

# **Minutes of the Blackburn Rovers Fans' Forum Ewood Park, Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2013 – 7.15pm**

## **Present – Fans' Forum**

Andy Neill  
John Wareing  
Tris Stock  
Gordon Ormerod  
Neil Duckworth  
Jennifer Lewis  
Alan Birkbeck  
Ray Williamson  
Rob Parker

## **Present from BRFC**

Derek Shaw  
Greg Coar  
Stuart Caley

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Glenn Pegden  
Ste Birtwell  
Terry Crawford  
Annette Birkbeck  
Ben Sumner  
Simon Barnes  
Jim Holden  
Mark Hitchen

AN advised the meeting that John Billouin had resigned from the Forum.  
JW agreed to write a letter of thanks for his long service as a member.

### **2. Matters arising from the Minutes 29<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

#### **a) Use of Flares**

AN expressed concern at the use of devices by a Rovers fan at Carlisle and a Bolton fan at Ewood in recent weeks. SC replied that whilst neither was a true flare, the use did cause some concern. A warning to fans had been printed in the first match programme of the season and he agreed that this should be repeated.

#### **b) Asset of Community Value Application**

DS stated that the club had replied to Blackburn with Darwen council regarding the application to register Ewood Park as an asset of community value. A number of other grounds around the country had been granted this status as well as other buildings. DS expected that the application would be approved.

**c) Replica Shirt Sales**

AN noted a feeling that there were more replica shirts around the streets this year than for a number of years. GC confirmed that the club had had its best two months for retail sales in the last six years and shirt sales had been very strong.

**3. Safety and Security Issues**

**a) Half-time Smoking Areas**

AN asked whether it was possible to create outdoor smoking areas at Ewood at half-time as was happening at other grounds around the country. SC stated that the club had looked at whether it could be possible to create such areas but had faced a number of practical difficulties. Outside areas needed to be secure to stop people coming into the ground at half-time and also needed to be discrete to each stand to avoid fans moving from one stand to another. This was likely to be prohibitively expensive in extra stewarding costs. It would also be necessary to provide barrier fencing that would secure an area but be able to be rapidly dismantled should an emergency evacuation of the building be necessary. After some discussion about possible ways to create a suitable area SC agreed to look at the matter again and consider the practicality of setting up a trial area.

**b) Standing in the Darwen End**

JW advised the meeting that he had had contact from a season ticket holder in the Darwen End who was concerned about crowd safety in a small area at the rear of the stand where fans were standing, especially when there were movements when a goal was scored. SC replied that there was a problem with a small group of younger fans. Stewards were particularly concerned with keeping walkways clear for the safety of all fans in the stand but this was now under better control in the Darwen End.

**c) Checking Concession Tickets**

SC advised the meeting that the club had set up a small team this season to do random checks at turnstiles to catch adult fans using concession tickets to gain access to the ground. Over the first three home games of the season 26 fans had been caught and asked to upgrade their tickets. They had also been written to, to advise them that they were breaking club rules. (A copy of the letter is attached to the minutes).

**4. Burnley Away Game**

GC stated that almost 1,900 tickets had been sold to date for the game and he expected a few hundred more to go before Saturday. SC said that, as a result, the club were still not sure how many coaches would be

needed on the day.

There was a discussion about the whole operation restricting fans' ability to make their own way to the match and how this was affecting attendance at games with Burnley. Whilst this was a matter for regret, it was understood why these measures would continue for the foreseeable future to control the small minority of fans of both sides who wished to create trouble at or around the games.

ND asked what uptake there had been for the family coach idea. GC confirmed that one coach had been sold.

## **5. Season Ticket Sales 2013/14**

GC presented some statistical analysis of sales of 2013/14 season tickets, which had been taken off sale the previous week.

The club had sold about 10,500 season tickets, up from 9,700 the previous season.

Although a significant proportion of tickets had been bought online, about half were sold over the phone through the call centre. Despite press reports of problems 20% of tickets had been bought on the direct debit scheme.

The geographical spread of sales was as expected heavily concentrated in East Lancashire, although there were season ticket holders as far afield as Aberdeen and the west coast of Ireland.

19% of sales were to women, a figure which had been static over the last four seasons. There was a feeling that this was quite low and the club would make comparisons with other clubs.

Around 19% of sales were new sales i.e. not renewals. Of these 58% had not held a season ticket in the last three years. A further 30% of the new sales were those who had held a ticket in the Premier League but not last season.

## **6. Lancashire Telegraph**

AN asked whether it would be possible to involve the Lancashire Telegraph in promoting the work of the Forum to the wider fan base, particularly those fans who did not use the internet. GC replied that he did not feel it appropriate for a reporter to be part of a future meeting at this stage, but this was something to consider in the future. However, a meeting with the Telegraph after meetings was entirely a matter for the Forum.

## **7. Any Other Business**

a) AN thanked RP for his work in setting up the new website for the

Fans Forum. GC offered to put a link to the site in a future mailing to fans from the club.

- b) GO asked whether it was possible to show away reserve games on Rovers Player. GC thought it was unlikely as he doubted whether these games were filmed by a Rovers film crew.
- c) DS asked whether it was appropriate to move the meetings from a 6 week to an 8 week schedule. AN agreed that members would consider this.

## **8. Date of Next Meetings**

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Pre -meet       | Main meeting    |
| Monday 14/10/13 | Monday 21/10/13 |
| Monday 25/11/13 | Monday 2/12/13  |

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](mailto: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](http://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