

CUSP CUFC Meeting

The minutes of the CUSP CUFC Meeting held at 7.00pm on 13 October 2021

Present

CUFC: Ian Mather, Shaun Grady, Dave Matthew-Jones

CUSP: Ben Payne (Chair), David Burkett (Vice-Chair), Philip Saich (Secretary), Nigel Browne and Chris Neild

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Ben Phillips.

The Abbey Grill

Concerns have been raised over the quality of the food and the slow service. The Abbey Grill is outsourced to Premier Foods. Their chip & pin machines are slow, which leads to long waiting times. The Club has focused on improving outlets elsewhere in the ground by installing new chip & pin machines and pre-pouring beers to aid throughput. The Club has raised the issue of waiting times with Premier Foods and will also feed back on the quality issue.

Programmes

While there appears to be demand for printed programmes, the Club is looking at this carefully due to the costs involved. The digital programme worked in the Covid year but the Club responded to demand for a printed programme as fans returned by creating a subscription model and printing some extras for hospitality. They are now at something of a crossroads as the digital programme costs around £900 a time, while the printed version can more or less cover its costs. With larger away followings in League 1, it may be possible to increase the print run and even make a small profit. There is a market for the digital version, but it would need to be at a price that works. One challenge is that most fans don't carry cash so there is an option to sell programmes in the tea bars, especially as there is concern over a lack of regular sellers around the ground.

Half-time entertainment

It would be good to spruce up the half-time entertainment, possibly with under 10s playing small matches in front of the South Stand. The Club is open to suggestions with maybe a penalty shootout involving the ball boys/girls. To raise interest (and to provide more winners), could the skip have a back board and be moved around the pitch?

Ball boy/girl experience and mascots

Could the ball boys/girls be given waterproof clothing to make them more homegenous, especially as they tend to be hooked and come back to future matches with their families? Could they form a guard of honour with flags when the players come out, and could they be allowed in to watch the Man of the Match presentation? The Club is hoping to bring back the mascot package, although access to the dressing room will not yet be possible.

Sponsored main stand seats

Adding a sticker to the seats was part of the agreement for D&A to sponsor the Main Stand, but the Club will look into having the Bridge The Gap sponsors' names uncovered.

Papa John's match v Spurs

Several complaints were received about the Main Stand being crammed full for this fixture, when the Club had reiterated the need for social distancing. The Club were taken by surprise by the level of ticket sales and have agreed to look into opening another stand for future Papa John's fixtures.

Women's football

The Club is firmly committed to growing women's football, and would welcome CUSP's support with this. The women's team will be playing two matches at the Abbey this season, including one against QPR, and it will soon have a shirt sponsor and a presence on the Club website. Season ticket holders can enjoy free entry, and the aim is to invest in the development of women's football.

Why is there a 50p surcharge on online tickets?

The surcharge is to cover payment processing fees with Sagepay which don't apply to ticket sales in the club shop. The Club will discuss including the booking fee in the published ticket price.

The Cambridge cow

John Ruddy and his wife won the auction for the Cambridge cow and have kindly loaned it to the Club for the remainder of the season.

Turnstile congestion

Two things are contributing to congestion at the turnstiles: 1) fans being in the wrong area and 2) people with e-tickets having the background to their phones set to black which prevents the QR code from scanning. The Club is looking to increase the number of Abbey helpers to direct fans to the correct turnstiles, the CUFC Lottery is funding a large sign with a map of the ground and the Club will send out communications emphasising that fans need to avoid having their phones set to a black background to aid speedy entry to the ground.

Date of next meeting

This will be confirmed in due course.