



# MEETING MINUTES

Date : April 15, 2013

Location : Tyneside Irish Centre

## **Agenda**

1. PRESENT

2. SINGING SECTION

3. AWAY TRAVEL/TICKETING

4. SAFE STANDING

5. STEVE HARPER TESTIMONIAL

6. MEMORIAL GATES

7. WIGAN COSMOS & GOOSE GREEN



# MEETING MINUTES

## 1. PRESENT

GRAEME C, MARTIN D, STEVE H, TOM L, LEE M (NUFC), MATTY N, ELAINE P, ANDY S, SUSAN S, STEVE W, ZAHRA Z

Apologies: Malcolm D, Bill C, Ian C, Paul R, Wendy T, Rob M.

## 2. SINGING SECTION

The group has received a lot of emails regarding this issue wanting to know if it would possible for the singing section at St James' Park to be reinstated. It seems as if the Europa League games have brought this to the fore. Lee was not employed by the club when the singing section was present and asked the group's opinions as to why it had been stopped. The group felt that this was because the relationship between the club and the supporters was strained at the time. However, it was felt that things have moved on significantly since that time. It was felt that the club's PR is much better and the acceptance of past mistakes made has gone down well. Lee said that he will raise the issue with the club, but feels that it is unlikely that it could be adopted in time for next season as it would need a period of consultation; meaning there will not be enough time to implement it in time for next season. A point was put to Lee that many people in the singing section didn't renew their season ticket due to cost, as the section offered season tickets much cheaper than other areas of the ground.

## 3. AWAY TRAVEL/TICKETING

There have been a number of issues on this subject, particularly with the ticket office and ticket sales at the club shop. Complaints of poor customer service were raised with Lee. People have had to go to the club shop to amend tickets or obtain duplicates for tickets that hadn't arrived in the post. On one occasion it was said that a member of staff walked off with people still in the queue for ticketing issues. It was suggested that because their job roles are mainly retail, some club shop staff seemed to lack knowledge of ticketing issues and are unable to answer or resolve these enquiries. Other people have complained about ongoing issues which have meant several visits to the club shop, and because of the staffing, they have had to explain their situation from scratch on each occasion. There were also complaints about telephone calls to the box office had resulted in box office staff hanging up on callers. Lee said that he would raise these issues with the Box Office manager. It was suggested that the club consider a customer service/enquiries point be set up, manned by properly trained staff aware of ticketing and box office procedures.

A number of people have raise queries over the allocation and management of the loyalty points Scheme. It was put to Lee that there is some dissatisfaction regarding the manner in which loyalty points are earned. It was suggested to Lee that now might be a useful time for the club to review the loyalty points scheme and consider ideas such as additional loyalty points being awarded to those season ticket holders and members who attend early rounds of cup competitions. Lee said that he would forward the issue to those at the club responsible for coming up with incentives.



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## **4. SAFE STANDING**

Following on from the last meeting, a survey has gone live on the NUFC Fans United website. So far, 98% of respondents are in favour of safe standing. The survey will remain live for approximately another two weeks before closing. The information will then be passed on to NUFC so that the club can analyse the data and look into whether they feel they can back the safe standing campaign. The Football Supporters Federation is looking for clubs to endorse the scheme. So far five Premier League clubs are in favour, along with a number of Championship clubs. It was felt that if NUFC could voice its support for the principal of safe standing, it would add considerable weight to the campaign. NUFC Fans United have already won support for the campaign from representatives of Newcastle City Council and regional MPs. Lee stated that the club welcomed the efforts of the survey as well as its results and the club will need to develop its own informed opinion from both the survey and through a wider canvassing of supporters.

## **5. STEVE HARPER TESTIMONIAL**

It was recently announced that Steve Harper is due to leave NUFC at the end of the season. Steve has been at NUFC for twenty years, is from the area and is well liked and respected by the fans. It was felt that the club should reward Steve's loyal service with a testimonial game, and a number of people felt that it was disappointing nothing has been announced. Lee will raise the matter with Derek Llambias.

## **6. MEMORIAL GATES**

The Gates which used to stand at St James' Park and which have been entrusted to NUFC Fans Utd by Sir John Hall are ready to be collected from storage and restoration work commenced. As the club are now working with NUFC Fans United, they will undertake responsibility for having the gates restored and installed at St James' Park. Lee stated that the club hope this work will be completed over the summer and to have the gates installed in time for the beginning of next season.

## **7. WIGAN COSMOS & GOOSE GREEN**

Lee confirmed that as compensation the offer to play at St James' Park has been made to and accepted by both clubs.. Lee confirmed that a further announcement on this issue will be made by the club in due course, including details concerning the possibility of supporters being able to attend St James' Park to watch the game.