

**MINUTES OF THE MET POLICE FOOTBALL IAG HELD ON THURSDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2023 AT WEST HAM UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB, THE LONDON STADIUM**

**PRESENT:** Sue Watson (WHUST), Sue Maisey (CPST), Paul Hay (CST), Rachel Major (Arsenal Independent Supporters Association – AISA), Andy Sheldon (Met Police, West Ham DFO), Lee Sparkes (Met Police), Simon Brooker (Met Police), Iain Jones (Met Police), PC Kiera (Met Police), Kevin Perrett (AST), Trevor Pickering (CSC), Sue Couch (FST), Ian Clarke (FST), Tim Payton (AST), Nigel Kleinfeld (CAST)

**APOLOGIES:** Margaret Wittich (CST), Cliff Auger (CST), Dave Lane (MST), Keren Harrison (LOSC), Tim Hillyer (AFCWST), Kevin Hind (WHUST)

RED TEXT ACTION TO BE TAKEN

	Action
<p><b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting were approved with a few minor details to be amended. Darren Preston is Fulham’s COO, not SLO. The Riverside Stand will be open again next season but not fully open. Police patrol (not parade) local streets while game is taking place Sue Couch has forwarded those changes to Margaret.</p>	<p>MET to inform supporters when information is not covered under Official Secrets Act. Margaret to edit minutes of last meeting in line with comments.</p>
<p><b>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES</b></p> <p>None</p>	
<p><b>PRESENTATION OF ANTI-TERRORISM MEASURES</b></p> <p>This presentation is postponed until the next meeting, as presenter was unavailable. Police apologised for this second postponement and said they will ensure presentation takes place at the next meeting, wherever that will be held. The police presenter will depend on the location of the meeting.</p>	<p>Police to identify presenter on this topic for next meeting.</p>
<p><b>POLICE RESPONSE TO INAPPROPRIATE SEARCHES OF FEMALE SUPPORTERS BY MALE STEWARDS</b></p> <p>Sue W. stated that there have been several reports of female supporters being sexually groped during ‘pat down’ searches by male stewards, especially at one club in particular, which she did not name. This type of incident seems to happen more frequently on the continent, and less often but enough to warrant concern here in the UK (one incident noted by Sue W in the Premier League, two non-Premier League). Do the police have a view/procedure for response to these situations and the behaviour of stewards employed by football clubs? What can fans do to protect themselves and report these incidents?</p>	<p>Police to raise at end of season conference (which includes DFOs and SLOs) with aim of feeding into steward training.</p>

<p>Simon said that he cannot speak for the stewarding companies carrying out the searches, but clarified one misconception about police searches. Legislatively searches of females do not have to be carried out by a female officer. However, in the case of stewards, this should be the case.</p> <p>The level of search depends on what they are looking for. If police are looking for drugs, the search would be more intrusive and therefore should not take place in public view.</p> <p>The police view is that if a person and their belongings are searched, it should be done properly or not at all. However, that is not what happens at football. A quick look inside a bag and a pat down is unlikely to find small items, but it might find larger items and pyros. Some fans, particularly of teams from the continent, will use women and children to smuggle pyros into the ground.</p> <p>The Dedicated Football Officer (DFO) and the Club's security officer should have the conversation about level of searching that takes place and the conduct of the stewards.</p> <p>If there is a complaint about how a search is carried out it needs to be raised at the time. This can be done by asking to see a steward supervisor or a police officer. Many stewards work for agencies and are transient, which makes it difficult to find them later.</p> <p>If a complaint is linked to a particular club/entrance/person, the Police can get in touch with the club.</p> <p>People can request to be searched by a female steward and can also request to be patted down out of public view.</p> <p>Tim P suggested that a template response could be written, based on the information provided by the police at this meeting, to send to supporters raising similar issues.</p> <p>Important to stress the importance of reporting an incident at the time. Don't leave it.</p> <p>Searches are random and not an indicator of suspicion. They are a club condition of entry.</p> <p>When police conduct a search they explain beforehand what a search is for and what it involves.</p> <p>Sue C said that if a person had been groped or touched inappropriately while being searched by a steward, then surely this is a sexual assault and should be reported to a police officer there and then. Sue W indicated that apparently people often don't report till much later.</p> <p>Simon said that Clubs and Police both do lots of training in the</p>	
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<p>close season, so this is worth raising now (see action).</p> <p>Nigel asked how we could provide advice to the Clubs about these issues. Simon replied as Supporter Representatives we have it in our gift to contact our Club on behalf of fans and advise them of what's happening and of any concerns.</p> <p>Sue W. said she is hearing of these incidents more and more.</p> <p>Simon said that police do pat-downs using the backs of their hands, which is a less intimate approach and less likely to be experienced as inappropriate touching. Stewards might do things differently.</p> <p>Club stewards are likely to do a better job than agency staff and reduce the risk of rogue stewards moving around. The stewards undertaking pat downs are not likely to be SIA (Security Industry Association) level 2. This is the level for response teams.</p> <p>Rachel asked about the wands. A wand was triggered by her once although she was not carrying anything illegal. Wands and dogs trigger and necessitate a more thorough search There is a national shortage of stewards and so Clubs have been reliant on agency stewards who do not know the Club or its fans and may be minimally trained with no real incentive to doing a good job.</p>	
<p><b>HOW DOES THE POLICE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BRANCH OPERATE, CAN YOU MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO IT AND HOW?</b></p> <p>Nigel raised a general question about the operation of police professional standards branches, based on his own interactions around a specific incident. Nigel said he had seen an online video of police pushing supporters over after a match in Manchester. The video had gone viral on social media and he was concerned by what he saw so he contacted the DFO and club safety officer who referred him to the Manchester police professional standards branch. He received a reply within 12 hours saying Police had reviewed footage on body cams and there was nothing to answer.</p> <p>Nigel felt this was wrong so he wrote again to them and received the reply that nothing happened. Nigel asked who the people are who reply to these requests.</p> <p>Simon said anyone can make a complaint about a police officer if they have a concern. It does not have to be the person affected.</p> <p>You can complain by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• calling 101</li> <li>• going into a police station (if you can find one)</li> <li>• but that completing the online form is best.</li> </ul>	

<p>If you see something at a match, then you can 'grab a cop' at the time, though due to their other match day duties they'll probably just take your name and phone number and report it from there. If you do report an incident concerning a police officer, make a note of their name, badge and shoulder number which will help locate them. In addition, it's fine to video a conversation on a phone – police are used to this now.</p> <p>In London, if the incident is relatively minor it goes to the police service in the Borough in which the officer is based. The complaint will be reviewed by an Inspector, who will speak to the informant, look at the officer's notes and talk to the officer.</p> <p>More serious complaints are referred to the Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS). The DPS have a comms team who also respond to viral social media activity relating to the police.</p> <p>When a video goes viral police now prefer to respond straight away by acknowledging and saying what action if any is being taken.</p> <p>If complaining about what you see online, each Borough has a dedicated social media officer who will escalate to investigate, and the DPS is always on call to look at reported videos.</p> <p>Body worn cameras are not always switched on but will be turned on by officers if there's disorder. Camera use is not always appropriate for every situation. Body worn cameras are liked by the police. Complaints dropped by 80% when body worn cameras were introduced. They are not always switched on but they work on 60 second loops so that when the camera is switched on it picks up the lead-up to that event. They should always be used when searching and making arrests and if they're not used there is a lot more time-consuming paperwork and admin for the police to do, which is one reason why they like to use them.</p>	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF THE SEASON. HAVE MEETINGS BEEN USEFUL?</b></p> <p>The discussion moved on to the season overall from the point of view of the police.</p> <p>Simon said that liaison between the clubs and the police was very good and a great example of a partnership approach. Clubs also have very good CCTV now which helps with investigations and banning orders.</p> <p>The question was asked is behaviour going back to pre-COVID levels, after the widespread anti-social behaviour seen especially from younger male fans after lockdowns ended.</p> <p>Lee said general behaviour seems to be better but there are still challenges on trains in particular, usually due to people being</p>	

<p>intoxicated, and there have been there were a couple of incidents of note, but overall, an improvement.</p> <p>Simon said Police look at behaviour pre-match, during the match and post-match. Behaviour during matches has improved and he thinks that most football fans don't experience the negative aspects as much as the police obviously do. Outside of the grounds there were some spontaneous flare ups which sometimes happen when fans of different Clubs cross paths, usually while in transit to away games. These are often drug and alcohol fuelled. There were also some organised meet ups.</p> <p>Another issue is turnstile "tailgating" by ticketless fans. Also organised marches to matches by away fans in European competitions.</p> <p>Wembley is a good example of good policing and shared organisation of a public space, with the council and the stadium organisers all doing their bit. There is a no-drinking zone on the way to the stadium and early engagement with the fans, all of which have helped to create a more pleasant and safe experience.</p> <p>The safety officers of London clubs meet up every quarter and so there is learning through their shared experience. The recent new legislation has affected behaviour. People are getting locked up and banned for the offences of bringing in pyros, bringing in drugs and for hate crime at stadiums and online. They are all type 14A and 14B offences.</p> <p>It is definitely the minority that spoil it for the majority. "Now people know they'll get a banning order and that frightens them".</p> <p>The women's game is getting big and selling out. There were 60K fans for the Arsenal game with no issues whatsoever. The only problem is that the women's game is attracting new supporters who don't know how best enter the grounds so queues build up.</p> <p><b>Chanting</b></p> <p>'Tragedy Chanting' is being recognised as a hate crime. The problem for the police is dealing with it when many people are chanting. The good news is there's a lot of self-policing and peer pressure to stop this kind of chanting.</p> <p>Simon said the offenders are often young males who genuinely don't know what they're singing about and when it is explained to them, they are regretful.</p> <p>Question was asked about the impact of football on the nearby community and the cost to the taxpayer.</p>	
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<p>Despite contributions from football Clubs, police funding costs exceed what they receive.</p> <p><b>Changes to kick off times</b></p> <p>Tim asked who had the final decision on changes to kick off times.</p> <p>Simon told us that the SAG holds this responsibility after consultation and advice from other parties including the police. The SAG can refuse a safety certificate for a particular game.</p> <p>The National Police Lead says that each force needs to have a policy on high risk 5:30pm kick offs which can be troublesome due to extra drinking time.</p> <p>Changes to kick off times can alter the category of a match depending on a number of varying factors. Every game is assessed on an individual basis by running all factors through a risk matrix. Factors that can impact the category include kick-off time, London derbies, busy town centres, the context of the fixture, pre- and post-match policing requirements). 5:30 kicks-offs are likely to move the game to a higher risk category.</p> <p>The DFOs also have a say, and the Inspector will listen to their views. There is a genuine reviewed risk assessment for each match. As risk lowers, the assets (number of police) are reduced, but new 'intel' gets taken into account, and response to changes is normally quick. High risk games mean that police are taken away from their usual jobs, so police numbers are reduced in other areas.</p> <p>The police get 6-8 weeks advance notice of planned fixture changes before they are made public.</p> <p>Tim said that communication to fans is the most important thing.</p> <p>Currently games cannot be broadcast on TV at 3pm (UEFA "article 48") but Simon said he thinks this needs to be looked at. Tim said he thinks change is unlikely. Clubs only take into account safety at the game and within the stadium, but the police will be dealing with public safety and incidents that may occur afterwards, including at railway stations, etc.</p>	
<p><b>WAY FORWARD FOR 2023/24</b></p> <p>Shall we continue meeting? <b>Yes</b></p> <p>Shall we have some standing items for the agenda? <b>Yes</b></p> <p>Should we have contributions to the agenda from the police?</p>	<p>Sue W – Ask FSA if they can help encourage London supporter groups not attending the IAG to participate.</p> <p>Sue W - recirculate the</p>

**Comment [SC1]:** was this off the record?

<p><b>No</b> – the police are here to respond to us, and it would not be appropriate for them to guide the agenda</p> <p>Should we try to get meetings in the diary well in advance so we can plan specialist talks etc?  <b>Up to IAG members.</b> Simon and an Inspector will always be there regardless.</p> <p>Tim suggested less frequent meetings which should be issue-led. There did not seem to be agreement from the rest of the group.</p> <p>We were reminded that we can always contact our DFOs if we have questions between meetings.</p> <p>Simon said he wished police were able chat to all football fans on a matchday but the situation usually doesn't allow for that.</p> <p>These meetings are an important link between supporters and the police.</p> <p>Sue W said she would like to increase the number of Clubs represented at the IAG. There are still a good few who haven't responded to invitations to join although they are sent meeting minutes (Barnet, Brentford, Wealdstone, Spurs, QPR, Dagenham &amp; Redbridge). Can the police get in touch and do the inviting? Simon said it's not really their place to do this.</p> <p>Tim asked whether the FSA should be doing that. Sue W will ask the FSA.</p> <p>Simon will have a word with the DFOs from those Clubs and ask them to remind supporters' reps informally.</p> <p><b>How do we compare to other IAGs?</b></p> <p>Simon said he has attended many IAGs for different aspects of policing and they tend to be a bit more structured and have a Memorandum of Understanding, etc. He said this is a unique group in that respect.</p> <p>Sue C said she likes the more informal approach that this IAG has developed. There seemed to be agreement on this around the table.</p> <p>Simon told us that we as individuals can request to join the IAG for Policing in our own Boroughs. This would be useful for getting a wider view and not just from a football perspective.</p> <p>There then arose some discussion about supporters' representatives joining the SAG for their Club. Fulham already have a FST rep at the Hammersmith and Fulham SAG. The FST contacted the Club a few years ago and asked if it would be possible. The SAG</p>	<p>original IAG guidance notes provided at the first meeting.</p> <p>Simon – ask DFOs of clubs whose supporter groups don't attend the IAG to informally mention it to them where possible.</p>
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<p>Chair had already decided to allow membership to a Supporters' representative and while the Club needed to approve the appointment and work alongside that person, it was relatively easy to arrange. However, Chelsea Supporters' Trust have apparently been refused membership, though it is unclear who said no. This is significant as Chelsea and Fulham (and QPR) are all in London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.</p> <p>Sue W said she will recirculate the original IAG guidance notes provided at the first meeting.</p> <p>Those new members who have not signed the Official Secrets Act can do so at the next meeting.</p> <p>Tim suggested that the IAG is meeting too frequently as some people can't get to all the meetings. He feels that meetings should be determined by and restricted to current issues.</p> <p>Sue C said she believes that the group have found it useful to learn about many aspects of policing of football and for example the presentation about Anti-Terrorism Measures would be of interest to all. Meeting in person every two months has been satisfactory so far and should work going forward.</p> <p>Kevin P said that whilst moving the meetings around the clubs is interesting, it can be hard for travel and he would prefer central London (Lambeth) meetings. Simon said he is happy to host at Lambeth if that is what the group wants. Sue C mentioned that we have been swapping between the two options.</p> <p>Simon announced that Matt Ashmead is moving on to a new role and will be replaced by Inspector Graham Younger. The group expressed its thanks to Matt for his support over the years and asked for our thanks to be passed on.</p>	
<p><b>NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Thanks were given to the West Ham supporter liaison team for hosting this meeting at the London Stadium.</p> <p>The next meeting was provisionally agreed for 20<sup>th</sup> July, 6pm for 6.30 start. It will be held at Lambeth Police HQ and details will be circulated nearer the time. <b>Members should bring photo ID with them.</b></p> <p>A plan for the following meetings (with locations) will be made then.</p>	
<p><b>The meeting closed at 8:06pm</b></p>	