

Chelsea Football Club - Special Safety Advisory Group Meeting

Licensed Standing in Seated Areas

4th October 2021

Minutes of Meeting

Via MS TEAMS

Attendees:

NAME	INITIALS	ORGANISATION
Stephen Hollingworth – CFC SAG Chair	SH	LBHF
Thiru Moolan – Head of Building Control	TM	LBHF
Graham Souster – Environmental Health Officer	GS	LBHF
Stephanie Needham – Head of Environmental Health	SN	LBHF
Paul Kingsmore, Operations Director	PK	CFC
Jamie Gray, Head of Facilities	JG	CFC
Chris Baker, Head of Matchday Safety	CB	CFC
Keith Overstall, Head of Security	KO	CFC
Wills Payne, Deputy Safety Officer	WP	CFC
Paul O'Donnell, Deputy Safety Officer	PO	CFC
Richard Berry, CFC Counsel	RB	CFC
Superintendent Mark Whitten	MW	MPS
PS Iain Jones	IJ	MPS
PC Paul Wright	PW	MPS
Matt Shute	MS	LAS
James Berry	JB	LFB
Ken Scott	KS	SGSA
Geoff Galilee	GG	SGSA

Apologies: No apologies received

Number	Actions Summary	Who	Status
1. (Page 6)	SAG will be held in January and can be added to the agenda – supporters Code of Conduct	LBHF	Deferred to March SAG
2. (Page 6)	GS queried if the club will be copying in the local authority to their application to the SGSA? PK confirmed he would do this.	CFC	Copy of early adopter application made to the SGSA was received from CFC – 6 TH October 2021
3. (Page 6)	H&F SAG e-mail/letter to confirm happy and no objections to the plans and they support what Chelsea are doing and can go in with the application.	LBHF	Letter sent to CFC 5 th October 2021 from Steve Hollingworth

MINUTES

ITEM	MINUTES	ACTION
1	Welcome from Chairman	SH
	SH welcomed all, mentioned the meeting was being recorded as nobody present to take the minutes. No apologies received.	
2	Purpose of the meeting and apologies received	SH
	To purpose of this meeting is to discuss the early adopters' process for Chelsea FC to have licensed standing in seated areas at Stamford Bridge. At the last CFC SAG back in August the club's then planned installation of rail seating and seats with independent barriers to the Shed End Upper and lower tiers and Matthew Harding (North Stand) lower tier received positive feedback and support. On 22 nd September the Government announced the commencement of the legal process needed for clubs to offer licensed standing areas from 1 January. Football clubs (including Chelsea FC) subject to the Government's all-seater policy have been invited to apply to offer licensed standing areas, as part of an 'early adopter' programme Clubs will have until 6 October to submit an application to the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) to become an early adopter. If approved, they will be able to offer licensed standing areas from 1 January 2022.	
3	Update from the Sports Ground Safety Authority	SGSA
	➤ Background / criteria requirements. The necessary infrastructure being in place – such as seats with barriers/independent barriers – which must be in both home and away sections.	

	<p>Fans must be able to sit or stand in the licensed area – the seats cannot be locked in the ‘up’ or ‘down’ position. There must also be one seat/space per person.</p> <p>The licensed standing areas must not impact the viewing standards or other fans, including disabled fans.</p> <p>There must be a Code of Conduct in place for fans in the licensed standing area.</p> <p>The ground must consult with its Safety Advisory Group about plans for the licensed standing areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SG01: Safe Standing in Seated Areas – Guidance did go out for consultation and the final version has now been published by the SGSA ➤ Application / evaluation process for early adopters <p>KS/GG gave an update. Currently at the stage of implementing the Government’s manifesto commitment from 2019. Sports Minister announced a few weeks ago the SGSC the ability to move forward and take applications from clubs to be early adopters to have licensed safe standing and sports grounds.</p> <p>Packs would have been received from SGSA, on how they can achieve the early adopter status and get their licence conditions changed from 1/1/22 onwards. SGSA will look at the applications, approval has to be out to all by 5/11/21 in respect of the applications.</p> <p>This then goes to the Government to get the legal side completed and licences put in place. Licences then go out effective from 1/1/22, then up to the end of the season, monitoring will take place. CSE Research will be doing the monitoring. At the end of this period, there will be a change in the law going forward for all clubs.</p> <p>The pack that was issued included an application form, set of 16 criteria for the application, demonstrate how you will comply with the 16 criteria. If not already complying already you need to show how between now and December you will be able to meet the criteria.</p> <p>The criteria is broken down into 3 areas.</p> <p>Criteria 1 - 7 – infrastructure in the ground (rail seating) 8 – 3 – safety management procedures, how manage the seating areas (suggested code of conduct for spectators, how monitor the areas) 14 – 16 criteria – safety advisory group engagement, consultation with the group. How maintain consultation during the period, how deal with any objections.</p> <p>KS mentioned it was a key milestone after 30 years of the rule that the Government have seen to look to flex these rules in the way people want a choice in the way people want to watch a football match. Not expecting too many early adopters, the evaluation will be positive and will allow for expansion of seasons 22/23.</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH queried the monitoring and whether there would be a regular update or a report at the end of the season? <p>KS confirmed that they'd be engaging with CSE Research, won't be intensive monitoring. Will be going to the early adopter venues. Will be speaking to fans etc, asking for an interim report Feb/March. Mindful of the fact, some clubs who want to go down the route next season will need to make some communication announcements to fans that maybe moving into areas the clubs needed to seek approval for. Won't be huge new areas of standing but will see introduction of barriers where people currently standing.</p> <p>Need to look at number of people standing because they want to or standing because people around them are standing, need to find this tipping point.</p> <p>The licensed standing areas will be independently evaluated from their introduction in January for the remainder of the 2021/22 season. Other parts of the ground will remain all-seated, and fans will be expected to sit in these areas.</p>	
4	Chelsea Football Club	CFC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Safety management arrangements <p>Legal counsel joined Chelsea for the meeting. Will be helping with the application. Senior support within the club to apply. Will hit the deadline. Internal meetings to look at criteria and confident can fulfil the criteria. Hoping to get a positive outcome from today.</p> <p>Code of Conduct – does that need to be signed off by the SGSA. Chelsea working on the Code, stated they didn't think it was needed for the application, but need to have for the start of the trial, will need to do some more work on. Made a start on it and will work through.</p> <p>KS confirmed the code of conduct will be different for each club. Spectators need to take ownership of the code. Good examples of where fans have done this. (Social distancing code). Fans see it as a good move. Will want to be compliant to requests. Need the fans engagement. It's an historic event for fans watching football. Will help remove stewards from confrontational positions asking people to sit down.</p> <p>GG stated the guidance states the draft Code needs to be in by 1/12/21. GG expects the Club to have consultation with the SAG on how it's managed and implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH questioned whether there had been collaboration with other clubs who were applying for the early adopters? <p>KS confirmed you can work out the clubs going for early adopters. KS not aware of clubs collaborating but is aware of clubs visiting other clubs to learn from their changes. Once the cohort is put together the clubs will sit down and discuss any issues and will go forward as a group to end up with a positive.</p>	

	PK confirmed visits to other clubs has taken place. Would welcome sharing learnings from other early adopters.	
5	Comments from the Emergency Services	MPS/LAS/LFB
	<p>GS advised that the LBHF did consult with the emergency service prior to the installation of the rail seating and received no adverse comments from the emergency service who responded (LFB & LAS). MPS did not respond.</p> <p>MPS represented by PW (DFO) confirmed he'd not seen too many issues put down to standing, but quite an easy way of breaking the seats at Crystal Palace and at Aston Villa – the whole rail was taken down. More the product than the behaviour of fans.</p> <p>JG confirmed they haven't had rails pushed down it's the standard seating that's been broken. The rails haven't been affected. Standard seating on the rear row.</p> <p>JG has had minimal complaints about the rail seats, more complaints about the glass screen at the front. Only damage is from standing on the seats and jumping on them.</p> <p>GS queried the glass screen complaints and was it regarding viewing/sight lines?</p> <p>JG confirmed it was and some complaints saying the glass impairs their vision. An explanation has been given on why it's been done.</p> <p>MW mentioned the evaluation process and whether there would be a London region football club input so that we can gather experience of the other clubs?</p> <p>KS confirmed there would be a cohort with the early adopters' clubs. There will be another London club – possibly 2.</p> <p>LAS: MS not had anything specifically raised from the initial matches this season. Just mentioned the rails would alter access if a patient presents in the middle as there is more infrastructure to work around, narrows the area of working and would make moving a patient out a bit trickier as you can't lift a person up and over the seats, there are plans in place to mitigate these issues. No other concerns.</p> <p>LFB – JB discussed evacuation. No incidents as yet. JB is sure everything has been tested.</p> <p>KS confirmed the requirements to the Green Guide still apply, what has been seen from monitoring at Spurs and Wolverhampton people are getting out quicker in a more orderly fashion, helped speed up the movement of people.</p> <p>CB confirmed he'd not noticed any adverse effects on egress, more constructive, it's no slower. Nothing has been reported from the ground and looks more orderly.</p>	

6	Comments from the local authority	LBHF
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Environmental Health – GS advised he was involved during the challenging installation process and has reviewed the use of the rail seating at various matches – Tottenham Hotspurs (no away fans), Crystal Palace and Manchester City with away fans present. Really impressed with the product and the safety improvements. Egress is facilitated, lots of benefits from it, will continue to look at it and look at behaviour. Happy with works done at Chelsea and making things safer. ➤ Building Control – TM had no updates. Had a walk around with JG last week and everything seems fine. 	
7	Next steps	All
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licence – SH queried if we need to meet again after the decision has been made to sign off the code of conduct before January? <p>ACTION 1 – SAG will be held in January and can be added to the agenda.</p> <p>KS confirmed that in June 2021 went out to consultation on 3 things, 1 of which the amended wording that would form the new licence conditions (which are already out there). KS doesn't think there will be any issues with what the conditions say.</p> <p>GG suggested you may want to become familiar with the code of conduct. Has the club tweaked any of the areas in respect of stewarding? Could be worth going over these..</p>	LBHF
8	AOB	All
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GS queried if the club will be copying in the local authority to their application to the SGSA? <p>ACTION 2 - PK confirmed he would do this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RB queried referencing the criteria of engagement with the SAG and evidence of this, do we seek something formal in writing or is the fact that the meeting is recorded enough? <p>KS confirmed the SAG is an advisory group only. Keen to hear the SAG views. Evidence of having the meeting/minutes/no objections raised is sufficient evidence for the SGSA.</p> <p>ACTION 3 – H&F SAG e-mail/letter to confirm happy and no objections to the plans and they support what Chelsea are doing and can go in with the application.</p>	<p>CFC</p> <p>LBHF</p>