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## Supporters Consultation Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017

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### Attendees:

From the Club:

Lee Hoos - CEO

Mark Donnelly - COO

Jordan Hayes – Digital Marketing Manager

David Scriven – Webmaster

From Aqueduct:

Mark Folbigg

Gareth James

Prash Menon

Lee Cook

Guillaume Baut-Menard

Supporters Consultation Committee (SCC):

Duane Harvey – Corporate Box Holder

Steve Hodgkiss - Lower Loft

Stephen Dedridge – QPR 1<sup>st</sup>

Tania Hillman – W12

Steve Sayce – Indy R's

Bill Cox (LSA) – Loft Upper

Gobi Ranganathan – X Block

Jeremy Gardener – QPR 1<sup>st</sup>

Clive Whittingham – LoftForWords

Matthew Woolf – We Are The Rangers Boys

Saffa Michail – qprdot.org

Eusebio Barata – QPRReport

Simon Dorset – AKUTR's

Robert Bennett – LSA

Paul Finney – QPR Pod

### Minutes:

Jordan Hayes

ACTION POINT
<b>ACTION POINTS - from last meeting:</b>
All in agreement that everything has been covered/actioned from the last meeting
<b>ACTION POINT</b>
<b>New Website</b>
Lee Hoos begins the introductions by explaining that the 17 year FLi deal is due to expire shortly and the club made the decision to create a new website. Aqueduct were selected as the agency tasked with designing the new site and are here this evening to give a presentation to the Supporters Consultation Committee (SCC).
Gareth James from Aqueduct explains that the agency have had regular consultation with fans over the past 12 months including Skype calls with overseas supporters and have created fan persona's. They asked fans what they wanted from the site and revealed to the SCC a matchday model which shows what fans want to see from the new site, and revealed how in depth they have considered the local area and history of the club.
Mark Folbigg from Aqueduct then takes the SCC through a demo of the site on the projector, and David Scriven

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hands out iPads to allow the SCC to test the new site.

SCC: What's happening with QPR PlayerHD?

DS: The new video platform will be free to view content, you'll just have to register for free on [qpr.co.uk](http://qpr.co.uk) to view it. The only content that will be behind a pay wall will be live coverage of fixtures. Highlights the next day after a game will still go out at Midday and will be free to view.

LH: Still in discussions with the EFL on the price point for the overseas live streaming service.

DS: Single Sign On will be coming, allowing supporters to link their ticketing/retail/QPR PlayerHD accounts together. Hoping to have this ready for launch, and supporters will be able to view their QPR Cash on both the website and the new app.

SCC: Why can't UK supporters stream live matches?

DS: We'd love our UK fans to be able to live stream matches, but that's not possible due to both the leagues broadcast deal and the UEFA legislation that doesn't permit any 3pm game to be shown live in the UK.

SCC: Is anything missing from the old site?

DS: No, the old site is currently too cluttered and therefore has been condensed.

SCC: The new app seems to work well for connectivity but aside from that the stadium is really poor for 3G/4G signal. Will the new website improve this?

DS: The site is optimised for mobile and so will load quicker. There are pockets of Free Public Wi-Fi around the stadium. We have looked many times into in-stadia Wi-Fi but the cost is extortionate and it's not something many football clubs have been able to crack.

SCC: When will the site launch?

MF: End of June.

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### **ACTION POINT**

#### **Season Tickets**

LH: 28 days remaining of the Season Tickets. Lots of new people on board, and we are up on sales from last year with 28 days of the Loyalty Window to go. Lots of people taking up on the new interest free direct debit scheme which is good to see.

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### **ACTION POINT**

#### **Licencing**

Mark Donnelly: New licencing terms will be in place from next season which are much better. Hospitality areas remain unchanged; public areas will change as we'll be able to serve in the kiosks until 5minutes after kick-off. The bars can then re-open 15mins before half time until 15mins after the second half kicks off.

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### **ACTION POINT**

#### **QPR Cash**

SCC: QPR Cash seems a really good scheme. Can I redeem my QPR Cash online?

Jordan Hayes: Yes, QPR Cash can be redeemed at the Online Superstore or in-store. You need to create an Online Superstore account which will need to match the details of your ticketing account. To view your account details you just login with your surname and client reference number at [myqpr.co.uk](http://myqpr.co.uk). Any questions please email me.

SCC: Has this been promoted to supporters?

JH: Yes, a number of emails have been sent to those eligible for QPR Cash reminding them about the scheme and prompting supporters to redeem the Cash. It has also been promoted on social media, in our matchday programme, on the big screen and via SMS. We will continue to promote this heavily over the next 3 weeks as supporters have until 31<sup>st</sup> May to spend their balance this season.

SCC: Can it be redeemed on match tickets? Or even to reduce the cost of my season ticket?

LH: That's one we may look at in the future.

SCC: Overall it seems a really good scheme, and is a benefit to season ticket holders that we weren't expecting.

### **ACTION POINT**

#### **Training Ground**

SCC: Do you have an update on the bonds scheme we discussed previously?

MD: Yes. R Bonds survey was sent out and there seems to be some appetite for the scheme. We'd like to open up the survey to more people soon to gauge a wider opinion. The scheme has been very successful at the Oval, Lancashire Cricket Club and the Jockey Club. It wouldn't be exclusive to QPR fans, but we'd expect mostly QPR fans will be interested.

SCC: How much cash would we want to raise?

MD: Based on the training ground costing around £15-16m, we'd hope to raise between £7-10m.

LH: If we finance this correctly, it seems like a no brainer. It's been an extraordinary journey to get to where we are so far.

MD: In relation to the legal challenge we are waiting to hear if the objectors will appeal which we expect they will. This process is likely to take 4 months for the courts to decide whether there is grounds for an appeal.

LH: We keep clearing hurdles but new hurdles get created. We are not guaranteed to win, but we are confident that we'll be successful. Eventually we'll get this through as it's so crucial for the future. The Bond seems to be a win-win.

SCC: How long will it take to build?

MD: Expected build should be around 2 years.

SCC: is the next stage sorting out the footpath?

MD: Yes, following the JR appeal the footpath appeal is scheduled for September.

### **ACTION POINT**

#### **Stadium Update**

LH: There has been speculation that we are looking at the Linford Christie Stadium – we believe this would be a win-win for us, the Council, and Thames Valley Harriers Athletics team as well as bringing wider community benefits. Before we begin to look at hiring architects we plan to engage thoroughly with the stakeholders (residents, the hospital, the prison etc.), talking to as many people as we can about the area to get their opinions right at the start of the process. At some point we'll need your help to engage with the fan base.

SCC: Is Old Oak dead in the water now?

LH: We haven't binned the idea altogether, but there are huge difficulties with that site.

SCC: Old Oak was going to be financed from development is that still the case with the plan for the Linford Christie site?

MD: Financing any new stadium is difficult and we see residential development playing a key role although not on the site. We are currently working with Genesis Housing on a residential development called Oaklands and there are other land holdings we own. We also plan to create value from the development of the Loftus Road site.

SCC: How big is the new site?

MD: 16 acres. To put that into perspective, Loftus Road is approximately 5 acres.

LH: The new site will hopefully have a football stadium and a new adjacent community sport and athletic facility on the site. QPR is so embedded with the community; it really makes sense to plan to build a new stadium with the community at the heart of it. We'd love to do things like using the facilities for residents, education, training and health care – ideas include using the kitchens for cooking classes etc.

SCC: Does the Wormwood Scrubs Act of Parliament affect us?

LH: Yes it is very complicated but we have taken legal advice and understand the various stages and permissions that will be needed. It is a challenging site, and there is a lot of work to do but if we establish feasibility we need to ensure we address various stakeholder concerns.

SCC: How big would the stadium be? Are we still looking at 40,000?

LH: No, a 40,000 capacity is too much – it should be remembered that the original proposition at Old Oak was very different. We need to consider the Championship model and in the Championship it would be very difficult to sell 40,000 tickets. Looking at what Leicester and Southampton have done, 30,000 would seem about right.

SCC: Who owns the land?

MD: The Borough owns it, but the Trust governs it.

LH: We are keen to work with the Trust and demonstrate that we can overcome any concerns or possible issues.

SCC: Are there any other sites in West London aside from these 2, or will it be looking down the A40 corridor if unsuccessful?

MD: At the moment there aren't any other sites in Hammersmith and Fulham – we have looked at many sites over the last few years but they have been used for other developments. Linford Christie looks to be the only option that would keep us in the Borough.

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### AOB

#### Stan Bowles

LH: There has been a breakthrough. People on the committee are now realising it is harder than first thought to organise this game. We can't do a testimonial as Stan didn't play for us for 10 years and there are VAT issues with a testimonial. There is a viable solution which is to do it through the Community Trust and set up a Players Foundation which doesn't attract VAT. We still want the Foundation to be going in 20 years' time, helping many former QPR players who are in ill health. Events such as golf days, dinners, quiz nights etc. can be done to raise money. Currently only 262 donations have been made to Stan's Just Giving page which isn't many at all. We as a club will be doing everything we can to promote the Stan Bowles Benefit Match at the end of July.

The SCC were in agreement that it is a good idea to keep the foundation going for many years.

#### Sustainability

LH: Whilst Losses were reduced to £11m which took a lot of work, our parachute payments decrease even further next year, and in 2 years' time become non-existent if we aren't promoted. Therefore we may have to generate cash through player sales which is why The Academy is crucial to our future. The Academy scouting department is vastly improved; Gary Karsa is doing a great job there. Tricky giving players 3 year contracts as that final third year is when parachute payments will have disappeared. The shareholders have converted debt into equity which a real sign of them taking financial responsibility. The £4m Barclays loan will be paid back in the next 4 months.

SCC: Will we have to sell players to generate revenue?

LH: It's possible. At the moment, we are trying to get our Operation costs down from around £8m to £6.5m. Ticketing

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revenue is only £5m so isn't even paying for the Operation costs. Player contracts are your biggest liability but the players are also our biggest asset. Sensible contracts will deliver success.

SCC: Who makes the decision to sign a player?

LH: The scouts identify players, and if they like the look of someone and the manager and Les are happy, and I approve it from a budgetary perspective, the player will get signed.

SCC: Will many players leave this summer?

LH: It's clear which players are in our thoughts going forward and those that aren't. It's also clear to us where we need to plug a gap, but we don't need too many. Once you get a reputation for spending big it's hard to shake that off but we're getting there.

### **Fan Zone**

SCC: The Fan Zone appears to have been a great success, will this continue next season?

LH: Yes. We had Imperial College there a few weeks ago with multiple stands in the car park which was a real success.

SCC: Can we get alcohol down there for the parents?

LH: Local residents didn't allow this last time, but we can look into this again. Also want to increase catering options at the Fan Zone.

Lee Hoos says he will look into a number of issues raised by individual members of the committee including disabled supporters not being able to renew their season ticket online, a collectable item to replace season cards, away coaches and programme subscriptions.

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**NEXT MEETING: September 2017**

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