



CEO FANS FORUM | WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 2023

EDMISTON HOUSE, PRESENTED BY PARK'S MOTOR GROUP –

17:30 – 19:00

PARTICIPANTS

Chair: Nick Thomson – Head of Communications

James Bisgrove – CEO

David Milburn – Customer Service Manager

Greg Marshall – Head of Fan Engagement / Supporter Liaison Officer

John MacFarlane – Facilities Manager

John Speirs – Disability Access Officer

Josh Hollywood – Head of Corporate

Natalie Nairn – Head of Retail & Events

Robert Boyle – Head of Digital & content

WELCOME

Nick Thomson welcomed everyone and introduced James Bisgrove, CEO. James advised the audience that this was the first quarterly CEO Fans Forum which is part of a broader strategy from the board on fan engagement and supporter communication. The new Fan Engagement strategy is available to read [here](#).

James said that it was a privilege to be CEO of Rangers and commented his current focus would be supporting Michael Beale and his staff with summer recruitment and player trading, overseeing key leadership appointments at the club, managing the financial sustainability, including revenue growth and the various ongoing infrastructure projects at Ibrox Stadium.

Nick Thomson invited each staff member to introduce themselves to the audience.

Robert Boyle – Head of Digital & Content

Joined the club in 2011 and is now in his 13th year. Robert went on to outline his role at the club including matchday programmes and publishing, social media, club website platforms, photography, and heritage. Within his remit, Robert is heading up the new ticketing platform project which has been ongoing, however over the next year the team will be working to roll out the new system ahead of next season's renewal process. Robert is also working on the Museum project which is scheduled to open this summer.

Josh Hollywood – Head of Corporate

Joined the club six months ago. One of Josh's main focuses is managing the catering partnership with Levy. The unique structure of this deal sees 74% of profits returned to the

club. Rangers are the first club in Scotland to have a partnership with Levy alongside English clubs such as the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, Chelsea and Aston Villa. Rangers looking to introduce new technology for the coming season with catering. Day to day, Josh oversees the management of club hospitality where we have just completed circa 1,500 renewals. Over this season we will see the opening of the Gordon Ramsay project and a new Sports Bar. Year one has been a year of learning and finding out what fans want. Another exciting project will see the installation of a touchscreen ordering system within the Copland Rear stand to reduce waiting times.

John MacFarlane – Facilities Manager

John is directly responsible for leading the facilities operation across all three club sites and has been with the club for six months. Fully focused and committed to delivering world-class experiences for supporters. Current projects will see the development of the existing infrastructure and John is keen to hear from supporters to allow him to factor that into his department's decision-making.

Natalie Nairn – Head of Retail and Events

Natalie has been a Rangers fan all her life and has worked at the club for six years. Natalie looks after retail and manages the club's relationship with Castore from first-team to the Museum gift store which is opening next month. Natalie also looks after the club event portfolio, from MyGers open training session to player of the year awards dinners. Natalie also manages MyGers membership.

Greg Marshall – Head of Fan Engagement and SLO

Greg confirmed that the CEO Fan's Forum is the first of many engagement activities that the club will be hosting in the coming season. Greg discussed the Rangers Supporter Engagement Strategy that has been recently released confirming that the club is proud of the work and it's by far the most comprehensive strategy released by a Scottish club. Greg took the opportunity to acknowledge that the club recognises the need to engage and do more in conjunction with the fanbase and increase the two-way dialogue between club and supporter. Greg reiterated that the club wants to make sure that the fans are involved and that opportunities are there to speak to the club directly to have input on strategic and operational decisions. Greg hopes that this is step one in seeing a legitimate and drastic positive change in the connection between club and supporter.

David Milburn – Customer Service Manager

David looks after the Customer Services unit and is generally the first point of contact that fans have with the club for any day-to-day operations of the football club. David works particularly closely with ticketing, MyGers and Greg's fan engagement team to provide the best possible level of service for supporters both on matchday and out with matchday.

John Speirs – Disability Access Officer

John has been with the club for 18 months. John was appointed as the club recognised that they needed to continually improve accessibility at Ibrox and across the club. John is working on the disability access project that will see the introduction of new accessible seating in the Copland, Broomloan, and Govan stands, and his role is crucial in driving this forward. John is also building on the existing services offers including Broxi's Den which won the UEFA award. When the recent plans to evolve the Stadium come to fruition, Ibrox will be the most accessible Stadium in Scotland and comply with best practice guidance from UEFA and the green guide. John is very proud to be part of delivering that.

QUESTIONS

Nick Thomson invited questions from the floor, however, if your question is personal to your own customer experience then there are personnel from the customer service unit available to answer these following the open forum. First the panel will answer questions that had been received via the website.

STADIUM EXPANSION – Answered by James Bisgrove

As we complete the renewals for season 23/24, we have a 99% renewal rate and around 10,000 supporters on the waiting list, which is exceptional. From recent board meetings, there is a real desire from the RIFC board to look at how we can expand the capacity of Ibrox as part of a sustainable long-term strategy. We recently launched the Blue Sky Lounge which created an additional couple of hundred general admission seats (in addition to the BSL Lounge with 330 premium seats). Once the cantilever project on the Broomloan and Copland stands is complete that will add on circa 600 seats to the overall stadium capacity.

The board will continue to assess the medium to long term options in relation to stadium expansion. The options under consideration are the areas in the corners between the Sandy Jardine and the Broomloan and Copland.

We could look at a 'partial fill' of the corners which will give 1300 in total with between £2.5 to £3 million per corner investment required. The other option is a complete fill of the corners which would give another 3500-4000 in each corner but at a very high cost of £20-30m.

Another route is lowering the pitch which would add an additional 4500 with a cost between £15 to £20 million but it's a complex project and would be impossible over one summer to complete which would add complications with games likely being played away from Ibrox for part or all of a given season.

MUSEUM & TROPHY ROOM – Answered by Robert Boyle

The museum has been a long-term passion project. 2017 saw the beginning of cataloguing every item that we own and protecting everything we own. We now have a collections room within the stadium. We looked at all the items and took the decision not to do anything with them that would affect the possibility of us having our own museum and showcasing them ourselves. We have engaged with other heritage professionals as we wanted the collection to be as engaging across the entire fanbase as it possibly could be.

The space will be split into nine zones and each zone will have a specific theme. It will be a walk-through set up, beginning with the early years of the club, progressing through the story of Ibrox, Managers, players, trophies, travel in Europe, special moments, Ibrox and the supporters. There will also be a temporary exhibition space for ad hoc exhibitions. We don't want the Museum journey to end there we want it to extend into the Trophy Room, therefore that area will still have all the familiar sights housed within it – pennants, portraits, silverware etc. To answer the question "What happens to the Trophy Room?" the trophy room will still be there with the bike in place and Bill Struth looking down on you. The museum allows us to move more aged items into a safer environment in order to preserve them for generations to come.

STADIUM FACILITIES – Answered by John MacFarlane and James Bisgrove

John MacFarlane stated that independently and collectively we all recognise a need to for significant investment around the stadium. Recent projects include installation of a new pitch, undersoil heating upgrade, new grow lamps as well as improvements at the training

centre. There has also been significant commitment from the Board to other projects around the stadium – new lifts, press room modernisation with police cells being converted to expand the press facilities. Upgrade to East and West tower lift lobbies, new boilers and hundreds of new seats being installed. James Bisgrove added that it is amazing to sit in modern facilities like Edmiston House and Blue Sky Lounge and we are proud of them but getting the basic facilities upgraded is now a high priority. We will be looking at the upgrading concourse toilets, resurfacing the tarmac on the stadium footprint etc. We need to continue to drive our standards therefore we must ensure the basics facilities are also getting addressed. We know it comes with expenditure that we have to make decisions in a sustainable manner and prioritise, but we are keen to reinforce that it's not just the "glitzy projects" that we are being focused on but also that the core facilities receive the required investment.

SINGING SECTION MOVE – Answered by David Millburn and Greg Marshall

David Millburn discussed the special atmosphere that Ibrox can have and advised that a trial singing section would take place during the pre-season fixtures. The trial will mean that people will be displaced from their current seat for certain games.

Greg Marshall confirmed that following the post-match surveys the most valued aspect of the matchday experience was atmosphere. The club have to assess and evaluate what is for the greater good of the club in decision making. The key is not only the decision, but the process that the club takes to get to any such decision. A more concrete example of a project that will displace people is the creation of new accessible facilities. The club are waiting on the exact confirmation of who is going to be moved in the Broomloan and Copland. Once confirmed, the club commit to engaging with those supporters who are due to be moved. Once a project timeline is known we will engage with fans affected. We want to understand exactly what the impact of these changes mean to supporters so that the decisions are made with eyes open and understanding of why supporters feel the way they do.

David Millburn added that James has already confirmed that moves created by the introduction of the accessible seating areas will have first option on the new cantilever seats.

CATERING – Answered by Josh Hollywood

We are 11 months into the new catering partnership. Josh reiterated that 74% of profits from matchday and restaurant sales come back to the club. The new restaurant is doing well and generating over £80,000 per month in revenue. We continue to work with Levy and their commitment to the club in terms of investment. We will see the opening of a new Sports Bar which will include the first self-pour beer facility in Scotland. The Gordon Ramsay lounge project in the Ibrox Suite is also underway.

Josh acknowledged that there were teething problems, and we work to resolve them with improving the food offering and consistency offer right across the stadium. Josh also acknowledged that kiosk wait times needed to improve and we are currently exploring a vending option to try and help alleviate that issue, along with new Self Order Units. The department is always looking at new products and liaising with Greg Marshall on fan feedback, of which there has been a huge increase. We need to be reactive to what the fans want. The pre-order facility that was mentioned previously will be up and running for the Newcastle game.

OPEN FLOOR QUESTIONS

ONLINE CUSTOMER JOURNEY – Alex Irvine: MFK

Question

The online customer journey remains fragmented, different logins and different passwords with different complexities. It would be good to have a mobile app that looks and acts like a mobile app.

Answer – Robert Boyle

We have different providers for different products which creates the issue being addressed. All the stakeholders use the website and ticketing platform in different ways. Our current ticketing platform has been in place for over 10 years and during that period we have had to adapt and redefine it to accommodate each additional product that has come along. We have listened to the fans on this, and we are very close to finalising migration to the new ticketing system that is being launched next year. The login issue will be addressed as part of the new system and will now enable you to move between all club products. For this we need your feedback, and the fan engagement strategy will have places for your queries.

MATCHDAY EXPERIENCE – Scott Murphy

Question

Are the club going to improve the matchday experience for travelling support. As it stands, we are not treated very well when we go to other stadiums, Hibs is a case in point. Easter Road experience was dangerous with 2,000 fans trying to enter the stadium in a two lane system. Dundee cup game was the worst experience on ingress and egress. We get treated poorly and the demand for tickets outweighs what we get.

Answer – Greg Marshall

We work closely with our heads of Safety/Security & Operations, perhaps they may come to a future forum and can share their experiences. Hibs fixture midweek was a difficult situation. Post match survey for these games went out and there are known factors which we fed back to Hibs in particular. Changes were made for the next game, which did appear to improve the situation, but Greg remains merely cautiously optimistic but is still concerned and advises supporters to arrive as early as possible. Notwithstanding the issues at other grounds, our best chance of improving the experience of fans is to get supporters to these grounds 25-30% earlier in order to accommodate slow ingress that we know exists. With regards to access to Celtic fans at Ibrox, which is often asked – the police have a hard deadline at Celtic which we don't have here at Ibrox for 360 access under safety concerns and broadly the experience for both sets of supporters is similar. Aberdeen was also poor, and we took up the issues that we encountered, and we have had a positive response from them. The point was raised that football fans definitely feel that we treated differently than rugby fans and this would not occur at a rugby game. Greg confirmed that he engages with other clubs not only in the UK but in other countries and with bodies such as Football Supporters Europe. There has been a notable de-skilling of stewards around the grounds. Greg will meet with other clubs' SLOs ahead of next season to discuss a way forward on this. However, Greg reiterated that getting to games earlier makes a huge difference as it's the only thing fans can control. Greg suggested the treatment of away fans in Scotland may be a topic for supporters' collaboration session.

WAYS TO HELP REVENUE – Colin Docherty

Question

New Edmiston House is an asset but what is the club planning on doing with the community complex? For example, if there was a gym in there, I would pay a subscription to use it. When I look at the stadium there are areas with nice soft seats – is there an opportunity for fans to pay for an upgrade to have a seat like that, is there an opportunity to sponsor seats?

Answer – James Bisgrove

James noted that he liked this gentleman's creative thinking and how important it is to grow our revenues. James discussed the four pillars of Rangers revenue: season ticket sales, commercial revenue, European football, and player trading. Over the last six to seven years, we have seen revenue grow to record levels and back to profitability, but we can't stand still. Creating areas for people to visit Ibrox on non-matchdays is key with Levy, the sports bar, the museum and more. With UEFA financial sustainability it is extremely important to improve our revenues and I will be attending ECA meetings and UEFA meetings in the coming weeks. We are getting to the end of this UEFA Club Competition cycle and will be moving to the expanded competitions with 8 group stage games from 24/25 onwards. James wants Rangers to be heavily involved in the conversation at a European level and have input to benefit the team we can put on the park to be successful.

ACCESSIBLE PARKING – Roderick MacKenzie

Question

I bring a disabled friend to games, and we have a hard job finding parking within the Albion car park. Two seasons ago there was a Steward on the (Albion) car park who was very thorough on who got in, but he is not there now, and it is a free for all. My friend also gets tickets for Hampden; however, he doesn't receive a parking pass.

Answer – John Speirs

There are 100 accessible spaces within the Albion Car Park. John acknowledges that issues have been raised over the last few years and have been addressed where possible by helping ensure that only those with the right passes use the accessible parking in the Albion. We currently provide double the number of spaces recommended for accessibility, but the club will continue to look to do more. However, the Albion car park is being reviewed ahead of the coming season. The difficulty we have with Hampden is that we are tied by the SFA and SPFL and the demand outweighs what they can provide. We issue Hampden parking passes on a rotational basis so that each person on the list is accommodated at some point, but Hampden is very difficult.

CORPORATE TRAVEL TO AWAY GAMES – Stewart

Question

We are four weeks away from the first games of the season and travel to away games and we have no travel partner. CTM let us down badly. Day trips are important, and we rely on them to get to games as we can't take more than a day of work etc.

Answer – James Bisgrove

The CTM travel partnership for supporter travel is no longer in place. We have a broader club travel partnership with Destination Sport – they will operate day trips but only if there is a specific requirement for destinations that are difficult to get to. Destination Sport have strong experience in the sector and can deliver early decisions to ensure supporters don't miss out on independent travel options. Greg Marshall reiterated that we need early decisions from the travel partner so that supporters don't miss out on independent travel options. Greg also expressed his sympathy for supporters who were affected by the Ajax

situation. The previous partners pricing was always on the high end of acceptable, often due to the nature of the marketing, if we can get it running and it is a decent price then we will go ahead, that said if the price point is wrong then the trip won't be put on sale but communication is key

TICKETING APP & SAFE STANDING – Kevin

Question

Are there any plans to have mobile tickets on your phone?

How far down the line are we on Safe Standing?

Answer – Robert Boyle

Yes, we are looking at mobile ticketing and will decide what is best for the supporter journey along with the new system possibilities. Transferring tickets, we need to look at due to security. It will be about what is best for the supporters.

Answer – James Bisgrove

We are trialing moving the singing section to different areas across the pre-season games. There are different opinions on safe standing, but my overall thought is that it would definitely enhance the atmosphere even further at Ibrox, if implemented correctly. There will be widespread consultation and engagement events run on this topic to obtain supporters' feedback to explore all the options and hear all the opinions. The entire stadium expansion issue is being discussed at Board meetings, and we have engaged with architects in order to carry out feasibility studies into all aspects of this.

SUPPORTERS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY – Michael Grover

Question

There is an issue with access to supporters with reduced mobility. At other grounds, particularly in Europe, supporters with reduced mobility are not treated as such but treated equally. The supporter explained his experience at RB Leipzig where Greg Marshall and John Speirs also witnessed the care and attention given in assisting Mr Grover. Mr Grover also made the panel aware that it would be good if the ticket office had a better profile on supporters' abilities as Mr Grover received a ticket for an away game only to find it was in the upper section of the stand right in the very last row, so he was unable to access his seat.

Answer – John Speirs

John thanked Michael for his kind words. John noted that this question raises an interesting point about the ageing population in Scotland and therefore the demographic of those attending football games. The new platforms will improve the overall access to Ibrox not just to the accessibility areas. However, we need to work within the confines of our older stadium. We also need to work with host clubs alongside Susan Hannah and the ticketing team in order to be more aware of supporters needs. John reminded that himself and Greg are present at all games so please inform us prior to your arrival and they will assist in whatever way they can. Greg added that he and John would discuss the possibility of a plan with ticketing to identify with away clubs more appropriate accessible seating.

WALTER SMITH STATUE – Craig

Question

A few years ago, we were told there would be a statue of Walter, can you update us on this?

Answer – Robert Boyle

Work started on this project prior to October 2022 and has been ongoing since. We are working closely with the Smith family and the sculpture has been started and is well underway.

SAFE STANDING – Douglas Kinnear

Question

There is discontent within CF3 with the lack of engagement on this. What does this mean for the Celtic allocation too?

Answer – Greg Marshall

Greg advised that the club are not at a proposal stage, but a one to one transfer is unlikely. Any proposal would follow a similar process to the way people will be consulted regarding being moved for the disability seating. Any supporters moved for any reason would be first in the queue for moves at the time. It would not be likely to be a direct move from one block to another.

James noted on the Celtic allocation its very unlikely that Celtic will ever being given the full Broomloan stand again, there are other options and scenarios in talks.

Any moves or changes will be tied in with the Fan Engagement Strategy and supporters will be consulted with.

COMMERICAL STRATEGY – Colin Duff

Question

What is the club's commercial strategy? And how do we ensure that we don't alienate fans with the price?

Answer – James Bisgrove & Natalie Nairn

There is a fine balance when it comes to commercial deals. We are so fortunate for the backing that we have, and we are always trying to find the right balance. James acknowledged that the club may have got the ticket pricing framework for the Champions League last season wrong, despite selling the packages out. MyGers has been a fantastic success and the £2m raised from this goes into the men's first team playing budget. James invited Natalie Nairn to expand on this. Natalie was pleased to see MyGers grow but recognises that our membership programme needs to continually evolve and adapt. Natalie advised that there is no perfect solution for ticket allocations due to demand but we knew change was necessary as fans were asking for ticketing reform, particularly domestically and for semi-finals and finals. We spoke with other clubs on this subject and the most pertinent outcome was that we needed a hybrid system that rewarded loyalty but doesn't create a "closed shop" as it's important that younger fans can access tickets too. There is no all-encompassing solution, however MyGers was also introduced to give non-season ticket holders, young supporters, and global supporters an opportunity to feel connected to the club and access other club benefits.

COMMERCIAL DEALS – Andrew

Question

Will we continue to do commercial deals with where the reputation of the club is put at risk? For example, Sportemongo.

Answer – James Bisgrove

We are learning from some of the commercial deals, especially those from emerging sectors/ industries, it is clear that protecting our global brand is paramount. With regards to the NFT partner deal, we took advantage of an emerging product that was financially

very successful the club. We don't get everything right but bigger picture we are in an extremely strong place commercially but must be prepared to learn and adapt our strategy as we move forward.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT – Chris

Question

Commercial revenues have increased, is there anything in our strategy for multinational partners?

Answer – James Bisgrove

Although we have a number of global and leading British brands in our portfolio such as Cadbury, Vitality, EA Sports, Molton Brown, Castore, Seko etc., we need to aspire to engaging with global blue-chip companies. The club are constantly seeking out opportunities and often host meeting in London and overseas with potential partners. We are extremely pro-active in this regard, and this has allowed us to build a thriving Commercial partnership programme. This will be aided by the return to the European stage, we have new partners coming on board all the time and will be making some exciting announcements in the coming months.

IBROX DISASTER MEMORIAL – Ian Milne

Question

Are there still plans to have a designated memorial created in the area where the Disaster happened. There was talk of an area at New Edmiston House.

Answer – John MacFarlane and James Bisgrove

Design and planning work on this is ongoing and we are working to develop a memorial on the footprint along with the overall changes and upgrades to the stadium footprint. Internal conversations have and continue to take place. James Bisgrove confirmed that he was aware funds had been raised by supporters, which had been safely ring fenced to contribute to this project, and that the club would fulfil the funding for the rest of the project. There is design work ongoing, and this will be shared in due course.

HOSPITALITY PRICES – John MacDonald, Lewis and Harris Supporters Club

Question

Will there be further increases to hospitality prices?

Answer – James Bisgrove

The hospitality prices increased this season in line with the season ticket pricing which was c. 5% which is behind general inflation and soaring food inflation. We appreciate that there is a balance to be had and try to ensure there is an entry point available to everyone, whilst recognising we have high demand for club hospitality.

RECRUITMENT – Marcus, Govan Rear

Question

There has been a lot of people left the business recently, where are we in the recruitment process?

Answer – James Bisgrove

We are at various stages in the recruitment process for each position, however we will make announcements about the following soon:

- New Academy Director (since appointed, Zeb Jacobs)

- CFO
- Chief Commercial Officer (since appointed, Karim Virani)
- RWFC Head Coach (since appointed, Jo Potter)

With regard to the Sporting Director position there are top calibre candidates currently being considered and the board is keeping an open mind on this role to ensure the right candidate is appointed as it stands, we have huge confidence in the Manager, Scouting team and Executive staff that are leading the recruitment process and football operations.

CLUB's VISIBILITY TO MARKETS – Colin Docherty

Question

What is the club doing to make sure Rangers is visible to the global markets i.e., US & India?

Answer – James Bisgrove

Growth outside of Europe is key – We are very active currently in the US and India and have enjoyed partnerships with Orange County and Bengaluru.

END OF MEETING

Nick Thomson thanked everyone for coming and reminded that the Customer Service agents were now available for any further questions. Another event will be arranged in due course.