

# MANCHESTER UNITED FANS' FORUM – MINUTES

**TUESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2016**

**OLD TRAFFORD**

## FORUM MEMBERS

Peter	Rickard	Over 65s Representative
David	Blackledge	Season Ticket Holder
Phil	Downs	MUDSA Representative
Peter	Evans	MUSC Representative (Cardiff & South Vale Branch)
Keith	Udale	MUSC Representative (High Peak Branch)
Josh	Llewellyn	Season Ticket Holder
Jared	Winder	Manchester/Salford/Trafford resident ST Holder
Ruairi	McMenamin	16-21 Representative
Roger	Muckle	Executive Club Member
Adrian	Short	Official Member
Matthew	Harris	Official Member
Gaynor	Bagnall	Season Ticket Holder
Lindsay	Roe	MUSC Representative (Nottingham Branch)
Alan	Thomas	Official Member
Andy	Whitehead	Family Stand Representative

## CLUB AND FOUNDATION OFFICIALS

John	Alexander	Club Secretary
Richard	Arnold	Group Managing Director
David	French	Director of Venue
Sam	Kelleher	Head of Ticketing and Membership Operations
John	Shiels	Chief Executive, Manchester United Foundation
Guy	Smith	Director of Venue Operations
Chelsea	Mould	T&MS Comms & Admin Team Leader
Philip	Townsend	Director of Communications

Topic	Speaker	Topic Notes
<b>1. Introductions / Apologies</b>	RA	<b>Apologies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Alexander (Club Secretary)</li> <li>Phil Downs (MUDSA)</li> <li>Peter Rickard (Over 65s Rep)</li> <li>Josh Llewellyn (Season Ticket Holder)</li> </ul>
<b>2. Minutes (last meeting)</b>	RA	The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
<b>3. Ticketing Update</b>	SK	<b>Validation Exercises</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following on from our validation exercises on the ST Loyalty Pot in 2013/14 and 2014/15, we have continued validations on the Standard Pot at away games this season.</li> <li>To-date 35% of people we requested to collect their ticket either cancelled in advance, or left them to go unused.</li> <li>Currently, if a supporter is allocated a ticket and is subsequently asked to collect, but then cancel, no measures are taken. If someone is asked to collect, doesn't cancel, but doesn't collect the ticket, they are banned from applying for the remainder of the season.</li> <li>We need to impose much stronger sanctions on supporters who apply for matches with no intention of actually attending (something already raised in this forum this season), however the difficulty is that there will always be people who genuinely cannot attend.</li> <li>Therefore we need to look at policy &amp; processes to ensure that ticket</li> </ul>

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		<p>applications are only made by people who intend to attend the game, and want Fans' Forum reps to be actively involved in developing the policy &amp; processes, and will therefore send out discussion notes / options ahead of the next meeting for review &amp; input, so that we can summarise views/option and present recommendations in April's forum.</p>
<p><b>4. Security / Car Parking Update</b></p>	<p>GS</p>	<p><b>Security</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessment of the global security environment remains unchanged and events in Europe over Christmas / New Year and recent attacks in Turkey mean that we will not be reversing any of the enhanced security measures put in place following the Paris attacks in November 2015.</li> <li>Therefore the security presence and searches on the approach to the stadium, enhanced searches at the turnstiles, vehicle searches and bag policy will remain until further notice. We have also introduced a bigger &amp; better bag drop operation for those supporters who do bring large bags or prohibited items to the stadium – this has significantly reduced queueing time. We would urge that all supporters now factor additional time into their matchday routine to accommodate this. We thank all fans for their understanding throughout this time.</li> <li>Northern Rail has reinstated the Matchday rail service to the stadium with effect from the recent game against Southampton.</li> <li>GS agreed that training must be ongoing in order to maintain the effectiveness of the operation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Car Parking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GS apologised for the lack of consultation and the communication regarding changes that were recently implemented on some of our car parks (namely W1, W2 &amp; N2) for the last few games. Going forward we will ensure that we fully consult affected parties, and communicate more clearly the changes and options available to those affected.</li> <li>For information, GS read out an email on this subject that was sent to affected parties ahead of tonight's game explaining the change in procedures following supporter feedback:</li> </ul> <p><i>Following recent changes made to the exit procedures on your car park, we have now had the chance to review the impact of those changes, and to take on board valuable feedback from affected supporters.</i></p> <p><i>As a result, we will be changing the procedure for the game versus Stoke City on Tuesday 2nd February, which will involve traffic marshalling rather than a holdback; these changes are aimed at improving the flow of vehicles from the car park, as well as maintaining the safety of pedestrians as they depart the stadium. Please be aware of pedestrians who choose to cross the road/bridge on their way out.</i></p> <p><i>Please can I ask for your patience and to respect the marshalling staff as we trial the new exit procedures, which we hope will facilitate the exit for drivers while also safeguarding pedestrians.</i></p> <p><i>We welcome your feedback after the match, and thank you for your continued support.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Background to the changes/car park holdback (W1/W2/N1): the issue of egress from the north-western area of the footprint was raised in the Fans' Forum in December in 2 parts (i) traffic management at the stadium end of the canal bridge (ii) concerns about pedestrians crossing the road. This was reviewed by the Club at the West Ham game, after which we implemented a holdback operation at the Norwich game. This was designed to (i) remove the hazard of cars colliding with pedestrians as they exit W1, W2 and N1 car parks (ii) allow pedestrians exiting via W3 (MIFT) or returning to N3 car park to safely cross the road.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This continued at the next 3 games when we tried to refine the timings (and impact on motorists) by waiting as late as possible to implement the holdback. This resulted in the holdback being in place for 9 minutes (Chelsea), 8 minutes (Swansea) and 5 minutes (Sheffield United).</li> <li>• However the profile of departures at the Southampton game meant that a longer holdback period was in place.</li> <li>• We have been continually reviewing this area and have taken feedback from supporters- particularly those parking in the affected car parks who have expressed concerns about the impact on their onward journey times. As a result of this, and as mentioned above, revised arrangements will be in place starting at tonight's game; we will introduce a traffic marshalling operation and attempt to avoid a temporary holdback of vehicles. Measures will be in place to provide additional space for pedestrian egress and to guide pedestrians to the correct side of the road for their onward journey to minimise the amount of people needing to cross the road/bridge.</li> <li>• During the trial operation of the holdback we have offered to relocate those car park users who have complained about the impact on journey times to car parks not affected by the holdback.</li> <li>• Finally it has been suggested that the route through W3 car park exiting via MIFT should be used as a public exit route for vehicles. This is a designated emergency access route (both inbound and outbound) and cannot be made available to general traffic.</li> </ul>
<b>5. European Away Game Update</b>	DF	<p><b>Midtjylland (Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We carried forward credits from the Champions League campaign to this fixture and despite the small allocation of 800 tickets, all supporters who have attended 3+ of the 4 European games this season were successful in the ballot</li> <li>• We have arranged a collection point in the Kongresscenter which is situated on a small square just off Herning's main pedestrianised street; the Kongresscenter is easily identifiable by the large glass pyramid outside the main entrance; tickets will be collected from the external windows of the Kongresscenter Box Office.</li> <li>• The weather forecast highlights the potential for snow and freezing conditions so we have arranged and paid for 4 coaches to transport supporters to and from the stadium from 4pm on the day of the game.</li> <li>• The meeting point for supporters will be the 'Herning Rutebilstation' (bus station) next to the Scandic Hotel.</li> <li>• For supporters not travelling to Midtjylland don't forget the early kick-off time of 6pm UK time</li> </ul>
<b>6. Disability Consultation Program – Questionnaire Results</b>	DF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank you to those of you who replied to the questionnaire that was emailed by Chelsea following the last forum.</li> <li>• We are now assimilating responses from all key stakeholders and then will make recommendation to the board.</li> </ul>

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<b>7. Official Club Sanctions Document Update</b>	DF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the last Fans' Forum we promised to send out the latest draft 'Official Club Sanctions' document for your review/comment; this was sent a little later than anticipate but thank you to those that have feedback.</li> <li>As a reminder, the purpose of the document, which we intend to publish on the Club's website and communicate to ticket purchasers/holders, is to improve fairness and to provide transparency for fans and staff as to which behaviours are deemed unacceptable, and to advise what sanctions offenders can expect.</li> </ul> <p>We received some positive feedback which supports the stated intention, as well as some comments/questions about specific elements such as the appeals process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interestingly, some of the feedback suggested stronger sanctions should be imposed.</li> <li>The proposed policy is in line with good practice at some other clubs but we aim for it to provide enhanced information and detail, as well as a game leading system for appeals etc.</li> <li>Next step is for SK to respond to everyone that fed-back, and we will now undertake a final review, and design/publish the document in the coming weeks; prior to the next Forum meeting on 29th April.</li> </ul>
<b>8. MU Foundation Update</b>	JS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working closely with MUTV, we were able to give some of our more unfortunate young people the experience of a lifetime, part of a number of the Club's Christmas activities. The aim next year is to include fans more in those activities.</li> <li>Starting to work on increasing our coverage across the City, 4 more secondary and approximately 24 more primaries will come on board in September 2016.</li> <li>Working closely with Wayne Rooney's Foundation around his testimonial, and a programme we have created around him.</li> <li>We had over 1,700 Santa runners.</li> <li>We continue to support the Looked After Children awards in Manchester, as well as the Foster Carer's event.</li> <li>We are hosting a Premier League Non-Executive Directors visit, chosen from the league as an example of good practice.</li> </ul>
<b>9. MUDSA Update</b>	PT (on behalf of PD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing Places: We are pleased to say that our Changing Places facility is now open and situated off the East Stand concourse (ground level). Changing Places is a dedicated hygiene space for severely disabled people and their carers. Its introduction follows representations by fans and Old Trafford is one of only three stadiums in the country to have such a facility. It is stewarded with the benefit of a RADAR Key to restrict its use to those disabled supporters with high dependency needs only.</li> <li>Access Stewards: The Club has now initiated the use of Access Stewards around the stadium that will supplement the services already provided by MUDSA. The Access Stewards will be located around the stadium with a view to approaching people who seem to need additional support to enter the stadium. This is part of the improvement provided by the Club for those people with mobility difficulties as part of our broader inclusion strategy.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing Membership: We continue to see an increasing demand for tickets from disabled members who require the use of specified seating. Whilst we will always witness a churn of members, the new members appearing outstrips that number showing a steady increase of approximately 100 new members a season.</li> <li>25 Year Summary: MUDSA concluded its 25 year celebrations at the MUDSA Annual Dinner in October last year. This dinner saw Sir Alex Ferguson accept the honour of becoming the MUDSA Patron and David Gill as the Honorary President. On the same evening MUDSA launched its 25 year anniversary booklet which was an excellent attempt of condensing the last 25 years. A documentary on the 25 years of MUDSA followed in November and aired on MUTV. The response from all the elements of the year of celebrations has been amazing and we hope the next 25 years can be equally productive with the Club maintaining its position of providing the best quality facilities at any club.</li> <li>Complex Needs: In a stadium the size of Old Trafford we have an expected level of people who attend the matches with complex needs. These can arrive in the form of people attending with their personal equipment needed for day to day survival, e.g. oxygen cylinders, nebulisers and ventilators. This clearly demonstrates the intention of the Club to welcome any supporter and provide for their needs wherever possible.</li> </ul>
<b>10. Members' Questions</b>		
a. Price of Midtjylland away tickets	SK	<p><b>Q: Did the Club approach Midtjylland and/or UEFA about the ticket pricing for the away leg in Denmark, because when Southampton played there in the qualifier the tickets were priced at £22 each, so why should the price be hiked to £71 for United.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UEFA rules do not state anything about the price of match tickets (but it is generally UEFA's view that they will not intervene unless a club is attempting to charge away fans more than home fans).</li> <li>Once pricing was confirmed, we made a case to UEFA that this is unfair as the tickets will be priced at £71, which is extremely high for our supporters when compared to recent fixtures against other English teams.</li> <li>This would be the 2nd highest amount our supporters have been charged for a European away game in recent seasons.</li> <li>UEFA's only view was that we would have a case if this pricing differed from what Midtjylland declared before the draw took place, upon checking this Midtjylland had advised these prices would be in place for all supporters (home and away) regardless of the opposition.</li> <li>Unfortunately, this means there is no case to present as Midtjylland declared this pricing in advance of the draw and there are no rules for them to break.</li> <li>We are also regularly asked if we will impose a price hike when these teams visit us, but given the understanding that pricing is to be comparable between home and away fans, we would need to increase the price of c3,500 ST holder seats from £29 to £71. Therefore, prices remain as standard.</li> </ul>

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b. European away Thomas Cook allocation	SK	<p><b>Q: The Thomas Cook announcement for CL away game is still not clear, and we have supporters who have already received confirmation that they have been accepted for the trip and guaranteed a ticket, so just how many tickets are they getting and how will this affect the independent travellers with 6, 7 &amp; 8 credits in the ballot, if they are allocating tickets to supporters with less credits than 7 or 8 before the ballot is made.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nobody was allocated a seat or guaranteed a ticket before the ballot. Thomas Cook only initially took applications, rather than guarantee bookings for this game. This was to ensure that if people were unsuccessful in our ballot, they still had a chance to secure a package through TCS.</li> <li>Based on feedback received from supporters (i.e. that they would only want to travel with TCS if they couldn't get a ticket through MUFC), we agreed with Thomas Cook that they would extend their application period until 24 hours after our own ballot was complete. For Midtjylland, no tickets were allocated by TCS until after the MU ballot.</li> <li>We also emailed all regular European away travellers (who were not guaranteed a ticket via our own ballot), and advised of this process.</li> <li>As previously communicated, Thomas Cook now takes credits into account when allocating tickets (in previous seasons they didn't).</li> <li>All fans with credits had the opportunity to use the TCS exclusive window before spaces were made available to those with less credits.</li> <li>However, if TCS do not receive enough applications from supporters with higher credits to fill their aircraft (less than 200 seats for the Midtjylland game), they will have to allocate tickets to people with lower credits; the number of tickets they are allocated identically matches the number of seats on the aircraft they have purchased and from a business perspective, they need to fill the plane in order to continue providing the official trips that they currently do.</li> <li>Members expressed appreciation for greater transparency from the club on all ticket issues.</li> <li>RA promised the Club would look at ways of making this process clearer.</li> </ul>
c. Pre-season tour	PT	<p><b>Q: Can the Club advise where the pre-season tour will be this year and do they have a schedule so supporters can plan and get the most attractive prices early enough, can they also confirm that there will be tickets available to travelling supporters for the games from the club.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contracts are yet to be finalised for the tour. As soon as we have a finalised list of venues, we will announce it. A small number of tickets will be available for travelling fans, as agreed at the Forum a couple of years' ago.</li> </ul>
d. Away game family section	SK	<p><b>Q: A couple of years ago United started to liaise with other premier league clubs to ensure successful family stand applicants for were located together and in the most suitable part of the away section for young children's safety. Is this continuing as family stand applicants currently seem quite scattered at away games.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is still happening for every game; in a ballot, a batch of seats is held off to relocate family groups into; families are then moved together, and their original seats are re-balloted; therefore applications containing juniors could still get tickets, but would be seated in the seats vacated by</li> </ul>



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		<p>family groups in the aforementioned process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We also sometimes receive returned tickets which may be reallocated to family groups, and in that case they would need to sit in whatever seats were returned.</li> <li>Please note that the process mentioned only applies to supporters who choose to make an application together as a group, e.g. Mum, Dad, Daughter and Son all apply together, in one application for 4 tickets; if supporters split applications (e.g. Mum, Dad, Daughter and Son all apply individually) our balloting software will not class these as a group, and therefore their tickets will not be relocated.</li> <li>In total, for the last 3 games, 197 individual supporters who have been successful in a ballot have been moved together, 36 have not.</li> </ul>
e. Car park matchday hold back and rail way closure	GS	<p><b>Q1: Having looked at the minutes of the last 2 Fans Forum meetings I can find nothing where the problems/concerns referred to in Guy Smith's email of the 23rd Dec were discussed or the decision taken to hold back exit from the respective car parks have been sanctioned by the Committee.</b></p> <p><b>As explained in my response email there a wide range of implications that appear not to have been considered and I am appealing to yourselves to raise this on an urgent basis before there is another cock up this afternoon.</b></p> <p><b>I have had a number of issues over the past several; years with the Club and the way it deals with its loyal supporters (particularly those registered disabled with limited mobility problems) and been frustrated in every instance by a lack of a clear complaints procedure. Now that I have found the FF site, (obscurely placed in the Club Information section) I will have greater confidence that the issues are properly aired and considered. Please advise on the protocols and meeting attendance procedures.</b></p> <p><b>Perhaps you could advise the Supporters what the problems are that have closed the rail access over recent weeks and what the future plans are. I say this because fans who usually use this service are considered similar permanent closure decisions may result.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Q: 1) W3 has a locked exit point leading to the Europe Gate - Westinghouse Rd roundabout. Could this not be re-opened thereby reducing traffic flow onto the Canal Bridge ? (This could also remove the need for 3:1 barrier currently used on the approach to the bridge – referred to in my attached communication with GS of 1st Jan)</b></p> <p><b>2) Is it appropriate and justifiable that the only way the aggrieved drivers in the affected car parks can alleviate the Club's created congestion (and potential disaster) problem is by leaving the stadium before the game ends? – ( a practice highly noticeable and commented on at televised games)</b></p> <p><b>3) Have the implications and potential scenarios outlined above been discussed with the emergency services prior to or since the “holdback” decision announced on the 23rd Dec? If not, why not?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GS covered in his update.</li> </ul>
f. Kiosk issues	GS	<p><b>Q: I sit towards the Stretford End in tier one and at half time I go down to see a friend who sits further along. By the time I manage to force my way</b></p>

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		<p>through the totally unacceptable and unnecessary throng to get to him, it is almost time to make my way back. The problem is the beer sellers, or more to the point, where they are situated. In case you are not aware, there are two in the area I refer to and both stand opposite the exit from the lower section of the stand and also a toilet. This causes little more than chaos, as you have a line of people wanting beer, which queues back to the exit, where there are people trying to get out to either get to the toilet or the food outlet. Then you have the people trying to get into the toilets from other areas, so you can well imagine what it is like. It has been like this for ages and I am surprised something hasn't been done about it before now, as I would imagine that it is something of a health and safety issue. I know the beer sales are profitable, but they should not be situated where they are. Could they not be put in the programme kiosks at half time as most buy a programme pre match and the sellers could return at full time to get anyone wanting one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We suspect this refers to the Stretford End Tier 1 (lower concourse) but would be grateful if this could be confirmed. The beer hawking operation was designed to improve congestion by removing the need to join queues for the catering kiosks for those wanting to buy beer/cider only.</li> <li>• Member confirmed the email was relating to North Stand tier 1 near to the Stretford End, and another Member said that East Stand lower faces similar problems. GS advised that the Club would review these areas and across the whole of the stadium.</li> <li>• We will review these specific locations see if we can either move them to a more appropriate position or better manage the queues that are impeding movement.</li> <li>• RA was grateful for the suggestion of using programme kiosks at half time and promised that the option would be investigated.</li> </ul>
g. Adidas partnership	RA	<p><b>Q: What are the Club's thoughts on the comments made by the CEO of Adidas about the style of play we are playing, and is there a get out clause from the sponsorship if the situation worsens.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone is entitled to a view on the team but the reality is that he said nothing that the Manager had not already said himself. It was good copy for a quiet news day but it does not and cannot change the nature of our partnership.</li> </ul>
h. Mobile app for tickets	DF	<p><b>Q: Is there plans for a phone app where fans can apply for / buy tickets.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently the club does not have an app available in the UK.</li> <li>• However, it is working on a developing a new set of global digital platforms with its Digital Transformation Partner HCL.</li> <li>• The project is still in the planning stage, but an app is included with a view to this being developed and launched some time next season, however, as with our current platforms, online ticketing sales will – in the short term – continued to be delivered by a specialist e-ticketing provider.</li> <li>• However, users will be able to link to the ticketing solution from within any app.</li> </ul>
i. Foundation visits	JS	<p><b>Q: One for the foundation. They visit hospitals with players are there plans to visit care homes to visit the older generation.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a Foundation our charitable objectives target the 5-18 year old age</li> </ul>



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		<p>group, so that is what we focus our energies on. Having said that we are looking to see if there is funding to do some Inter-generational work, because we feel that having our young people working with older people is great for their development, but this will depend on obtaining funding. In terms of players the hospital visits is a traditional Christmas activity, and by the time we have done Royal Children's, The Christie and Francis House Hospice we do not have any other players to go around.</p>
<p><b>11. Any Other Business</b></p>	<p>RA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints were received about the quality of stewarding at the Derby FA Cup tie – stewards failed to keep the gangways clear and failed to police other breaches of ground regulations. Some fans had submitted mobile phone pictures of incidents and each will be examined. The Club does send stewards to high profile games if asked; mainly to ensure that we receive full allocations at future away games.</li> <li>RA confirmed that the Club is aware of the funeral of Gary 'Coco' Thompson at Manchester Cathedral on Friday 5th February – the Club were represented at the service.</li> <li>Members asked whether the Premier League clubs are to discuss the distribution of TV deal funds at the upcoming meeting. RA said that a number of options were on the table and the results would be communicated by the League after the meeting.</li> <li>Date of Next Meeting: Friday 29th April 1pm – 4pm (ATC), ahead of MU vs. Leicester, Sat 30<sup>th</sup> April, 3pm KO</li> </ul>