

Lionel Road Liaison Group Meeting (LRLG) Minutes

15 April 2019, 7:30pm – 9:30pm

Venue: Brentford Community Stadium, Reservation Centre, Heritage Walk, Kew Bridge Rd, London, TW8 0EF

Chair: Robert Gordon Clark, London Communications Agency

Project Team:

Brentford Football Club: Sally Stephens (SS), Jon Varney (JV), Alan Walsh (AW),

EcoWorld London: Lee Aylott (LA), Robin Goodlet (RG)

London Irish: Brian Facer (BF)

London Communications Agency: Robert Gordon Clark (RGC), Emma Crowe (EC), Emily Fisher (EF)

Attendees:

Dorothy Boland – Strand on the Green resident
Brian Burgess – Brentford FC Community Sports Trust
Andrew Dakers – West London Business
Keith Garner – Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
Tony Glanville – local resident
Phil Marchant – BIAS
Katherine Murphy – local resident
John Ormsby – Strand on the Green Association (SoGA)
Bob Perry – local resident
Marie Rabouhans – West Chiswick & Gunnersbury Society
Michael Robinson – Stile Hall Gardens resident
Andrew Ross – local resident
John Ricketts – Kew Society
Sally Smith – Hounslow Chamber of Commerce

Summary note: The format of the evening saw introductions from the group's chair, Robert Gordon Clark who introduced Brentford Football Club's new Chief Executive and the Chief Executive of London Irish who both attended the meeting. This was followed by a presentation from Lee Aylott, Project Director at EcoWorld London on the construction progress on site and Sally Stephens from Brentford Football Club on the plans for the stadium's opening. Informal discussion was welcomed and questions were asked at various points. For the purpose of these minutes and for ease of reading, questions and answers have been grouped and where requested during the evening, additional information has been added.

A. Welcome and introductions

Robert Gordon Clark (RGC), chair of the meeting welcomed everyone to the meeting, and explained that the location of the meeting was the new Reservation Centre for Brentford Football Club (BFC). RGC introduced the new (as of 6 weeks ago) Chief Executive of Brentford Football Club, Jon Varney.

Jon Varney (JV) introduced himself. He grew up locally and has been a longstanding Bees fan and season ticket holder. He expressed that he was really pleased and proud to become the Chief Executive of the club, and has big plans to make a difference for his team. **JV** has a track record in the world of commercial sport as both Commercial Director for Premiership Rugby and former co-owner of sports marketing agency Pitch International.



JV highlighted how next season will see the countdown to the farewell to Griffin Park, with an anticipated sellout for 10-15 matches, building up to the last ever game at the old ground. The move will bring the club closer to where BFC was founded – at a meeting in the Oxford and Cambridge hotel, near Kew Bridge.

He described how he wants the club to be a really good neighbour, and they are looking forward to building on the great work in the community already being undertaken by Brentford FC Community Sports Trust.

Brian Facer (BF) then introduced himself as the Chief Executive of London Irish for the past 18 months. At the end of December 2018, the Exiles agreed a deal with BFC to have a licence to play at the new Brentford Community Stadium. London Irish is also keen to encourage young people to take part in sport, embracing rugby's key values of social inclusion and respect. He added that it is an exciting time for all, and he is looking forward to adding value to the community.

B. Progress update and the upcoming programme

Lee Aylott (LA), Project Director, from EcoWorld London, presented the progress on site since the last meeting and the upcoming construction programme for the next three months.

LA informed the audience that he has been on this project since June, responsible for the day to day running of the site and is enjoying the challenges of delivering a stadium and new homes on a site which is surrounded by railways on all sides.

A time-lapse was played showing the progress on site since groundbreaking on 19 March 2018, just over a year ago.

LA recapped the key milestones which have been achieved in the last few months and highlighted some upcoming milestones to the summer:

- The frame, terracing, and roof at south, east and west stands are now complete, and the next stage will be progressing with the internal fit out.
- **LA** clarified that there was a slight delay with the north stand due to the logistics of the site, but this has now progressed and he expects the stand to be completed in the next few weeks.
- **LA** showed the audience photographs of the inside of the stadium, explaining that the internal fit out will start soon.
- The next job is to clear the ground inside the stadium in order to start work on the pitch construction in early June.
- The cladding panels have now started to be installed on the outside of the stadium.
- The northern access route is in place.
- The eastern bridge over the railway is now in place and will shortly be in use, and both tower cranes have been erected on the Central Eastern site.
- The residential blocks are on track and going up as planned.
- The third development site, Capital Court is well on track with ground works due to begin in August 2019.

C. Apprenticeships and community liaison update

- **LA** updated the meeting with the news that there are seven apprentices on site, three being from Hounslow and the others from neighbouring boroughs.
- Currently there are two apprentice positions being advertised to work in the new stadium development.
- Schools in the area have benefitted from talks on Health and Safety, and career opportunities in construction and development.
- Photos were shown from a recent event planting flowers with Green Dragon Primary School in advance of the marketing suite launch.

- The project continues to engage in local charity work and has donated to St Mungo's and the Suns and Stars Appeal.

D. Update on new stadium plans

SS updated the meeting on the plans for the new stadium.

- The Reservation Centre (the location of the meeting) has been opened, with premium seat hospitality packages already on sale and preparation is underway for the sale of Season Tickets at the new stadium later this year. Season Tickets for the Farewell Griffin Park season are also on sale.
- Sales of premium seats have been going really well. Around 65% of the premium seats from the first release have been sold, and a new section of stadium will be released shortly.
- The Club is working closely with London Irish as corporate customers are often interested in tickets for both.
- The Club has recruited a Farewell Griffin Park Project Manager and planning is underway for a number of special events to recognise the history and heritage of Griffin Park, and to give the old ground an appropriate send-off (also coinciding with the 130th anniversary of the Club).
- The Club is also developing plans for an opening ceremony at the new stadium.
- An indicative timetable was shown as part of the presentation. This shows that after Practical Completion in Q1 2020 there will be a series of three test events, which need to meet the requirements of the Council and the FA's Green Guide before the club is given a full safety certificate and the stadium is considered operationally complete. The Club is working with Hounslow Council to understand what it would like the Club to test during each event.
- The test events will test the stadium at different capacities. The first with around 2,000-5,000 people, the second with around 8,000-10,000 people and the third with 12,000-15,000 people.
- **AW** described that outline plans for the stadium's Transport Management Plan and Operations Manual (stewarding, ticket accessing, counter terrorism, routes to railway stations, unloading during events, departure and evacuations) have been drafted and the Club is already sharing documents with the council for review. Amendments to the plan will naturally be made after each test event as any lessons are learned.

E. Questions and Answers

Construction related questions

1. *Will there be lots of solar panels on the stadium?*

We have undertaken detailed solar studies and have identified 400sqm of roof space on the west section of the south stand roof that will work for the solar Photovoltaic Panels (PV).

2. *Have you been monitoring and managing air quality on the site?*

Yes. Throughout construction the air quality has remained well within parameters with, for example, measures taken to dampen down any dust. In addition, the phases that tend to create lots of dust (e.g. demolitions) have now been completed. All data has been captured from day one in order to adhere to planning conditions, and is available for review.

3. *What is the approach being taken to sustainability, including water?*

We can confirm in these minutes the following environmental sustainability measures:

- The stadium redesign reduces construction materials and energy usage
- The ecology value of the site will be increased through external planting
- Brise soleil shading and overhangs will help to cool the building and the stadium's glazing will be designed to minimise winter heating needs

- Building Energy Management System (BEMS) will be in place to centrally control plant and equipment and ensure the building is as energy efficient as possible
- There will be photovoltaic panels on the west section of the south stand roof
- Lighting sensors will control lighting based on occupancy and there is an energy efficient lift system
- Water leak detection and monitoring will be in place to reduce usage and there will be attenuation tanks to minimise surface water run-off with the grey water captured from the roof re-used for the pitch irrigation system.

4. *Will you consider again having a site-wide combined heat and power (CHP) network for this site? With so much development taking place in this area is it possible to co-ordinate with other developers?*

It was noted that this issue has been raised before and the infrastructure surrounding the site means it is just not possible to have a site-wide CHP network. However, each phase has its own dedicated CHP, which is like having a mini-energy centre for each residential building.

Regarding a combined effort, it is not possible to connect to infrastructure that isn't there. The issue is that utility companies don't have the ability to cater for everything all at once, so the development must work with what it has.

5. *Where and how will the old materials rescued from the old stable block be reused on site – will this be displayed and done properly?*

The drawings have been finalised about where and how the London stock brick and cobbles will be used and are being reviewed by the Council. We will be able to show you what is planned at the next meeting.

Action: EcoWorld London to present drawings of where and how the reclaimed materials will be used on site at a future meeting.

6. *There is concern regarding the Club's proposal to raise the height of the video screens within the stadium due to the impact it will have on the heritage of the area, and because it will create a real eyesore. Can there be a technical solution to have it on a mount so that it can be lowered when not in use?*

The screen needs to be raised higher to meet Premier League requirements. The screens are there primarily to compliment the sports and enable video action replay. Whilst the screen will be higher, it has been designed to work into the design of the stadium and will look similar to the roof structure so it is not an eyesore from a heritage point of view.


The screen could not be retractable as the weight loading and engineering motors would not work with the design of the roof.

The planning application has been submitted and is being considered by the Council.

7. *With these new screens, we are also concerned the stadium will be used for music concerts?*

Whilst the club could not completely rule out ever considering other events, such as concerts, it was noted that:

- a) The stadium does not have a licence for music and would need to seek planning permission to do this.
- b) The capacity of the Brentford Community stadium will be much smaller and therefore less attractive for this type of event than both the O2 and Wembley Arena.
- c) In addition, nearby Kew Gardens holds music events already.

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- d) Unlike venues such as the O2 and Wembley Arena, the window of opportunity to use the stadium for music events is very small and restricted to between seasons, which is the time the pitch needs to recover from use for both football and rugby union.
 - e) The proposed new screens wouldn't compliment the normal layout needed for music events.

Operational questions

8. How does crowd testing work?

We are waiting to find out from Hounslow Council what they want to test during the test events. But at present we imagine the first test event (2,000-5,000 people) would be a familiarisation event for people and we may have a training session running to encourage people to come. The main focus would be on entry and exit procedures. The second test would be more specific, with perhaps an evacuation practice, and a test of the fire safety system, PA announcements, and a blackout practice to see how live safety systems work. Test 3 would test full match day operations.

On matchdays we will have plans in place to encourage people to leave the ground at different times to reduce congestion e.g. people staying on to enjoy hospitality.

The Club will have people observing in the local area (not just right at the stadium itself) to pick up on any potential problems.

9. Will the test events be able to attract the capacities needed?

Yes. They will be promoted and we believe that lots of people, including local residents, will appreciate the opportunity to come and preview the stadium. RGC referenced the Spurs test events he had been to which lots of local residents attended. He also noted that in the case of the Brentford Community Stadium, the test events are due to take place much earlier in the overall programme, allowing lots of time for learning and reflection to be built in to the plans, well before the first competitive match.

10. Given the experiences we have had with music events at Gunnersbury Park, will there be people assessing the impact of volume from the stadium?

Yes there will be and a lot of work will go into this. By way of background:

- a) The design of the bowl and roof structures limit the amount of sound which emanates from the stadium
- b) In comparison, the sound from the Gunnersbury Park festival was not contained and therefore there was nothing to contain the frequencies.
- c) We have to consider the people working in the stadium and not expose them to excessive volumes, so this in itself limits the noise.
- d) The club is a good neighbour to the residents near Griffin Park, and when we are in the new stadium we will likewise need to consider people living around the site, so we will be testing this.

Transport and logistical questions

11. When will the Stadium Management Plan be ready, and will this cover the impact on the local community with fans moving to and from the stadium to the train stations?

Yes, this is all part of the planning we are currently working on and intend to address in at least one single issue meeting with local residents later this year.

Whilst residents understood that detailed discussions with the Council were essential, it was requested that engagement with the LRLG happened prior to the proposals being submitted to the Council, so that residents, with their valuable local knowledge, could feed in their views in a timely manner. BFC confirmed that they want to share the transport plans with the community and consider any comments they had to share. Specifically there remains concern about how fans will queue post-match at Gunnersbury station.



Action: Organise a meeting with the LRLG to discuss the Stadium Management Plans and transport arrangements for people arriving and leaving the stadium on matchdays.

12. *There has been no improvement work on either Gunnersbury or Kew Bridge Station yet, this is a concern.*

Unfortunately it was published on 4 April that Kew Bridge station was not selected to get the Access for All funding. 73 other stations were selected to benefit from this funding. The Government is however intending to use £20 million of the funding to re-launch the Mid-Tier Access for All programme. This will be focused on stations where accessibility improvements can be delivered with between £250,000 and £1 million of government support. We have already followed up with Hounslow Council who has met with SWR to discuss active progression of Kew Bridge and they are due to come back shortly with a project plan.

Action: Sally Stephens will liaise further with Mark Frost at Hounslow Council and South Western Railway find out more about potential availability of mid-tier funding.

13. *At the last meeting you said it was down to residents to speak to the council about CPZs. We have given them a petition and it is meant to be presented to the Council but this has still not happened. Are you able to follow up for us?*

Yes, we can of course raise this in our meetings with them but in the end this is an issue to raise with your ward Councillors and local MP directly.

14. *Who owns the yard at the back of the station, behind the platform? Could this be used as an exit from the platform?*

We understand the land is owned by Network Rail, however we believe a planning application for a residential development on the land has been approved meaning level access from Kew Bridge Road to the station platform won't be possible.

Use of the land was raised as part of the stadium planning application and a strip of land was held back from development to enable access by wheelchair users either by a ramp or a lift.

14. *Are the Cycle Superhighway 9 plans to narrow the pedestrian pavement on the Brentford side of Kew Bridge a worry for matchdays?*

We are looking into this and have passed details of the plans on to our transport consultants to identify whether there are any concerns from the perspective of the stadium and the development.

15. *What planning has happened to provide off-site parking spaces for matches? Where are you hoping to provide the parking spaces? If they are within walking distance that will have an impact on local traffic.*

In total the club is looking to have enough options to reach the 1,000 spaces we need to secure.

Detailed conversations have been happening with various organisations including a company which may provide 500 parking spaces off-site and local schools have shown an interest in providing parking spaces. The Club is also talking to a management company that has experience in managing similar contracts for other stadia.

Whilst the aim is to find some parking within walking distance, we know from stadium related travel, that fans are prepared to walk some distance to and from their cars on matchdays. And there may be some spaces within a few train or bus stops.

The Club is looking at every opportunity to find a compromise for both fans and local people. Interestingly, many fans have indicated they won't change their matchday routines but of course it may



be different for London Irish fans who will have a big change from where they are currently located, in Reading.

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