

## Preston North End And Preston Supporters Collective



### Minutes of scheduled meeting held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 6pm in the Boardroom at Deepdale

**Attendees:** Peter Ridsdale, Ben Rhodes, Luke Gallagher (PNE), Ben Astley, John Billington, Kim Ramshead and Charlie Winyard (PSC).

**Apologies:** Jonathan Counce (PNE).

#### 1. Ticketing

BA said that feedback on season card prices had been well received. He acknowledged the club had changed its matchday prices and PR confirmed this was to try and further maximise revenue opportunities, particularly when there was a big away following. BA said that all season card holders needed to be communicated with. LG explained that a full marketing plan was in place, including a letter that had gone out on 15<sup>th</sup> May to those not yet renewed, plus an email campaign and paid for advertising. BA asked about the use of the Kop in 2023/24; PR explaining that it had become a very difficult area to manage with problems with anti-social behaviour, drug use and other problems caused by a large section of young fans and that the costs of managing this were significant and that its usage would have to be assessed on a match-by-match basis.

#### 2. Merchandising Update

BR explained that the Castore contract begins on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023, with Nike/JustSport due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> May, so there would be a month where there was no shop online or in person. He also said that the aim was to open early with Castore, on or around 26<sup>th</sup> June with the new home kit on sale and this should be released in the coming weeks. PR said that other Castore partner clubs had given them a very positive appraisal and that the club were looking forward to working with them.

#### 3. Catering Update

PR said that Heathcotes had been informed that their contract would not be extended. He went on to explain that after a thorough process, Sodexo would be announced as the new catering partner, who would take over all aspects of matchday and non-matchday catering on 1<sup>st</sup> July. He said that Sodexo were keen to arrange a meeting in the near future to sit down with supporters to discuss offerings, both for the concourses and in hospitality areas. PR explained that the deal involved significant annual investment in facilities and that other clubs who were already working with Sodexo had given them very positive references.

#### 4. Pre-Season Tour Update

BR told the meeting that the organisation of a fixture during the tour was progressing, with a couple of possible options and that the date and opponent would be confirmed when stadium and opposition availability was finalised by the agent involved.

## **5. Fanzone Feedback And Suggestions**

BA said that PSC had received very positive feedback on The Gentry Bar and had given their own comments on the day to Jonathan Counce and Geraldine Traynor (the designer) on the day of the launch. PSC had provided a separate email of feedback, which was acknowledged. PR confirmed that the club were speaking with Preston City Council about further licencing opportunities outside the bar and that Sodexo were keen to see it open other than on a matchday. BA said that PSC would work with the club to try and create something that allowed everyone a voice.

## **6. NFM Space Update**

JB asked if there was any update on the possibility of the club gaining any more of the space back. PR said that at the present time there was very little dialogue as the current executive of the NFM were engaged in other legal matters.

## **7. Ground Repair Updates**

BA asked about plans for a number of areas of the stadium. PR said that work would hopefully begin soon on a brand new roof for the Alan Kelly Town End, with the club's principal partner PAR Group undertaking the work; he explained that the biggest section of a large cost was the scaffolding. He continued by saying that usual annual works on the pitches at all three venues was well underway and that normal annual maintenance programmes, including painting, continued. Floodlights were also discussed, with PR saying, that subject to cost of the works, the club were looking to improve the lighting and all options would be considered.

## **8. Future Fan Engagement Proposals**

PSC had provided the club - at the club's request - some ideas for further enhancing fan engagement. These included online webinar sessions for supporters outside the area, a fan advisory committee and also a summer forum and inviting Radio Lancashire to facilitate it, so that supporters could listen to it live. PR confirmed that the club are looking at all the possibilities and that those ideas would be further explored over the summer months.

## **9. EFL TV Deal – Impact On Club And Fans**

PR explained that the new deal would not mean a significantly increased number of displaced games, but would actually just see all midweek games (currently on the red button), the first and last day of the season and bank holidays all be classed as live games on the new Sky Plus facility that would replace iFollow in the UK. He also explained that all TV picks until the FA Cup third round date would be announced before the first ball is kicked and that after that they would be on a five-week rolling programme until late March. He said this would begin in 2024/25.

## **10. AOB**

10.1 Academy Development – PR said that club were discussing options for a dome with Preston City Council, which would get them closer to meeting Category Two requirements.

10.2 Safe Standing – PR said this was not currently on the first phase of spending, but it had not been dismissed as an option in the future.

- 10.3 Memorial – BR explained that the PNECET had just been successful with a Heritage Lottery bid and were looking at creating a new heritage timeline of the club at the stadium.
- 10.4 Mirrors – BA said that a member of PSC had asked about mirrors in the ladies toilets; PR confirmed he would speak to the maintenance team about this.
- 10.5 Café – JB asked about a café/hub at Deepdale for people to meet during the day. PR said that Sodexo were keen for The Gentry Bar to be open during different hours and that those discussions would develop when the relationship began.
- 10.6 Retained List – PR confirmed this had to be submitted to the EFL by the third Saturday in May and that it would be announced as per those regulations.
- 10.7 Social Media – CW was complimentary about the club's use of social media during recent weeks and suggested engaging video content with fans during the pre-season tour.

#### **11. Date And Time Of Next Meeting**

The next meeting date is yet to be scheduled.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.