

MINUTES OF THE MET POLICE FOOTBALL IAG HELD ON THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023 AT LEYTON ORIENT SUPPORTERS CLUB

PRESENT Sue Watson (WHUST) Margaret Wittich (CSC) David Lane (MSC) Sue Couch (FST) Ian Clarke (FST) Keren Harrison (LOSC) Cliff Auger (CST) Paul Hay (CST) Tim Hillyer (AFCWST) Kevin Perrett (AST) Sue Maisey (CPST) Simon Brooker (Met Police) Matt Ashmead (Met Police) Stuart Parker (Met Police) Lee Sparks (Met Police)

APOLOGIES Nigel Kleinfeld (CAST) Kevin Hind (WHUST)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

\*BTP will be invited to a future meeting

\*Drugs initiative on the agenda

THRESHOLD FOR FBO presentation by Stuart Parker Met Police Banning Officer

Stuart reported that there are 2 versions of the banning order.

14A is applied for on conviction of certain offences. Violence, missile throwing, racism/homophobic etc chanting, pitch invasion. A banning order is not always applied for.

The amount of violence at games has increased since lockdown.

14B is a civil banning order which comes as part of a package, like an ASBO. It is given to people who are consistently involved in violence.

Stuart said that football needs to be a safe place for everyone.

Conditions can be added to the terms of a ban eg times zones when they can't be in a place and surrender of passport.

So far this season 7 14b banning orders have been issued.

5 West Ham supporters (mainly at European game)

1 Millwall

1 Brentford

57 14A have been issued

10 supporters of other clubs i.e. not London clubs

8 Just Stop Oil protesters

2 German fans at an England game

In addition clubs can issue their own bans, which are valid for their club only.

Just Stop Oil protesters have to surrender their passport in the same way as a football supporter. Conditions can be specific to one club.

Stuart reported that some supporters will accept the offence but will ask the court not to give a banning order.

Sue W asked what is the minimum age that you can be given a banning order. Stuart said 17.

Stuart said that orders are for 3 or 5 years, unless you are imprisoned. They can then be 10 years. It is the judge that decides the length of the order.

Keren asked if a club can put a banning order in place in the meantime. Yes. It is a civil sentence. Somebody else can buy them a ticket for another ground. However DFOs are aware of those with FBOs so can respond.

Matt reported that a supporter with a 3 year ban can apply for it to be terminated after 2 years.

Sue W asked how wide is the zone for being considered as a football offence? Stuart said that the zone is simply 24 hours, if linked to football.

Stuart reported that ,so far, one banning order has been issued for a drugs offence (Wrexham).

Paul asked if football is the only sport that issues banning orders. Stuart said that, in law, it is. Cliff suggested that maybe the law needs to be extended to other sports.

Tim asked if BTP figures are included. Stuart said that they are if in London. BTP also have their own banning order scheme.

So far this season there have been 343 banning orders issued across the country. This is an increase of 230%

Stuart reported that it is the Met Police Spotters role to look out, at games, for those with banning orders. Stuart felt that some clubs prejudice supporters on reputation. The police also work with other clubs. All of the information on banning orders is on the National Police Data Base. Spotters should be easy to find as they wear yellow and blue jackets. They should be engaging with the supporters.

Simon added that if supporters feel that they are not being treated fairly, they can report to the DFO.

Tim gave two examples. At Cambridge the stewarding was very strong. He realised that they were monitoring a stand that was very steep and they were actually looking out for supporters to prevent accidents. At a game at Plymouth they were practising for an upcoming local derby against Exeter.

Kevin P asked how much information is shared with the home club. Stuart said that they are informed of all of the banning orders but not necessarily shared with other clubs. Any concerns should be shared with the DFOs.

Keren asked if other countries have banning orders. Stuart said that they don't have banning orders but they might prevent a supporter from travelling. Tim asked about non league grounds but Stuart said that he hadn't seen it in the Met.

## ARREST DATA FOR SEASON SO FAR

Please see attached presentation by Lee Sparks

These figures are based on the financial year. The process takes a time so it means that figures are slow to get into the system.

Sue W asked how many are linked to homophobic / racist etc chanting? Stuart reported that the clubs are doing a lot to reduce this. Simon felt that behaviour is different from away supporters. There is a huge focus on hate crime. Online abuse is also reflected in these figures. Supporters try to hide behind a false name.

Cliff asked if there is a reason why 65 away fans have been arrested at Spurs. Lee didn't know of a specific reason but he added that they do arrest a lot for drugs. So Cliff clarified that that have a more rigorous approach.

Sue C asked specifically about the anti Semitic chant and why are Spurs supporters allowed to sing it while others are not.

Simon replied that generally a collective voice can be more difficult to deal with. The CPS treats each case on its merit. The Y word is different.

Tim was pleased to report that in Qatar there were no England or Wales supporters arrested. Cliff added that 3 Liverpool have been arrested for the use of the Rentboy chant.

Ian asked if supporters groups should publish a message about inappropriate chants? Lee said that clubs are offering a text message line or QR for supporters to report incidents. Simon felt that education programmes are improving. Spotters look out outside and inside the ground. Restorative justice programmes are being used. Supporters talk to police about their behaviour and how it affects others. Cliff agreed that they need to be educated.

David asked if any clubs have LGBTQ+ teams? Millwall do and he felt that promoted them helps to show that they are part of the club.

Sue W commented that some younger supporters seem to challenge 'football behaviours' that have built up over generations. This is seen more since coming back from lockdowns. Ian said that there are different groups within the supporters eg those who want to sit and those who want to stand.

## POLICE DRUGS INITIATIVE

Matt said that he felt that the use of drugs was one of the reasons for the increase in violence at games. Being convicted of the use now carries a banning order.

At each game 7 officers are on duty. More away fans are being found with drugs.

If a supporter is suspected of using drugs they take a one off test on the day. They are refused entry to the ground and summonsed to appear in court. If the Met consider the game to be high risk, officer numbers are increased to 20.

Tim recalled an incident that had been told to him of a Palace supporter at Fulham, that was spoken to by the Met and rigorously searched. Simon said that they must have had reason to believe that he had drugs. He recommended that supporters report to police if they are not happy. Tim thought that it must be a rarity. Simon said it was extremely rare. David thought that it was an indication. Sue W asked about a 15 year old at West Ham. Stuart said that for Youth found to with drugs, the Youth Office and Children Protection team would be involved. Simon added that he might have been carrying for someone else. It was asked what can supporters groups do to help? Simon announced that the flyer is with the communications department awaiting approval. Supporters are invited to use as appropriate. Feedback to the Met will be welcome. The campaign is not based on just matchday activities but trying to find the suppliers too.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

#### TURNAROUND PLAN

Sue W shared the new Commissioner's plan to improve the Met. It is not football specific. He wants to listen. Supporters are asked to read the document and fill in the survey. Supporter groups are asked to promote the report and survey to their fanbase.

Lee said that the commissioner is interested in football. Simon said that he has already met with The FA and Football Policing section. He added that football is a community. We have direct links to people that deal with football. Tim asked if the report was going to all Londoners. Simon said yes. Each new commissioner writes a manifesto to build trust with the community. Police morale needs to be built up as it is low.

Tim felt that sometimes people exaggerate crime. The Police in Wimbledon do take action.

Simon encouraged people to give feedback about what they do. Paul asked how numbers compare to the West End on a Friday night. Simon said the West End is higher.

Cliff asked if there has been movement among the DFOs. Abbie is now at QPR. Paul W is off operational duties.

#### CORONATION WEEKEND GAMES

Margaret asked if the Met knew which days games are being played on the weekend of the King's Coronation.

Premier League are playing as normal  
EFL Sunday or Monday

The meeting finished at 8.10

**NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023 VENUE POSSIBLY FULHAM**