**CPST Meeting with CPFC**

**Weds 28th July @ Selhurst Park**

**Present:** CPST: Rich Wilsher, Ray Wright, Keith Powell

CPFC: Sharon Lacey (Head of Customer Service and SLO), Mike Pink (Head of Retail), Adrian Roberts (Head of Safety & Security), Cheryl Wiseman (PA to the Directors).

1. **Loyalty Points**

* CPST raised issue and presented a range of fans’ concerns regarding the perceived unfairness and inequality of the scheme as it presently operates. CPST reiterated that they were opposed to the scheme in its current guise and would continue to lobby against if it remained unaltered.
* It was accepted by all parties that the likelihood of fans ‘jumping the queue’ by purchasing merchandise was limited, albeit not an impossibility. CPST however stated that the notion of loyalty points and the privilege of accessing away tickets based on prior away travel should not be something that could be priced, and as such should not be married to a scheme based upon spend per head at Selhurst Park.
* SL discussed the history of the scheme; some points were awarded last season in selected bar outlets, in addition to some club shop purchases. This was a limited amount and had an immaterial impact on total points held by members/ ST holders. The reason for this was to pilot the scheme and iron out any potential IT gremlins, of which there were a few.
* CPST raised concerns that the awarding of points would impact service speeds around the ground on match day. CPFC stated that for the first time, all staff had undergone customer service training during pre-season which they felt would expedite service and mitigate bottlenecks.
* SL recognises that corporate clients should not receive points so as to retain fairness. As such, no points will be awarded to corporate events, meals in Speroni’s etc. Points would be limited to food/ drink outlets and the club shop.
* CPST stated that they did not feel the scheme should continue as currently planned. It was recognised that a scheme rewarding expenditure at the club was a good idea; however CPST was adamant that this should be entirely separate to an away points scheme.
* CPFC seemed open to this idea, and agreed to further consider the operation of the scheme, however it was accepted that further discussions, both internally and with other stakeholders were required. The Trust indicated that it would actively keep this issue under review.

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1. **Away Tickets/ Travel**

* CPST noted the PL rules presented by CPST on ticket allocation\*
* AR/MP noted that a lot of consideration goes into the final decision of number of tickets to procure, consider many variables. It is not simply an arbitrary figure.
* MP stated that the club is looking to be bolder with away ticket requests this season. They recognise that miscalculations over tickets were made in some matches last season, leading to both over/ under demand.
* CPST floated the idea of a crowd-funder lead solution to pre-sell tickets, thus removing uncertainty. MP will investigate this.
* CPST asked CPFC to explore viability of reciprocal deals with other clubs, using the example from 13/14 when we agreed a deal with Swansea for reduced concession ticket prices. MP will discuss with Steve Parish.
* CPST thanked the club for providing free coaches to certain away matches. However it was noted that not all fans benefit from this largesse, as they often travel by other means. CPST requested that CPFC make intention to provide free coaches clear as soon as the TV match dates are confirmed, so that supporters can make informed travel decisions. A cap on away ticket prices is another option, however CPST recognise that this is potentially unattractive in that it effectively subsidises the home club.
* CPST queried £25 fee payable by away ST holders, noting that some other clubs do not charge for this service. SL pointed out that the admin involved with running the scheme accounts for the fee, and that away ST holders do benefit from guaranteed access to tickets.
* CPST questioned validity of the use by the box office of a premium rate number and the cost to fans involved. CPFC hopes to encourage people to use the online ticketing system (CPST pointed out that this has had failing in the very recent past). SL explained that the call-back system in operation is actually very effective – as the callers point in the queue reaches the front, the IT system automatically redials the caller who requested a call-back. As such, the caller does not have to hold, nor loses their place in the queue – and encouraged fans to use it. CPST requested that a recorded message explaining the system be placed on the BO line so as to raise awareness.

1. **Club Shop**

* CPST acknowledged the club shop, both online and in store, had improved considerably. MP took over operations recently, and was hoping to broaden products further still.
* MP noted that club shop was hoping to (re)introduce gift cards soon. This was one of the elements that escaped attention when the club shop was brought back in house.
* The second temporary club shop (in the exec car park) is being tripled in size with multiple tills and a new shirt printing facility being created, hopefully in time for the Arsenal home match. This will alleviate queues around the main shop on match days. A more permanent solution is still under review.
* CPST noted that P&P for online orders seemed high. MP is looking into the costs and provider (currently sent by 1st class signed-for), and is hoping to introduce a tiered pricing structure based on delivery timescales. Calculating delivery charged based on weight however is not feasible. MP stressed that the club makes no extra margin on P&P.
* Some club shop items ran out early. Calendars, for example, were underprovided. Sales were much higher than anticipated based on earlier years’ sales, moreover the company delivering the calendars over-promised on bulk – in the event the club was 300 short of the order placed. MP stated that this would hopefully be a one-off.
* The club were looking to licence certain goods so that they could be sold in other outlets rather than just the club shop.

1. **POTD**

* CPST thanked club for support in previous years. POTD was mooted as Swansea this season, SL will support promotion/ merchandise where she could, including reciprocal tickets discussed earlier.

1. **Palace Radio (PR)**

* CPST raised concerns over lack of visibility for PR. MP stated that PR operated on a very low FM frequency that could not be picked up by conventional receivers, and was only available within the ground.
* Further, PR is limited by lack of transmission mast. The situation is unlikely to change in the near future.

1. **Kings Ferry Coaches**

* CPST noted that concerns remain over routes taken. AR noted that this has been raised several times with KF and now expects the issue to abate.
* CPST queried whether stewards were being removed from official coaches as rumoured. AR explained in depth that those acting in that capacity were not stewards as such, rather escorts. The club sought advice from KF as to how other clubs operated, and is now reappraising the benefits paid to such escorts on away trips.

1. **Fans’ Forums**

* CPST is keen that the club reintroduce open fans’ forums, which have been popular events in the past. SL will explore this possibility. A potential inaugural date for this was put forward by the Trust for Sept 24th immediately before its AGM.

1. **Disabled Fans**

* SL explained that disabled Palace fans are in the process of forming a self-representing steering group. This is being sponsored by Level Playing Field, with elections due to take place in a couple of weeks. CPFC is providing facilities for meetings etc, but also believe it important that the group is outside of official club influence. Once the committee is decided upon, SL will fully engage and hope to address their concerns directly. CPST welcomed this progress.

1. **Other Points Discussed**

* SL reiterated that the match day text number was available for all fans to utilise to report any issues, but also to provide feedback/ suggestions.
* Stadium manager will look into pre-pouring pints so as to reduce queues at HT.
* Club cannot under present alcohol license employ hawkers around the stadium. A variation on the license is being sought to enable this.
* Policy on bottles in the ground is as follows: sealed drinks can be brought into the stadium, and all beverages inside the ground are to be sold with tops removed.
* SL remarked on club’s improvement in the Visit Football survey (Premier League clubs rated through mystery shopping) from 20th to 15th last season. CPST acknowledged this improvement but agreed with SL’s assessment that aim should be midtable.
* AR also conducts his own mystery shopping at every home match so as to identify trouble areas. Feedback received is that many areas are improving after certain lapses, especially stewarding.
* CPST raised issue of Arthur Wait concourse arrangements for home/ away supporters, noting that there appeared to be a bias towards space for away fans. AR stated that the club is limited by the amount of space available, moreover away fans utilise the concourse much more than home fans. This is evidenced by empirical data. Therefore the club has an obligation from a safety perspective to provide sufficient space in the AW concourse. Ultimately AR is hamstrung by the outmoded design of the AW stand – the club believes it is working as well as it can under constrained conditions.

\*The Visiting Club (Rule 10.2) must confirm its final order of tickets at least 4 weeks before the league match to which they relate and (Rule 10.3) shall pay for the entirety of the tickets so ordered save that it may return (and not pay for) ay unsold tickets in the final seating block for which it ordered tickets if it has sold 50% of the tickets in that seating block.