



Brentford Independent Association of Supporters (BIAS)

2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Date: 17th November 2021 at 18:00

Venue: Via Zoom Conference Call

Minutes

1. Attendees
 - Meeting attended by the following members of the BIAS Executive Committee (Quorum as defined by the BIAS Constitution):
 - Adam Hobbs (AH) – Chairperson
 - Phil Marchant (PM) – Committee Member
 - David Minckley (DM) – Finance Officer
 - Richard Nabarro (RN) – Committee Member
 - Darren Castle (DC) – Secretary
 - Richard Kirchner (RK) – Committee Member
2. Approve minutes of 2020 AGM
 - Minutes from the last AGM have been available on the BIAS website –
Minutes passed as accurate
3. Chairperson's Report
 - Please see Appendix A
4. Finance and Membership Report
 - Please see Appendix B
5. Motions
 1. Adoption of the Financial Accounts for the year ending 31st May 2021
 - ***Motion Passed by AGM***
 2. Approve retention of Jim Walsh as auditor for BIAS Financial Accounts
 - ***Motion Passed by AGM***
 3. Approve election of new members to the Executive Committee
 1. Ronald Mansveld
 2. Paul Stedman

3. Mark Chapman
4. Sarah Todd
5. Stephen Houlihan
- **Motion Passed by AGM**
4. Approve re-election of Executive Committee
 1. Adam Hobbs (Chairperson)
 2. Darren Castle (Secretary)
 3. David Minckley (Finance & Membership Officer)
 4. Phil Marchant (Committee Member)
 5. Richard Nabarro (Committee Member)
 6. Richard Kirchner (Committee Member)
- **Motion Passed by AGM**
5. Approve continuation of free membership to the Association
 - **Motion Passed by AGM**
6. Adoption of the BIAS 2022 Manifesto
 - **Motion Passed by AGM**
7. Adoption of the BIAS 2022 Mission Statement
 - **Motion Passed by AGM**

6. Q & A Session

- Question raised from the floor regarding liaising with TFL regarding closure of Gunnersbury Station for match days.
 - BIAS have engaged with the Club and police liaison officer but TFL are not engaging not only with BIAS, the club and the police as well. BIAS will keep pushing on this matter
- Question raised from the floor regarding communication with the club regarding incident between stewards and Oldham fans.
 - BIAS reported to club what was reported to us by the Oldham Supporters Trust. Club gave a statement that CCTV footage had been reviewed Oldham fans were not being well. In regards to confiscation of T-Shirts and flags this was a historic banning on protesting within stadiums which has carried over from Griffin Park which has now been rescinded.
- Question raised from the floor regarding due to an increase in Sunday and evening matches can we get the frequency of the H91 bus for after matches increased.
 - BIAS will raise with the Club to get it raised with TFL
- Question raised from the floor regarding the cost of postage (£2.50) when buying a ticket.
 - BIAS responded by stating there was a ticketing working group which raised this with the club and pushed for it to be removed but a comprise of reducing the cost to £1 was reached to cover postage costs.

- Question raised from the floor regarding the unhappiness about quality of beer and lack of food options.
 - BIAS fed back on catering and hoping to have a meeting with Levy group to discuss catering options and potentially try out different options and feedback. Club has a pouring rights deal with Asahi so can only buy from Asahi brand. This is an outstanding action from our meetings with Jon Varney. Correspondence received during the meeting from the club asking for representation from all stands to attend the catering meeting.
- Question raised from the floor about the exit procedures from the stadium to the station and how uncomfortable they are.
 - BIAS stated this is not a health and safety issue unless there is a risk of crushing. Exit is slow and there are big queues but not personally witnessed anything unsafe.
- Question raised from the floor regarding issue from exiting the stadium using your bike as there is an issue that fans have to carry bikes up the steps. Is there a possibility they could put a ramp in to avoid hitting others with their bike.
 - BIAS will raise this with the club.
- Question raised from the floor regarding if the club will make more of the wheelchair scheme for match day access and if you can book in advance.
 - BIAS will raise this with the club
- Question raised from the floor regarding volume of match day tickets for sale outside of season tickets.
 - BIAS informed this is a fluid number depending on allocation of away tickets and segregation between away fans. There should be circa 2000 match day tickets for members.

7. Meeting Closed

- Meeting closed 19:00

Appendixes –

Appendix A - Chairperson's Report

Good Evening everyone, thank you for all attending tonight for our 2021 AGM. And welcome to all our new members who have joined in the last year. Last year was the first time we were held our AGM online, with our hand forced due to government restrictions.

The committee discussed the possibility of hosting the meeting again physically but concluded that we would be able to reach more people by keeping this meeting on-line.

In my speech last year I mentioned the disappointment of about the club already playing at Lionel Road and us fans not being able to see us play there yet. Since then as you well know we have already had some amazing games at our new home. The Incredible comeback in play-off semi-final against Bournemouth set a high benchmark for what could be possible at our new fortress and with that was with only 4,000 lucky people there too. That was blown out of the water as our own club proudly opened the 2021/22 Premier League on a magical Friday evening against Arsenal to a global audience of billions. The noise when Hey Jude rang round the ground is something I will never forget, the result of course made it even more special. Following that with more special evenings matches against Liverpool and Chelsea, you the fans have played such an incredible part in making the move from Griffin Park seamless. So much so that Chelsea's Ben Chilwell described the atmosphere as 'Hell on earth', despite Chelsea coming away with all undeserved 3 points.

It has become evident that we have a very special ground that we should be proud of.

And the reason we should be proud is because it is the fans the made it happen. The incredible work of BIAS, via it's Stadium Action Group, as well the ABeeC political party all working tirelessly to ensure the club, politicians and local residents were all in support of the proposal of a possibility of a new stadium not only within the borough, but within Brentford. If you want to see more about this there is a great exhibition on show at the Steam Museum which I highly recommend going to on the next match day.

Fan representation continues to make national headlines, the Government honoured its commitment to a fan led review on football. BIAS gave evidence to Tracey Crouch and her review panel. The initial report has been issued and has some good recommendations around fan representation and governance, we look forward to seeing the final report and seeing the recommendations put into action.

I have spoken many times about the importance of a strong committee. This year we have five new people, who have been nominated to join the Executive Committee, some of which are old faces and some are new. Welcome to our new nominees.

When new people join the committee it usually also means that some people are leaving, this year there will be a big loss as Gemma Teale has decided to step down from the committee after many years of service. Gemma has always been our strongest voice at BIAS, never scared to speak up, never scared to be the voice of the fans when others chose to remain silent. Her commitment to ensuring that Brentford is a safe place for all fans will be missed. Gemma is also the founder of the LGBeeT's group so no doubt our paths will cross many times as BIAS continues to campaign for equality, diversity and inclusion in the game.

Gemma has dedicated so much time to both the campaigns for the new stadium but also to the safe standing campaigns. I am grateful that she has agreed to continue to work with BIAS on Safe Standing, as the likelihood of the club bringing safe standing to Lionel Road for the 2022/23 season now looks increasingly likely.

I'd also like to thank the rest of the committee for their brilliant hard work in the last year. There have been a lot of high publicised issues from the club since the start of the new campaign, from the late delivery of season tickets, faults of the ticketing system, access to and facilities at the stadium. It is our job as a fans group to hold the club accountable for these issues and ensure that these things do not happen again.

We also attend lots of external meetings with bodies such as the FSA, Premier League, Metropolitan Police. Certainly enough to ensure that our new colleagues in the Premier League know who we are.

We have now been running without membership fees for three years and this has allowed us to increase our membership base significantly, be more reflective of our fan base and reach out to more people. Once again there will be a motion to continue this for another year shortly and I hope that will be passed.

Finally I'd like to thank all our members for their patience over this last year which has been difficult for many people. Whatever is thrown at us over the coming months by the government or the Premier League, we will ensure that everyone is treated fairly and that your voice is heard.

Thank You.

Appendix B

2021 AGM Finance and Membership Report

Finance

- BIAS Accounts for the year ending 31st May 2021 have been audited and approved by Jim Walsh our independent auditor.
- Total balances for the end of the financial year (31st May 2021) amounted to £28304.43 which **I am pleased to report is an increase of £2211.38 compared to 31st May 2020**. This includes a donation of £500 for Jamie Powell made in October 2020 and costs incurred to upgrade the BIAS Website Domain amounting to £54.20.
- Membership donations continue and are very much appreciated. This coupled with reduced administration costs continues to place our finances on a very healthy footing.
- Total balances as at 31st October 2021 amount to £29392.53 a further increase of £1088.10, this includes a small profit following the BIAS sponsored boat to West Ham on the 3rd October.

Membership

- We continue to see our membership grow, as at the end of October 2021, we have 1223 Full members and 22 Junior Members making a total of **1245** BIAS Members
- This figure includes 13 Full Members who are making monthly standing order payments, but we do not have an email address nor have they responded to our letters – we are continuing to investigate
- This year we have seen our membership grow by over 200 new members achieving our 2021 Mission Statement membership target
- At the end of October we also had 1177 members on the BIAS Facebook page which is an increase of 89 since the last AGM.

Summary

- In summary BIAS continues to be in a healthy financial state with a growing membership and we are well placed to build on this over the next 12 months, working to improve the match day experience for all fans