

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the
FANS FORUM OF CELTIC PLC**
held at Celtic Park, Glasgow
on 27 February 2017 at 19:00

Attending:

Club Representatives: Robin Buchanan (Stadium General Manager)
Chris Duffy (Company Solicitor and Secretary for the Forum)
Adrian Filby (Commercial Director)
Angela Forbes (Ticket Office Manager)
Ronnie Hawthorn (Head of Safety, Security and Operations)
Iain Jamieson (Communications Manager)
Kerry Keenan (Head of Marketing and Multimedia)
Chris McKay (Finance Director)
Michael Nicholson (Company Secretary)
John Paul Taylor (Supporter Liaison Officer)
Brian Wilson (Non-Executive Director, Celtic plc and facilitator of the Forum)

Fans: A list of attendees is attached at Annex 1

1. Opening

Brian Wilson, the facilitator of the Forum, welcomed everyone and opened the meeting, introducing the table of representatives from Celtic and explaining the creation of the Forum.

John Paul Taylor (Supporter Liaison Officer) (“**JPT**”) then noted who was represented from the fans perspective. He explained that the recognised Celtic Supporters Clubs and organisations had been invited, that there was a public application process to allow anyone to apply to attend and that individuals who had given up their time on similar initiatives in the past had also been given an opportunity to apply to attend. The ‘house rules’ were explained, agenda was summarised and then the floor was turned over to the first presentation from the Club.

2. Season Tickets Presentations

Angela Forbes (Ticket Office Manager) (“**AF**”) commenced the presentations on Season Tickets, talking through the various stages of planning and outlining the timelines associated with the whole process each year before finishing with some information on the actual purchase process itself.

Chris McKay (Finance Director) (“**CMCK**”) then continued the presentation with a look at the different categories of tickets available and an analysis of the key pricing considerations. This included looking at some historical pricing information and a comparison of Celtic versus other clubs in Scotland and England together with looking at the significance to the Club of the proceeds raised from season ticket sales and the re-investment strategy in respect of the same.

Kerry Keenan (Head of Marketing and Multimedia) (“**KK**”) then rounded off the first presentation by providing some background on the forthcoming season ticket

campaign itself, including some of the key drivers behind it, the different stages of the campaign (from research through creative and delivery and finishing with feedback and review) and looking to some of the future plans and goals (including going digital).

3. Season Tickets Consultation with Fans Forum

The floor was then opened up to discussion regarding Season Tickets:

Joe Miller (Not the View) was first to speak and raised the issue of timing and movement of games, highlighting that he felt television was playing too key a role in the scheduling of matches and that some balance needed to be struck and stricter rules around notice etc. should be sought.

Adrian Filby (Commercial Director) (“AFi”) responded, acknowledging the legitimacy of the points raised. It was noted that cup games in particular could be problematic but that the Club worked hard with the relevant football authorities to try and best deal with this. AFi noted that, by way of example, from next season, the number of home league matches that could be moved at the sole request of broadcasters was being reduced from five to four.

Joe followed up on his initial point highlighting that fans attending away games in particular got a rough deal, noting that often there was not suitable public transport given the timings.

Gordon Cowan (Evergreen CSC) asked how many season ticket holders (“STH’s”) we currently had and wanted some information on the current position with regards to child’s pricing for the games against Rangers.

AF noted that we currently had around 47,000 STH’s and that we were close to the maximum capacity. It was further noted that the system of opt-in/opt-out (which covered the pricing of child’s tickets for the Rangers matches) was being looked at ahead of the new season ticket campaign being launched.

Jamie Garamanli (Celtic Affiliation) questioned whether there could be an option to pay by direct debit on a monthly basis rather than have one big outlay at the start of the season.

AF clarified that there was an existing direct debit scheme for the Auto Renewals and, separately there was again going to be the finance option through Zebra Finance for the forthcoming season.

Alison Docherty raised two points, firstly around stadium improvements noting the lack of hot water in the Lisbon Lions stand, and secondly about the process for student tickets being sold and what she thought was a flawed system given the timings of application versus enrolment etc. She wondered if having a grace period to come in with matric card/validation following the start of term time (else have season ticket blocked/turned off) would be better?

Robin Buchanan (Stadium General Manager) offered to speak directly following the meeting on the stadium concerns and noted that the next Fans’ Forum might provide a better opportunity for wider discussion given the focus on ticketing at this one. AF noted there had been issues in the past with fraudulent letters in respect of student tickets but accepted the point raised and agreed to look into this prior to the launch of the new campaign.

Lee House noted that he had encountered issues in trying to relocate seats during the season to accommodate taking his daughter and wondered whether some sort of online portal or swap shop could be implemented in the new season.

AF noted how difficult this was due to the limited availability of tickets and the issues in trying to automate this type of service online. AF further highlighted that the Ticket Office had previously introduced 'Relocations Day' in an attempt to deal more proactively with the issue and agreed to review this area again.

Martin Gilmore (Ballymena Shamrock CSC) highlighted that he thought more young Irish fans were coming to Celtic Park than in previous seasons and wondered whether there was any way of/merit in varying the message being pushed out on multimedia channels by Celtic to really appeal to them (such as with Green Brigade songs etc.).

KK noted that representatives from certain fan groups (including the Green Brigade) were aware of the plans for the forthcoming campaign and were supportive of it so hopefully it would meet with Martin's and others approval.

Gerry McDonnell (AICSC) followed up on the student point raised previously and further queried whether anything was or could be done to encourage international students.

AF noted that Celtic already did work with a number of universities such as Stirling and would continue to do so as and when asked or where otherwise deemed appropriate. Afi also added that there were already initiatives targeted at overseas students and free tickets had been given out but agreed it was a good point and we should continue this work.

Keith McGinty then raised a couple of questions that he had received online from people who couldn't attend in person: firstly, reiterating the perceived issue with match scheduling and timings and querying whether there were any strict notice periods that had to be adhered to.

Afi noted that there was generally always 6 weeks' notice of domestic matches but acknowledged the issue with fans who relied on flights to attend matches.

Secondly, it was queried whether there was any merit in creating an online platform to enable the reselling of specific match tickets (as was already prevalent in other countries such as Spain).

Afi pointed out that this type of platform was usually only used where a club regularly sold out its ground as it could result in a loss of ticketing revenue otherwise. That said, he noted that we had spoken to third parties such as Stub Hub and Viagogo in the past to explore opportunities and would again if it was the right thing to do for the club and the fans.

Paul Thomson (By the Minute Celtic) noted the disconnect between the number of season tickets sold and the number of people actually in attendance at each home game and whether there was anything that could be done to incentivise these people to attend. In particular he raised the point of what more could be done in and around the stadium to get people to Celtic Park earlier etc.

This was noted as being a very pertinent point and was agreed to be added to the agenda for the next Fans' Forum as a wider discussion point.

Chris Stewart (The Celtic Trust) asked for an update on pricing of the season tickets for the new campaign and any rationale behind this.

CMCK noted that nothing had yet been decided regarding specific pricing and that all relevant factors (such as affordability and relevant commercial aims) were being fully considered before a decision would be taken.

Jamie Sweeney (Donegal CSC) reiterated the point on there being a disconnect with the fans (particularly those not based locally) in terms of fixture scheduling, highlighting in particular the busy December midweek schedule and the earlier friendly against Inter Milan in Dublin which replaced the first scheduled home match.

Peter Ritchie (CDSA) then brought up the issue of disabled access and facilities at the stadium which is obviously now almost 20 years old.

JPT noted that around £200,000 was spent on the Jock Stein stand two seasons ago. He further noted that there were no immediate plans in the pipeline but that conversations were ongoing and a new location within the stadium is being thought about for development and further conversations with Peter and other interested parties were always welcomed.

Tommy Stephenson (Millburn & Garngad CSC), agreeing with the concerns around matches being moved for television, returned to season ticket pricing and noted that, after hearing rumours of pending increases, he did not think it was a good idea at this exact point in time, although supporters would pay more for a better product on the pitch.

CMCK agreed to take these thoughts on board in the continued internal discussions around ticket pricing before the meeting moved onto the second presentation of the evening.

4. Away Ticket Allocation Presentation

AF commenced the second presentation with an analysis of the current allocation process for both league and cup matches, which included some figures on the total tickets sold and allocations received from other clubs. AF moved onto the key challenges of the whole process, emphasising that supply and demand is the most fundamental issue.

JPT then moved on to detail some of the feedback he had received in his role as SLO following a consultation at the end of 2016. A wide range of opinions were received, from a strong desire of many for the Club to focus on loyalty and attendance history, through a feeling among others that everyone should be afforded some opportunity of building up some attendance history, up to the suggestion of a random ballot for all away tickets. JPT then looked at how some other European clubs try to deal with the issues around away ticket allocation before the floor was opened up to questions.

5. Away Tickets Consultation with Fans Forum

Frank Smith kicked off by asking for detail on what the current situation was for corporates/supporter's clubs etc., adding that he, like many, felt marginalised in respect of the Hearts and Aberdeen games.

JPT and AF noted that the system was loyalty based but that there were no set numbers as such per match given the varying number/type of allocated tickets. It was noted that there was an increase in the number of corporates/premiums seasonal purchases this season but not any increase in the proportion of tickets allocated to such groups to the detriment of other groups for any given match. AF reiterated that the Club adheres to deadlines with all those offered tickets to ensure

that any extra tickets can always be allocated to standard STH, appropriately and with sufficient notice but that the total numbers available were often problematic.

Jeanette Findlay (The Celtic Trust) then spoke, noting that the Celtic Trust had held an open meeting in October and had accepted a mandate to speak at this Forum and raise the following points on behalf of its members:

On the away ticket allocation, the main desire is for the Club to apply a fair and transparent system. People are ready to accept the limited supply issues but fairness and transparency was crucial in allocating those tickets out. General consensus was that the current system was mostly achieving these aims and was rightly based on previous attendances. Acknowledgement that everyone was squeezed for key matches, not just independent supporters. No massive need to change the current system. Anyone is free to just do what every other STH has done over previous seasons and pick up tickets where they can and gradually build their attendance history.

On the Ticket Office generally, the biggest complaint was the changing mechanisms and processes game by game, for example, only being able to pick up individual tickets rather than batches or the previous Home Cup Ticket Scheme (“HCTS”) collection issue (which was then sorted to give credit where it is due). General point was there was no real explanation for the differing rules and processes, and often not enough notice given to fans about them.

The final point raised by members was to query the extent to which changes were being made by the Club in order to try and control the behaviour of the Celtic fans at away matches. Several fans were concerned that there was almost a separate class of ‘away’ fans being created which had some negative connotations attached and the hope was that the Club were not being influenced by Police Scotland or other authorities and making decisions/changes to appease such parties.

AF responded to the points raised, acknowledging in particular that the issues with tickets for the Semi Final and Final of the League Cup were down to the increased demand for the HCTS and across the board. Some changes are necessitated by the fact that the Club is allocated further tickets after already going on sale but the Ticket Office does try to keep things as consistent as possible and will continue to strive for that. It was also acknowledged that supporter’s clubs have different issues again and the Ticket Office try to work with them as best it can, with some having adapted well and others still having issues in the distribution process for away matches which the Ticket Office will continue to assist with.

Michael Dyer (Greenock CSC) acknowledged the supply issue with away tickets and agreed that seeing any criteria openly applied was helpful, STH’s are priority but that those who regularly attend away games should also be due some recognition. Also acknowledged that tickets are passed on from the original purchaser in many cases which is obviously difficult to manage and/or recognise the correct attendee.

Martin Gilmore asked if anything can be done to get extra tickets from clubs who limit our allocation but do not then sell out their home allocation (e.g. Aberdeen) and queried how big the issue is with corporate package holders getting so many tickets.

Julie Donohoe raised the issue of the fans who are not able to build any sort of attendance record, highlighting that she had bought tickets for Inverness in the home end and a season ticket at Hamilton but obviously didn’t get any ‘points’ for that and had limited opportunity to get credit through official club channels as things currently stood.

Alison Docherty suggested that those who, like her, have had a 100% attendance when the Club were not quite so successful over the years should be rewarded more and other fans need to be reasonable in considering this. She acknowledged that there is an issue where allocation (i.e. Hearts/Aberdeen) doesn't even cover this group and suggests then that some sort of system could be instigated where that group get to go on an alternating basis each season. Also raised a new issue about being grouped together with your family/friends and some of the issues she had encountered in this regard.

Jim Hammill asked for some specific details around whether or not the club would be making changes to the procedures for allocating away tickets and a date for the same, insisting that there should be clarity on the point before the season ticket renewals as it would certainly affect his decision.

JPT answered that it is not certain anything will change and there are therefore no dates or other plans to speak of.

Jeanette McGeown highlighted that there are still some challenges for those, like herself, who have limited mobility and request specific seats at away matches (i.e. lower down or ground level seats). Noted that staff at Celtic Park and certain other stadiums have been great over the years but sometimes there are empty seats which would have been better for her etc.

Joe O'Rourke (Celtic Supporters' Association) acknowledged the 'Brendan Rodgers' effect, whereby previously you could have had 13/14 away matches that went to general sale and could always get tickets at the relevant away stadium (with supporters clubs typically taking 10 but having spares). Now it's a struggle, especially Hearts and Aberdeen, and he feels that something does perhaps need to be done to help new fans, especially the young fans who have no attendance history as such but no drastic changes are necessary in his opinion.

Chris Stewart reiterated the point that it appears to him that corporate package holders do get more tickets than previously, given his recent experience of procuring tickets for Pittodrie and that this should be looked at.

Martin Gilmore further noted that perhaps some sort of review should be undertaken in respect of supporters buses in that some probably get legacy tickets that don't always go to the same people week in week out which is then preventing others getting them directly from the club.

Gordon Cowan reiterated that loyalty should be rewarded and that corporate package holders' tickets do in practice often seem to go 'spare'. He queried whether corporate package holders have been fully consulted on whether they actually want, and/or what they end up doing with tickets. He further picked up on the transparency point around supporters' clubs and buses and whether there was any record of who actually took the tickets for each match, and whether the numbers of tickets each organisation actually received was published anywhere at all.

Anne McElhinney (Celtic Affiliation) suggested that all SPFL matches, home and away, should be counted in any calculation of attendance history to potentially penalise those who don't attend home matches. Further, she thought this concept could flow into the HCTS to ensure that people don't just buy tickets (but not attend) for the early rounds in order to guarantee semi-final and final tickets.

Lee House gave another example of the struggle of fans to build up the loyalty required to get away tickets and noted that he had been able to easily get tickets

from St Johnstone on a couple of occasions but no 'credit' would then be given for that so could the Club think of a solution for this.

Tommy Stephenson summarised that corporate package holders' access to tickets seemed to be an issue and the perception from the 'regular' fan is that they get as many tickets as they want. Whilst acknowledging the importance of this group of supporter and the money they bring into the club he wondered whether a similar loyalty scheme could be initiated within this separate group.

AF then addressed the themes raised in the discussions. She noted that the Affiliation of Registered Celtic Supporters and the Celtic Supporter's Association got an allocation of tickets but that the majority of the other CSC's and buses etc. are included in the general ticketing scheme. Acknowledging the point around home match attendance, AF thought this could be looked at but noted that its totally understandable that people could have other engagements for one or more games in the whole season so this could be difficult to manage fairly. On the issue of tickets allocated to corporate and premium package holders, AF noted that package holders do get an allocation but are often also short in terms of the numbers that they have requested and have the same issues as were explained in the meeting by other groups, in which case they are balloted. AF noted that this group do pay a premium to have this 'right to buy' however noted that the Club were equally concerned with recognising the support of standard STH's as a group too. AF acknowledged the 'grouping' of friends/family point and indicated that all feedback would be considered.

Jeanette Findlay asked what the motivation for the Club to look at potentially changing the allocation process for away tickets was, whether there were security or other concerns as has been alluded to by the floor in the meeting, perhaps stemming from official match reports.

JPT responded to say that the introduction of new unacceptable conduct rules by the football authorities was a factor along with the comments of new STH's and those struggling to get access to away match tickets generally. He highlighted that there were no plans to change anything but the Club obviously wanted to canvass opinion and see if there was anything that could be changed for the better. Specifically on the match delegates reports, JPT confirmed that there is one for every match and, whilst the majority are positive, there was a slight disparity between the home and away reports, for example on issues such as pyrotechnics at away matches.

The Facilitator summarised that the themes of fairness, transparency and loyalty being rewarded had come through and that all points would be considered before moving the meeting onto the third section.

6. Fans' Forum, the Future Presentation

Michael Nicholson (Company Secretary) ("MN") gave the final presentation of the evening touching on the background to the creation of the Fans' Forum including previous engagement with clubs and associations and productive meetings, the resolution which proposed the fans forum and which was passed at the 2016 Celtic plc AGM, the supporting statement to the resolution and key administrative points before touching on some of the feedback received so far (e.g. concern by some about the size and formation and the clear message from many that the full spectrum of fans should be represented). MN invited consultation on what principles should be taken in to account for the effective operation of the Forum and

requested any further feedback in writing following the meeting (included at Annex 2 are the further written comments received by the Club from attendees following the meeting).

7. Fans' Forum Consultation

The Facilitator noted that the diversity of attendees seemed to him to be good and the range of opinions given and issues raised certainly backed this up.

Lee House asked what the next steps were and whether minutes would be circulated.

The Facilitator confirmed minutes would be circulated and that the next meeting would be scheduled before the end of the current football season picking up on some of the non-ticket related matters raised earlier in the evening.

Michael Dyer noted that he thought the number of attendees was good but that he wasn't sure how many fans were actually aware of the Forum taking place. He also noted that the majority of attendees were 'older' and that perhaps required some thought.

David Barrett extended his thanks for the invitation to attend the Fans' Forum as he sometimes felt alienated from the Club despite being a STH for 22/23 years. Encouraged the Club to repeat the Forum and consider on a case by case basis whether a more focused group may be required on any particular issue.

The Facilitator added that he hoped those present would 'spread the word' of the meeting and the content to other supporters and encourage future engagement.

Ronnie Reagan (CDSA) echoed his thanks to the Club for establishing the Forum, noting he believed it to be a 'Club for All'.

Jim Docherty agreed that the principles behind the meeting were great and encouraged the Club to disseminate information about it so that as many people as possible could contribute and air their views going forward to help the Club to grow and develop as all supporters wanted.

Frank McGuire added his positive thoughts on the meeting and specifically queried whether the invitations would be rotated or the attendees would be the same each time? He also queried whether a future meeting could discuss the new parking arrangements around Celtic Park.

JPT confirmed that parking would be on the agenda for the next Fans' Forum when the Club would hopefully have had more discussions with the Council on the matter. The Facilitator then confirmed that the club would seek to strike a balance between consistency in attendees and allowing everyone a voice at relevant meetings.

Jeanette Findlay reminded the Forum that the Celtic Trust had put forward the resolution to create the Fans Forum and, whilst the evening had been very interesting, informative and enjoyable it didn't match the format that they had suggested at the AGM. Noting a previous initiative of the Club to have 'Open Meetings' all around Scotland, she queried whether that type of approach would be taken again, but noted that if more detailed discussion was required on a particular matter then the format of the meeting this evening was not a great forum for that and that a smaller group, perhaps just of supporters' clubs etc. would be more helpful, maybe in conjunction with wider meetings. This was still the view of the Celtic Trust and a tighter forum would still be sought.

Joe O'Rourke echoed the sentiments that the evening was enjoyable and useful. He commended Brian Wilson for his running of the meeting and thanked the Club for

giving any and all fans another formal forum to raise issues, noting that Supporters Organisations had regular access to the club to discuss matters. He also stated that he liked the approach of having a set agenda which wasn't deviated from as it helped with keeping the meeting focussed.

The Facilitator reiterated Celtic's desire to strike an appropriate balance in its organisation of the Fans' Forums between an effective format and consulting with a wide range of fans.

Kevin Paterson (Green Brigade) thanked the wider group for their recent support in raising funds for a stadium display and stated that a donation was being made to an Alzheimer's charity as a result of the target being exceeded.

The Facilitator thanked all attendees and concluded the meeting.

Annex 1: Fans confirmed as being in attendance

Joe Miller
Simon Mullen
Stephen Mullen
Tommy Stephenson
David Barret
Brian Gilmour
Paul Thomson
Jim Hammil
Gordon Cowan
Frank Smith
Michael Dyer
Lee House
Gordon Morrison
Michael Glancy
Sarah Jane Conway
Jeanette McGeown
Julia Donohoe
Frank McGuire
Jamie Metcalfe
Keith McGinty
Alex Gallagher
John Flannigan
Brenden Darcey
Mary Cannon
John McGinn
Danny Boyle
Joe Mackin
Alison Docherty
Joe O'Rourke
John Andrews
Anne McElhinney
Neville Carolan
Gerry McDonnell
Kevin Mackin
Joe Mackin
Ronnie Reagan
Chris Stewart
Jeanette Findlay
Kevin Paterson
Tony Connor
Martin Gilmore
Jamie Sweeney
Jim Lewis
Peter Ritchie

* Note that no sign in sheet was taken on the night therefore apologies if anyone who was in attendance has been missed off the list above.

Annex 2: Fans post meeting feedback regarding the Forum

Just wanted to thank you and your colleagues for the well run and informative meeting last night. It was good to be able to hear the Club's point of view on various matters and to get an explanation of the difficulties encountered in running a successful Club.

I personally believe that there should be representative from all groups, independent fans included. I think that is the fairest way to ensure that there is representation from all areas of the support and not just the main affiliated bodies or those on the Celtic Trust. I know the format will naturally evolve through time but hopefully like last night, all areas are represented.

Overall an enjoyable and informative night! Massive thanks to you for all the excellent work you continue to do.

I thought last night's Forum was very encouraging and helpful to all in attendance. Could you please put me on the list to attend all future Fan Forum events. Thank you HAIL HAIL.

Think getting "independents" and guys like myself who help run buses but aren't in association or affiliation was very important. Like Joe said the various supporter groups have access to the club fairly regularly but these other categories do not have such access.

I would just like to thank everyone for the effort that made last night's forum very enjoyable & informative. I look forward to hopefully being involved in some more in the future.

as the guy at the front (Joe I think his name was), said the bigger groups have more opportunity to meet with the management at Celtic Park on a more regular basis so I think you should continue to include independents as well as groups.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to attend the first meeting of the Celtic Fan Forum, it was enjoyable and informative. I felt it was a worthwhile and positive exercise with a wide array of supporters represented. I would imagine that the purpose of the forum was to provide information and open up discussions with the support. Obviously not all issues discussed can be resolved in the space of a two hour meeting, therefore it informs areas for discussion at future meetings with those most affected.

The forum gives all fans a chance to engage with the senior management board and pose some questions that some of the organised groups have not thought of. Its very important that all fans have a chance to be heard and have some interaction with the club.

Thought the forum worked better than I anticipated it gave fans an input that don't normally get the opportunity