



Minutes of Board Meeting Monday 25th September 2023

Attendees:

Greg Tomlinson (GT) – Chair
Cliff Culley (CC)
Paul Karter (PK)
Lisa Mole (LM)
Kevin Patterson (KP)
Charlotte Robson (CR)
Adam Stoker (AS)
Felicity Thow (FT)
Colin Whittle (CW) – Secretary

Apologies

Pete Davey (PD)
Olivia Thomson (OT)

Item 1 – Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 4th September 2023 were accepted as a correct record.

Item 2 – Ticketing update

GT outlined that this meeting had been specifically arranged in order to discuss the wide range of issues in relation to ticketing (and associated matters) ahead of a planned meeting with NUFC's Head of Supporter Services (HSS) due to take place later this week (time and date to be confirmed). The intention was to present to HSS the wide range of views received from members and the wider fan base and receive any feedback in relation to the survey results presented to the club at the meeting on 5th August 2023.

NUST continue to receive a wide range of queries in relation to unresolved issues where the club is unable to assist supporters and it is hoped that the forthcoming meeting will provide some assurances from the club that appropriate action will be taken to assist supporters.

A summary of the issues that have arisen was discussed and included the following:

Membership issues (as covered in the survey):

- Timeframes of ballots – currently around 1 week before game.
- Uncapped number of memberships: what are club doing to prevent opposition fans purchasing?
- Transparency – with regards to the amount of tickets in each area and numbers entering the ballot.
- Rewarding loyalty versus building the fanbase.
- Selection of seating area for those with disabilities eg. visual or mobility issues who would benefit from picking their seat location.
- One price category – some fans would like the option to enter multiple categories.
- No merchandise this year which many members valued, particularly for junior members.

Issues affecting all home supporters (from the survey):

- Digital ticketing access difficulties, namely queueing affecting East Stand and Gallowgate in particular.
- High volume of complaints/issues from new systems compounded by insufficient resource at Box Office – people spending time and often not getting solutions or hearing conflicting advice.

Issues arisen since the survey:

- No Cup Scheme for members as remains on club FAQs and was communicated at start of the season.
- No home ticket ballot emails going out – fans are missing out.
- Burnley resale opened 30 mins early.
- Problems transferring ST to F&F – believed to relate to the transfer of concession tickets
- Multiple error messages encountered on ticketing site.
- Multiple payment issues being encountered
- Ticketing website issues functionality across the website - numerous issues, including system incorrectly blocking payments due to 'fraud score' despite using their own payment cards. This issue can often only be resolved by attending the box office in person and has caused a lot of fans to miss out on tickets as a result.

Away issues

- Safety implications for supporters having to pick up tickets from the opposition Box Office.
- The inability for those with loyalty points to apply in ballot with their F&F who have fewer points making it difficult for families.
- Could there be a small number of occasions an away fan can transfer a ticket in the event of eg illness.
- Timeframes of tickets going on sale - making it difficult to arrange transport/accommodation and increasing costs of supporting the team.

Notwithstanding the above, it was agreed that NUST would continue to proactively respond to queries and liaise with club representatives to offer feedback in relation to those issues raised by members and the wider fanbase.

However, given work commitments of Board members in the next few weeks it may prove to be impossible to continue to answer queries at the same rate as present, since the process is time consuming, and all Board members are elected volunteers.

It was agreed that the number of issues demonstrated why it is important for meaningful fan engagement to take place ahead of major decisions impacting on supporters. If NUST had been consulted ahead of implementation of ticketing plans -or indeed at all- input could have been provided to the club. However, the failure to consult in any meaningful way at all, and implement a plan without meaningful consultation, has resulted in numerous issues.

Item 3 – Fan Advisory Board (FAB) update

GT confirmed that there have been no further updates with regards to FAB and will enquire as to the up-to-date position at the forthcoming meeting.

Item 4-Champions League Update

Following further engagement with FSE it is proposed that NUST will circulate information to fans relating to the venue ahead of the Dortmund game.

Item 5-FSA Governance Audit

It was confirmed that all of the information requested by the FSA in relation to their Governance Audit has been collated and will be provided to them in order that they can undertake the audit in relation to NUST.

Next meeting- to be confirmed.

NUST