

CHELSEA FOOTBALL CLUB

SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (SAG) MEETING PART 1

Wednesday, 21 April 2021 – 1PM

Minutes

ONLINE VIRTUAL MEETING – MS TEAMS

Present:

LBHF

Stephen Hollingworth (Chair)	SH
Stefan Bystrzanowski, Senior Building Control	SB
Dermot Casey, Senior Building Control	DC
Lee Currie, Highways	LC
Sharon Egdell, Infection Control Advisor	SE
Lesley Gates, Waste Management	LG
Bathsheba Mall (minutes)	BM
Matthew Ramsey, Safer Neighbourhood and Registration Services	MR
Valerie Simpson, Strategic Lead Env` Health and Regulatory Services	VS
Graham Souster, Environmental Health	GS
Keith Stevenson, Transport and Highways	KS
Emma Stuart, Community and Culture	ES
Christiaan Uys, Transport and Highways	CU
Lisa White, Licensing	LW

CFC

Chris Baker, Head of Safety	CB
Jamie Gray, Head of Facilities	JG
Gareth Jones, Security and Match Day Business Partner	GJ
Paul Kingsmore, Director of Operations	PK
Keith Overstall, Head of Security	KO
Wills Payne, Matchday Safety Officer	WP

Fulham Broadway Shopping Centre

Mark Adedeji	MA
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MPS

Chief Inspector Lysander Strong	LS
Paul Wright, Dedicated Football Officer	PW

SGSA (Sports Grounds Safety Authority)

Geoff Galilee, Regional Inspector	GG
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RBKC

Michael Allen, Network Management Transport and Technical Services	MA
Laura McGahon, Licensing	LM

Transport for London (TfL)

Brenda Akot	AK
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NHS

Sophie Walmsley, NHS England London Ambulance Service	SW
Mark Shute	MS
St John's Ambulance Katherine Wainwright	KW
London Fire Brigade (LFB) Brett Loft	BL
NHS Michaela Davis	MD
Catherine Sands, Emergency Planner, Royal Brompton Hospital	CS

1. **Welcome from the Chairman**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting and went through the housekeeping tasks.
- 1.2 Virtual meeting etiquette and protocols were outlined, and the Chair recommended that participants used the hand up facility when needed.
- 1.3 Since the January SAG there had been separate, closed Special SAG meetings to discuss matches and more recently the return of supporters to sports grounds.

2. **Purpose of the meeting / apologies**

Apologies were received from the following:

- Alan Brown
- Lee Sparks
- Ahmad Rafique
- Adrian Overton
- Ian Hawthorn (Christiaan Uys)

SH (Chair) outlined the roadmap that allowed 10,000 attendees, that represented about 25% of overall spectators at a match on 17th May 2021.

3. **Update from the Sports Ground Safety Authority**

- 3.1 GG provided feedback regarding the review of plans to date for matches arranged from 17th May onwards, but these were subject to capacity. This and the Wembley event that had been held were test events, with restrictions for social interaction and compliance with Covid-19 health regulations. Attendees would also be required to have a lateral flow test and a negative result in order to attend, along with valid tickets.
- 3.2 It was noted that the Wembley event had not reflect the behaviour of a typical football crowd. In addition to the reduced capacity, free tickets had been distributed to local residents and NHS staff for the Wembley event with

compliance required such as mask wearing. There had also been lots of pre-match communications regarding hygiene and distancing, with management monitoring half time queues. The event had received special, limited dispensation to permit drinking on the concourse. It was important that trained staff who were familiar with the venue were in place to work with crowds and to enforce compliance with Covid-19 regulations. The event had only 4000 but it was purposeful in that it allowed staff the opportunity to gain match day experience. NL reported that the Brent Director of Public Health had directed ticket holders to lateral flow test sites in the borough.

4. Update from CFC: Return of Stamford Bridge / management arrangements

Learnings from December 2020 – Leeds United & FC Krasnodar Matches

4.1 CB reported that learnings from events in December 2020 had been taken forward. Hospitality guests had been given a three hour window for arrival pre-match, but most had arrived within the first hour, with staggered variations in entry times for both the west and lower south stand. Most people arrived within the last 40 minutes. The 4000 capping limit allowed for smooth entry through the turnstiles, with time to check phones and certification. Print at home tickets were also issued, which helped avoid phone related tech issues. Approximately two people were turned away.

Risk assessment / Covid-19 secure / safety operations plan update

4.2 The Club confirmed that the matches had been arranged in compliance with Covid-19 regulations. A Covid-19 secure risk assessment had been undertaken and all operational documents were live and fluid. Stage 5 operational plans had not been updated and once finalised, following updated government and premier league guidance, would be populated.

Ticketing / communications / entry control

4.4 Ticketing control was the same as provided in December 2020. Marquees had been established and the number of lanes had been extended, especially at Stamford gate together with sanitising stages but there were no temperature checks as they had received advice that this was not necessary. It would also cause logistical difficulties to implement.

Social distancing / circulation / seating bowl

4.5 There had been strong communication and messaging (hands, face, space) ahead of the match and a welcome back video for supporters to view. The video would be updated as required and streamed on all media platforms and the Chair commended the content and production of the video.

Hospitality, toilets, catering retails concessions, etc

4.6 In terms of hospitality, toilets, concession and retail units, supporters needed to be seated in general areas, however clarification was sought on the sale of food and alcohol servicing on the concourse when it was implied that there was a requirement to be seated in order to consume food and beverages. GG clarified that there was a requirement to be seated and that you could not have alcohol in view of the pitch, so the response was no, this was not permitted. The roadmap guidance was expanded to include food. It could be consumed standing but so long as this was not in the vicinity to the food

outlet. GG speculated that supporters would not be permitted to eat internally on the concourse, but food could be taken back to the seating areas.

Medical Plan

- 4.7 The medical plan was as per normal. Medical suppliers will provide the usual number of staff (St Johns Ambulance and London Ambulance Service). It was recognised that pressure on medical services remained challenging and that this support might need to be renegotiated, allow there were much lower capacity to deal with. The aim however was to operate as per a full stadium.

Egress management

- 4.8 Egress management – there was big screen entertainment in place but not available on the concourse and would show match highlights to slow down egress. If Chelsea were losing this would not be an issue as people would naturally leave early and egress would be spaced out.

Zone-ex (spectators journey)

- 4.9 NK explained that they were waiting to see what guidance would be issued. If there was no change then it was unlikely that Fulham Broadway tube station would be open as it would be difficult to maintain social distancing. This would continue to be monitored and CB confirmed that this would be built into the operational plan.
- 4.10 SH asked about the distribution of supporters in the stands and whether this would be the same as in December 2020. CB explained that a 2 meter distance would be maintained between individual and paired seats. This could be extended to include an additional pair of seats and the SGO2 method 1 had been applied.
- 4.12 GS reported that he had been impressed with the Club's compliance of Covid-19 regulations and the enforcement of mask wearing. It was confirmed that the date for game 37 would be either 18th, 19th or 20th May and that game 38 would not be played later than 20th May.
- 4.13 KO reported that use usual components that were provided in a crowded environment would be used. Hostile units would be deployed to monitor roads and to monitor occurrences of fraudulent tickets, with pre and post-match searches of the stadium. In terms of ingress to the stadium, no bags larger than A4 would be permitted with only selective wandling.

5. COVID-19 / Health protection advice

- 5.1 NL was called away during the meeting, but it was noted that social distancing would be relaxed behind entry to avoid build up and delay and security would be as normally applied. SH enquired if there had been any issues with suppliers and it was confirmed that there had not been. The Club were aware that they used a large number of contractors on the site and there was a huge number of staff who were either new or unfamiliar with the site due to the absence of spectators. Additional assessments an accreditation would be required in advance of any fixtures.

- 5.2 PO'D explained the rule of four regarding paired seating so they had opted for seating configurations of four and six, with use of the maximum capacity of the seating deck. CB commented that this was a problem that was difficult to monitor, for example, where there was a group of six from two households. It was a question of trust to assume that two households were in a bubble, but this was hard to manage. Transferring the hospitality rule of six to the seating area was a logistical issue. GS suggested that this could be built into the pre-match guidance and supporter code of conduct, which could be enhanced as per Covid-19 guidance.
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6. Feedback from Emergency services

- 6.1 Comments were invited from NHS colleagues regarding local infection rates and advice. CS commented that there would most likely be an impact on Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust given its proximity to the club site. However, the standard plans appeared sufficient, the main Covid-19 related concern was an above normal temperature or a referral to A&E. A lateral flow test was 80% effective. CS cautioned that food and beverage sales required interaction but could be used as an opportunity to promote vaccination.

ACTION: NL to send Covid-19 guidance to CB

- 6.2 The Club confirmed that no additional policing resources would be needed and that the next match was a Category A match but there were always opportunities for crime. It was agreed that this would be further discussed outside the meeting.
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7. Feedback from the Transport authorities / Network Management

- 7.1 British Transport Police reported no issues although additional resources would always be helpful to have.
- 7.2 LAS supported the standard medical plan in response to reduced numbers which was reasonable. There were no issues in respect of staffing or numbers. There was no "surge" expected at the time so usual numbers would be deployed.
- 7.3 BL (LFB) asked about road closures and it was confirmed that local roads would be closed, pre and post-match ingress and egress.
- 7.4 NK had nothing to report regarding transport. Lessons had been learned from the Wembley event. It was hard for Transport for London and London Underground to assist with social distancing because of the difficulties in policing. It was confirmed that nearby underground stations would be closed for egress, subject to further information and advice.
- 7.5 LC and KO raised the issue about the egress of players which continued to be an issue and lack of jurisdiction. It was hoped that the traffic management order (TMO) could be amended. LC had reservations regarding the safety issue of players and residents which might be caused by additional road closures. KO reported that there had been evidence of near misses and that

there may be evidence that might change this decision. CU responded that the council would need to be notified of any amendments to the TMO with the proper notice period. It was agreed that a separate meeting be arranged to discuss the TMO and the possibility of introducing a trial period. MA confirmed that whilst there was a likelihood of having road closures the time frame period for this would be continuous. CB explained that the plan was to close roads 90 minutes before the match, and 45 minutes after the match, both of which were standard. The roads requiring closure were discussed and KO assured the meeting that there would be proper communication with residents about this.

- 7.6 MA reported retailers and street traders would return to Fulham road to pre-lockdown levels. Governance of street traders fell within the remit of environmental health and licensing and no doubt that this will form the part of the anticipated return to normality.
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8. Fulham Broadway Shopping Centre

- 8.1 MA confirmed that the shopping mall remained closed and so no staff were currently in place.
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9. Feedback from other members

- 9.1 AK asked if TfL staff would be needed to redirect people to other stations. CB replied that this would need a dynamic risk assessment but there was no one usually available to redirect when Fulham Broadway station was closed. However, it was noted that staggered entry times across a two hour window to different strands was helpful. The maximum crowd capacity was noted as 8216, in accordance with SG02 (Planning for Social Distancing at Sports Grounds), in compliance with social distance requirements. BA also confirmed that Fulham Broadway station would be closed and that the district line would be closed on 15th May and that there would be no step free access at Kensington tube station.
- 9.2 It was not known at this time as to whether any pre-season friendly matches would be arranged. Similarly, it was noted that there were no charity or open day events planned. CB confirmed that they would need to present the local authority with finalised plans regarding such events and would include preparations that would allow sponsors, charities, and participants to play on the pitch. This may restart once the date of the Leicester fixture was known, with no spectators involved and limited to children and guardians. KO commented regarding the redirection of supporters from stations for the Leicester fixture. This would be a matter for TfL to address. Advice and guidance were provided to supporters regarding walking routes to Earls Court or Putney and KO asked if the Club could collaborate with TfL on this. BA welcomed the suggestion and highlighted the publicity and communications that could be used to notify the local community as well as supporters. NK also supported the idea and emphasised the importance of getting the messaging right.

- 9.3 MA asked if a parade was planned to anticipate and celebrate the success of the Club. JG confirmed that a parade was not planned and described the seating arrangements which would begin at the away end of the stadium. An architect had been engaged and would liaise with building control. There were also plans to install glass on the dwarf stand at the north upper tier. This will help improve management of that area by raising the height of the balcony and the installation was planned in time for the start of the new season and would mean the loss of about 500 seats. SH and GG raised the point that the local authority would have to approve the installation, together with building control, and that the license would need to be re-issued. MR confirmed that the Club had submitted an application to building control and that this would also need to consult a structural engineer.
- 9.4 GS welcomed the proposals as barriers and seats would help address the issue of persistent standing. Although the plans were subject to approval this was a positive development and an ambitious but necessary package of work. It was noted that the SAG approved of the plans in principle, subject to the formal approval application process and plans. JG confirmed that the architects design report had been sent to the council from Jonathan Hampton. In addition, there were other projects being planned, the applications for which had not yet been submitted to building control. GS confirmed that an amended application for a seating rail had been submitted to the SGSA and a copy to be provided to GS for information.

ACTION: Copy of the amended application to be provided to GS for information.

10. Local Authority / General Safety Certificate / Licensing

- 10.1 GS noted that the operational plan was fluid but that the safety certificate would be issued once the plan was submitted. This would not be known until 10th May. The safety certificate would be subject to review and would need to be re-issued. A pre-match licensing inspection (AO was unable to attend) would be required.
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11. Licensed Premises

- 11.1 SH enquired about licensing arrangements for pubs outside the stadium. GS confirmed that pubs may re-open outside 17th May, indoors and outdoors. These venues might be busier and attract more people which could lead to other issues. LMc reported that most premises near the ground had not re-opened as it was not financially viable at this time and were waiting until 17th May.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 The following two items were reported and were noted within the above discussions including seats Incorporating Barriers/ Independent Barriers and West Stand and other works.