

**Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975
QPR Football Club Safety Advisory Group (SAG)**

**Wednesday, 18th January 2017, 1.30pm
Hammersmith Town Hall, Courtyard Room**

MINUTES OF MEETING

Name	Initials	Organisation
Ann Ramage (Chairman)	ALR	Head of Environmental Health Commercial (LBHF)
Karen Ashdown (Lead Officer)	KA	Commercial Services (LBHF)
Bathsheba Mall (Minutes)	BM	Governance and Scrutiny (LBHF)
Mark Donnelly	MD	Chief Operating Officer (QPR)
Mark Gibson	MG	Operations Manager (QPR)
Jim McNeill	JMcN	Safety Officer (QPR)
Alex Fish	AF	Deputy Safety Officer (QPR)
Richard Turner	RT	Facilities & Security Manager (QPR)
Joshua Scott	JS	Facilities & Operations Co-ordinator (QPR)
Siva Kumar	SK	Building Control (LBHF)
Dermot Casey	DC	Building Control (LBHF)
Phil Wilmann	PW	Senior Building Control Officer (LBHF)
Stephanie Needham	SN	Commercial Services Manager (LBHF)
Geraldine O'Grady	GO'G	Commercial Services (LBHF)
Keith Stevenson	KS	Information & Special Events Officer (LBHF)
Vanio Franco	VF	Information & Special Events Officer (LBHF)
James Brockway	JB	Acting Chief Inspector (MPS)
Mark Whitten	MW	Chief Inspector (MPS)
Tony Pegrum	PG	Highways (LBHF/RBKC)
Michael Allen	MA	Highways (LBHF/RBKC)

ITEM	ACTION
<p>1. Welcome from the Chairman</p> <p>1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.</p>	
<p>2. Apologies/New Members</p> <p>2.1 The Chairman noted the recent operational staff changes at QPR and welcomed Mark Donnelly, Chief Operating Officer and Joshua Scott, Facilities and Operations Co-ordinator to the meeting.</p> <p>2.2 Apologies were received from: Geoff Galilee, SGSA; Lou Elliston, SGSA; Ahmad Rafique, Senior Contract and Monitoring Officer; Doug Dickson, Trading Standards; Graham Souster, Deputy Lead Officer; Marya Lee, Parking Services Manager; Roy Instrall, Contract & Enforcement Manager; Lee Currie, Highways; Mike Dorans, MPS and Will Kearns, LAS; Peter Hollely St John Ambulance.</p>	
<p>3. Confirmation of previous minutes and matters arising</p> <p>3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2016 were approved as an accurate record. The Chairman identified the following actions from the minutes that were outstanding and not on the current agenda:</p> <p>3.2 Item 4.18 - JWG had agreed to provide recorded figures for incidents of persistent standing. MG said he will report on this under the Club's item on persistent standing.</p> <p>3.3 Item 8.1 - LFB had offered to attend a site visit, the Club confirmed that they were happy to facilitate this.</p>	
<p>4. QPR Safety Management Review 2016/17 - First Half of the Season</p> <p>Management/Operational Changes</p> <p>4.1 Noting the recent operational staff changes the Chairman formally recorded her thanks to Jenny Winstanley-Griston, former QPR Operations Manager, for her invaluable support and commitment to the work of the SAG and congratulated Mark Gibson, who had been promoted to the role.</p> <p>4.2 MD confirmed the changes within the Operations Team, following the departure of JWG in October 2016. MD has taken on more matchday operational involvement. JS has been recruited to MG's previous role. RT continued to oversee security and non-matchday operations. The new structure was working well. The Operations Manual has been updated to reflect the new staff structure and the detail will be circulated to SAG members.</p>	QPR

Update on Safety Management Arrangements Including Stewarding

4.3 MG confirmed that Jim Driscoll had been appointed as the new Chief Steward. There were no changes to report to the stewarding agencies contracted to the Club, and they will be in place to the end of the current season. Steward deployment positions and supervisory roles had been reviewed and the Operation Manual had been updated to reflect revisions. Stewards are regularly placed in selected seat blocks to monitor and discourage foul language and seat migration.

4.4 JMcN reported that there had been a marked decrease in supporter incidents outside of the stadium. Supporter bans were proving effective. There had been two incidents of pitch incursion when supporters crossed the pitch side hoardings. Challenges ahead included the forthcoming fixture with Fulham FC.

4.5 Smoke devices had been set off at the Brentford and Aston Villa matches by away supporters. Stewards on site nor CCTV footage could pinpoint exactly where they originated from. JMcN was satisfied with stewards' handling of the incidents.

4.6 JMcN reported that they had intervened with a number of supporters regarding the use of bad language in and around the Lower Loft Family Stand, following three complaints. Stewards have spoken to the supporters responsible which resulted in improved behaviour or relocation to seats elsewhere in the stadium. The Club continued to work with supporters as cursing was not acceptable in the Family Stand and the Club would continue to enforce this.

Abuse of Stewards

4.7 JMcN reported that a home supporter was awaiting sentencing following a conviction for abusive behaviour towards a steward. He confirmed that this individual would not be permitted to enter the stadium in future. MD added that the Club would not tolerate any abuse of its staff and stringent measures will always be taken where the culprit is identified. An incident of racist abuse towards a steward, where the supporter responsible had not been identified, had been reported to the Kick It Out campaign.

QU and R Blocks

4.8 JMcN reported that despite his initial reservations, the removal of the fence between QU and R blocks to improve sightlines had reduced persistent standing and migration between seats which they had anticipated did not occur. This arrangement now replicated that between H and V Blocks. MD added that they would continue to monitor and speak to supporters in these areas to ensure effective management and control.

Contingency Plan Access for Emergency Vehicles

4.9 AR enquired if the Club had a contingency plan in place to ensure swift access for emergency vehicles into the stadium if some roads around the stadium were blocked. JMcN responded that there was currently no written contingency plan as there were several vehicle access routes to the stadium unlike some other sites. JB was confident that emergency response solutions can always be found and added that emergency services and the Club had already thought about options available. It

was not necessary to explore additional options other than those that were currently served by existing traffic control measures and that the MPS would formulate its own arrangements on the day, as required. JMcN commented that Match Commanders were all aware of the contingency and mobilisation plans, which would be applied and escalated as needed.

- 4.10 JMcN added that the Club strongly supported the recent positioning of physical barriers in nearby roads, particularly considering rogue attacks in Nice and Berlin. It was noted that feedback from the public regarding the escalation of safety checks at turnstiles had generally been positive. AR acknowledged that while it was not possible to anticipate every eventuality, contingency plans that considered solutions to various scenarios was helpful.

Persistent Standing

- 4.11 MG reported that there was persistent standing of away supporters during the Leeds (7th Aug), Newcastle (13th Sept), Birmingham (24th Sept) and Brentford (28th Oct) fixtures. However, it was noted that there were no identifiable trends or patterns to link standing with poor behaviour. At the Birmingham fixture the front row had been netted off, whereas these rows had been used at the Leeds, Newcastle and Brentford fixtures. Given the known reputation of supporters for persistent standing for these Clubs, AR commented that should there be evidence of poor behaviour linked to persistent standing there is an expectation that the Club would consider reducing the away ticket allocation next time that club came. JMcN responded that with their effective stewarding maintaining free and clear aisles was not an issue at QPR. If there was evidence of aisles being overtaken, blocking circulation routes, then that would be addressed in the future.

- 4.12 MD confirmed that where the Club was aware of the history of supporters, this is addressed. AR referred to an incident during the 2015/16 season during the Fulham FC fixture where a supporter had stood on the front ledge of the School Upper stand. It was acknowledged that good evidence and current intelligence was required to persuade the football authorities and visiting Club that a reduction in away ticket allocation was necessary on safety grounds. The Club advised that additional stewards would be made available for the forthcoming fixture against Fulham FC.

Accident and Injuries

- 4.13 MG reported that to date had there been 20 accidents or injuries this season. None were RIDDOR reportable.
- 4 persons being hit by the ball
 - 4 trips and / or falls
 - 4 minor cuts
 - 4 pre-existing conditions
 - 4 categorised as other
- 4.14 In terms of illnesses, there were 5 supporters and 5 staff presenting as feeling ill, all arising from pre-existing conditions and not serious.

<p>Ejections/refusals statistics/trends</p> <p>4.15 MG reported that overall there had been 56 ejections from the stadium including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 for drinking in view of the pitch • 8 due to aggression towards staff or other supporters • 7 away fans seated in home areas • 4 for being intoxicated • 17 others <p>4.16 MG reported that there had been 23 separate refusals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 for being intoxicated • 2 for aggressive behaviour • 5 categorised as other <p>4.17 AR commended the staff responsible for carrying out refusals, noting that this vigilance was reflected in a relatively low number of ejections from within the stadium.</p> <p>Smoking Policy</p> <p>4.18 The Smoking Policy remained unchanged and compliance was high. However, it was noted that it was harder to enforce the policy in the partially open area of the Ellerslie Road stand. Additional signage to identify the permitted smoking area would be considered by the Club.</p> <p>TV Broadcasting/fixture change</p> <p>4.19 No concerns were reported although it was noted that with three Clubs planned scheduling can cause an issue for Borough policing and transport. There were no current scheduling changes of concern to report.</p> <p>Customer Feedback (complaints/praise, statistics/trends)</p> <p>4.20 JMcN reported that the Club had introduced a revised complaints recording system. An increase in complaints about the use of foul language occurring in the Lower Loft Stand had been noted which has led to Club action to resolve this. MD commented that the Club would continue to take a robust and proactive approach to all complaints. Stewards are regularly reminded of the need to report any complaints or incidents through to the Control Room for action.</p> <p>4.21 There had been some complaints reported to the Club by residents relating to activity outside the stadium. There was a report of excessive rubbish in the streets, notably following the Blackburn fixture. A resident with a disabled Blue Badge had been denied access to a suspended parking bay. KS confirmed that the Blue Badge did not permit parking in a suspended bay. However, the Club acknowledged it should operate as flexibly as possible in handling such incidences.</p> <p>4.22 MA referred to an incident where the hired tow truck driver had refused to remove a vehicle parked in a suspended bay. On investigation it was found that the driver was new to the role and had followed incorrect direction from a Traffic Warden. It was confirmed that irrespective of a resident parking permit being displayed, it is correct to remove any</p>	<p>QPR</p>
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<p>vehicle parked in a suspended bay.</p> <p>Supporter Group liaison/feedback</p> <p>4.23 MD reported that two Fan Forum consultation meetings had been held. Some issues raised were relevant to the SAG. As mentioned previously there had been consultation on the removal of the fence between QU and R Blocks. The newly introduced Fan Zone area has been popular and well used during each match day. Supporters had commented that queues at the kiosks were excessive at times.</p> <p>4.24 JMcN explained that it has been an end of season ritual for supporters to invade the pitch and that pitch access had again been requested for the last match of this season. It was acknowledged that there could be potential adverse consequences for refusing this request outright. Operational decisions would be taken on the day to manage and control the situation safely.</p> <p>General comments</p> <p>4.25 In the context of recent allegations of historical child abuse at sports clubs it was noted that there were no safeguarding or child protection concerns to report. Current measures and policies remained unchanged.</p> <p>4.26 A supporter who suffered a heart attack after leaving the ground was found by British Transport Police who contacted the Club for assistance. The Club was commended for providing quick medical support, which helped ensure that the supporter survived.</p>	
<p>5. Metropolitan Police</p> <p>Updates on operational arrangements</p> <p>5.1 JB reported that the season had a good start and there were no significant matches to report on. There were minor issues outside the stadium with Reading and Brentford supporters. MW and JB would continue as the main points of contact for the duration of the 2016/17 season. There were MPS 'Spotters' only (with no stadium Command Team) at the three matches assessed as lowest risk and it was considered that another two Category A matches could have been resourced like this.</p> <p>5.2 JB stated that there was commitment that Command Team roles would be filled by officers with local experience when possible. JB explained that he was keen to increase training opportunities for all officers involved with the provision of match day support. JB thanked the Club for hosting a training session. The introduction of an iPad for use on matchday had proved to be an extremely helpful tool. JB appreciated the continuing good and effective communication between all agencies.</p> <p>5.3 JB observed that Counter Terrorism considerations were increasingly part of match day delivery although there was no specific intelligence linked to sporting events.</p> <p>Public order</p> <p>5.4 JB commented that in his view, there were no incidents that could be defined as public order incidents.</p>	

<p>Arrests</p> <p>5.5 JB reported that there had been 13 arrests, 10 from league fixtures and 3 from domestic cup matches, with no discernible pattern or trends, and nothing significant to note. JB pointed out that there were 10 drinking in view of the pitch offences which were resolved by Community Resolution. The Borough is currently the only area in London that uses this option for disposal of arrested suspects.</p> <p>5.6 JB stated that of the 13 home arrest figures, 8 had been outside the stadium, with 5 inside. There had been one arrest for ticket touting. 3 QPR supporters had been arrested; 1 for common assault, 1 for S.4A Racially Aggravated Assault (awaiting sentencing) and 1 for Breach of Ban.</p> <p>5.7 There had been 9 away supporter arrests in total 1 each for; Missile Throwing, Common Assault, ABH, Possession of Cocaine, S.5 Public Order, Drinking in View of the Pitch and Criminal Damage and 2 arrests for Pitch Encroachment.</p> <p>Racist/homophobic behaviour</p> <p>5.8 There had been a small number of reports of racist language used by individuals against stewards as already mentioned.</p> <p>QPR Supporter Behaviour at Away Fixtures</p> <p>5.9 Supporter bans and jail sentences from incidents in previous seasons had led to a reduction in risk behaviour at home and away fixtures. There had been 4 ejections for breach of Ground Regulations and one arrest for pitch encroachment.</p> <p>Policing during ingress/egress</p> <p>5.10 There were no issues of note. JB commented that it was important to make sure that effective stewarding continued to be in place. AR observed that the newly introduced three lane queuing system worked well, noting this particularly at the Burton Albion match. JMcN expressed the view that the time kick off was scheduled for impacted on the control and management of the queuing system. Three searching lanes gave opportunities for dealing with arriving groups of supporters at every game, allowing for greater consistency.</p> <p>Banning orders</p> <p>5.11 JB reported that two supporters had been convicted and received football banning orders preventing them from attending any football matches, home or away for 6 and 8 years. JB commented that this had been a significant piece of work.</p> <p>5.12 There had been 26 bans imposed on QPR supporters in total and JB observed that this was quite high compared to figures across the country and reflected the MPS commitment to proving offences and supporting prosecutions.</p> <p>MPS/CPS prosecution of football offences</p> <p>5.11 JMcN formally thanked the MPS for their support and the high quality of policing provided throughout the season. AR thanked JMcN for his positive comments and observed that there while there was robust and</p>	
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<p>proactive partnership working arrangements in place, there were always areas for continual improvement.</p>	
<p>6. Local Authority Review – 2016/17 Half Season</p> <p>(a) Lead Officer Update</p> <p>Observations following inspections</p> <p>6.1 KA reported that several inspections had been carried out this season. Focussed inspections looked at partnership arrangements following staff changes at QPR and the searching regime. Interviews with stewards conducted at the start of the season found that there were several new stewards who were not familiar with their roles. It was pointed out that it is requirement of the General Safety Certificate that new stewards should be paired with experienced stewards for at least four matches. Other stewards spoken to were very knowledgeable and experienced. The Club had since introduced improved briefing and monitoring for new stewards.</p> <p>6.2 There had also been a post-match review of CCTV footage and club documentation from the Aston Villa fixture.</p> <p>Persistent Standing</p> <p>6.3 KA had prepared a report on persistent standing, as requested by the Chairman at the last meeting. In summary, the report concludes that away supporters often stand throughout, but were generally well behaved. The Club had enhanced its stewarding in the School End Stand and responded as needed match by match dependent on the previous history of visiting team supporters. The report will be circulated.</p> <p>Safety Certificate</p> <p>6.4 No amendments had been necessary to the General Safety Certificate.</p> <p>Operations Manual</p> <p>6.5 It was noted that the Club had regularly updated the Operations Manual and associated documentation as required.</p> <p>Smoke Free compliance</p> <p>6.6 There were no observed issues to report, although the enforcement of the policy in the Ellerslie Road Stand concourse was noted as challenging.</p> <p>Customer Feedback/complaints</p> <p>6.7 KA reported that complaints had been received at the Council since the last meeting. There were two reports of ‘early’ pre-match road closures and a poor attitude from stewards to those residents requesting access to their homes. Records showed that all road closures were within the times permitted. The Club agreed to speak to the stewards involved.</p> <p>6.8 There had also been a complaint about poor behaviour of some Aston Villa supporters and poor safety management response by QPR. A thorough investigation is ongoing which includes a review of CCTV footage and Club match day records. Club staff and police officers have</p>	<p>KA</p>

<p>been asked to provide additional information. A smoke device was thrown onto the pitch and an away supporter got across the hoardings to pitch side. A full response will be sent to the complainant shortly.</p>	
<p>6.9 It was noted that when the smoke device had been thrown onto the pitch, this had adversely affected the ball boys who were ushered away by stewards. The Club agreed to tell all Club personnel that they should move away in such situations.</p>	
<p>Supporter Groups liaison</p> <p>6.10 AR enquired if the SAG agenda had been circulated to the supporter's trust. KA confirmed that it had not as there was no current contact held by the Council. MD informed the meeting that there are regular supporter consultation meetings at the Club and agreed to provide KA access to this group.</p>	MD
<p>(b) Licensing Update</p>	
<p>Inside the stadium</p>	
<p>6.11 No Licensing Officers were in attendance however KA reported that there had been observed breaches of alcohol licensing conditions on the 7th, 20th and 23rd August 2016. MD confirmed that the alleged licensing breaches were being investigated and that they concerned the failure to cease serving alcohol on the concourses by the commencement of the second half of the match. MD was keen to make amends and to meet the operational requirements of current licensing conditions. MD also confirmed a meeting had been set to discuss the terms of the existing licensing conditions with a view to applying for an amendment. It was noted that no anti-social behaviour had resulted because of the alleged breaches of licensing conditions in the stadium.</p>	
<p>6.12 KA confirmed that no further breaches had been observed and that concourse staff and stewards had been retrained in the requirements of the licence. There was a comment that additional serving time would eradicate the problem of people queueing for drinks at half time then being turned away from the kiosk before being served. On occasion this had caused conflict between supporters and kiosk staff.</p>	
<p>Outside the Stadium</p>	
<p>6.13 There were no significant issues to report. JB commented that there had been a proposal from the nominated away supporter pub to open earlier in the morning and that the pub adjacent to the stadium had changed hands.</p>	
<p>(c) Highways Update</p>	
<p>Traffic Management Order and associated Memorandum of Understanding</p>	
<p>6.13 TP reported that the Club had confirmed that it was content to sign the documents as drafted. It was agreed this would be finalised by the Club and the Council without further delay.</p>	QPR/LBHF
<p>Network issues/planned closures</p>	
<p>6.15 In terms of network activity TP reported that there was a temporary walkway outside Wood Lane Tube station which would remain in place</p>	

<p>for eight months. Periodic utility works will be ongoing due to the developments in the area. Where possible planned maintenance will be scheduled outside of the football season.</p> <p>(d) Parking Services Update</p> <p>6.16 KA asked whether there had been any reported issues following changes to the JJ residents parking zone. MD and KS confirmed they had received no comments.</p> <p>(e) Street Scene Update</p> <p>6.17 KA reported that the fly tipping removal company for Imre Close had recently changed. There were no issues of concern to report but contact details will be forwarded to the Club.</p> <p>(f) Building Control</p> <p>6.18 Philip Wilmann is now the key contact for Building Control matters.</p>	<p>KA</p>
<p>8. Update from the London Fire Brigade</p> <p>8.1 No officers in were attendance from LFB.</p>	
<p>9. Medical Provision Update</p> <p>Update on Medical Plan</p> <p>9.1 MG will ensure that all parties were happy with the technical terminology used in the medical plans. AR suggested that this should be completed without delay to ensure that documents reflect what is operational.</p>	<p>MG</p>
<p>10. Update from the Sports Ground Safety Authority</p> <p>10.1 KA reported that SGSA Inspectors had been unable to attend but had sent an update. A new national counter terrorism phone app has been developed for the public called Citizen Aid, which gives first aid advice for major trauma.</p> <p>10.2 The SGSA had just produced and published the Hillsborough Inquest Outcomes Review, which emphasises that the safety of spectators is the responsibility of all agencies involved.</p> <p>10.3 The SGSA annual conference on 3 March 2017 is themed “Being a leader in safety”.</p> <p>10.4 Two drones had been flown over the Bradford City ground in September. The match was suspended to ensure the safety of all.</p> <p>10.5 SGSA Inspectors had not inspected so far this season.</p>	

10.6	The Chairman wanted to put on record her thanks to Lou Elliston who was moving to cover another area and to thank her for her contribution to the QPR SAG.	
11.	Looking forward to rest of 2015/16 Season	
	Anticipated challenges	
11.1	AR recommended that given the current adverse weather conditions, match postponements were a possibility. It would be helpful for the Club to review its contingency plans to ensure familiarity with possible outcomes. MG advised that all contingency plans have been reviewed recently.	
	Planned Stadium Works	
11.2	There are no planned works.	
	Planned Operational Changes	
11.3	There are no planned operational changes.	
12.	Chairman's update	
12.1	AR confirmed that a review of the SAG Terms of Reference is due to ensure it was fit for purpose. Minor amendments to the text have been made and will be circulated for comment.	KA
12.2	New Council procedure and enforcement policies relating to sports ground safety have been published online.	
12.3	AR reported that a questionnaire had been circulated to all three Clubs following up on the outcomes of the Hillsborough Inquest. A response from the Club, MPS and LAS had already been received. A SAG sub group meeting would be organised to identify any points for action.	
13.	Any Other Business	
13.1	AR reported that she and KA presented football related work to a Council Scrutiny Committee. The meeting, attended by both residents and Councillors, had been very well received. It explained the balance between protecting the interests and safety of residents, spectators and the Clubs. The need for partnership working had been emphasised and AR expressed her appreciation for the work put in by all to ensure that we were not complaisant and commended the commitment of members of the SAG.	
14.	Date and venue of next meeting	
14.1	The next meeting will be held at Loftus Road in July. Date to be confirmed.	KA
The meeting ended at: 15:30.		