

CUSP CUFC Meeting

The minutes of the CUSP CUFC Meeting held at 7.00pm on 24 May 2022

Present

CUFC: Alex Tunbridge, Godric Smith, Dave Matthew-Jones

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

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Neild, Danielle Foster and Ben Phillips.

Catering

A capex project has been signed off to improve catering at the ground, in particular the speed of service, quality of food and availability of beer. Baxter Storey will be managing all outlets with the exception of the away end. The offering will be 'pie and pint' style, with hot dogs, chips and chocolate also being available, along with an alternating van in the Habbin. The NRE will have the existing arrangement while the Main Stand area will see the Abbey Arms removed and a large shipping container with food and drinks to be enjoyed beneath canopies. The catering company will take responsibility for staffing, stock and food quality, and the pricing ceiling will be £6.50 with a variety of offerings below that price point. The Club are in discussions around Gluten Free options.

The pies and pasties will be locally sourced, there will be two beers (Ghost Ship and Amstel), and the Club are exploring post-match possibilities. The opening and closing times of all the outlets will be clearly publicised to avoid confusion and loss of revenue.

Programmes

These will be retained and an announcement will be made shortly around this. There will be more sellers – both at static booths and wandering – to help with sales.

Marvin

The Club will look into whether Marvin's costume needs attention.

Big matches

1,522 season tickets have been sold to date, which is encouraging, and the overall target is 3,000, which the Club believe is achievable. There are plans to introduce an Abbey Access scheme to give non season ticket holders priority access to tickets, and an announcement will be made on this in due course. The Junior U's scheme will also be relaunched.

Dryers in the toilets

New toilets are being introduced behind the Main Stand, so that should ease congestion, and the Club will review the hand dryers around the ground to see if any need replacing.

Tunnel beneath the Main Stand

The Club will look into whether this should be made 'one way'.

Dublin Bar

The use of this for hospitality is under review and an announcement will be made in June.

NRE standing areas

The Club operate under Green Guide management guidelines. Exits and gangways should be kept clear and where circumstances dictate, crowd control measures will be implemented.

Bond/NRE

The Club's immediate focus is on finalising the Stadium buy back and improving the facilities at the ground for the start of next season. The Club wants to modernise the ground but needs to be realistic about the potential timetable given the sums already committed by the owners for the Abbey and the training ground. The Club is open minded on exactly how that could be done and financed but believes it is important not to jump ahead and also to manage expectations.

Shirts

The new home shirt will be revealed on 10 June, with the new away shirt following on 17 June. The third kit will be replaced with a training top.

Half-time entertainment

Mick George acknowledge that the half-time entertainment needs refreshing and will work with the Club on ideas. The aim is to improve the PA system with the addition of a roaming microphone and the IT infrastructure and operational wifi are also being improved.

Fanzone

This project is currently shelved in favour of improvements in the catering and the availability of beer around the ground.

Pre-season

The players are back on 20 June, and a full pre-season schedule will be announced shortly.

Mascot package

The mascot package is being revamped to give a better experience and better value for money. Details will be released in due course.

South Stand/South Habbin

The Club will review home fixtures to assess whether the South Habbin and/or the whole of the South Stand should be given to home or away fans. There are pros and cons either way, and this is currently under discussion.

Shadow Board and Golden Share

The Club is setting up a Working Group including – CUSP, CFU and Amber Belles – to establish the Shadow Board as it believes it is important to co-create it with fan groups. It is hoped that it will be in place for early next season and the Club will say more about how it will operate once agreement has been reached. The Golden Share protection for the Stadium is obviously an important part of the buy back. It is likely that the details of this will be worked on with the Shadow Board during the course of next season as there are obviously complex legal issues involved and it is important to get it right rather than do it quickly.

Walk out song

The Club are keen to receive fans' feedback on a possible walk out song and the pre-match build-up from 14.45. CUSP will request feedback from the fans on various channels.

Atmosphere in the NRE

The Club would also like to hear suggestions as to how the atmosphere in the NRE can be improved. More prominence for the drum(s) and oversized flags are possibilities.

Women's football

The Club are fully engaged with women's football and are focusing on increasing its profile by having more matches at the Abbey and thereby attracting more fans.

Date of next meeting

This will be confirmed in due course.