

# MANCHESTER UNITED FANS' FORUM – MINUTES

FRIDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2018

## FORUM MEMBERS PRESENT

Chas	Banks	MUDSA Secretary
Seb	Chowdhury	Official Member Rep.
James	Coatsworth	Season Ticket Holder Rep.
Ben	Cooper	Official Member Rep.
Phil	Cowper	65+ Rep.
Alan	Harvey	Family Stand Rep.
Darryl	Hewlett	Season Ticket Holder Rep.
Terry	Holland	MUSC Rep.
Janine	Kasmir	Local Resident Rep.
Josephine	Loughnane	Official Member Rep.
Ian	Stirling	Fans' Group Rep.
Paul	Warlow	MUSC Rep.
David	Young	Season Ticket Holder Rep.

## CLUB AND FOUNDATION OFFICIALS PRESENT

Steve	Deaville	Director of Football Finance & Group Risk, and Interim Football Secretary
David	French	Director of Venue
Sam	Kelleher	Head of Ticketing & Membership
Andrew	Lisgo	Corporate Media Relations Manager
Claire	Mulroy	T&MS Office Manager
Dan	Schofield	Head of Venue Operations
John	Shiels	Chief Executive, MU Foundation

Topic	Speaker	Topic Notes
<b>1. Introductions / Apologies</b>	DF	<b>Apologies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Richard Arnold (Group Managing Director, MUFC)</li><li>• Phil Townsend (Director of Communications, MUFC)</li><li>• Craig Dilley (MUSC Representative)</li><li>• Mark Heaton (Executive Club Representative)</li><li>• Harry Sutcliffe (16-21 Representative)</li></ul>
<b>2. Minutes (last meeting)</b>	DF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minutes approved.</li></ul>
<b>3. Security &amp; Operations Update</b>	DS	<b>Security</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Over the past 12-months we have been upgrading the CCTV within the stadium bowl and the final stages of work, to complete the full installation of the state of the art digital camera system, was completed just before Christmas.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ This provides an increased capability to closely monitor any areas of concern and also allows a very detailed retrospective review to take place of any footage that has been captured.</li><li>○ This is an excellent tool to address, for example, any problems associated with missile throwing or the use of pyrotechnics; the quality of the system provides much more detailed information to assist with any investigations, whether they are internal matters or those where the police require CCTV footage as part of a criminal investigation.</li></ul></li></ul>

Topic	Speaker	Topic Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The agreement with Northern Rail continues in relation to suspending the third inbound service to the Ground Halt rail platform adjacent to the Sir Bobby Charlton Stand; this is for security reasons due to increasing congestion around the Munich Tunnel in the period leading up to kick-off.</li> <li>• We maintain a close working relationship with relevant authorities in relation to the introduction &amp; implementation of a range of counter terrorism measures, and supporters will continue to see a significant police presence at our home fixtures in and around the stadium.</li> <li>• In addition, to further enhance our security, we ask that all supporters remain vigilant, and if anyone has any security concerns they should raise the matter immediately with a steward, a member of security staff, or a Police Officer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work has commenced to reduce half-time queues at kiosks by flipping the Programme &amp; Betting booths, which don't operate at half-time, into catering units; two of these new kiosks were introduced in the lower tier of the Sir Alex Ferguson Stand at the Huddersfield game, and the next area to roll-out is West Tier 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A reminder that we now accept Contactless and Chip &amp; Pin payments at kiosks, which will also speed up the queues.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Due to the ongoing Metrolink works, we have recently undertaken a series of meetings with Transport for Greater Manchester, Trafford Council and a number of other agencies to make amendments to the way the road network is operating, in order to help speed up egress from the stadium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As a result, the one-way route on Village Way will be reversed, flowing away from the stadium for a period of 1hr post full-time from the Liverpool game onwards; this should have a significant, positive impact on the time it takes to get away from OT.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Atmosphere</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As you will most likely be aware, the atmosphere at Old Trafford is something which has been frequently commented on of late, both in the media and across social networks, and is a subject the club takes very seriously.</li> <li>• To this end, senior management plan to further discuss this topic with fan groups and other interested parties &amp; stakeholders to listen to concerns, ideas, etc. and then to put forward recommendations to help facilitate positive change, however our view is that ideally initiatives should be fan-driven.</li> <li>• We plan to solicit the views of as many match-attending fans as possible, as different segments of fans will likely have different views as to what constitutes a better atmosphere.</li> <li>• To do this, we have started a consultation process and plan to imminently launch a survey to further understand the various views, and to get the most out of this survey please could I ask you all to have a think about what 'atmosphere' means to you, and the people that you represent, and feedback those views and any suggestions which could enhance the atmosphere.</li> <li>• Please can you email your input by next Friday, 2nd March; we'll then use this, and other inputs received, to help shape the survey.</li> </ul>

Topic	Speaker	Topic Notes
4. Ticketing Update	SK	<p><b>European Away Games</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We presented options in the last forum to review potential proposed sanctions in relation to ‘false’ European away game applications.</li> <li>• As a reminder, at that point, we had failed to sell-out a European away match this season; for Moscow, before ordering tickets, we opened applications in order to assess demand, however over 300 people who applied subsequently cancelled in the lead-up to the game; additionally, we actually issued 825 tickets, however we estimate that only 566 supporters actually attended the game (based on the number of supporters who provided proof of travel).</li> <li>• For Benfica we received 4,500 applications for 2,500 tickets, which prompted us to negotiate a higher allocation. We processed two ballots, but had a high number of cancellations after each ballot, and despite trying to contact all unsuccessful applicants we ended up having to return c500 unsold tickets; should we draw Benfica again, this will weaken our position to negotiate the full allocation.</li> <li>• Subsequently, for Basel, we received 3.5k applications for 1,600 tickets; 292 supporters cancelled after the first ballot; we then stated that no-one could cancel after the 2nd ballot (other than for exceptional reasons) and 269 people still did not collect, meaning we had 269 empty seats in the stadium.</li> <li>• For Sevilla, we received 5k applications for c1,450 tickets, and c600 supporters cancelled after first ballot. We again stated that no-one could cancel after the 2nd ballot but 100 people still did not collect (meaning we, again, had 100 empty seats in the stadium).</li> <li>• Following the feedback received on the potential proposed sanctions at the last forum, we asked for other ideas that could be considered in order to help minimise the issue, however unfortunately we haven’t received any other options as yet, although post the forum, one rep did email their support for option 2.</li> <li>• As a reminder, the previously presented options were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stop issuing credits for European away games and conduct a fully random ballot, which will mean that supporters would only apply when they fully intend to attend the match – however, this would be unfair on those supporters who travel around the world to watch the team on a regular basis.</li> <li>2. Place sanctions on those supporters who apply, are successful and allocated a ticket, but subsequently cancel or fail to collect their ticket (recommended sanction would be a 12-month disqualification from applying for any away games, both domestic &amp; European); note, today, if someone fails to collect, the only ‘penalty’ is that we remove the credits they would have got for applying/attending.</li> <li>3. Now that we allocate tickets using over two years of credits (whereas previously the credit count reset every year) and we are moving towards a rolling three year credit system, we could continue to allow cancellations from people who cannot make the game anymore, but stop issuing credits to those who are unsuccessful.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Given the ongoing issue, i.e. at Basel &amp; Sevilla, we need to discuss options again, and propose Option 1 if no other acceptable options are tabled (i.e. ‘Stop issuing credits for European away games’) as it is the only way to guarantee stopping false applications (appreciating that there will always be a few genuine reasons for cancellations).</li> </ul>

Topic	Speaker	Topic Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible sanctions were discussed at great length, including suggestion to remove a set number of credits, or preventing people from applying for the next game should someone cancel or fail to collect; however, no decision was reached and so it was agreed further communications/discussions would take place over the next few weeks with a final decision to be taken at the next meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Domestic Away Games</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the summer we implemented the away ticket exchange, and in the last forum advised that it was being underutilised for games where we didn't have collections (i.e. opening games of the season), and that it would be interesting to see if the volume increased when/where we undertook collections. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For games where we haven't undertaken any ticket collections, an average of 0.4% of people exchanged their ticket (note: this figure is slightly misleading/inflated due to large volume of people using the exchange for Leicester, as we had planned to undertake ticket collections, but reversed the decision due to the timing of game – if we excluded Leicester, this % would halve to 0.2%).</li> <li>○ However, for games where we have undertaken ticket collections, this increases to 8% (supporters are c20 times more likely to use the exchange if they are asked to collect).</li> <li>○ In terms of validations, c33% of individuals asked to collect have failed to do so (8% cancelled, 19% used the ticket exchange and 6% didn't cancel but failed to collect – note: people who cancel, and/or do not cancel but fail to collect twice are suspended from applying for a 12-month period).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We raised in the last forum that, given the above, our view is that the current sanction is not strong enough and we propose to strengthen, i.e. to issue an immediate 12-month suspension from applying for domestic away games to supporters who cancel or fail to collect their ticket (unless they have used the ticket exchange, where the recipients would be qualifying supporters).</li> <li>• In that forum, we advised we would not formalise this change immediately – allowing time for you to feedback; as we have received no feedback, we propose to make this change with immediate effect.</li> <li>• No feedback was offered in the meeting, other than agreement that the issue of people applying for matches without an intention to attend was worsening, therefore it was unanimously approved to issue an immediate 12-month suspension from applying for domestic away games to supporters who cancel or fail to collect their ticket (unless they have used the ticket exchange, where the recipients would be qualifying supporters).</li> </ul> <p><b>Away Game Ticket Exchange (Concessions)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been a number of queries as to why a Season Ticket holder aged 65+ cannot use the exchange, even if they were just limited to transferring that ticket to another Season Ticket holder in the same age category.</li> <li>• Prior to implementation we advised on a number of occasions that transfers will only be available to 'adult' supporters, and in this specific scenario, the issue is that our current system is unfortunately not sophisticated enough to only allow concession to concession transfers (e.g. the system can't prevent a 65+ concession ticket being transferred to a supporter who's ineligible for that concession).</li> </ul>

Topic	Speaker	Topic Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have also previously mentioned that Ticketmaster is not developing the current system we use as their focus is on developing a new system, and we are in discussions regarding our business requirements with them; until such time we migrate to Ticketmaster's new platform, we are somewhat restricted.</li> <li>Therefore, based on the above (i.e. increased sanction for people who cancel or fail to collect their ticket), we will make exceptions for supporters aged 65+ and allow them to cancel a maximum of two times per season, when they have been asked to collect.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Accessible Stadia Update</b></p>	<p>DF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have now undertaken a total of 6 tests covering two new wheelchair platforms (South Stand + East Stand in front of existing) with the next test planned for the upcoming game vs. Liverpool.</li> <li>Tests of other new platforms &amp; facilities will be carried out as necessary over the coming season/s, in order to obtain approval from the relevant individuals &amp; authorities from a safety perspective.</li> <li>The club would again like to thank those Season Ticket holders who have been, or will be relocated, and those displaced to enable the tests and to go ahead.</li> <li>We have a further meeting with the EHRC, subsequent to which we will hopefully be able to confirm the revised roll-out plan for the new accessible facilities (which will take into account the construction issues we have faced, as previously mentioned in this forum, as well as the on-going safety testing programme); the meeting will be used to update the EHRC on those issues, the on-going safety testing programme and the implications of both on the roll-out plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. MUDSA Update</b></p>	<p>CB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since the last time the forum met, MUDSA members have seen another part of the new wheelchair facility being deployed in the East Stand lower on a couple of occasions.</li> <li>This particular section was greeted by a lot of online negativity and scepticism last year when the plans were first released. The view was questioned ("You won't be able to see the goal at the Stretford End" etc) and the exposure to the elements. As if it wasn't the same all around the main bowl of the stadium.</li> <li>The initial reports from the wheelchair members who have used it are glowing. 100% positive and no complaints that I am aware of. The doubters have been proven wrong with the views [from the platform] being particularly praised. It certainly looks amazing too and we're hopeful of seeing it deployed again later in the season.</li> <li>It does get wet down there when it rains, however the MUDSA Ponchos I told you about last time arrived in the nick of time and were deployed to good effect. The only downside being that a few people pinched them.</li> <li>The barrier preventing the occupants of what is at the moment the middle tier, to access the Ability Suite is still in place while the trials are carried out and it's fair to say it hasn't been a popular move.</li> <li>However, the majority do understand that the reasons for doing it are valid and valuable.</li> <li>The young lad called Nathaniel Yates who we co-opted on to the committee at the AGM has been busy and he will be starting work in his Junior Ambassador role very soon. He'll be working closely with the foundation, paying visits to the Power Chair football and Pan Disability football sessions on a monthly basis.</li> </ul>

Topic	Speaker	Topic Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• His role is to encourage the young disabled kids to become members of the club and members of MUDSA too. He'll be giving out some free stuff (which always helps) and telling them how MUDSA has changed his life for the better.</li> <li>• He'll also be working with the Foundation's Alex Wilson to meet and greet the young kids that the Foundation will be reaching out to in the community.</li> </ul>
7. MU Foundation Update	JS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The players conducted pre-Christmas visits to the Royal Children's Hospital, The Christie's Teenage Cancer Ward and Francis House Children's Hospice. The visits were well received by all including patients, their families and staff of the hospitals.</li> <li>• We have been informed that we will receive funding from Greater Manchester Police around a "Threats to Life" project we are doing. It is a 3 year project and is the first time that GMP has funded a project for more than a single year.</li> <li>• We have worked with the club on the Munich 60th Anniversary, by making an anniversary community video and also by the choir performing at the ceremony.</li> <li>• Working with club sponsor Virgin Money we will be fielding a team in the London marathon made up of staff and fans.</li> </ul>
8. Members' Questions	AL	
a. Away Ticket Exchange for 65+	SK	<p><b>Q: A number of 65+ members have raised concerns with the lack of a facility for them to transfer their allocated away ticket</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covered in Ticketing update.</li> </ul>
b. Away Fans in Home Areas	DS	<p><b>Q: At the United v City game it was apparent that away fans were in home areas, with some visibly supporting their team, resulting in some scuffling and confrontations in the stands. Could you confirm what checks and validations are undertaken?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are unable to provide a specific response outlining why these particular people were not ejected from the stadium without the Block/Row/Seat detail to investigate, however, the following update details our protocols surrounding this type of action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The terms and conditions for ticket holders state the following: "Facilities are located in the 'home' section of the Stadium. To ensure the safety and enjoyment of visitors to the Stadium on a match day, the Club may refuse to admit to the Stadium or eject from the stadium anyone who is visibly supporting the opposition team and/or whose behaviour may create and/or increase potential crowd disorder and/or result in a reaction from other ticket holders."</li> <li>○ As such, stewards are thoroughly briefed to watch out for the potential of away fans in home areas, with extra vigilance requested for high profile matches; stewards dynamically assess the situation and if the safety of the 'away' fan, or those around them, is affected then an ejection may be considered, and such incidences are directed to the control room for due safety &amp; security assessment with the police (no 'away fan in home areas' will ever be relocated to an away section).</li> <li>○ From a hospitality perspective, the Safety Management team receive a list of all purchasers highlighting if any are from the same area as the opposition, and account managers then make additional enquiries and issue reminders about away fans in home areas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Topic	Speaker	Topic Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Supporters can also use the anonymous text service to alert stewards of instances of 'away fans in home' for monitoring and action as appropriate; furthermore, if we do become aware of away fans in home areas, whether ejected or not, we will endeavour to trace purchasers, investigate and appropriately sanction any home ticket holder who has either passed on or sold their ticket to a known away supporter.</li> </ul>
c. Away Ticket Allocations	SK	<p><b>Q: Is the club able to release for home games percentages of where the tickets are sold like they do for away games? How many to Official Members, how many to Season Tickets, of away supporters, hospitality, Thomas Cook etc.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The %'s will differ by competition/game, however the overwhelming majority, over 80% of the stadium, is allocated to 'seasonal' product holders; Official Members then receive around 10%, the away team c3.5% with the remaining being allocated to various others, e.g. match-by-match hospitality purchasers, competition organisers, sponsors, inc. Thomas Cook Sport, players, etc.</li> </ul>
d. Away Ticket Collections	SK	<p><b>Q: Can the club please explain why some ST holders in the loyalty pot have been requested to pick up at Arsenal, Burnley and Spurs, although the Arsenal was a transfer they had to collect.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally, we have only asked supporters in the Loyalty Pot to collect once this season; if people have been asked to collect on more than one occasion it will be because they have previously been asked to collect their ticket, and didn't do so.</li> </ul>
e. European Away Games	SK	<p><b>Q: Following previous discussion on sanctions to be placed for non pick up or cancellation of European away games, this has been discussed on numerous occasions and now the club are agreeing there is a problem?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To confirm, this 'problem' was raised by the club at the last forum, however we've discussed this in the Ticketing Update section.</li> </ul>
f. Rates of Pay	SD	<p><b>Q: What is United's policy re rates of pay, is it the living wage or the minimum wage?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manchester United pays staff competitive salaries for the jobs they undertake and we have many variations of contracts in place due to the size and nature of the club, although all directly employed permanent &amp; temporary employees, whether engaged on a full or part-time hours basis, are paid at least the Voluntary Living Wage, in line with the Premier League agreement.</li> <li>• It was requested in the forum that the club confirmed the split of directly employed staff who would qualify for the above (including casual, permanent and those on temporary contracts) vs. agency / 3rd party staff, who may not – the club will look into the feasibility of providing this information ahead of the next meeting.</li> </ul>
g. Customer Complaints	AL	<p><b>Q: Are supporters who express dissatisfaction or raise complaints with the Club 'punished' for doing so via ballot results or any other means?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absolutely not; we genuinely encourage and appreciate supporters raising their concerns and providing feedback, and we make every effort to provide people with an individually tailored response and, where appropriate, resolution of the issues raised.</li> <li>• Complaints are handled by a separate team and recorded in a stand-alone system, meaning that, for example, ticketing staff who manage ballots, do not have visibility into complaints unless specifically involved – but even then ticket ballots are run automatically and no factors are taken into account other than those published e.g. date of application, number of credits etc.</li> </ul>

Topic	Speaker	Topic Notes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporters wishing to make a complaint or provide feedback about any aspect of the club should email <a href="mailto:feedback@manutd.co.uk">feedback@manutd.co.uk</a>.</li> <li>If supporters are not happy with the club's attempt to resolve their complaint, they can escalate their concerns to the Independent Football Ombudsman who will review their case from an independent standpoint; details are included in the 'Club Charter' that can be found on our website.</li> </ul>
<p>h. Executive Allocation for Away Games</p>	<p>SK</p>	<p><b>Q: The allocation to Executive Season Ticket holders has over the last couple of years been reduced from 33% to 11% and despite asking how this was communicated to execs as I don't ever recall seeing any communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On average, until the 2016/17 season, Executive Club Members received an average of c19% of the overall allocation for away games, which, based on the number of applications, delivered around a 43% success rate, however neither allocation volume or success rates were guaranteed, communicated or published.</li> <li>Also, until this point, we hadn't undertaken any validation exercises for these tickets, so during the course of the 2016/17 season we started requesting that Executive Club Members provide details of the people using their tickets.</li> <li>This process change proved that lots of these tickets were ending up in the hands of Season Ticket holders who had been unsuccessful in the ballot, and many Executive Club Members did not provide details of the end users, and so their tickets were cancelled, meaning that just c11% of the overall allocation for away games went to Executive Club Members or their official guests.</li> <li>For transparency, 11% of the overall allocation for away games are reserved for Executive Club Members, which equates to the same proportion of tickets issued to Executive Club Members at home games (and reflects the number actually used in 2016/17) and delivers on average a 37% success rate.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Any Other Business</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reps were offered the opportunity to raise any other pressing items and a number of late questions were submitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several forum members wished to express their satisfaction with the event organised to commemorate the 60th Munich Anniversary; they felt it was respectful and sincere and asked that their gratitude was passed onto those responsible for organising the event.</li> <li>Several supporters had thoughts on where the club mascot should be located during any minutes silence; the mascot has previously stood around the centre circle with the players, however it was suggested that the mascot should stand with the officials on the side line – the club advised this will be considered ahead of any future events</li> <li>It was requested that the club facilitate a request to have a dedicated area to create “a loud and vibrant atmosphere” at the FA Cup game against Brighton (something that reps from the J-Stand have asked us to accommodate previously this season, but there hasn't been a suitable game to accommodate without forcing people to move from their seats) – as Brighton are being allocated their tickets in East Stand Tier 2, leaving the usual visitors section free, the club agreed to accommodate this request.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Topic	Speaker	Topic Notes
		<p><b>Q. Can 'clean' chants/songs be printed in the programme, placed on website and song sheets distributed to supporters?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DS advised that this will be looked into for future games.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q: Is there any update on a women's football team?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AL: This remains under review at a high level at the club and isn't something that can happen overnight; a number of factors need to be considered such as staffing, facilities etc. – we will provide full update in the next meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q: Fans get moved for Champions League games and not always to seats that are similar to their usual ones. Can the press or hospitality seats be moved to accommodate fans?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SK: Unfortunately not due to facilities and UEFA rulings, but efforts are always made to accommodate supporters into the best possible seats available – we will look into any alternatives ahead of the next meeting and provide an update.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q. Can the Family Stand be looked at with changes to the entertainment in there?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DF: Yes, the club welcomes new ideas and will look again at the current situation and ways to improve this – we will provide a further update in the next meeting.</li> </ul> <p>Date of Next Meeting: Friday 11th May, AON Training Complex.</p>