





## **Matchday Experience (starting with Catering, as the Regional Director joins on Teams)**

**SV** – We would like to see more variety on catering, as there is less of what we'd hoped for.

**ACJ** – We came from a standing start from across the organisation in terms of catering. Gather & Gather have spent a great deal of money, which you would've seen, in terms of digital screens and an increased number of till points. The challenge we had was we didn't have enough staff to man those till points, so we took the decision early on for the Manchester United game to reduce the menu quite heavily.

We have now recruited quite heavily in several areas, so you're seeing more outlets open and you're seeing lots of younger employees getting used to it. But right now, we are on a reduced menu for the speed element, and we will start to gradually increase that menu as the season progresses.

**TC** – We also took the decision to have a reduced menu as some of the staff have missed out on the last 18 months of working and it takes time to train and bring them up to speed. We have also created a training program for them.

We took the decision to take the chicken and beef burgers off the menu. We will start to see these items being brought back but need to make sure we have the right balance. We started to open some of the smaller kiosks for the first time against Leeds. I am delighted to say we have had our biggest take, not only of the season but on record in the retail concourses. I think people are starting to really enjoy the food.

Albeit, we will always have a challenging environment for those 15 minutes at half time and the 15 minutes before the game.

**SV** – The Season Ticket discount seems to be confined to the first 30 minutes after entry. Is this a short-term thing, or is this going to be relaxed later in the season similarly to before?

**ACJ** – At this moment in time we encourage people to come in early and would like them to come even earlier for the next game. It's not something that we are looking to extend beyond those 30 minutes. What we have done is introduced the discount for post-match. You may have noticed we have started to open our concourses post-match for supporters to have a beer and watch some of the later match on our new screens

**SV** – Would you consider 2-pint cups in the future?

**TC** – I think 2 pint was introduced at the rugby a few years back and it's evident at concerts. I am not sure if we want to be encouraging 2 pints at football because of that responsibility of the sale of alcohol.

**SV** – Can we use the app to order food and beverages?

**TC** – The pre-order function hasn't been switched on yet for our app. We have had a few technical challenges with it and therefore need to get this right before the launch. You only get one opportunity to get it right.





**SV** – Our PA System has been all over the place this season. Sometimes it's too loud and sometimes you cannot hear it.

Saints Brass are very good and have done well.

**ACJ** – Pre-game we are about right in terms of sound and announcements, however the issues are at half time with the interviews.

Frustratingly we aren't allowed on the pitch because it's a Red Zone, so we must do everything from the side, including the Forever Saint awards.

## Replacements

**SV** – We know that Jim and Khali have left the club, also Callum has formally left Saints Voice now. In terms of Callum, we didn't feel it was appropriate to go out and replace him mid-season, given the amount of work involved in the polling process. So, we would like to hear your updates on the Supporter Services Team within the club, and also to make sure the club are comfortable with us working with a panel of 11 in the short term.

**ACJ** – We have completed our recruitment process. Kelly Lewis will come in to replace Khali. She is very experienced and knowledgeable. Aaron Heskins has been promoted to Supporter Services Manager and Supporter Liaison Officer.

We have two open roles being advertised, which are Supporter Services Advisor & Disability Liaison Officer, and a Supporter Services Admin Assistant. We are bolstering our Supporter Services team and increasing the head count. We are certainly not slowing down and we will have certain events taking place over the course of the season to improve our fan engagement. We are being very proactive.

In terms of Saints Voice, we are now down to 11 and I think we really need to address this. It would be good to understand your views on that. Is 12 the right number? How do we get the right representation, as we are quite conscious that we need more diversity in the group.

**SV** – What we discussed on our internal call was that to go out and say to fans we are looking for one replacement person, just didn't seem necessarily useful. Do we have any stats on ages that buy tickets and are season ticket holders? Our 18 to 30s age groups aren't really represented.

We could look at previous applicants.

**TS** – This could stay at 11, it may end up being a panel of 15-18. We could go out and target the group that we are looking for.

**DT** – We are not recruiting young fans at the rate we need to and are really focusing on our junior Saints. From our perspective we also need to understand the 18-25 group better. We need to extend our reach regionally. We do well reach locally but not so well in other areas.

We also need look at products to target juniors and look at a more digital strategy, so that we are engaging with all juniors within the local area.



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**SV** – You need to start thinking about students and getting them engaged; finding out if they come to matches and stay in the area after their studies.

**ACJ** – In terms of action, once our team is full it's important to use these forums to represent the whole fan base ensuring that everyone feels valued and to make sure there are far more balanced decisions/ feedback.

**SV** – We have a massive fan base globally. Perhaps these could be involved?

**ACJ** – We will work on a plan and present this to you before the next Saints Voice meeting.

### **Safe Standing**

**TG** – This is something that we are looking into and must plan this. We would also like to consult with fans and discuss how we bring that to life. In terms of a wider vision the stadium is 20 years old and due its real first fix. We need to review what this will potentially look like and what other issues can we resolve, like accessibility.

**SV** – There are lots of different opinions on safe standing and you get a mix of supporters who want to stand and don't want to stand.

**TG** – When reconfiguring the stadium, it is important to get it right and find a balance for fans. When we do it, we will look at the away section as it has the main persistent standing.

### **Ticketing and Stadium Entry**

**TS** – Prior to the Manchester United match we changed the ticketing system, which was always planned for 2020, however we couldn't utilise this until pre-season 2021. We had tested during the pre-season friendlies and had 8000-9000 supporters at those games. We tested the gates before the Manchester United match, the same as we do for all our games. For this match there was a mechanical failure at the turnstiles, where a very small piece of equipment fell out of the system.

Since then, we have still experienced some issues of fans not knowing where to place tickets, we have rectified this with shelves to make it more targeted.

Despite the initial ticketing and stadium issues, things have started to improve.

**SV** – The refunds for the Manchester United game certainly helped. We feel that the Season Ticket problems could have been better addressed with more communication, and we would have liked to be involved in, and be able to help with this process. A lot of the items on the agenda come down to failures in communication, and SV want to help with this.

In terms of individual matchdays, the stewards aren't particularly helpful in assisting at the turnstiles. Perhaps some fans are arriving later as they don't want to be in the bowl too long before a match, due to covid.



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**ACJ** – We were as deeply frustrated as you are about the situation. We had planned for a pack for Official Members and Season Ticket Holders. We used a company that other Premier League clubs use, and we were aware that they started to fall behind. We were incredibly disappointed that the junior tickets hadn't come through and if we had to start this process again, we would've started two to three months earlier.

**SV** – Why have barriers been put in place at the Chapel End? There are no directions, and it has made the area more congested.

**TG** – A similar system is in place in the away end to stop mass build up. What we found in the Chapel End is that people are queuing directly back, and supporters are crossing the queues from the Fanzone and Shop. These barriers are designed to create a nice pathway to walk through.

**LD** – This is something we are trialling to stop the cross over. This has been working well and we need to make sure the stewards are communicating with fans in the right way to direct others.

**DT** – We have had to recruit a lot of new stewards following COVID.

**LD** – We need to look at how we manage the infrastructure and have more consistency of staff that work here.

**SV** – The stewards didn't check all the bags and perhaps felt overwhelmed by the queues. From a safety point of view this needs to be monitored.

**LD** – This will be picked up on and added to the brief.

**DT** – It is difficult to know if more people are bringing in bags than previous seasons. We need to encourage supporters to only bring a bag if they really need to. The other thing we are thinking about is introducing a clear bag policy to speed up that the stadium entry.

### **Away Ticket Issues**

**SV** – Firstly, we would like to touch on the topic around away fans in the home end.

**ACJ** – We follow guidelines from the police if games can go on general sale. If they can't, we don't market it at all.

**MS** – When the tickets go on general sale it's something we closely monitor. We ask supporters certain questions if we have any raised suspicions, we can also look at addresses. Before a game we look to see how many are coming from different areas and see if there are significant numbers from certain areas that should raise any issues or concerns.

**ACJ** – If you do witness any away fans in the home end, you can text SFCREPORT to 60060. Similarly to how you report any discriminative or anti-social behaviour.

**SV** – It seems to be difficult to book away tickets and you end up selecting "we will choose the best seat for you". After that point you can change what it suggests. In the new system you click on the seats, but nothing happens. Not very user friendly with older supporters.





**MS** – We will have a look at the customer journey as we haven't had much feedback on this.

**ACJ** – We will go back and look at the away journey in more detail.

**SV** – How can you view your purchase history?

**MS** – This has now been changed to just this season so this should appear in purchase history. If you have specific games you want to look back on, we hold that data and can look back on that for supporters.

**SV** – When purchasing an away ticket, booking fees have been inconsistent. How come?

**ACJ** – Booking fees are not just an element of a transaction fee, staff must sort and allocate tickets. It is more than just a transaction fee, which takes a lot of time and staffing. This should be £1.50 per ticket consistently.

**SV** – We have received a lot of negative feedback about late arrival of tickets, and multiple booking fees, and perhaps if you publicly clarify the reasons as you have just done, it would be more acceptable. Maybe put something on the website.

**MS** – A lot of clubs are in a similar position to us where we were chasing things at the start of the season. There were delays in the information coming through for covid information and how many away fans are allowed to travel. A couple of teams were very slow in sending the tickets and only provided us with information about two weeks before the game. With one team we didn't get the tickets until the Saturday before the game, however managed to get them all sent out by the Tuesday. On an away matchday, we always have one person on call to deal with any ticket issues with the opposition team, such as the duplicate ticket list.

Our aim is to get tickets on sale four and half weeks prior to an away match. We make sure the information goes out in advance with emails, this might change slightly when it comes to cup games.

**SV** – Manchester City have changed their bag policy, with the bag to be no larger than A4. They then had an extra bit that if your bag had two straps its classed as a rucksack and you wouldn't be allowed in with it unless you pay £10 to their foundation. Manchester United also did something similar. It would be good to know this information in advance of travelling all the way to an away game.

**MS** – This information was on our website. We will try to include more information.

**SV** – The problem was also that their policy wasn't consistent, as some of our travelling fans were allowed in with big carrier bags, whilst others were not allowed in with a small bag – we feel like women and children are mainly affected which feels a bit discriminatory.

**MS** – We can feed this back to Manchester City directly.

**AH** – I can contact their SLO.

**SV** – Chelsea covid information was very late.

**AH** – I had only received this information from Chelsea on the Monday before the game and we tried to get this information out as soon as we could.



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**SV** – What is the latest feedback for our own covid policy? We have had a lot of feedback, and some are not impressed by the current policy and that it is slack. There seems to be a lack of sanitisers on concourse; it feels very much like pre-covid.

**TG** – We are going to push towards stepping things up around the stadium. Where the concourses are busy, it makes it difficult to put too many sanitising stations in. I will go back and have a look at this.

The policy we went with around masks is that all staff wear them, and it's advisory for supporters to wear masks. We need to get some good messaging out and need to take personal responsibility. The worst case is that we go back to limited numbers, so we will look more into this. We need to focus more on everyone feeling safe.

### **Kit Launch**

**SV** – Generally everyone is impressed with the new kits and the designs. The feedback is that the pricing is still too high.

The women designs are quite generic.

**ACJ** – The kit price is still at £55 and little less for kids. The kit is an exact replica of the player's kit. Our training wear is a lot cheaper than previously. We are very proud this year as our women's teams are wearing female cuts for the first time. We also have a women's range which was brought out in March. Over the next few weeks, I will be looking at future proposals and will provide feedback to Hummel.

### **Sustainability**

**SV** – Why are the floodlights always on? This is not very sustainable.

**TG** – Premier League state that they must stay on.

**SV** – Could Saints please raise this with the Premier League then, as there is a major waste of power occurring throughout most of August, September, April and May.

**AH** – Just conscious of time. I'll pick up a separate conversation with Saints Voice surrounding sustainable travel at a later date.

### **Meeting Closed**



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