

CUSG 30 May 2023

Club update


This update is, as usual, focused on operational matters within the remit of the 1921 Operational Board. I will take any further questions from CUSG groups at the meeting on 30 May 2023 and answers will be detailed in the minutes.

Issue	Reference/Comments	Status
Supporters		
<p>CUSG hosted a fans' forum in Foxy's Restaurant on Thursday 13 April (6.30pm to 8pm) with club shareholders, directors and the first-team manager present.</p> <p>The second fans forum will be held before 30 June 2023.</p>	<p>https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2023/march/forum-join-the-manager-and-directors-next-month/</p> <p>Date tbc</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>June 2023</p>
<p>Warwick</p> <p>The club has worked with the Warwickroadenders and CUOSC to introduce flags to add to the match spectacle. These started vs Tranmere. We hope this continues.</p>	<p>SLO and club are working with the new Warwick Road End group to support their efforts.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Bars</p> <p>The west side ground floor lounge used by players will be dedicated to Alan Ashman in Q2. We are looking at options for McConnell's bar for 23/24 to increase usage. This will include sponsorship and commercial use.</p>	<p>TBC</p> <p>Details TBC</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>Information</p>
<p>Playing shirt amnesty to hand back old shirts for reuse is continuing.</p> <p>Donation points are in the Blues Store and east stand upstairs ticket office/reception. The club is seeking shirts missing from the collection to complete the display.</p>	<p>https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2021/december/club-donate-your-old-shirts-for-good-causes/ More donations welcome – please help if you can.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Memorabilia continues to be collected and donated by fans. The collection is now sizeable and still growing. New items are being put on display in the West stand bars every month.</p>	<p>Any other donations will be welcome. Details of the collection will feature in an SLO website article after the season.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2023</p>
<p>Behaviour at games</p> <p>Fan support remains brilliant in big and growing numbers, home an away. We have a lot of really positive initiatives going on, working together with fans (like the Warwickroadenders).</p> <p>We continued to get isolated incidents (tennis ball on the pitch, two fans on the pitch v Salford).</p> <div data-bbox="837 874 1144 1166" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>We are under FA investigation for incidents at the Bradford 2nd leg including pyros, missiles, pitch incursion (including by U14s) and pitch invasion.</p> <p>We are working closely with the Police to identify individuals.</p>	<p>We will continue to work with fan groups.</p> <p>We will be continuing to appeal to fans with posters and social media to try and get the message across. Increased stewarding will be put in place.</p> <div data-bbox="1744 874 1998 1166" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>This is a potentially serious issue with potential to lead to misconduct charges against the club.</p> <p>Anyone with information please contact enquiries@carlisleunited.co.uk</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>Appeal</p> <p>Information</p> <p>Appeal</p>
<p>The club is now actively working with external agencies like Remedi UK on restorative work. This is being fruitful already. https://www.remediuk.org/</p>	<p>More information to follow.</p> <div data-bbox="1744 1348 1998 1425" data-label="Image"> </div>	<p>More info to follow</p>




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<p>Prostate Testing</p> <p>We are hosting a Prostate Cancer testing session in association with the Community Sports Trust and Barry Kilby Prostate Cancer Appeal on 17 June 2023.</p>	<p>This is a serious illness. In the UK, about 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. Get tested - book here: https://bkpca.mypsatests.org.uk/Events/</p>	17 June 2023
<p>Matchday</p> <p>The club supported CUSG in its fundraising effort v Salford (See SLO report).</p>	<p>https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2023/april/cusg-bucket-collection-ahead-of-the-salford-game/</p>	Complete
<p>Retail</p> <p>Retail sales remain strong. New products are arriving all the time. The 22/23 kit is now close to selling out with only limited stock and sizes remaining. It has been an exceptional seller. Retail income is up +41% on 21/22 up to the end of March.</p> <p>A new kit supplier has been appointed and the first manufactured samples of the 23/24 kit have been approved. The launch is being planned for late June</p> <p>The new web-store development is very well advanced. Final testing is taking place with the launch after the season concludes.</p>	<p>Check out https://www.bluesstore.co.uk/ https://theterracestore.com/collections/carlisle-united</p> <p>A more detailed updates will be provided after the season.</p> <p>Further updates to follow.</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>June 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p>
<p>Tickets</p> <p>In early May we moved to a new ticket platform. We expect it to allow us to be improve the service in future.</p>	<p>Fan feedback has been very positive so far.</p>	Information
<p>Despite appeals, we have seen no change to fans coming very close to kick off to change their tickets (from one terraced area to another, or from one seated area to another).</p> <p>This impacts on service times, queues and selling tickets to fans buying in the run-up to kick off is very significant.</p>	<p>The 50p standard charge and unrestricted ability to move at last minute even during the ticket rush close to kick off cannot continue.</p> <p>In 23/24 ticket exchanges and reprints on the matchday will be increased in cost and new restrictions will apply to help improve service on match-day</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>Details tbc in June 2023</p>
<p>Season tickets</p> <p>These will be launched shortly now our divisional status is confirmed.</p>	<p>Further updates to follow.</p>	June 2023
<p>Gates</p> <p>After the 23 home L2 games the average total attendance was 6659 (with 6259 home and 400 away). This total is 34% up on 21/22 (away numbers were unchanged).</p>	<p>This is fantastic support. Fans are backing the team in the best numbers for over 10 years.</p>	Information
<p>Catering and hospitality</p> <p>After all 23 home L2 games catering total takings are ended +66% up on 21/22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home retail takings up +79% (+73% 20 games). Container bar took £70k in its first year and proved a huge success. Away takings up +3%. Hospitality income is also +45% up (previously +37% up on 21/22 after 20 games). <p>Provisional booking are now being taken for 23/24.</p>	<p>Strong performance continues to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More fans coming before games to support the catering at the club. Reopened hospitality lounges are contributing. Feedback is good. Bookings are very strong in games ahead. <p>https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/commercial/testimonials/</p> <p>We are looking to install another West stand container bar for 23/24.</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>Information</p>
<p>iFollow</p> <p>Our most recent streaming data since Gillingham is as follows – Tranmere (H) 437 (despite 13000 crowd), Walsall(A) 899 Stockport (H) 698 and Sutton (A) 1027</p> <p>23/24 streaming arrangements are expected to be unchanged</p>	<p>From 24/25 there is expected to be no iFollow streaming to the UK. It will be replaced by the new Sky EFL App (overseas streaming arrangements to be confirmed).</p>	Information
<p>Stadium</p> <p>The annual Safety Advisory Group safety process is scheduled for early June 2023.</p>		



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Credit to Dave Mitchell and ground-staff who were highly commented for the pitch by the EFL as runners up to Newport. Stadium pitch renovations will commence on Monday 29 May.	https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2023/april/pitch-united-highly-commended/	Information
EFL EFL Football is a highly compliance-driven business off-the-field. The regulatory regime continues to toughen, especially over club governance, finance and cost control, match day, safeguarding, EDI, security, H&S and player care. Financially an increasing number of clubs are breaching EFL regulations.	The Fan Led Review is bringing more compliance and regulation. Our operations are constantly being independently audited, reviewed and inspected.	 Information
Family Excellence Awards The final 22/23 outcome was released by the EFL on Thursday 18th May. We successfully achieved the award once again ranking 6th in L2 (21/22: 7th) Outcome of the first visit is here.	https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2023/may/family-excellence-united-receive-award/ https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2023/january/club-mystery-shopper-survey-received/	Complete Complete
Fan Led Review White Paper on reform and the governance of the game has finally been published. The outcome of the latest consultation is awaited. The EFL and PL and FA are continuing to negotiate changes to the game in parallel with these reforms.	Much remains unknown including – timing, scope, powers and impact. No change since the last update.	Information Ongoing
EFL Broadcast deal All 72 EFL clubs unanimously agreed to mandate the EFL board to conclude a new deal with Sky for 5 years starting with the 24/25 season. This will see over 1000 EFL games available live each season via SKY. We expect around 16 CUFC games to be available to watch live via a new SKY EFL app or on the main SKY channels. The deal is significantly increased in value and will lead to a net increase in our broadcast income from July 2024 (after the impact of UK iFollow income lost is taken into account).	Full details are here https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2023/may/efl-landmark-broadcasting-deal-announced-with-sky-sports/ https://www.efl.com/news/2023/may/efl-and-sky-sports-broadcast-rights-agreement/	Information
EFL Regulations and compliance We have completed the process to adopt new Articles of Association for both 1921 and Holdings... The EFL Conference and AGM is 6-8 June in Chester.		Complete Information
EFL Safeguarding Safeguarding is a key area of focus for the club. https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2022/july/efl-safeguarding-standards/ Scott Taylor is the club's Designated Safeguarding Officer, his details are here: https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2022/july/club-staff/	All club policies have been updated and its approach is detailed on the website https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/safeguarding/ Contact Scott with any Safeguarding issues.	Information Contact
EFL EDI and Mental Health We have finalised our Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 “Stronger Together” . This is available on the website along with our Equality Statement as required by the EFL. Contact Nigel Davidson (EDI Officer) if you want to get involved in EDI, for more details.	https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2023/january/club-club-equality-statement/ https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2023/january/edi-equality-action-plan/ https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2022/july/club-staff/	Ongoing Contact



Issue	Reference/Comments	Status
<p>EFL Green Code</p> <p>As an accredited “Green Club”, we are committed to improving our environmental practices and operations as we continue our journey to a more sustainable future.</p>  <p>We are still to formulate a Club-Fan ‘Green Group’ to work on a joint initiative. Fans with a passion for sustainability are wanted to help us.</p>	<p>We are in the finals stages of formulating our Green Plan which we will now publish in June</p> <p>https://www.efl.com/-more/efl-green-clubs/#:~:text=In%20a%20first%20for%20football,the%20world's%20greenest%20football%20club.</p> <p>Get in touch via the SLO.</p>	<p>30 June 2023</p> <p>Contact us to Volunteer</p>
<p>Academy</p> <p>We are scheduled to receive a full routine independent audit of EPPP compliance in 22/23.</p> <p>21/22 EFL benchmarking shows our academy productivity (players from the academy playing games in the pro game) is improving. We rank 3rd of all cat 3 clubs (13 of 72 in the EFL) over the last three years and but 12th and 36th over the longer term measure (nine year period)</p>	<p>Full EPPP audit date to be confirmed.</p>	<p>Audit date tbc</p>
<p>Funding and finance 22/23</p> <p>Club finances in L1 are different to L2. Central distributions from the EFL and PL rise by circa 50% (£500k) between L1 an L2.</p> <p>At the same time owner subsidies for club spending on players and football costs rise significantly meaning club losses are far higher than L2. The onus on owners to provide capital to compete with rivals in L1 is far greater than L2.</p> <p>Purepay debt position is unchanged.</p>	<p>During the close season the club will provide a review of finances in 22/23 and details of the prospects for 23/24</p> <p>The shareholders continue to seek a dialogue with Purepay.</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>No change</p>
<p>Play-offs</p> <p>I would like to pay tribute to all the staff at the club for their efforts during the 22/23 season and in particular during the period from the last game of the season, during the play-off period up to Wembley.</p> <p>Their efforts have been terrific. The teamwork has been a credit to them and they have gone the extra mile.</p> <p>At the same time, we have had great support from board of CUOSC and SLO who have been a tremendous help. Thank you all.</p> <p>There has been some questioning of the decision to sell tickets and not contract out.</p>	<p>See Q&A below for our response</p>	



Q&A

Q. I do have a problem re Wembley tickets, especially Etickets. Why didn't we do them? I ordered by phone, as there was no online option for carer tickets and the lady was friendly/helpful and said to collect in 24 hours. I went and they weren't there so I went yesterday and I got them but that's two unnecessary trips I've made.

Stockport are using 'see tickets' a simple system; most other clubs use ticketmaster. Stockport's reason for using see tickets is due to Ticketmaster being too expensive. Our official line by Matt from the trust, via Suzanne, to the reason why we haven't gone the eticket route is because we wanted to save the supporters 50p. Some ticket office staff have said the reason is because the club won't pay ticketmaster, so some miscommunication/understanding here. But regardless folk are travelling miles to pick tickets up as they don't trust Wembley/post and when they see Stockport doing it simpler it's frustrating.

A. When we were going through our planning process for Wembley ticket sales, we thought long and hard about contracting-out ticketing to a third party agent. In the end we chose to keep it in-house, this time. The reasoning was as follows.

There is no doubt contracting-out ticketing to a third party agent (like Ticketmaster) is a huge benefit to the Club. We simply hand responsibility over to someone else. That's great for us.

1. it means we have to do very, very little in the selling process
2. almost everything is done by a ticket agency
3. it's a free service to the Club – we pay nothing, all the costs are borne by our fans who pay the agent in fees

If we wanted to take the simplest and easiest route for us that was it. However, doing so also has disadvantages – particularly to fans:

1. fans pay more in fees and add-ons than if we do the job ourselves
2. it removes the personal service aspect a fan gets from the club doing ticket sales. They want to be able to speak to club staff. We strongly believe our fans find this very, very important – their buying patterns prove this

On-line purchasing and e-tickets

I understand for many fans (like yourself) they find internet purchasing and making payments online and downloading e-tickets with the associated booking fees all routine, and not having it is an inconvenience to them. However, for the vast majority the buying patterns of our fans are clear.

Our ticket system has had an e-ticket capability for many years. Some fans use that every week, but the fact is, even after many years, the significant majority of our fans continue to prefer to physically come to the club and deal face to face with real people or talk to them over the phone when they buy. They like to book and collect on the match day. They like to ring in and talk thorough a purchase or come in and talk through options. History shows our fans like to come, go in the shop and meet fellow fans when buying – it's part of the 'event' for them. Hence the big queues on site early Sunday morning despite an allocation of 36,000 tickets. Those that didn't want to do this could still buy online and get them posted or collect.

The numbers of our fans who use e-tickets, while growing, is still relatively small. To force all our fans down a route of online and e-ticket only route, with no choice, was not right for our fans. Choice is important.

Our experience tells us that fans are not all the same and it's very important to them that we recognise this. That means giving them choices - in this case, the choice to buy in-person, over the phone or online - rather than 100% online only.

An e-ticket facility was simply not available if we sold tickets ourselves. We were issued with printed tickets that is all. Ideally, of course, we would have wanted to offer this option for those fans like yourself who prefer that. We couldn't. With the cost of living crisis and inflation still close to 10% we strongly believe that the club has to do what it can to keep the costs down for fans - including on the fees.

Collection

In terms of collection, the very short turnaround reduces the scope for postage I agree, but the choice was there for fans who didn't want to collect in the early stages. The fact you don't trust Royal Mail or Wembley is not something we can control. We will have club staff at Wembley to resolve queries if they arise on collections.

I understand the frustration of making a special trip to the club and the tickets not being available. In the extraordinarily busy first couple of days the priority was to sell first then despatch, 24 hours was not enough gap initially. However, having made the trip, you should have been offered the opportunity to wait 5 minutes while your order was specifically fulfilled to avoid two trips. That was the plan, and it was a mistake not to do that, I'm sorry.

Conclusion

In the end, given the numbers of tickets we expect to sell, we chose to give our fans a personal club service, with people they know, buying in ways the vast majority are comfortable with, to retain control and save them a bit of cash on the ticket fees along the way. All the staff service wanted to take this route, it was important to them to make sure the fans who wanted it could have a personal club service not online and call centre. This helps resolve queries and concerns with a personal touch. There is no right or wrong answer with this, had we gone to an agency and online only, I have no doubt many fans would have been unhappy with that decision.



Q The ground and facilities are poor. Are there any plans to improve them . Also is there any possibility of acquiring the old Newman School for a future development.

A.....We are under no illusions that aspects of the stadium fall well below modern standards demanded by fans. At the same time, I have always been open and honest about our financial constraints. We have very little to spend on stadium improvements, our priority for cash is always football first. We then prioritise safety critical capex items first, then essential repairs and essential improvement before nice to have improvements. In the last year we made improvements across the West side and with the Fan Zone. These modest improvements will continue. We looked at Newman School as a possible training base but the cost was prohibitive under in current financial position.

Q Could a suggestion be made to maybe have a player awards ceremony for the younger fans to attend. I know my 6yr old nephew would love something like that.

A... An end of season event for players and kids is something we will look at. It would be via Olga's Army