



Arsenal Women Matchday Forum Agenda
18:00pm-19.30pm 15th November 2023
Boardroom, Highbury House & Online via Teams

Members:

Club representatives

Khali Parsons – Fan Services Lead (Chair)

Amy Trynka - Ticketing & Venue Strategy Lead

Chantel Francis – Fan Services

Rob Fawdon – PR and Corporate Communications Lead

Dan Lane – Communications Manager

Emily Jones – Senior Venue Analyst

James Swanson - Supporter Experience Manager

Tom McCann – Venue Director

Yannick Phippen - Event Operations Support Manager

Supporter representatives

Anthony Joy (AJ)

Brian Kelly – Virtual (BK)

Chloe Phillips - (CP)

George Murray (GM)

Kristina Cartwright-Riley (KCR)

Michelle Keenan (MK)

Paula Akpan – Virtual (PA)

Rajan Nandha – Virtual (RN)

Selena Chambers – Virtual (SC)

Tim Hardy (TH)

Tracey Taylor (TT)

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Rules of the forum
3. Updates from Arsenal
4. Fan Rep Questions
5. AOB

Minutes

Welcome

- Khali Parsons (KP) introduced Amy Trynka (AT), Yannick Phippen (YP) Dan Lane (DL), Rob Fawdon (RF), Emily Jones (EJ), James Swanson (JS) And Chantel Francis (CF).
- All those on the forum then introduced themselves.

Rules of the Forum

- Khali Parsons confirmed all attendees had read the rules of the forum which had been sent prior to the meeting and all those in attendance confirmed they were happy to proceed.
- KP then informed the group of the next steps regarding meetings and the plan will be to look into setting all the dates for meetings to ensure they are at key dates for feedback/questions etc. KP stated any questions/concerns can be submitted up to 7-10 days prior to the next meeting.
- KP then went straight into the questions which had been pre-submitted by members of the forum.
- The first question submitted was 'How Do We Link in With Groups' KP answered that plans published for the 2023/24 season was to have this forum and read through this from the premier league. TT confirmed this had been read briefly.
- The next question asked was with regards to Feedback. KP answered that this was the reason for the forum and that anything shared can then be feedback to wider groups and advisory board to give a better understanding of improvements and how well certain changes work. An example was the ticketing policy, from this we can work out the journey our fans are taking from the purchase to the experience. Our hope from these forums/conversations will feed into our plans which is why the forum is so important as you can all provide different journeys/experiences.
- The last pre-submitted question was 'How Do We Link in With Other Groups' TT specified she was questioning our social media followers and how do we troll this for feedback. AT advised TT that this was RF team who this is and is a conversation our ticketing team have regularly for an understanding of what matters to supporters online and through our official channels. If there is talk on social media, this does mean we are usually aware of this and is something

we can discuss at the forum and to bring in other ideas also. KP also advised the key point of the forum and discussions taking place is to be as open and transparent and there may be times we do ask for these to be kept only at the forum and not to be shared within networks etc. However, this will be made clear at the point of discussion.

- KP then opens the floor to question and at this point no one had anything to ask/add.

Updates from Arsenal

- KP formally starts with the introduction of the first Women's SLO who is Chantel Francis, and we are the first club to have done this which is currently a mandatory role within the premier league. We felt this was important for our Women's team to have their own and Chantel will now be the point of contact for questions, concerns, admin. CF looks forward to working with the group and seeing everyone in attendance at Westham and further fixtures.
- AT then announces the ticketing updates for this season. With regards to the feedback, we have received and how the demand has increased, and the pressure has been there for the tickets. We have enjoyed hosting fixtures at the Emirates. We have introduced new policies which have been received with positivity from supporters. AT then would like to thank a few members of the forum for their feedback.
- AT goes onto our away games, which were the most important, and talking about the new disability access changes which will be coming into place.
- EJ is introduced and starts by stating we have a New DA Manager Aaron Heskin and we have been working with him for more accessible tickets. Currently Meadow Park accessibility tickets are all online but historically this is not the case at Emirates Stadium and was something Aaron instantly noticed and would like to change.
- EJ confirms this will happen from the Arsenal Women v Manchester United fixture which goes on sale Tuesday 26th November at 14:00pm through a link online.
- AT then asks if there are any feedback/questions?
- AJ asks Do they need to be registered as someone with access needs.
- EJ states that anyone who is registered in our database who has previously purchased a Women's accessibility seat will automatically have the client type assigned to their account giving them online access.
- AT advises this to be announced on the channel of ASDS to let people know if they have not already registered to reach out so we can assist them.
- AJ has worked closely with the club to ensure additional information is available to supporters who may never have bought tickets before and will review with Aaron.
- KP states a catch up will be scheduled to ensure the process is clear for supporters.
- TH as we release tickets in stages, will that add any additional issues with sell outs. AT states that when opening additional areas in the ground we ensure there is accessible seating within those areas. There is also seating available at Club Level which is for accessible members. AJ states the tickets would only be available for supporters who match the criteria and EJ confirms this as they will be done via the link online and will only appear for the correct members.
- GM asks about accessibly seating at MP and gave the example his partner's uncle has mobility issues, but they hold Season tickets and how would they be able to attend together.

- KP advises GM to reach out to our Disability Access Team who are always on hand to assist with information and to accommodate if the availability is there.
- AT, Away ticketing is next, and we have had discussions with the AWFC Supporters Club, and this was high on both Arsenal and their agenda.
- EJ shares her screen which shows the new away process.
- Feedback has been positive, and all our allocations have sold out.
 - ST holders are given 24 hours purchase window,
 - 50% of ticketing allocation is used,
 - Can buy 2 tickets through this window.
 - SC have 10% of the away allocation and their window to purchase is doing the General sale and only have 24 hours to pay or their tickets will be released.
 - 1 ticket only through the supporter's club.
 - General sales will have 40% and any remaining tickets to purchase.
 - Can look to purchase 10 tickets per account but this will vary on the game and allocation.
- BK thanks EJ and our ticketing coordinator for the work they have put in as this is something that has been in discussions previously and a lot of work has been done for this to be accomplished and will help to grow the game.
- KP asks if anyone else virtually or within the room has any further questions regarding the away ticketing.
- DL says the numbers are amazing and it is noticed by the team and manager and hope it is shown through the interviews. This makes a huge difference and thanks again.
- TT asks with regards to Tottenham away, would we be given more allocation as we could fill tickets. AT says all we can do is ask and we are very clear we will take more tickets if we can. It is just hard due to the operational side, but we will continue to ask.
- TH is the Women's super league behind the drive as we can see this is beginning to increase with the demand and is there a set criterion.
- AT states we took part in a workshop regarding ticketing, and it was with the FA who was trying to understand the challenges clubs face, Arsenal and Chelsea are championing this due to their support (home and away). However not all clubs are set up like this with limited support and to bring in rules at this stage would come across challenging. However, there has been an update in the policies which are shared with and published with the FA stating clubs must now include away ticketing in their policies and we will be intrigued to see if any further requirements will be needed moving forward.
- PA Thanks for all the hard work that has been taking place behind the scenes and this is being noticed.
- GM adds feedback is amazing and he has now managed to get to an away game which was Westham, and it was great to see such an amazing fan base. However, was not aware of the ST holder's window.
- AT states an email was sent out as this was a new benefit implemented from the start of the season and if you go to www.arsenal.co.uk/ticketing and the dates and times are listed on each fixture. And this is useful to let your own networks know and please if notice anything to reach out/feedback to the forum.
- AT our last point is the new system with regards to the ticket exchange/ticket transfer and seat utilization. With the demand and sell-outs at Meadow Park we want to see as many seats full as possible. The requirements this season are:

- 7 out of 13 fixtures must be used,
- 3 out of the 5 played at the Emirates must be used.
- This can be done via selling on TX, attending, using the TT.
- TX will open for Meadow Park once the fixture sells out.
- TX will open for Emirates once the fixture is confirmed, and lower tier has sold out.
- This can be shared with your network and if there is any feedback, please bring this to the forum.
- CP asks the question regarding the TX/TT closing a week prior to the fixture and if there is a reason behind this. AT confirms this is due to an operational side and our teams will continue to review the process. EJ confirms we have moved the window for TT/TX for Chelsea based on the timing for this fixture which will now close on the Tuesday prior to the fixture instead of the 7 days.
- KP Any more feedback/questions? No further questions were asked.
- KP now goes onto discuss the Premier League fans funding, which is new for this season, they will invest £5million over 2 seasons to strengthen the bonds between fans/club and the local community. This will be administrated in grants of £10k for PL/NL/WSL clubs. As a club we can apply for men's, women's, both or neither. KP will follow up with further information but wants this to be on the minds of those in the forum on any ideas they may have.
- KP will not go to our pre-submitted questions submitted:
- The first pre-submitted question was regarding the lack of availability for the Women's away kit. DL thanks for the questions being submitted and states how proud we are of launching the first ever Women's away kit and this is a groundbreaking moment for the club to have launched. However, with the demand due to this being the club trying something new and pushing a boundary this is a learning curve which we can learn from, and we value feedback. AJ asks if we have the stats on the number of shirts sold with the WSL shirt due to the large number of supporters attending the Liverpool fixture wearing the 3rd shirt with this printing. DL confirms this will be taken away and see if the figures can be located. RF this is all a learning opportunity and to continue telling us what you think and engaging with us.
- KP then mentions a question which was submitted regarding the Emirates Games and the future home of Arsenal.
- AT good question regarding any further games at the Emirates for this current season as we currently have 5 WSL and would have hosted the Champions League. There was a part of this question regarding are we planning a new stadium similar to what Brighton has announced. We were delighted with the games at the Emirates as they have been special moments with selling out for Wolfsburg which we thought was further away than last season. However, at this stage there are no further plans for any other games to be played at the Emirates as Meadow Park is our primary home and the atmosphere for the last few games has been amazing and shows what a special place the stadium is. We are committed to the growth of Women's football, and we will continue to explore and champion that.
- TT believes Brighton are going down the wrong as our club stadium is the Emirates which was something Viv said and that is what we should focus on as this is what is about instead of having a this is our stadium and that is your stadium which splits the club. CP confirms that Cannes in America have already done this and is the first to have a Women's stadium.
- GM asks if there is a time frame to get all WSL fixtures at the Emirates as this was mentioned by someone awhile ago that we would like this to happen. I know things change with growth and demand but is this still a plan or are there operational difficulties?

- AT replies I think at the moment everything is moving so quickly and we are in a position where we are looking at last season and this season and are delighted with the numbers we are seeing and there is constant talk on how we sustain the growth and attendances at games, so it is too soon to comment on that. However, we are committed to exploring every avenue and we do look at what other clubs are doing in England, America and Europe. We also have new data points with getting to know what the new audience likes to ensure we make reasonable decisions. GM replies no worries.
- AT continues with the 3 WSL games we held at the Emirates last season to this year Holding 5 WSL fixtures shows we are committed to doing everything we can and every decision now at the club is very much Men & Women were Arsenal and not separate. GM gives the example of Wolfsburg the season prior to last, we had only managed to sell out 2 blocks and last season we managed to sell the entire ground out which was unpredictable. KP states this is exciting for both staff and the fans, which AT totally agrees.
- BK has been supporting the relocation to the Emirates for some time but brings a point of the consideration that we may well play 40+ Women fixtures and 50+ Men's fixtures making a total of 90 games on one of the best pitches in the country and is this realistic and would it be possible to fit everything in. This is a logistic element which must be played fair and that we probably have contractual restrictions with Borehamwood and that people love the closeness and nature of our games being played at Meadow Park.
- BK however, one thing that is interesting was the other evening and our PA announcement confirmed we had sold out and BK does appreciate this can change for WSL to Borehamwood fixtures, but we announced a sell out off only 3400 tickets whereas the capacity is in the region of 4100 at Meadow Park.
- YP It was our maximum selling capacity with seat kills for camera towers and to sell to safe capacity for safety and security of fans.
- EJ adds that the capacity is given for stadiums this is usually for adult men and for the past year/2 years we are trying to establish how full we can get Meadow Park while maintaining a positive experience and safety for our demographic of supporters, especially in the unreserved areas.
- BK then advises on some feedback which is to remind our accessibility fans that the press stand on the south stand is an area they can use, and our supporters club can also confirm this.
- KP states Chantel will be at the next game and is something she can help with.
- AJ to build on BK point he is totally right with the south stand being accessible however, if Sky broadcasters are within the section their cameras can block all the view as the main TV stand is on the roof but the try pods cause restrictions.
- YP states this is something he is happy to speak to the broadcasters about.
- KP confirms this is useful information which can be taken away. KP then asks if anyone else has any questions based on our current conversation.
- AT confirms that BK points are challenges we are aware of and are useful for the future and we have taken notes based on the feedback and thank you.
- KP then goes onto the next question which was pre-submitted 'What is AWFC doing to address the concerns of Black and brown supporters around the lack of racial diversity in the squad which does not reflect the supporter base, the makeup of North London itself, the club's history or even the men's team?'
- DL underlines that this is an important topic which is the front of the mind for our players, coach, football leadership etc. As a club, it was felt that that a public statement needed to be

shared in order to acknowledge supporter concerns and the lack of diversity, as this does not reflect the community outside in North London or across our history in men's and women's football, with players like Alex Scott, Anita Asante and Rachel Yankey. The club is not where we want to be in this area. There are some structural barriers which the FA has acknowledged and is addressing, with regards to emerging talent centers, with plans to make sure all children can access one within an hour of where they live. There are some positive stories at academy level. We run a yearly demographic survey which this year shows over 30% of participants in the academy identify as non-white, compared to national level of 10%. Young women of colour represent some of the top talent coming through from academy to first-team level. We also provide financial support to cover travel to our academy in Hertfordshire or to loan clubs - the girls who currently use this are all based in London boroughs, where communities tend to be more diverse. Through these actions, and structural changes which are led by the FA, we hope we will get to a place with greater diversity within the first team. However, we do welcome any further feedback.

- KP asks PA if she has any response or anything to add.
- PA thanks DL and confirms this answered some follow up questions she had. However, PA does ask what the structure is from the Academy level to Senior Level within the Women. Before DL answered, PA read the below: Insights from Black AWFC supporters:
- "I've supported Arsenal all my life but I've only recently started actively following the women's game and supporting the Arsenal women. As a black woman, I was really shocked to see the lack of representation in the team especially because the men teams and the academy are so diverse. It's so disheartening to not see anyone who looks like you and the community the club represents. Hopefully things will change in the future."
- "I grew up watching the likes of Campbell, Toure, Vieira, Gilberto and, of course, Henry - watching them play forms my earliest memories of Arsenal and becoming a lifelong gooner. There was something so powerful watching these Black men play beautiful football every single week, despite the racism they were often subjected to - they were a reflection of me and my little brothers on the pitch. This unique connection with Black communities is coded into the legacy of Arsenal - something that Arsenal spotlighted in this year's BHM. And it's why the state of the women's squad feels even more egregious than it already is. It doesn't reflect the wealth of player talent and fan support that has propelled the club to its high status."
- KP thanks PA for reading and asks DL if he can answer this or does this needs to be taken away.
- DL confirms this needs to be taken away and will get some input from our academy manager and director of football. However, one structural challenge with the women's academy is that the teams are based at the academy site, whereas with the men's academy the highest age groups are based at the first-team training ground. DL confirms there those at academy level do travel to London Colney regularly to train with the first team. DL ends this by asking PA to leave this with him.
- KP then asks RN to talk he was on virtually. RN states that 50 years ago as an Asian supporter, there was no footballer to look up to which is something that is talked about within the community. Emma Haines states the structure which we had 4-5 decades ago with the men is now coming out the other end with the women, but this must be for the right reason. You have to believe it to see it, and this is something within the league that needs to change, not just Arsenal. DL confirms we have recently held an event at Hale End in October as an outreach event for families of south Asian Origin, this is something we did for

the boys academy last year and was successful. We as a club are trying to engage with different groups, and not go with a blanket approach.

- RN says thanks but has one last comment this is brilliant and with the generation we can allow within the culture, and we are the own barriers, but working with the club this is putting cultures at rest with the facilities being in place to allow them to reach their dreams, success.
- RH asks PA if she can share the testimonials and says thank you for bringing them to the forum as they are input.
- PA confirms these will be sent to CF and states she agrees with RN and did some number crunching and reads the below figures: A quick look at the other WSL squads in 23/24 (as listed on each club's website, does not include loanees):
 - Man Utd - 7 Black or brown players in a squad of 23, 30.4%
 - Man City - 7/23, 30.4%
 - Chelsea - 8/29, 27.5%
 - Tottenham - 6/24, 25%
 - West Ham - 6/24, 25%
 - Brighton - 4/22, 18.2%
 - Aston Villa - 3/20, 15%
 - Liverpool - 3/24, 12.5%
 - Bristol City - 3/25, 12%
 - Leicester - 2/20, 10%
 - Everton - 0/25, 0%
 - Arsenal - 0/27, 0%
- Comparison with the Arsenal men's and academy squads in 23/24 (as listed on each club's website, does not include loanees):
 - Arsenal men's - 10 Black or Brown players in a squad of 25, 40%
 - Arsenal academy (U-21 men) - 12/18, 67%
- And finishes with know that there are a number of different age groups for boys and girls that fall under 'Arsenal Academy', although the website only lists the U21 Arsenal Men's team. I believe that to thoroughly examine the statistics, a researcher - myself or someone else - should be commissioned to conduct a more expansive report with stats and figures provided by the club. This report should also look at how academy players are transitioned into the senior teams through scouting protocol, strategy and decision-making, especially with the Academy stats being starkly different. It should also look at the class and economic links that are obstacles for younger Black and Brown footballers attempting to journey through the academy into senior squads. Additionally, an examination of the resources available to the senior Women's team, namely financial support from the club, in challenging these structural issues is necessary.
- KP says thank you and to ensure these are sent to CF.
- TH then asks on the back end of the academy chat how much of a link is there between the community football and Arsenal community as his son in Tottenham Park and Arsenal coaches come and teach football their one night a week, how/is this linked into the academy or are they different operational things as one problem here is you have players within communities who are being unnoticed and this is a problem with women not coming through from the bottom.
- DL says this is to be taken away and find out further information. However, this is a general point on the women's side, this isn't as developed as the men's and with revenues now

increasing as the game grows, there is further development needed and there is room to improve but we will take this away.

- KP asks all those present/virtually if there were any further questions which there was nothing further to add.
- YP then addresses the most recent incident at Meadow Park and confirms that the steward which supporters had reached out regarding was in fact a ball boy which is why they was not as response as he was trying to continue his job. This is based off the end of the investigation with Borehamwood.
- TT says how she was impressed with how fast a response was given but those in other stands did not know what was happening until they had left. She does, however, appreciate this is something we would not announce but wanted to provide feedback.
- TT also states that the Tannoy did not work and had missed the McCabe presentation due to this.
- YP confirms that a new scoreboard has been ordered by Borehamwood and will be going up in due course which will be better for those in attendance and will allow videos to be shown around the ground to ensure supporters do not miss out on these moments and thanks TT for the feedback.
- GM goes back to the incident at MP and provides the feedback that it should not be that delayed and that it should not have been like that, and we should nail this down in future and be prepared.
- YP confirms that we do have 4 dedicated first aiders and at least 1 crowd doctor in each stand at Meadow Park and the correct process is usually to inform a steward who would then inform the first aiders and then then the crowd doctor and the delay was around 2 minutes from checking the CCTV cameras. However everyone has now been given a briefing and to remain on high alert at future games.
- BK follows on from TT point that the publication of Caitlin Foord 100 caps and Katie McCabe 200 caps presentation was not that great but in the circumstance that recently arose, it was only until the East stand had begun to shout medic that there was a reaction and there needs to be a better reading of a situation and from everywhere else it looked like the North Bank was celebrating the goal.
- KP thanks BK for mentioning and concludes this is the end of our first forum.
- KP thanks everyone in attendance both present and virtually and this is something were all excited to be apart of and that the inbox is always open for questions/feedback.

The end of our AWFC match day forum.

For reference, please find below our statement on diversity in our women's first team.

We acknowledge our current women's first-team squad does not reflect the diversity that exists across the club and the communities we represent. Increasing participation among young women and girls from diverse backgrounds is a key priority for us at academy level, with specific measures in place to improve pathways and accessibility. Across all our teams, including our men's and women's academies, we're proud of our players from diverse backgrounds who have contributed to our history, success and culture. It's a priority for the club to continue to drive greater diversity and inclusion and create a sense of belonging for everyone connected to the club.