higgins (Wednesday Ladies), Paul Holmes (Wednesdayite), Jon Wakefield (South West South Wales Owls), Emma Partridge (Sheffield Wednesday Women's Supporters Group), Eve Winstanley (Hoyland Owls), Chris Ledger (Rainbow Owls), Adam Eccles (Armed Forces Owls), Evan Skilliter (Owls Americas)

Panel Individual: Dave Buttery

From the club: Dejphon Chansiri (Chairman), Liam Dooley (Chief Operating Officer & Chair), Alastair Wilson (General Manager), Trevor Braithwait (Director of Communications), James Todd (Commercial Manager)

New Business

DC welcomed everyone in attendance. The panel requested the meeting and as is normal, LD confirmed the club were happy to debate the agenda points of order.

Introductions

New members to the panel were welcomed and introduced – EP from the Sheffield Wednesday Women's Supporters Group, AE from the Armed Forces Owls and CL from Rainbow Owls.

The panel requested confirmation they were permitted to present 'difficult' questions, whether or not on the agenda, more for new members. DC confirmed there were no issues with any questions, on or off the agenda, reiterating the club's stance since the inception of the panel. DC said he would give as much information as possible in the interests of transparency.

Statement clarification

The panel asked for clarification of DC's statement outlining his investment in the club. DC said his statement was quite clear and explained that the club needs fans in bad times as well as good times. DC is fully conversant with criticism and particularly when the team are not producing good results but urges anyone not to cross the line. While general criticism is fine, going to his family is not. DC said he welcomes constructive criticism, with which the club will always engage. DH said it is the responsibility of the panel to raise the question and after further debate, DC reiterated that the statement was quite clear.

Bradley Lowery Foundation Fundraising

The panel and the club commended the outstanding efforts of EP in establishing a fundraising page on behalf of SWFC supporters following the appalling events of the Sunderland home game in September. The total raised was nearing £30,000 and acknowledged by all present as a fine representation of SWFC.

Matchday ticket prices

The panel raised the issue of the matchday ticket strategy and DC emphasised that prices would reflect the team's standing in the league table. PH suggested that more notice could be given for the category of games. AW said the average of three weeks is generally sufficient notice and prices are determined by the table at that time. DH said supporters were surprised the Rotherham game was categorised at the lower end of the scale and AW explained the methods of the system. DH asked if the panel could revert with further suggestions and ideas, to which AW agreed.

AW asked the panel for the entry level price point of 2023/24 compared to 2019/20 as an example and said matchday prices are currently £1.29 less on average for the first seven games, to which panel members expressed surprise. AW acknowledged the general consensus, including media, will refer to the higher end of the scale, regardless of whether those categories are used. DC outlined the benefits of the club's Community Engagement Scheme and urged supporters to use this option if necessary.

AE said the current system is complicated and confusing for supporters when compared to other clubs but applauded the categorisation of the Rotherham game. On the subject of categories for Season Ticket sales, DC said there are more categories in place to ensure incremental rises are smaller each time. He said categories could be fewer but the rises would be higher – clubs actually benefit from the latter but the former is in place to prevent higher rises.

AE asked if Season Ticket holders could be recognised more by the club, for example by gifting commemorative items. LD said he understood the theory but cost implications would be prohibitive. LD outlined the success of the new digital entry system which is a significant move forward for both sides whilst reducing the club's carbon footprint.

AOB

LD announced he is leaving the club having accepted the role of Chief Executive Officer at Shrewsbury Town, which was a significant step up in his career compared to his role of Chief Operating Officer with SWFC. LD thanked everyone on the panel for their support, contributions and assistance. LD said that he and AW had worked side by side for some time and AW would now move to the forefront of the operations side of the club. The panel wished LD well in his new position.

With there being no further business, DC thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting was closed.

Next meeting TBC.