



21st February 2018

Open letter to West Ham Groups United

Dear Representatives of West Ham Groups United,

First and foremost, I would like to sincerely thank you all for attending the meeting on Monday.

I want to re-state that I chaired the meeting with the full authority of the Club's Board. This followed a three-and-a-half-hour meeting David Sullivan had with the lead representatives co-ordinating these groups last week.

I believe Monday's meeting was highly constructive and I thoroughly appreciate your honesty. No one can question your passion for the Club and your desire only to see us move forward positively, and I hope no one can question our desire to build a Club you can truly be proud of.

You all spoke from the heart, your representations were thorough, and the efforts to ensure the meeting followed a constructive agenda were appreciated. We are also aware that some supporters travelled over 1,000 miles to attend, which just further reinforces what we have always known; that West Ham supporters have real passion for their club.

I hope that, having met face to face, you can see how much we share the desire to move forward together and make the improvements you want to see. Thank you all for recognising that we are stronger together. I hope that, by dealing with the issues that have frustrated you, we can form a stronger partnership going forward for the good of West Ham United.

Some of you raised some harsh criticisms about the Club's external communications. I want to acknowledge on the record that these have been duly noted and will be shared with the full Board.

One thing made clear is that you want to see the Board acknowledge that not everything has been perfect and that we need to work with you to improve your matchday experience and I assure you, you have our full commitment to doing just that.

Therefore, in line with my commitment to you, please see below our proposals for your consideration in response to the main points of action you were seeking.

AGREED ACTIONS

HISTORY AND HERITAGE TO BE BETTER REFLECTED

You were clear that the groups that you represent would like to see our rich heritage better reflected throughout the Club and at London Stadium in order to ensure our move in 2016 does not dilute the sense of

belonging that the West Ham community feels and its connection with the Club. As we outlined at the meeting, the Club does always strive to show nothing but the utmost respect for our history, which we are ALL proud of.

In response to your constructive requests for action we commit to:

- 1 Ensuring there is a permanent showcase celebrating all 16 unique Club crests, their significance in terms of the Club's history and the key historic moments they marked. We commit to recognising each of them and the glorious eras they symbolise in a permanent and meaningful way.
- 2 We agree the Club's heroes, most notably Moore, Hurst, Peters, Brooking, Bonds and our most recent home-grown hero Mark Noble, are honoured inside the ground with permanent tributes to their glittering careers and commitment to the Club. We note that Billy Bonds in particular, as our record appearance holder, requires special recognition in order to honour his unrivalled service to West Ham United.
- 3 As suggested at the meeting, we commit to displaying flags illustrating the 16 core crests of our history in advance of and at half time at every fixture at London Stadium for the foreseeable future – this was organised immediately following the meeting and will be in place ahead of our next Premier League fixture v Burnley on March 10.
- 4 Again, as requested, we commit to displaying each of these crests in every matchday programme, with features on their origin and key role in our history.
- 5 We commit also to displaying and recognising our heritage on the Club's digital screen.

We agree that making the approach to the Stadium feel more like an intrinsic part of the West Ham United matchday experience, as you suggested, is central to improving the overall experience for all, and we therefore propose the following:

- 1 Plans were submitted and approved to rename the primary walkway to London Stadium 'The West Ham Way' and have a visual celebration of our illustrious 122-year history. We would like to consult directly with you on exactly what should be displayed here and get it installed
- 2 We will pursue the installation of Fan Zones and have already agreed with our partner Heineken to install a new free standing 40ft long container bar on the Stadium Island, with staging on the roof that will allow for supporter engagement pre and post-match, and begin to create the type of social hubs you are keen to see bring the Stadium Island to life. West Ham legends conducting post-match analysis, music and other entertainment options all to be discussed with your groups.
- 3 We commit to ensuring all wayfinding signage at the Park and on key points of entry, totem poles, car parks and stations, make it clear that you are approaching the home of West Ham United.
- 4 We agree that accommodating the specialised food and sweet vendors and programme stalls - which are synonymous with the Club - at appropriate locations would hugely benefit the matchday experience for all of us and we therefore commit to appealing to E20 and the London Borough of Newham to allow this to happen.

- 5 We commit to hiring areas for key fixtures that celebrate significant anniversaries, milestones and events in our history to add to the overall sense of belonging, community and to enable supporters to come together to celebrate their shared love of West Ham United.

In addition, a number of initiatives to honour our history have already been confirmed for the remainder of the current season.

- 1 In April, we will be honouring legendary defender Ken Brown Snr at the West Ham United Player Awards 2018. Brown will become the sixth Hammer to receive our prestigious Lifetime Achievement award, after his former team-mates Moore, Sir Geoff Hurst and Martin Peters, Sir Trevor Brooking and Billy Bonds.
- 2 The evening will also pay tribute to the 1957/58 Second Division Championship-winning team, exactly 60 years after their promotion success fired West Ham United into the big-time and provided the springboard for the success that followed in the mid-60s.
- 3 This follows the one-minute applause which was held before kick-off at the Watford match in memory of a key member of that famous team, striker Vic Keeble, who sadly died last month at the age 87.

We commit to finding a location for a permanent museum style display that enables the Club to showcase its incredible collection of memorabilia currently in storage.

Since moving from the Boleyn Ground, the vast majority of West Ham United's extensive collection of memorabilia, honours and historical artefacts have been held in highly secure storage, while the Club continues to explore ways in which we can display some of the items at London Stadium. With more than 1,000 items in our possession it has not been possible to display these items, which range from first edition Club handbooks dating back to 1901 through to the three World Cup winners medals won by Bobby Moore, Geoff Hurst and Martin Peters in 1966, thus far. However, we will commit to identifying a location/s— either inside London Stadium or in the surrounding areas – where some of our most prestigious and impressive memorabilia can be showcased in the public domain.

This includes the entire Bobby Moore collection – containing World Cup 1966 honours, the shirt he wore on his West Ham United debut in 1958, his FA Cup and European Cup Winners' Cup winning medals, and various England caps and awards from his illustrious career – which were purchased by the Club in 2000. Honours collected by Hurst and Peters are also in the Club's possession, along with items such as runners-up medals from the famous 1923 FA Cup final – the first at Wembley.

It is our intention that as many of these extremely important reminders from our 122-year history as possible can soon be displayed for Hammers fans of all ages to cherish and enjoy.

In the interim, while a permanent location is sought, we will look to hold other exhibitions again in full consultation with representatives from your groups, in a similar vein to the Bobby Moore exhibition which launches on Saturday February 24, to enable as many supporters as possible young and old to view the items and share in the Club's history.

We agree to a full and thorough fan consultation over the summer ahead of our 125th anniversary in 2020, led by your groups, along with the Supporter Advisory Board, to agree how best we commemorate our glorious history from our inception, through our 112 memorable years at the Boleyn, to the present day at the Stadium.

- 1 As detailed at the meeting, just as we did back in 2013 at the Boleyn Ground on the 20th anniversary of the late, great Bobby Moore's passing, the Club is marking the 25th anniversary by taking the opportunity to celebrate the life and sporting achievements of our greatest ever player.
- 2 You will note this began at the very start of the year, when our principal sponsor signage was removed from the mid-tier to make way for our commemorative acknowledgment of this anniversary at either side of the Club's list of honours.
- 3 On Saturday 24 February, to mark the 25th anniversary of Bobby's tragic passing, we will be showcasing memorabilia from his trophy-laden career and paying tribute to the great man around the stadium with a series of commemorative designs. We will also be marking the anniversary at our away fixture at Liverpool.
- 4 Our Premier League match against Burnley at London Stadium on March 10 will be dedicated to his memory, with members of the family and of the 1964 FA Cup and 1965 European Cup Winners' Cup winning teams joining us at London Stadium to mark the occasion.

THE CLUB CREST

In respect of the West Ham United crest as discussed at the meeting, the supporter consultation took place in the summer of 2014. The West Ham United crest was the 16th iteration of the West Ham United crest with the most recent prior to that being 1999.

Initial consultations took place with the SAB and adoption of the crest followed two independent supporters' polls conducted by SMG YouGov. Supporters over 18 with a ticket purchase history had the opportunity to submit their views and vote. In-person consultation sessions also took place at the Boleyn Ground in June offering all fans with a ticket purchase history the opportunity to discuss their ideas with staff before providing written feedback.

The decision to respectfully retire the castle was the heart of the discussion. It was felt that one element of the badge needed to represent the momentous move to the Club's new home and its role at the heart of the capital to add to all the other aspects which were firmly steeped in tradition.

The addition of London came about as a combination of the Club's rich heritage from the Ironworks, its wartime and European history as well as a representing signal of the Club's long term global ambition as it moved to London's iconic Olympic Stadium.

Of the two supporter polls, SMG You Gov reported that 77% were supportive of evolving the Club's crest. The Club therefore had a mandate for change. We committed to go with a majority vote and the current crest was then voted for alongside the 1999 crest with a majority of 56% of fans voting for the new crest.

At the time, YouGov's Managing Director Frank Saez commented: 'This represents a robust and credible sample of the total supporter base. The results provided to West Ham clearly state the new crest is supported by the majority of fans. This concludes one of the most thorough supporter consultations processes ever conducted by a Premier League Club with regards to a new crest.'

While we fully respect the views represented by the groups, particularly in relation to the addition of London to the badge, we hope you acknowledge the Club's transparency around the process, the fact that this was the

first formal supporter consultation surrounding a crest change in the Club's history and the fact that it was trailblazing in terms of Premier League Clubs consulting their supporters regarding crest changes at that time. We in turn accept the point made in the meeting that the change took some time to sink in and supporters are now reflecting on that.

We therefore propose the below:

- 1 We commit to recognise the former 1999 crest as well as others throughout our history, both on a permanent basis at the Stadium, within the matchday programme and on a matchday as detailed above.
- 2 We commit to consult supporters over the summer once again ahead of the 125th anniversary celebrations to devise a commemorative crest that reflects all aspects of the rich history of the Club that can be used throughout that season in a similar fashion to the Farewell Boleyn logo in the 2015-16 season.
- 3 We will then consult supporters regarding a potential permanent evolution of the badge ahead of the 125th anniversary

WEST HAM UNITED'S PRIORITY AT LONDON STADIUM

As explained at the meeting, 2017 was an exceptional year in which the IAAF World Athletics Championships took place as a once-in-a-generation event. This will be the only time our home fixtures are impacted upon as a result of other Stadium events. Commitment to this event was required for anyone wishing to bid to move to the Stadium in 2013.

During every other summer, the overriding priority principle, which is a key cornerstone of our agreement with E20, means that West Ham United fixtures will take priority over all other events.

RETRACTABLE SEATING

At the meeting the fundamental point you raised around the way the Stadium was presented to you back in 2013 when we began consultation around the move centered on the retractable seating.

From the Club's very first discussions regarding a potential move we had always stipulated that we would not move home unless the seats were brought closer to the pitch – indeed as close as they possibly could be while still providing cover.

The conversion had to work with the existing structure and therefore, whilst this presented a challenge, all the options were being meticulously explored from the word go in extensive technical meetings.

In 2013 London Legacy Development Corporation provided us with the video that we shared with you in good faith, regarding the technical information about how the seating solution would work.

From a West Ham point of view, however, our primary focus was only in relation to the distance of the seats from the pitch and our contract (which is a matter of public record) states that clearly.

Our requirement was that the seats move as close to the pitch as possible and were as permanent as possible during the football season while still being covered by the acoustic roof. We believe this has been delivered.

We accept that as the transformation plans evolved this could have been more effectively clarified and for that we apologise.

We gave you only the information that was given to us and we did so on the basis that LLDC had provided it to us and it was correct.

We do, however believe that we delivered against our commitment of bringing the seats as close to the pitch as possible under the roof whilst maintaining sightlines. For clarity, the retractable element would not bring seats closer to the pitch; it merely speeds up the transition between modes to aid the multi-purpose use of the Stadium.

Our current understanding is that a long-term retractable solution would cost tens of millions and require a long period (up to a year) during which we would have to relocate from the Stadium. The Board would of course consider this if this change stood to offer more direct benefits for our supporters but our understanding is that benefits would be minimal and you are likely to favour investments of this level to go directly to the playing squad.

However we fully note your concerns and therefore commit to the following

1. As requested we will commence work looking into bringing seats closer to the pitch that do not require cover by the roof
2. We will commence a study of all the options available to us which focuses on moving the seats behind the goal closer to the pitch
3. We will work with E20 to determine all possible solutions around seating

TICKET PRICES

As per the meeting we have confirmed that all season ticket prices are frozen for everyone, including Founders who also had their prices frozen last season. The only caveat to this is for Band 5 season ticket holders who pay £289 a season, and who are able to maintain a price freeze subject to renewing on the original terms offered to band 5 season ticket holders in the 2016/17 season i.e. a two year term. They will have an option to renew for one year only but this will be subject to a small price increase of £31 making the final price for a one year ticket £320. I also commit to looking into the possibility of adding concession prices for category A fixtures in band 3-5, but in order to reward loyalty our initial thinking is that this might only be available to Claret members.

IMPROVING THE MATCHDAY EXPERIENCE

At the meeting you maintained that the primary issues with regard to supporters' matchday experiences were around stewarding. You confirmed at the meeting that matters had improved but there were still some issues to be addressed. I can therefore confirm the following:

- The ground has upwards of 1,000 stewards per PL game whose roles are divided between the bridges, turnstiles, stewarding inner bowl and on ingress and egress routes.
- We have progressed from using only one stewarding provider (OCS) to four to increase competition, assist with performance monitoring and which provides us with a broader scope to attract better quality stewards to London Stadium.

- Of the four quadrant managers, two are ex-Boleyn stewards and both have been promoted to senior positions.
- A new Head of Safety and Security is in post, Dave Sadler.
- Additional new Deputy Safety Officer, Andrew Bracken.
- We have previously written to all former Boleyn stewards to ask if they would like to return and this offer remains very much open - we would welcome them back.
- The Club have directly employed 40 SLOs to provide directional assistance and take care of any supporter feedback, enquiries or complaints on matchday and to work with stewards and to observe and report back to the Club.
- Two former Boleyn stewards are SLOs and we will be happy to speak to any others who would like to apply for a role.
- Boleyn Stewards were actively encouraged to make the move to the Stadium on several occasions.
- West Ham United and LS185 offered to pay for the necessary NVQ training.
- Those that joined us were re-deployed to key areas.
- The Club has worked collaboratively with LS185 on a number of initiatives to educate Stewards on the rich history and heritage of West Ham United and the importance of serving our fanbase and keeping them safe on a matchday including introducing a West Ham United section in the steward briefing notes and verbal briefing.
- Ben Illingworth, Head of Matchday Operations for West Ham United, attends the senior manager and supervisor briefings to provide updates and discusses the importance of their role at West Ham United.
- Yours and your fellow supporters' experience on a matchday is of paramount importance to us. In the event supporters wish to report an incident or experience relating to stewarding we do want to hear directly – if possible straight away. SLOs are on hand on the day or you can email supporterservices@westhamunited.co.uk. The majority of supporters report that this service is efficient. We can only act on the information we have but we assure you that if there is inadequate service, we will work with LS185 and are very much able to ensure that these individuals do not return.

In respect of the searching process, in the wake of recent acts of terrorism in the UK, changes have been seen at football clubs and major event venues across the country. I assure you, ours is a dynamic operation, and we are always striving to ensure the safety and security of all visitors to West Ham United's Stadium.

In respect of your request to speed up service and queue times at half time, one initiative that has aided this was the conversion of all female toilets on the outer ring of the concourse to male in order to enable a more appropriate ratio of male/female toilets.

I am also able to confirm the following:

- Half time queue times has reduced to average 5 minutes 40 seconds*
- Service is delivered in 1 minute 15 seconds*
- Overall catering results have gone up from 12th to 7th*
- Shelving (for drinks etc) is now in place throughout the concourses at the Stadium

(*statistics above are as reported by Visit Football. The Premier League's independent matchday experience assessor)

Accessible Shuttle Bus Service

- West Ham United offer this fully funded service entirely free of charge.

- 8 buses arrive on ingress, 18 are provided on egress
- A ticketed queuing system has been created to enable fans to wait in the WHU Coffee Shop in poorer weather
- We recently introduced a new Shuttle Bus stop at Stratford International station

As confirmed at our meeting and witnessed in person by your representatives, the gates cannot open until road closures are lifted by the Safety Officer in conjunction with the police. This is standard procedure at all Premier League stadiums and is for supporters' safety. As discussed in the meeting, 50,000 fans are leaving on foot using the surrounding roads and we cannot open to vehicular traffic until congestion on the roads eases. This is clarified in our Access Statement so that all fans using the service are aware.

Westfield access

After much hard work behind the scenes, we can confirm that the gates at The Cow and Jamie's Passage have been kept open at every match this season. These gates are managed by Westfield and shows a willingness to improve the journey to the stadium for our fans. Access through the gates is managed dynamically and Westfield will of course need to close these on ingress should the need arise for health and safety reasons.

Gates are closed post-match for emergency access and for health and safety reasons. Again, as confirmed at the meeting, there are 50,000 people leaving the stadium at once and therefore the route through the centre post-match is not possible. Any evacuation of the centre would present a huge health and safety risk. We have successfully trialled access for accessibility supporters through Westfield post-match since the Leicester City match. The trial is working really well and has now moved to Jamie's Passage.

In respect of supporters wearing other team colours, this is a football-wide issue. It has always been the Club's policy to not allow access to supporters wearing non-West Ham colours to the Stadium.

In addition to the above following the meeting the Club commits to the following:

1. We commit not to allow supporters in the Stadium if they are wearing the colours of another Club team. If you see this happening, please help the Club and report this via our text reporting service which is anonymous and enables the Club to locate this on CCTV. The number is here 07860404069 and is promoted on big screen, in matchday programme and on the online matchday guide. Please help us and be our eyes and ears.
2. We commit to working with supporters and representatives of your groups to establish a calendar of events that celebrate our rich history on themed matchdays and in doing so contributing to the ambience and overall matchday experience in a way which is appropriate to West Ham United.
3. West Ham United have paid London Living Wage to all directly employed stewards since 2015. We currently pay London Living Wage to all staff at the Club both full and part time. Following our extensive lobbying, our landlord and its operator have now committed to pay all London Stadium staff, including matchday stewards at West Ham United's fixtures, the London Living Wage. We commit to writing once more to all Boleyn stewards to inform them of this extremely positive update and to update them on all of the positive developments listed above in an attempt to attract them back to the Club.
4. We commit to having a former Boleyn steward as part of the senior supervisory team on all four quadrants by the end of the season (currently 2/4).

Memorial Garden

The Club has, as acknowledged at the meeting, been overseeing the maintenance of the memorial garden. We commit to the following:

1. In partnership with Barratt London, to consult the families of those supporters who are at rest and remembered in the Memorial Garden and agree to a long-term landscaping solution funded by the Club, respectful of the supporters remembered, that honours them appropriately and that can be accessed and visited easily by friends and relatives.
2. We commit to allowing a representative on behalf of the groups to attend these meetings with us.

We believe that we have answered and proposed solutions to every issue that you raised at the meeting and that you asked us to formally respond to.

You confirmed to us in both meetings that your proposed march was not 'anti-Board' but a call for the Board to listen and act upon the matters that were of upmost importance to our supporters. We believe that every point you have asked us to address has been addressed here we therefore anticipate a more constructive dialogue going forward.

I hope our suggestions are to your satisfaction, but I am more than happy to discuss them directly.

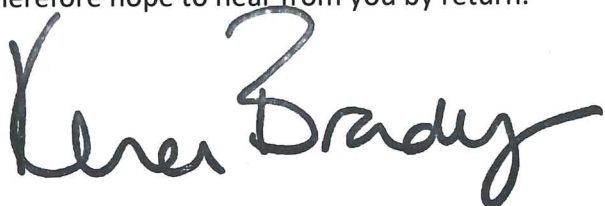
It is imperative there is no miscommunication and we can agree an agenda that we can work on delivering constructively together.

My Chairmen have also asked me to reaffirm their commitment to the restructuring of our recruitment policy, as David Sullivan outlined in his message to our supporters on the Club's official site recently.

They have also requested that I reiterate their full and focused commitment to ensuring you have a better matchday experience moving forward.

As we have said on many occasions, we are only custodians of the Club on behalf of you, our supporters. We have listened and we want to work with you to rebuild the sense of belonging and unity that we all stated was our primary goal at the meeting yesterday.

I therefore hope to hear from you by return.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Baroness Brady". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Baroness Brady CBE
Vice-Chair, on behalf of the West Ham United Board