

Thank you all for attending today, can I start by thanking all those who are here and also to those members who have sent apologies. Thank you to the Griffin Pub for allowing us to use the restaurant for this meeting for the third year running and for supporting us throughout the year by hosting our executive committee meetings. It is strange to think that this will be my last annual statement with the club playing at Griffin Park. When I set foot in the new ground I will always remember that the move to Lionel Road would not be happening if it was not for the fans. It's seems incredible that it was back in 2013 when initial planning permission was granted and there was over 1,000 Brentford fans at the planning meeting in the Civic Centre until past midnight.

I would like to thank Lisa O'Brien for stepping up to the plate as secretary for the last year. Lisa has decided to relinquish the role due to family commitments but intends to remain on the Committee for the next year. Darren Castle has been nominated to replace Lisa as Secretary, so thank you to Darren for picking up the baton.

Last year we made a big change in that we agreed to remove the mandatory membership fee from the organisation. With the club making huge strides off the field and moving to the new stadium it is vital that we have a supporter's association that is reflective of the entire fan base. It became evident that we were not attracting enough new members using the traditional subscription model. This is something that I hope you will agree has been a success which you will see when Dave delivers his finance and membership report shortly. I hope you will join me in ratifying the motion later on to keep the membership free.

In my statement last year I spoke about the importance of a strong committee and I am delighted with how we have worked over the last year. I would also delighted to have two new committee members nominated to join the executive committee which can only help make us stronger. One of whom, John Kenkel, who regularly travels over from the USA to watch the Bees and runs the BIAS USA branch.

Events over the last year have been good, we have attended various diversity and inclusion events which have been put on by the club. We have agreed to have regular meetings with the new CEO, Jon Varney, and this will ensure that we have positive structured dialogue with the club going forward.

The working groups for the new stadium were positive, albeit we would have liked to have seen some additional meetings. We have had a number of good outputs from that which will directly benefit the fans, these are mostly around season ticket priorities, on sale dates and allocations. We are still pushing the club for a few other actions, such as an FAQ and pop up Q&A sessions and to also have some final closure meetings with those who attended the focus groups.

We continue to work with the other fan groups and club historians to see the club make changes to the naming of the lounges in the new stadium based on our collective recommendations. Ensuring that Brentford's legacy and history is not forgotten when we move to Lionel Road.

Our external meetings continued with the Metropolitan Police Football Unit via the Advisory Group alongside other London football clubs, where we discuss safety and other football related policing matters. We also continue to attend various other FSA led meetings, some of which can last several hours. So I would like give thanks to those on the committee who give up their spare time, sometimes on weekends to attend these.

As expected our primary focus for this forthcoming year will be ensuring we say farewell to Griffin Park in the most appropriate way and ensure that the old stadium gets the send-off it deserves. More importantly it will be about how we can transition to the new stadium, ensuring that everyone ends up in the correct area and pays the right price and gets the right experience that they want.

As we say goodbye to Griffin Park, it is important that the voice of Brentford fans continue to be heard. Being a BIAS member is the best way to achieve this, but to do this we need enough members to be effective. So if you know people who are not members, whether it be in person or on somewhere like Facebook then please get them to sign up. It only takes a few minutes and with every new member our voice gets stronger.

Our attendances will grow at the new stadium and the supporter base will become more transient and more diverse, we need to ensure our membership reflects that. As the club's stature increases no doubt they will continue to look at how they can make gains on the commercial side and it remains our responsibility to ensure that they do not forget about you and me, the ordinary fan.

It is easy to think that whilst everything is going well on the pitch, there is nothing to worry about off it. This couldn't be further from the truth, supporters groups play a vital role in protecting clubs, we are here to hold the club to account and we speak as one voice for all Bees fans.

I hope the coming year is a good one for the club both on the pitch and off it and I am determined to ensure that BIAS will still be here to represent you all and to ensure that as the club transforms, the core element that makes Brentford unique, is the thing that is constant - that is the fans.

So let's make this year a great final year at Griffin Park both on and off the pitch and ensure that the spirit of the old ground lives on at the new stadium.

Adam Hobbs