**FAB meeting 1 24/25 Season**

**North Stand Sky Lounge**

**September 24th, 2024**

**Present**

Sarah Gould (SG) BHAFC

Jenny Gower (JG) BHAFC

FAB Members in person

Clive Steed (CS) Chair 1901 rep

Jo Davis (JD) Vice Chair WSL rep

Charlie Benny (CB) Mens STH rep

Gerry Brown (GB) MyAlbion+ rep

Mya Choudhury (MC) MyAlbion+ rep

Andy Goodchild (AG) Mens STH rep

Lucy Holford (LH) WSL rep

Jonathan Poole (JP) MyAlbion+ rep (secretary for this meeting)

Emily Wadge (EW) Mens STH rep

Via Teams

James Cassidy (JC) via Teams MyAlbion+ rep

Andy Maclay (AM) via Teams 1901 rep

**Apologies**

Gillian Martin (GM) Disabled Supporters Association (DSA) Rep

1. **2024/25 meeting dates**

* We agreed on the following provisional dates:
* Meeting 2 December 10th 2024, possibly with a Christmas social event to follow.
* Meeting 3 March 17th 2025

1. **Terms of reference**

* For a quorum, we agreed that 8/12 members (or pro rata if numbers reduce) is quorate for any official FAB meeting or if. Chair will not vote but will have the casting vote in the case of a split vote.

1. **Fan engagement report**

* JG confirmed that the 2024 fan engagement report was included in the original pack. It can also be found on the club website, labelled as ‘The Plan (add link current link does not work)’ JG explained that as it stands, it is a large body of work, which is not presented in a captivating way. This will be addressed in due course.

* We discussed the concept of moving away fans from behind the goal and the concept of safe standing for home fans as part of future stadium development. There is a greater appetite for safe standing today, but it requires full analysis and review by safety officers before the club can proceed to a final decision.  CB questioned the desired percentage of standing within the overall stadium and JG confirmed that whilst no final decisions have been taken, it is likely to be piecemeal project, i.e. starting with the North Stand (a significant percentage of fans already stand for long periods)

1. **Ernst & Young audit**

* SG advised that EY have recently been tasked with an audit of the Premier League. Brighton & Hove Albion were highlighted as representing best practice for fan engagement, notably with executive attendance at fans forums and away game meet and greets (with 2 such meetings planned for the 2024/25 season).
* SG confirmed that the club’s position within the fan engagement index improved a-lot last season. The club was also top of the equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) index.

1. **Working Groups**

The different working groups all have project leads that have produced Projection Initiation Documents (PIDs) to set a terms of reference, objectives and milestones for each group. The project leads presented their PID’s and a discussion was had.

* **Community & Sustainability Working Group (CB)**

* Community - We need to consider the Club’s presence in the city. There is now a sense that the city is grateful for the social and economic value which the club brings, but we now want to cement the club’s presence in the city centre. We should consider legacy, heritage, and identity, which should stem from direct fan presence, rather than being club led. We discussed the possibility of expanding the murals into more prominent areas of the city, acknowledging that this does present challenges.
* We agreed that the objectives of the Brighton & Hove Albion Foundation will be critical in terms of fan led projects and the charitable arm of club. The Foundation does a-lot of work around disadvantaged people and underrepresented groups, which we need to fully understand and embrace in the FAB’s work.
* JG advised that time and effort is required to address certain areas of the fan base, where there is a risk of under representation, notably amongst younger supporters. We discussed the need to keep the club’s legacy alive, whilst obviously appealing to a wider global fan base.

* **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (CS on behalf of GM)**

* CS spoke about the need to focus on the full range of diversity, rather than limiting our work to the Disabled Supporters Association (DSA) which is a targeted activity for the 2024/25 period.
* SG advised that all Premier League events, such as Rainbow Laces, will be added to the calendar, so that FAB involvement can be considered.
* SG advised that the clubs further EDI plans will be announced in due course. This will include campaigns such as no room for racism, as well as specific events, such as a confirmed date for a Ramadan Eid meal.

* **Women’s Working Party (LH)**

* LH confirmed that Duncan Price from SheGulls and Alice Botting from Her Game To are also part of this working group.
* A key objective of the working group is to work with Crawley Town to improve facilities for fans attending WSL games.
* The fan experience also includes away matches and the away support at Arsenal last season was an excellent building block, in terms of future development.
* LH advised that SheGulls meeting over the summer was a great success, in terms of driving fan engagement, with the Q&A session led by Duncan (SheGulls). Ongoing FAB involvement will help drive further improvements.
* We need to consider the overall match day experience at Crawley, including half time entertainment and children’s competitions. JG advised that a discussion should take place with Marketing to provide more information and to understand budgets, notably which games we may look to target in terms of wider entertainment.
* We discussed the challenge of fans getting to Crawley. JG confirmed that ticket prices do not include a travel subsidy, although the club does run a free bus from the Amex to Broadfields. The club will consider a rationale for running the bus from Brighton station or a city centre location, given the challenges of getting to The Amex.
* We agreed to look into where fans attending matches in Crawley actually travel from. JG confirmed that Marketing should be able to provide relevant data.
* We discussed interaction with other WSL fan bases. Fulham hosted an event recently which was very well received. We need to learn more about what other clubs are doing and build upon it.
* LH advised that 54% of women’s football fans watch football alone. There is a big drive to develop watch parties. Our future Fan zone could be a logical venue. JD advised that now all WSL matches are shown live on YouTube, there are local venues which are very female fan focused. Pub venues could be a good idea for building a community amongst fans of the women’s team and once open, the fan zone.
* LH advised that the ultimate objective is to fill Broadfields for WSL matches.
* We discussed future home games and JG confirmed that the club will look to host more games at The Amex. The Manchester United game on October 19th will be a good barometer of how far we have come in terms of home attendances, which may support additional fixtures in the future.
* EW raised the possibility of reaching out to local schools, including enrichment trips for children in vulnerable groups. SG advised that for previous matches, individuals within groups which were named and opted in remained anonymous, which can create challenges. However, the costs associated with WSL matches are more ‘friendly’ and therefore support the inclusion of vulnerable groups more generally.
* Beyond just the women’s game, SG confirmed that the club has been working with disadvantaged groups, including asylum seeking groups. In addition, the club supported the Fostering Brighton Group, with 190 people having attended a recent Carabao cup match, helping to raise awareness of fostering in the Brighton & Hove area.

* **Fan Engagement (GB)**

* GB advised that credibility with fans is still the biggest issue we face. The webinar last season was not particularly well attended but made a difference.
* GB represented the FAB at the last FSA meeting at Wembley and noted that, in comparison to several clubs, our independence gives us a real opportunity to make a difference.
* We discussed the need to work with supporters’ groups in order to gain buy-in to the value of the FAB as a conduit to the club for all supporters.
* We noted that there are 9 UK based supporters groups. These groups are likely to have similar issues, whereas the overseas supporters’ groups often raise different issues which we agreed should be considered separately.
* SG advised that Tiffany, of Hong Kong Seagulls is based in Brighton and has a huge social media presence.
* GB advised that he met representatives from Brighton & Hove Foundation just after they opened the hub. CB has also had contact with Dave Garrett.
* We discussed our involvement on future podcasts, such as Albion Roar. We agreed that we should aim to manage our own P.R. by Working individually and collectively to drive the message regarding the value an effective FAB can bring.
* CS suggested that match day attendance as **AM** had recently undertaken in the Donatello’s lounge should be a least a monthly occurrence. The FAB agreed to take this forward and visit each concourse. JG agreed to publish the location in match day communications.

* **Match day atmosphere (AG)**

* The Working Group is yet to meet, so AG presented a deck as general background for future sessions. JG recommended that Paul Camillin is consulted as part of this working group.
* As a mission statement, we should aim to create a connection between spectaculars and the event, making fans feel part of the event and experiencing emotions they can’t get at home on TV.
* Key work on flags - ideas included deployment of Mitoma flag, distribution of handheld flags, reuse of RDZ flag and a collaboration with monster energy on a new flag.
* North Stand concourse decoration. Is it too corporate? We would like to make this concourse less commercial and more like a home end, ie use of graffiti.
* AG advised that, based on his own research, there is a correlation between ticket price increases and a rise in the average age of supporters attending home matches. This point was made for general awareness.
* We discussed the future stadium layout, including the location of away fans, designated singing sections and safe standing, all of which are matters which will be part of future proposed actions.
* AG also noted that research supports stronger team performance as the overall atmosphere within the stadium improves.
* The ‘Good Old Sussex by the Sea’ (GOSBTS) song, the timing of which has changed and the contribution of rituals such as the fanzine, pre-match pyrotechnics and post-match lap of honour after home victories, all of which it was felt adds to the match day experience.
* We need to assess the use of the newly installed sound system to generate atmosphere. JG confirmed that the production team can be brought in to at least obtain further opinion.
* We agreed on the need to consult with Fan Groups to seek feedback on the matchday experience. North Stand Kollective, South West Corner and We are Brighton were some of the groups discussed
* AG advised that he would link with the supporters groups and then meet as a working group with a view to reviewing raw ideas, prior to eliminating certain ideas and moving forward with those initiatives which can support long-term plans.
* AG advised that measures of success from this working group will be audible volume within the stadium, feedback from supporters’ groups, visiting fans and social media commentary.

**Action 3**

We agreed that all PIDs would be completed and presented to the club for approval by October 4th.

Each working group should have at least one objective which is SMART (specific, measurable,

attainable, realistic and timely), resulting in a minimum of five key 2024/25 targets for the FAB.

We agreed that a communications plan would be drafted, addressing key plans for liaising with the

club’s wider fan base.

1. **A.O.B.**

* CS requested greater visibility of the banning and appeals process - JG advised that the club should run through the entire sanctions process with the FAB, including the matrix system sitting behind it. Going forward, the aim is for fewer cases to the referred to the ombudsman. We agreed that the club would host a meeting with FAB representatives. AG, JP, CS and GB expressed interest in participating in this meeting. **Action JG** to set up meeting
* CS requested visibility of Match day survey results. This has been an ongoing request, whilst the FAB do not wish or expect to see full reports some monthly or quarterly summary would be appreciated. - We agreed this match day surveys are a rich information source for which we do not have line of sight. JG agreed that the way findings are currently shared is unsatisfactory and that we need to work on an improved flow of information.
* Recruitment of FAB members - Views of newly appointed FAB members regarding the recent recruitment and onboarding process were generally very positive, with the only area for improvement being the communication around the election process. The induction day was regarded as a success by everyone concerned, including existing FAB members. **Action CS** agreed to resurrect last seasons project plan with a view to discussing planned recruitment for next season at the next full FAB meeting
* Parking- AM raised the matter of 1901 members having to pre-register vehicles for parking at University of Sussex. JG confirmed that the demand for parking spaces is so high that it is important to have a system which guarantees maximum use of the limited spaces the club has at its disposal. There is therefore no planned change to the current system.
* UNICEF - We agreed that a separate call is required to understand more about the partnership. CB had a meeting with UNICEF to understand their aspirations and they now need to understand the club’s position. Action JG to set up meeting

With no further business tabled, CS thanked JP for taking the minutes and closed the meeting.

**Actions**

**Action :**FAB to agree a programme of concourse / lounge attendance at least once a month on match days and north stand after matches

**Action :**

**3.1** GM to select one key SMART target and issue the final ED&I PID to the club for approval and public issue

**3.2** CBto select one key SMART target and issue the final Community PID to the club for approval and public issue

**3.3** GB to select one key SMART target and issue the final Fan Engagement PID to the club for approval and public issue

**3.4** AG to select one key SMART target and issue the final Match Day Atmosphere PID to the club for approval and public issue

**3.5** JD to select one key SMART target and issue the final WSL PID to the club for approval and public issue

**Action 4:** JG to set up meeting to explain banning and appeals process

**Action 5:** CS to resurrect project plan for FAB recruitment for next season

**Action 6:** JG to set up a meeting to understand the UNICEFpartnership and how the FAB can contribute