

# **DERBY COUNTY SUPPORTERS CHARTER GROUP MEETING: 07/10/24**

---



## **Meeting Details:**

Monday 7th October 2024, 6:30pm start in the Boardroom at Pride Park Stadium

## **Attendees:**

Nick Webster  
Andy Ellis - Derby County Collection  
Angie Kerry - Rams Trust  
Lynn Hemsworth - Derby County Supporters Club  
Nigel Owen - Black and White Together  
Gary Dempsey - Derby County Disabled Supporters Club  
Jas Gidda - Derby County Supporters Board  
Steve Wilson - Derby County Supporters Board  
Derby County Owner - David Clowes  
Derby County Chief Executive Officer - Stephen Pearce  
Derby County Chief Commercial Officer - Dave Biggar  
Derby County Chief Operating Officer - Simon Carnall  
Derby County Head of Communications - Tom Loakes  
Derby County Deputy Head of Communications - Olli Milligan  
Derby County Head of Ticketing - Tyrone Harta  
Derby County Head of Marketing - Megan Booley  
Derby County Supporter Liaison Officer - Sarah Wade  
Derby County Matchday and Fan Engagement Lead - Sophie Roddie

## **Apologies:**

Punjabi Rams, Rams Active.

## **Pre-Meeting Discussion:**

None

## **Agenda Topics:**

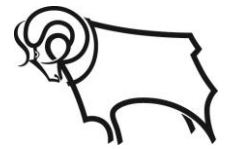
### **1. MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM LAST MEETING**

#### **Founders' Grave**

*A: The club has received numerous requests over recent years regarding tributes for ex-players and ex-managers in a variety of different ways. It is impossible to facilitate/fund every request, but whenever possible the club naturally wants to honour and respect the memories of ex-players and ex-managers. The club will continue to review each request on a case-by-case basis and provide an update if/when there is a change to this policy.*

#### **Player Unique Numbers**

*A: This has now been published online. As part of Derby County's plans to honour and recognise its 140-year history, the Legacy Numbers will be installed in Harrison's Hub at Pride Park Stadium as part of further heritage plans, which will be communicated to fans in due course. The installation will be updated during the close season, and heritage*



plans are being finalised with resources already assigned. The club are also investigating the possibility/practicality of incorporating Legacy Numbers on current players' shirts.

**DCFCMegastore parking**

*A: The club will schedule repainting of the parking bays.*

**Signage to Pride Park Stadium**

*A: This is something which falls under the remit of the local council to change. The club will discuss with the relevant people but are aware that any change will come at a cost for the council.*

**Derby County Board Membership** – Update, if possible, plus are there any plans to introduce additional members to the Board - including perhaps a fan representative - in order to facilitate more independent challenge and to deliver a broader range of skill sets and points of view?

*A: There is no fresh update to provide on this.*

**2. SUPPORTERS' BOARD**

Update from two Supporters' Board members and discussion on how the two groups will work together in future.

*A: The Supporters' Board is now in place, as has been communicated to supporters. Two official meetings, and one informal gathering, have been staged in recent months. As the Supporters' Board is only recently launched, things are in their infancy and roles and a way of working are currently being determined. The recruitment process was communicated externally, and it was open for anybody to apply. The Football Supporters' Association have guided the club a lot, with their best practice model being followed. It is expected that the progress made in the early stages of the Supporters' Board will become visible in the next few months. The Supporters' Board want to work closely with the Supporters' Charter Group. The plan is to have attendees at upcoming meetings to maintain regular dialogue and be able to take questions and feedback away.*

**3. SUPPORTERS' BOARD GOVERNANCE**

**Terms of reference for the Supporters' Charter Group** - These were discussed last season but haven't been formally agreed. What is the process for this?

*A: This work is currently ongoing and being discussed by the Supporters' Board.*

**Frequency of meetings** - Can these be held three times a season to mirror the arrangement for the Supporters' Board?

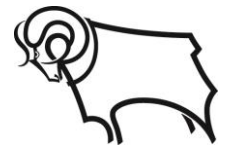
*A: The club is happy to mirror the same arrangement.*

**4. SUPPORTER EXPERIENCE**

**Protecting the memorial bricks outside the East Stand** - Can the club please fix the broken barriers that protect the personalised bricks, and make sure Block 6 has additional movable barriers placed in front to protect it?

*A: This club will ensure the bricks are protected and regularly cleaned.*

**Women's team** - Can the DCFCMegastore print shirts using the Women's team fonts, please?



**A:** *A limited quantity of Derby County Women home shirts (both Women's and Men's fit, and in a variety of sizes) will be on sale next month via the DCFCMegastore. Unfortunately, letters and numbers in the Women's team font are not available due to minimum order quantity cost (at this stage the club can only provide letters and numbers in the EFL team font) but the shirts will feature the league badge and associated sponsor/partner logos.*

**Merchandise** - Fanatics are unwilling to support selling Popside Fanatics' merchandise, which is fair enough. Mick has asked if we can do club merchandise with badges, and it's been approved verbally. Can we have some kind of stall either in the concourse or outside of the ground for Popside Fanatics and other groups to sell merchandise/memorabilia? The profit goes into more flags etc.

**A:** *The club cannot assign any third-party(ies) permission to utilise its copyrighted/trademarked IP Rights for retail purposes nor can the club accommodate any third-party(ies) retail stalls within the Pride Park Stadium footprint.*

**Post-match players' entrance** - Why have the arrangements been changed for fans? Fans are now penned in like sheep, pushed around and treated with total disrespect by heavy-handed security. A lady in a wheelchair was recently brought to tears by security who refused to let her speak to any player and made her move several times.

**A:** *Barriers are in place for two reasons. Health and safety is the first, to protect people from traffic moving in the car park and also from a traffic management perspective to ensure vehicles leave the stadium in a timely manner. The other is safeguarding, so the club fulfils its requirements to supporters and staff. This does not, however, stop players having photographs and signing autographs. The players are more than happy to stop and chat to supporters, as has been proven so far this season. The club are always happy to monitor this situation.*

**South Stand Bars** - Maybe the Middlesbrough home game and early kick off led to increased demand in sales, but queues were pretty horrific at half time. Is demand there to perhaps install another outside bar? Bear in mind the original bar covered its costs after a certain number of games. Appreciate staffing maybe an issue but service needs to be quicker in some shape or form - this is where the smaller bottle bars really helped.

**A:** *The bar currently in-situ covered its costs after 12 games, and the club is reviewing the merits of installing another outside bar unit adjacent to that already in-situ.*

**Bars** - Feedback from many members is that the beer is very poor (despite queues) and prices keep going up and up. Appreciate inflation etc but it's got to be 'affordable' - if the prices cannot be lowered can we perhaps look at doing a special game of £3 odd a pint and see where the bottom line takes us?

**A:** *As part of its long-term partnerships with the club, Delaware North and Molson Coors (both of whom have similar partnerships with a multitude of stadia and sports entities) continue to monitor and, where appropriate, address the quality, resources, and pricing of refreshments which, for the latter, are competitively/comparably priced.*

**The Yard** - Opening up so late (for example the Carlisle and Middlesbrough games) is a huge loss of business and inconvenience to many. Are licensing laws preventing this opening up earlier for the early kick off games? It would be great to open up at 9am for these games with an offering of bacon cobs if possible. Will The Yard be opening up in the week?

**A:** *The club is assessing operating times and opportunities/improvements for The Yard. On matchday, earlier kick-offs influence supporters' arrival times at the stadium and other factors also need to be considered including competition, demand, resources, etc. In the interim, the Baseball Lounge is proving to be a popular facility for supporters wanting pre-match refreshments (Admission Price: £5 Adults & £3 Concession).*

**Fans' Park** - Anymore update on the outside venue with Fan Park plans?



**A:** *Due diligence including initial designs and costings have been conducted for a Fans Park but plans are currently on hold subject to timelines and significant investment required.*

**Away tickets singing section** - Are the club promoting this as well as they can be? Seems to be a lot of fans in there who don't like the noise. I know it clearly states on website when buying a ticket but seems to be an issue. Have the club noticed or had feedback on this? Is it selling out early in relation to other blocks?

**A:** *This is clearly visible online for fans purchasing tickets for away fixture. It is not included in the on-sale information, as changes can be made at the last minute on several occasions and this has happened for some recent away fixtures. The singing section has, this year, been one of the last blocks to sell out.*

**Pre-match entertainment** - Can Popside Fanatics supply alcohol in and around the ground, or closest point, and sell merchandise? Manchester United have some streets around the ground where this is deemed acceptable. Or maybe sort something with the council where the Velodrome car park is?

**A:** *This is not something the club can facilitate, unfortunately.*

**Flags/Banners** - Can we get support from the club? Only appears to be Paul Warne who is mentioning it in interviews last season and this.

**A:** *The club is keen to keep the excellent atmosphere going at Pride Park Stadium. Paul Warne and the players will keep pushing for the atmosphere to remain as impressive as it has been. The club will look at some ways internally to help to continue to highlight the brilliant support and backing and encourage more of the same.*

**Can the club explain the situation with the standing in the East Stand near the away supporters?**

**A:** *Firstly, following the SGSA (Sports Ground Safety Authority) issuing a stern warning to Derby County concerning larger pockets of supporters **persistently standing** in seated areas whilst a match is in progress, we'd like to offer a sincere **"Thank You"** to the vast majority of supporters located in both East Stand Lower I and East Stand Upper J for assisting with the club's endeavours to comply with its licensing conditions.*

*Because of the angle of its raked seating/steps and other mitigating factors, the South Stand and Southeast Corner (Away Supporters) stands were identified/approved by the SGSA as the only areas for installing safe standing barriers. And, subject to due diligence, consultation and further investment, including the potential installation of safe standing barriers in its lower sections, **persistent standing** whilst a match is in progress continues to be tolerated by the SGSA in the lower sections of the South Stand and Southeast Corner (Away Supporters) stands only.*

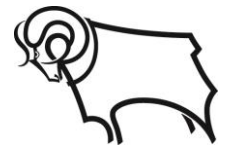
**Players** - Any chance current players or ex-players can support with the gigs pre-match? Currently at the White Horse. Not for financial gain but just to be a part of what Popside Fanatics are doing.

**A:** *Non-playing current players would unfortunately not be available on a matchday, owing to either training sessions, treatment or matchday commitments. The club has no issue with ex-players taking part in these events, but they should be approached and, if necessary, compensated directly.*

**Black Bins** - Can these be placed in the South Stand so all flags can be placed there after each home game?

**A:** *No problem at all and the club will make the required arrangements.*

**Music** - A discussion that has gone on and on for years and aware you will never please everyone, but many calling for change before half and full time.



**A:** *This is constantly reviewed by the matchday operations team, with an understanding that this topic will never be able to facilitate everyone's tastes. The club do have regular discussions about what works on a matchday to help build/improve the atmosphere and mix up the music on a regular basis. A new video screen was installed last season, and the club are looking at ways to utilise this further to improve and enhance the atmosphere.*

### **5. PLAYING AND STAFF MATTERS**

**1974/75 50th Anniversary** - Can you update us on plans and ask how we can get involved in and support this?

**A:** *The club will provide an update in due course but be assured that work is ongoing regarding celebration plans.*

**Staff wellbeing** - What, if any support, is available for Derby County employees around psychological safety? Especially given the trauma of administration, do staff have any access to counselling services and also is there any 'freedom to speak up' service, or similar way of raising concerns confidentially when necessary?

**A:** *Staff do have support from the club and not just for those that were employed during administration. There are the correct policies and procedures in place to speak up or raise concerns confidentially, as with any workplace.*

**Women's Team** - With Forest going full-time and moving to the City Ground are there plans to do the same with Derby County Women?

**A:** *What the club want to do with the Women is, first of all, continue the excellent work which has taken place in recent years. Taking the Women's club on board has seen the club launch the Female Talent Pathway with the Community Trust. The aspiration is there to be as high as possible in the Women's game, but not by throwing money at it. There is little funding and sponsorship externally, which is why the club appreciate the backing of its sponsors to support the Women's side. The club wants the youngsters coming through the youth system to see a pathway to progressing to the first team. If many players were signed from elsewhere, this would lose the connection and not show the pathway. The club remain ambitious but wants to provide an experience for local girls to play for their club. There are no plans to go full-time at this moment and this doesn't actually support the staff there and players currently with the Women's set-up. The club does not want to rip this up and lose what has been built, therefore are very much behind organic growth.*

### **6. CLUB GOVERNANCE**

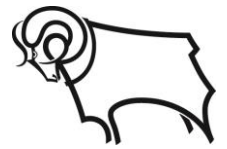
**Investment** - Are there currently any active initiatives or at least firm plans in place designed to bring additional investment into the Club?

**A:** *There is no update on David Clowes' stance from when he first purchased the club in 2022. He has stated he would always look for potential investment and have conversations, but nothing will be done unless there are the right people and in the right circumstances. The business plan is being followed and Supporters' Board is in place. If and when there is an update, it will be issued.*

**Ownership of Pride Park Stadium** - At present the stadium is held by a separate limited company to that of the Football Club. This was presumably due to the needs of the mechanism required to take the club out of administration and to buy the stadium back from Mel Morris, but are there now any plans to bring the stadium and the club together, with the latter taking legal ownership of the former?

**A:** *The stadium and the football club will never be separated and will be owned by the same company/individual, albeit as two different companies.*

### **7. ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**



**1.** What is the club doing about the abuse of Away Ticket Memberships, with fans selling tickets on social media from higher away category purchases, which never make it to lower categories of Away Ticket Memberships or general sale?

**A:** *The club have the ability to cancel tickets and Away Ticket Memberships. As and when cases are officially brought to the club, these are acted on. In the first case, supporters are issued with a warning and if a repeat offence occurs this results in cancellation of Away Ticket Membership under 3.3.7 of the club's ticketing terms and conditions.*

**2.** Can the club start posting content from men's games on Threads as well as Instagram and X? A growing number of fans are so fed up with X they have migrated over to Threads.

**A:** *The club is continuing to monitor use of Threads by other clubs and sporting entities to gain an understanding of the benefits of the platform before making a commitment to utilising this on a regular basis. The Communications Team/RamsTV have invested additional time into growing and developing the TikTok account this season, as well as its other existing social channels.*