

Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Monday 28th October 2013 – 7.15pm

Present – Fans' Forum

Andy Neill
John Wareing
Simon Barnes
Terry Crawford
Annette Birkbeck
Gordon Ormerod
Jennifer Lewis
Alan Birkbeck
Ray Williamson

Present from BRFC

Greg Coar
Lynsey Talbot

1. Apologies for absence

Tris Stock
Glenn Pegden
Ste Birtwell
Neil Duckworth
Rob Parker
Ben Sumner
Jim Holden
Mark Hitchen

2. Matters arising from the Minutes 9th September 2013

a) Half-Time Smoking Areas

JW asked whether any progress had been made in finding a trial area for smokers at half-time. GC replied that the matter was still under consideration. There was a willingness to identify an area but significant practical problems in making an area both secure and flexible in case of emergency. The Chair of the Safety Advisory Group was not keen to allow a trial without full control measures to ensure that there was no ability for fans to move between areas of the ground.

b) Standing in the Darwen End

GC stated that there had been increasing incidents of bad behaviour amongst a small group of youths in the Darwen End, culminating in throwing coins at the away fans at the Charlton game. There had also been incidents of fighting away fans outside the ground at the Barnsley and Charlton games. Most of the offenders had been identified but action was more complicated as

seating was unreserved. The club were nervous of escalating matters by involving the police and hoped this behaviour would not continue in order to threaten the current arrangements in the Darwen End.

c) Checking Concession Tickets

AN asked for an update on the exercise checking the incorrect use of concession tickets. GC replied that the exercise was ongoing, but that only a couple of offenders had been found at the Charlton game, which was hopefully a sign that the policy was working.

3. Burnley Away Game - Review

LT stated that there had been a de-brief after the away game at Burnley. The general consensus was that the coaching arrangements had been much better organised compared to last season. In particular the provision of a dedicated family coach had been well received.

The club would like to officially thank fans for their patience and co-operation.

No detailed planning had yet been made for the return fixture at Ewood Park, although it had been agreed that the sections nearest to the Darwen End in the Riverside and Jack Walker Stands would be cordoned off, following the problems in those areas last season.

4. Financial Fair Play Regulations

GC stated that the club recognised that meeting the upcoming introduction of Financial Fair Play Regulations was a very significant challenge for the club. The owners were well aware of the issue and the club were taking professional advice. Significant progress had been made in the last transfer window when the club's wage bill had been significantly reduced, but the club would not meet the regulations this season. This could possibly mean a transfer embargo from January 2015. However, many other Championship clubs were in the same situation and it remained to be seen what would happen across the division.

5. Match Day Pricing

JW asked whether the club would consider extending or changing the areas open for discounted student tickets. GC replied that the issue was mainly encouraging more students to take up the offer. The club were working with both Blackburn College and UCLAN to increase take up.

JW also asked whether it would be possible to introduce a cash turnstile. GC replied that the club were not aware of any demand for a cash turnstile. There had not been huge queues before home games at the

ticket office this season. There would also be cost issues in converting existing turnstiles to accept cash.

JW pointed out that any fans wanting to sit in the Darwen end had to go right round to the Blackburn End to buy tickets first and this might be putting some fans off attending.

6. Finance Director Vacancy

AN asked where the club was in replacing Karen Silk as Finance Director. LT replied that Derek Shaw had sent details of potential candidates to the owners in India for their consideration. In the meantime the existing experienced Finance team were handling day-to-day business, with support from KPMG.

7. PA Issues in the Jack Walker Stand

JL stated that the PA in the Jack Walker stand had been unbearably loud at the last two home games. LT responded that there had been recent problems in one or two locations in the ground. Contractors had been present at the Charlton game to assess the situation, but the reality was that the system was now quite old.

8. Any Other Business

- a) GC advised the meeting that he was awaiting final approval for pricing for half-time season tickets. The plan was to charge £149 for adults, £99 for senior citizens and £40 for juniors for the 13 home games from Boxing Day, with the free under 8 offer still available in the Family Stand. In addition fans buying half season tickets would be eligible to buy a season ticket for half the 2013/14 full season ticket price should the club be promoted. A full marketing campaign would start as soon as final approval was given.
- b) GC stated that the club were hoping to set up a permanent Fan Zone marquee behind the Blackburn End in Spring 2014, in partnership with the club's beer supplier Heineken UK.
- c) LT advised the meeting that the Football League had a Family Excellence award which the club were striving to get in 2013/14. The club had been making a concerted effort to improve the family offer at Ewood and hoped to obtain the award this season.
- d) AN expressed concern at the delays in fans entering the ground at Bloomfield Road on Saturday, which seemed to be because of ticket checks and the small number of turnstiles. GC agreed that there were issues although it should also be noted that many Rovers fans arrived en masse just before and even after the kick-off.
- e) JL informed the meeting that the Disabled Supporters Christmas Party would be held on Thursday 12th December, Tickets priced £7.50 were available from committee members.

9 Date of Next Meetings

Pre -meet	Main meeting
Monday 9/12/13	Monday 16/12/13
Monday 3/2/14	Monday 10/2/14
Monday 7/4/14	Monday 14/4/14

Pre-meets are held at Ewood one week before the main meetings. The pre-meet is open to all interested fans to attend, providing they request to do so in advance by contacting John Wareing by email or phone as below.

Members should contact John Wareing at roversfansforum@hotmail.com or 07984 085474 give their apologies if they cannot attend a meeting.

Fans can also contact John regarding the Forum using the contact details above.

Our ref: SC

10 September 2013

To the parent of
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

Dear Sir/Madam

Misuse of Season Ticket, Account number XXXXXX

During the match day operation at the recent Blackburn Rovers –v- Bolton Wanderers fixture on Saturday 31 August 2013 the above ticket was used to attempt to enter the ground. The ticket is a junior ticket but was being presented at the turnstile by an adult.

I would like to remind you that the use of a concession ticket by an adult is not permitted within the terms and conditions under which tickets are issued and such use may constitute a criminal offence. However such tickets can be upgraded to a full adult ticket on up to four occasions during any one season.

Please ensure that there no further instances of misuse of your son's ticket or the club may have to consider further action. Season Tickets remain the property of Blackburn Rovers Football Club at all times.

For further information regarding the Terms and Conditions under which tickets are sold please see the Club's Customer Charter on the web-site www.rovers.co.uk This Charter is also displayed around the stadium.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter and should you wish to discuss it further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Stuart M. Caley
Stadium Safety Officer