

CUSG meeting

Monday 18 October 2021 7pm

Club Operational Updates

Club

- Club chairman Andrew Jenkins and DoF David Holdsworth have made comment about Chris Beech leaving. David spoke to media this week about recruitment of a new manager, with him explaining the circumstances and approach <https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2021/october/dof-its-not-something-we-can-rush/>
- I will update and take any questions in the meeting.
- I attended an EFL all 72-club meeting at Walsall FC on Thursday where the EFL approach to the Fan-Led Review (FLR) was discussed, along with new approach to EFL club disciplinary matters in the light of many cases of club behaviour faced (Derby, Birmingham, Sheff Wed, Bury).
- In my view we are unlikely to see the impact of the FLR for over a year and any changes to the financial structure of the game won't be felt until late 2024, at the earliest.
- Successful awards dinner held by Community Sports Trust.
- The club continues to support our players in Taking the Knee, and the players really value that.
- There is no change or progress on change of ownership or control. No new meetings held. Again I will answer questions in the meeting as far as I am able.

Fan engagement

- We are pleased that rotation of chair of CUSG is proving beneficial and a number of fan initiatives progress forward, with new initiatives to come:
 - "My Club My Shirt" has advanced. Most of the photographs have been taken – most recently at St Herbert Community Hall – further update in the meeting.
 - Vinyl wraps and completion of Murphy's Bar décor now organised and to be in place in the coming month. New memorabilia installed with improved seating. It is now a much-improved bar.
 - SLO team is continuing to provide weekly post-match feedback to the club (SLO can detail) and giving match day support for fans via "meeters & greeters."
 - New eating tables in place on west side for improved catering experience, following fan feedback.
 - Additional shirts are on display on east side stairway walls, a dozen more to follow.
- Individual fans can, like always, question the club direct with any specific queries, as before. A fan guide detailing "Our approach to Fan Engagement" is on the website: <https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/siteassets/documents/fan-engagement-june-21.pdf> and for "Getting in touch" - <https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2021/may/fans-how-to-get-in-touch/>
- As said last month, a further meeting has been held with Anti-Racist Cumbria. We plan to announce that we are working together on community initiatives - including supporting its regional summit in November, and Black History Month celebrating former players.
- Shirt amnesty to donate old replica shirts for reuse to be launched, once the destination for where they will go is confirmed.
- NHS Vaccine bus visited as planned.

Stadium

- Spending priorities in 21/22 remain heavily weighted towards on-the-field and football department increases, which will continue to restrict stadium spending to essential matters.
- New football gym equipment in place.
- Further painting undertaken in west stand fan areas. This will continue.
- New fan mural installed on the west side – PR to follow when Dan is available.
- Electric works in the west stand to commence shortly – major project.
- Covid continues to place pressure on match day staffing availability with late drop-outs affecting ticketing, turnstiles and catering (despite overbookings).

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Tickets

- Ticket software issues have settled down. No issues at Forest Green or Tranmere.
- Contactless payment option for match tickets is now implemented.

Catering

- Contactless payment option now upgraded and will help to speed up the process.
- Further moves towards cashless are to take place – starting in Kiosks and Sporting Inn. Priority will be to cashless payment in these areas, with cash discouraged. This should improve speed of service and queueing times.
- The new APP for click and collect at seat ordering continues its trials (slower than hoped). This should improve the offering and further reduce the speed of service and queueing times. The “live” date will be confirmed in due course.
- Fan feedback on catering remains generally ok.
- Halstead Event Catering have been replaced by Stackerz Grill. They pulled out as it was unviable for them.
- Improvements in the catering have yet to flow through to increased catering income, which is something we are monitoring closely. Catering has to play a vital part in reducing operating losses. As catering develops the limitations of the stadium are being brought into sharp focus.

ifollow/ Season tickets

- Circa 500 fans for iFollow subscribed for Bristol Rovers (away), with roughly the same for Newport. Salford (home) was 287.
- Across the EFL, season tickets, attendance and away attendance are down vs 19/20 so far.
- Our L2 average so far is 4,839 (home 4535, away 303). After six home games the total average is:
 - +12% up (home 11% up) vs 19/20.
 - higher than 17/18 and 18/19.

Finances

- No new debt taken on or repaid since the last update. We will continue to operate as a self-sustaining club financially through 21/22, as we have since May 2019. This now includes absorbing the cost of a head coach change from our existing cash (using the proceeds from the player sales) and new recruitment to support a new head coach.
- I issued a full detailed update on club finances last month. I will continue to provide these around every quarter.
- Financial outlook and issues we face off the field are unchanged, and our overall financial position remains sound.
- As referred at previous CUSG meetings, the new guide for fans on Understanding the Club’s Finances is now on the website <https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/club/finances/understanding-club-finances>. With explanations, trend data over 5-6 years up to 30 June 2020. This is a great tool to fact check our finances.