

Tony Goodall Fans' Conference

Saturday 4th October – 11am



Attended:

Andrew Cullen, Rich Hughes, Mark Judges & Johnny Moore (PFC)

Andrew Plenty (Armed Forces & Services Club), Barry Dewing (Pompey Independent Supporters' Association), David Callahan (South West Supporters' Club), Donald Vass (TGFC Secretary & Chichester Portsmouth Supporters' Club), Graham Price (Pompey 808), Hinda Frost (Portsmouth Football Supporters Club London), Paul Frost (Portsmouth Football Supporters Club London), Ian Marshall (Chimes Lounge), Kev Ryan (Central Branch Supporters' Club), Martin Callahan (South West Supporters' Club), Mike Whittle (Pompey History Society), Nick Paul (Northern Blues), Peter House (Pompey Independent Supporters' Association), Roy Gregory (Central Branch Supporters' Club), Simon Colebrook (Portsmouth Supporters' Trust), Steve Heaven-Gandy (Isle Of Wight Supporters' Club), Steve Tovey (Legends Lounge), Tracy Jane (Portsmouth Women Supporters' Club) & Vicky Lamb (Her Game Too).

Stu Grover – Hampshire Police

Apologies:

Leon Tricker (Social Media Groups), Mike Fulcher (TGFC Chair & Social Media Groups), Pam Wilkins (Pompey Disabled Supporters' Association),

1. Football / Fixture Scheduling

Q: It was another busy summer transfer window, with 11 new signings confirmed. How do you assess the club's transfer business, and the team's start to the season?

RH: We're pleased with the work we've done. We knew it was important to strengthen the group, and we're pleased with the balance and depth we've now got, and the different options we have in the group. We saw in January that we were able to sign players who we consider longer term strategy pieces, but also players who could make an immediate, short term impact. We replicated that in the summer - some players have been able to make an impact straight away, while we still have a broader policy of bringing players to the club who we feel can grow with us and get better. Recruitment is never an exact science – we aim to get more right than we get wrong. By getting some important work done early, it gave us the freedom and flexibility to work late in the window when different players became available, notably bringing Conor Chaplin in at the end.

The start of the season has been mixed. In some games, we've not hit the standards required. We know that as a group and feel it. We're all disappointed at the performance against Sheffield Wednesday. We've seen some good performances as well though. We want to build on the start we've had, and not lose sight of where we were 12 months ago, after the 6-1 loss against Stoke. We feel there's lots more to come from the group.

Q: Josh Murphy had his contract extended this week. Is the timing of that significant, following interest in him late in the transfer window?



RH: No – extending Josh’s contract is something we spoke about prior to that. Contract extensions take a long time to put in place. From May to August, we’re working hard to bring in new signings and strengthen the team, and it was always the plan that once the window ended, we could then focus on this. There was interest in Josh, but we were well protected in terms of his contract. The club’s strategy shifted last year – previously, contract renewals were dealt with at end of season. Now, we’ve got more players we want to keep, and we don’t want to leave things to chance. Our aim is to keep the core group of players here so we don’t have summers where we’re needing to make 10-11 new signings.

Q: We appear to be suffering from a large number of injuries once again this season. What do the medical team put this down to?

RH: Speaking to specialists from around the game, this is something affecting everyone. There’s a lot of articles around the rise of hamstring injuries in the game at the moment, and there was [the Fifpro annual report](#) this week which looked at the increased demands on players in the modern game. The reduced space in-between games leads to these opportunities. We can’t do anything around contact injuries like Nico Schmid’s, but we’ve picked up frustrating hamstring injuries to Conor Shaughnessy and Callum Lang. Although it always feels like we have more injuries than anyone else, we’re replicating what other clubs are going through. It really hurt us last year when we suffered a number of injuries in one position. This year, the balance of the squad helps us. We have more options, and more depth within the squad. We’ll always want the best players available, but we’re better equipped to deal with it now when they’re not.

We’re speaking to specialists to see how we can adapt our work. The players do yoga, pilates, and ice pool recovery. But the game has evolved. The physical demands have gone through the roof. Elite players are now expected to be 12 month athletes. Some players are starting over 70 games a year – that’s mind blowing. It’s an incredible amount of games to be playing, and a remarkable upturn. It’s now up to clubs to catch up to these increased demands.

Q: As a club on the south coast, Pompey do more travelling than many other clubs. Does that contribute to the number of injuries we sustain?

RH: I think so. We have adapted what we use when we come back from night games, which has helped. We’re trying different things. The Saturday night game at Leicester is a challenge – that’s more akin to a Tuesday night game than a Saturday fixture. We like to find hotels that aren’t isolated, so the boys can go out for a walk or go get a coffee, rather than being stuck in a remote hotel somewhere.

Q: Does the club regret not playing a stronger team in the Carabao Cup game against Reading and the Hampshire Cup game at Romsey? Progression in this competition would have been an ideal opportunity to give a balance of first team and fringe players valuable game time.

RH: I’d separate the two competitions. The Hampshire Cup is a competition that we use for the development of the academy, so it would be highly unlikely for us to use first team players in this competition. In the Carabao Cup, the reason we lost that game wasn’t because we made too many changes – it was because we didn’t play well enough. Reading only made one less change than us, but they performed better. We had Championship quality in the team and believe we should have progressed. John wanted to win that game – he’s as frustrated as anyone. At the time, we felt it was right to play the squad players who hadn’t played against Oxford. If we’d picked up injuries in

that game – like we did at the cup game against Chesterfield last year, which left us without Tino Anjorin for a few months and Regan Poole for a year – we'd have kicked ourselves. We wanted to top up players' fitness.



We have played a couple of behind closed doors friendlies already this year, which we don't always make public. We played Havant and Waterlooville recently, to help players get back to match sharpness.

Q: Toby Steward appears to be doing very well at St Johnstone, who sit unbeaten at the top of the Scottish Championship. Where do you see him playing next year?

RH: We're delighted with what he's been doing. We're keeping tabs on St. Johnstone, and speak to his goalkeeping coach up there a lot. Joe Prodomo is in constant dialogue with him. Toby comes down to see his family a lot, and so we keep in touch with him here when he does. Joe does Zoom calls with him up in Scotland to assess his games. There was some surprise and frustration – with full respect to St. Johnstone – that a club higher up the chain didn't come in for him. But they're a team who are really competitive, and want to get promoted. It's a great club for him to be at.

Where do we see him next year? I don't know at this stage. We wanted to remove the obstacles for his development. That's why we signed an extra goalkeeper - if we had fewer in the squad, that would've prevented Toby going out on loan, or we might've needed to recall him. We've been really pleased with his development.

Q: Why was the midweek Watford fixture played on a Wednesday rather than a Tuesday? Neither club played on the previous Sunday.

AC: It's to do with the EFL's broadcasting deal, to accommodate Sky's desire to split the midweek Championship games across two nights. They want eyeballs on both evenings, so have a main channel game both nights, and divide the rest over both evenings on the red button. There were 7 fixtures on Tuesday, and 5 on Wednesday.

There are sometimes other complications – there's often a Friday night game in the Championship, and those teams can only play on the preceding Tuesday, not the Wednesday. Similarly, our away fixture at Sheffield United has been changed to a Wednesday, because their game against Sheffield Wednesday is on the previous Sunday and the regulations provide for a gap of two clear days between a club's matches.

Q: Media reports suggest the EFL is considering expanding the Championship playoffs to include more clubs. What's our stance on this possible change?

AC: It won't involve more games – instead of a two-legged semi-final, there would instead be two single-leg ties, like in the National League play offs . It's an idea that was initially proposed in 2003, but didn't get through, and was looked at again in 2008. The Premier League stance in 2008 was not keen on the proposal – they felt it could weaken their competition, if the 8th place team in the Championship could potentially be promoted. We haven't had any serious discussions about it as a club, but if it further increased the competitive appeal of the Championship then I expect we would be supportive.



Q: The home game against Millwall is scheduled for a Saturday 3pm kick off – the first time we’ve played against these opponents at this time for a number of years. Is this a potential stewarding and policing problem? Have any lessons been learnt from last season’s fixture?

AC: We looked at this at the start of the season, but felt there was no reason to move it. As a club, we’re keen to keep the integrity of Saturday 3pm fixtures wherever we can. We looked at Millwall’s other fixtures in recent years – there’s little evidence of other clubs moving non-televvised fixtures against Millwall for purely safety reasons. We have plenty of 12:30pm kick offs as it is.

SG: It’s something [the police] brought up at the start of the season, and a request went in to the EFL to not have it played at 3 o’clock. It is what it is. We know it will provide significant challenges, but we’ve had plenty of meetings with the clubs and are ready for it. There will be significant resources on that game. We learnt a lot from last season, where the teams played three times. There are other policing demands that weekend, with Aldershot vs. Woking being another high-risk fixture.

2. South Coast Derby

Q: The match at Southampton passed off without incident. Although the arrangements were very inconvenient for supporters, the club should be given considerable credit for the smooth running of the day. What action can be taken to reduce tension so that restrictions can be relaxed in the future?

SG: We did a lot of research with other police forces who police similar fixtures, and learnt a lot from them. Cardiff vs Swansea fixtures started off being very heavily resourced, but then over a number of seasons they reduced that. We did have a significant policing operation around the game and it will be similar in January. Ultimately, the clubs decided on the approach as we ensured our policing operation mirrored that. Our priority will always be public safety and we will do what is proportionate to keep people safe.

AC: We wanted to create a safe and enjoyable experience for supporters. In the context of the fixture, that took significant planning. We held a meeting with supporters from both clubs at Hampshire Police offices in Netley – that was very helpful. One thing that came out of that was offering different locations for pickup points. Winchester was a great location, as it was more accessible for people travelling from outside of Portsmouth, particularly from South West London, the Midlands and further north. While travelling on the coaches, you could see how much time and thought had gone into the policing operation. Every bridge was covered from early in the morning. The journey in from Winchester with the team was amazing – it was like an American presidential cavalcade! The success of the execution made all the planning and organisation worthwhile. I’d like to pay tribute to Marie Stedman, Emma Smith, Lucy Nelson and Mark Judges for their fantastic work. But the plan only worked on the day because of supporter cooperation, so my thanks to our wonderful fans as well.

Q: While most fans understood the reasoning behind the ‘club managed travel arrangements’, many felt the early departure time and the requirement not to take food and drink on the coaches was too draconian. Can this be looked at if these matches take place again next season? It’s important to maintain the goodwill of travelling supporters.



AC: It's a fair question. The reason for restricting food and drink was that it would have meant having to do more searches at the departure points and at Southampton. Because we'd searched everyone before they got on the coaches, it meant fans could go straight into the stadium once they arrived. That can be reviewed for future fixtures, but that was the rationale. By forcing people to travel on the coaches, we also had to think about things like food allergies - if someone opens a bag of nuts on the coach for example, that could have been problematic. We'll look to explore this for future games.

MJ: We could have had the Victory Lounge open, or had the shipping container kiosks in the fanzone serving food and drink, but our feeling was that this would have made the loading process even harder, and would've needed people to arrive even earlier. We didn't want the coaches to leave later and risk being held up by accidents or delays on the motorway. We had to plan to get everyone in the stadium to enjoy the game for the full 90 minutes.

We answered over 500 emails to the dedicated South Coast Derby email address we set up, all within 24 hours. I'm in debt to my team of staff who worked 7am – 9pm every night in the lead up to the game. We tried to go over and above to get people on the correct coaches. It's easy to criticise Lucketts, but they were unbelievably supportive of the football club for this operation. Everyone who selected their first preference of pickup location got their first preference. We worked directly with supporters from the Isle Of Wight, as there were challenges around the first ferry crossing and the early pickup times - we contacted every ticket buyer with an Isle Of Wight postcode and arranged a separate pick up for them from The Hard. We spoke to a father who made the decision not to go, despite having a ticket, as he was concerned the restrictions may have been off-putting for his daughter. We reached out to them to understand their challenges. We ensured their normal steward at Fratton Park was the one on their coach, so the daughter had a reassuring, familiar face, and they then felt comfortable attending the game. That's an example of the level of detail we went to in order to make the travel arrangements a success.

Q: Southampton charged our fans £40 for match tickets, far more than they charged most other away fans this season. Prices for beer, hot dogs and burgers etc were also extortionate, knowing that Portsmouth fans were being held inside the ground for more than 2 hours before kick off. What do we plan to charge them for the return fixture in January, and how many tickets will they receive?

MJ: The amount of tickets they'll receive is already well documented – the clubs agreed the allocations on a reciprocal basis. What we got at St. Mary's, they'll get at Fratton Park. For ticket prices, league regulations require all clubs to submit their prices to the EFL before the fixtures come out. In recent history, we have not categorised matches, although most clubs do. This season, we submitted various price sets before the season began – that gives us flexibility for conversations such as this. It's important to remember that whatever we charge away supporters, we have to charge home supporters in like-for-like seating. So, whatever their fans are charged in the Milton End, we'll need to charge to Portsmouth supporters in the Fratton End and wings of the North and South. Whatever decision we make will have a material impact on individual matchday supporters in the home end. It will impact around 3,000 Portsmouth supporters, many of those will be big fans who are on the season ticket waiting list, or perhaps can't afford a season ticket, but will be keen to go. We endeavour to set what we believe to be fair prices across the stadium in our food and beverage kiosks – we have no intention of raising food and drink prices for this fixture.



AC: Southampton had the ability to restrict us to 2,000 away tickets for this fixture – we wanted to maximise the number of Portsmouth supporters who could back the team at St. Mary's. Season ticket holders in the Milton End will need to move elsewhere for the Fratton Park fixture. They were aware when purchasing their season tickets that they would be required to move for certain games – historically that's been for cup games, but it's now this one as well. They will be written to soon to give them the full range of available seats so they can enjoy the game elsewhere. On ticket prices, our operating costs will be considerably higher for this fixture than for other games, which will factor into our thinking.

Q: Would the games have still needed enforced 'club managed travel' if the away allocations were restricted to only 2,000?

SG: The club managed travel was a club decision. It wouldn't have made too much of a difference from a policing point of view.

Q: There is much less space around Fratton Park than St Mary's to create a safe zone. Will there be any restrictions in place for the home fixture in January which will affect home fans?

AC: There are plans in place, but the more we say now, the more those plans are at risk of being compromised. I can say that there will be some restrictions on home fans' travel and movement on the day. We will explore bringing away fans in early, like we were at St. Mary's, to reduce the risk of confrontation around the ground.

SG: The club have given us the first version of their draft plans for the day, but we don't want to comment too much on them at this stage as they may well change before then.

Q: Will recognised supporter groups have a ticket allocation for the home fixture?

MJ: There has to be integrity around the sales process for this game. We want to ensure that supporters buying tickets for this fixture are known to us. Supporter groups get an allocation for away fixtures, but PO4 members get priority for home tickets. That's what we ordinarily do, and we don't want to deviate too far from that, therefore away supporter groups will not get a ticket allocation for the home fixture versus Southampton.

3. Ticketing

Q: Renewed season tickets were loaded onto previously used cards this year, but supporters were still charged a £4 fee to have a promotional pack and pin badge posted to them. Can this be optional in future years, particularly for households buying multiple season tickets?

MJ: Everything can be reviewed. Season ticket packs contain lots of important information though. This year, they detailed the changes made over the summer to the ticket exchange, as well as information on ticket forwarding and ticket upgrades. That's all crucial for supporters to be aware of, allowing them to maximise the use of their season ticket. It's something we can look at though - we recognise the sustainability issues. We could go purely digital, but do we then marginalise some groups? Two years ago, we didn't send out pin badges and got a lot of feedback from people who really missed that, as such the pin badges are now sent out in their season ticket packs.



Q: The club require every ticket purchase to be assigned to a client ID. This is a barrier to new fans attending, particularly more casual match goers and family groups, and appeared to make it harder for new fans to attend the home friendly against PEC Zwolle, the Carabao Cup game against Reading, and Pompey Women matches. Is there a requirement to register details for every fan who attends?

MJ: Not every ticket needs to be assigned to a unique client ID, therefore it is important we dispel that myth. The requirements vary depending on the fixture. For men's home league fixtures, we allow two tickets to be bought per client ID. For women's fixtures, as well as men's friendlies and cup games, we allow up to 5 tickets per client ID. That said, if you're buying an age restricted price category, that does need to be assigned to a client ID with correct age profile. In previous years, we've had adults buying tickets in a younger price category to get into the ground cheaper, and we wanted to stop that happening. We saw the feedback from people who struggled with setting up Client IDs for the pre-season friendly against PEC Zwolle, and put out a step-by-step guide after that. Client IDs take about 30 seconds to set up. We have a duty of care to this football club to deliver the next generation of supporter. It's important for us to know who our young fans are – that means we can keep in contact with them, and it means they can build up their own loyalty points for when they want to start going on their own as teenagers. Knowing who is in the ground also helps us to ensure we operate a safe and secure stadium. If we let someone buy 10 tickets all in one person's name, we have no idea who they are.

Q: There were significant issues with this at the first women's home game at Westleigh Park – there was one person with a laptop setting up client IDs for people, and lots of supporters were held up getting into the ground.

MJ: If we want to build attendance at the Women's games, it helps a lot to know who is there. We want to take a balanced approach. We don't want to create barriers to coming in for a growing audience, but we also want to know who they are and be able to contact them. That was the first time we'd run a box office for a women's fixture. Of the 172 tickets sold on the day of the game, 100 came in last hour.

Q: Why is the wallet sized fixture list not available this season?

MJ: We've seen the uptake of these cards decline in recent years, and now the fixtures change so regularly that they become outdated within weeks of being printed.

Q: Can the ticket office go back to using some discretion over supporter groups' away ticket allocation? We were oversubscribed by two for Ipswich, and assume some other regional groups would have been undersubscribed for this fixture.

MJ: In this forum, supporter groups are heavily represented. I'm not averse to having the conversation, but it would need to involve representatives for other types of fans who don't belong to supporter groups. At the moment, when supporter groups don't take their full allocation, the remainder goes into the club's main sales process and can be bought by fans with enough loyalty points or within general sale – giving more supporters the opportunity to travel to away fixtures.

Q: What checks do the club or Lucketts make in regard to ensure fans aren't travelling unaccompanied and underage on club coaches? No checks appears to be made on the day.



MJ: Away travel is not managed by the club but is managed by our provider, Lucketts. Their booking system does not allow U16s to book onto coaches without an adult. This is also in their terms and conditions. Individual adults may only be responsible for up to two U16s. We could have a conversation around putting stewards on coaches, but that would be one less seat on the coach available to supporters, and the price of coaches would be increased to cover the wages of the steward for the full day. We could explore that, but it could have a negative impact on the affordability of away supporter travel services.

4. Travel & Local Infrastructure

Q: The next TGFC Meeting is scheduled for December 13th. Will the Footbridge Survey findings be made public by then, given it was hoped to be available by the end of 2025?

AC: We're not running the feasibility study – we're the client. We've put in a large sum of money to pay for the study, as have some of the other stakeholders. The study has identified different routes, and costings are now being applied to those routes. There are other factors at play, including the nationalisation of South Western Railway. At the end of November, senior management from the new company will tour all three Portsmouth train stations and meet with us at Fratton Park. We'll put the case to the new team that this is not just a problem for the football club, but something which affects the whole city and presents an opportunity for growth both economically and in terms of rail passenger traffic. It remains to be seen whether the report will be ready for next TGFC – that's not in my gift.

5. Pompey Women

Q: The issue of financial sustainability is often talked about in the men's game. Are there concerns in the women's professional game at WSL2 level? A crowd of 1,129 attended Pompey Women vs Sheff United Women at Fratton Park last month.

AC: Attendances were generally down in the WSL for the first few games. That's partly linked to the Women's Rugby World Cup taking place at the same time, and partly put down to changes in kick off times, among other factors. More and more clubs now are giving away fewer free tickets. The salary cap has come in, but really it's a salary floor. Our investment in the Women's team tripled last year, and has then doubled this year to meet new minimum standards. Financial sustainability in the Women's game is predicated on owner investment, which is needed to attract the world's top talent in order to grow the game. The view of the WSL is that when they then go to broadcast companies and sponsors, that money will then grow in turn. The WSL have been successful in delivering some major brand new sponsorships, which will be of benefit to WSL clubs in terms of central distributions. But we're not yet seeing that same level of sponsorship investment trickle down to individual clubs. Big brands really want to come in at the top level, inspired by the Lionesses. The WSL is new, different, and unbound by heritage and tradition like the men's game is. That means they could be braver and bolder on funding models.

Pompey Men does not fund Pompey Women. The cash needed in the men's game is going up significantly and we have to keep going to the owners to fund more and more, which also applies to the Women's team. But we're committed to the Women's team. We did this fundamentally to inspire women and young girls to have their own role models in the form of Portsmouth professional players to engage in sport and live a healthy lifestyle. That's what we're trying to do.



In reality, the only way for us to build the game here is to stage more matches at Fratton Park. That's our ambition once the pitch is improved, which will allow for that many fixtures a year. We've worked hard with the groundsman this year to get four Women's fixtures at Fratton Park instead of two, but we want even more in the future.

6. Other

Q: Everyone at the TGFC would like to pass on our appreciation for the excellent work that Tony Brown put in during his tenure at Portsmouth Football Club, helping to oversee the club's return to financial stability during an era where we won two promotions, the EFL Trophy, and completely revamped the stadium. How close are the club to appointing his successor?

AC: We're at the final stages of interviews. I want to put on record the huge contribution Tony has made to this football club – not just on finances. He was a big part of the strategic decision to employ a Head Coach/Sporting Director model, and is an excellent negotiator in transfer dealings! We'll now change our structure slightly, and will employ a Chief Financial Officer. I'm really excited by the calibre of applicants, and will make an offer in the next few days. Tanya Robins, a long term member of the team, with many years of football experience is filling the role in interim.

Andy Redman also stepped down as a director recently, having taken on a new position with a company called MARV. They've taken a stake in Brentford, which means Andy cannot continue here as he cannot be a director of two football clubs. Andy will always be welcome at Fratton Park, and was here recently for the game against Preston North End. Our thanks go to Andy as well.

7. AOB

Q: Could the club introduce season ticket breaks for armed forces deployments?

MJ: This would be very challenging operationally, and ultimately make a season ticket seat available for a limited period of time therefore the new incumbent would ultimately lose their season ticket when the deployment ends – instead I would suggest using the ticket exchange, which would allow you to retain your season ticket seat but get back most of the value for any games you miss.

Other Matters

MW: The Pompey History Society have so far raised £20,000 to purchase Peter Harris's First Division Championship medals from 1949 and 1950 - thank you to supporters who have already contributed. The PHS are aiming to raise the final £5,000 needed to complete the fundraising. There will be a bucket collection at the Millwall home fixture on November 22nd, or supporters can donate online [here](#). Additionally, PHS would like to honour Peter Harris at the Blackburn home game on 13th December. Peter scored his first ever goal against Blackburn, and would've turned 100 shortly after this fixture takes place. Anyone with suggestions on how to celebrate Peter on this fixture can get in touch at history@pompeyfc.co.uk.



MJ: I'd like to remind away supporter groups to pay for any reserved tickets on time. We've seen an increase in tickets not being paid for recently - 50 reserved tickets for Leicester were not purchased.

AC: The football club are monitored every few years by the FA from an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion perspective. It would be really helpful for people to complete [the survey](#).

MJ: Pompey Women play Southampton Women at Fratton Park next weekend during the international break. It will be a great occasion and we'd like to see as many people there as possible.

8. Post-Meeting

[These questions were part of the original agenda but were not answered within the time constraints of the meeting. The following answers were given via email]

Q: Our replica kits are available in sizes up to 3XL, whereas some other Championship Clubs go up to 5 or 6XL. Is it possible to stock a wider range of sizes next season?

MJ: We're aware that sizing is an important consideration for supporters and we want to make our kits as inclusive and accessible as possible. Currently, our replica shirts are produced in sizes up to 3XL, which is the standard range provided by our technical kit supplier. We have already fed back the request for larger sizes and are in discussions about how we can extend the range – ideally up to 5XL – for the 2027/28 season. Nothing can be done for next season as production has started. We know this matters to fans and we're committed to exploring solutions with our supplier to accommodate all supporters.

Q: Would the club ever consider renaming one of the stands to honour one of the club's iconic former players?

MJ: There are no plans to rename any stands from what they are currently known as. It has become common place to rename stands as part of sponsorship agreements in recent time, and although the Club has sponsors for each of their stands they have ensured the traditional name also stays in situ.

Q: Why does the club continue to use X (formerly Twitter) rather than, for example, BlueSky?

MJ: When we review new platforms, we always look at the scale of audience and the level of conversation taking place. For example, during our recent home match against Watford, we tracked coverage on BlueSky and found fewer than 20 posts mentioning the game across the entire platform – most of which were from media professionals such as Neil Allen or Andy Moon.

By contrast, thousands of Pompey-related posts, comments, and engagements took place on X during the same fixture. That's the scale difference we have to factor in: X – whether we like it or not – remains the largest public micro-blogging platform used by football clubs, and it gives us the best chance to reach supporters quickly and at volume, particularly for live match updates.

That said, BlueSky has shown rapid growth and does provide a more community and value-driven environment. As it develops, we'll continue to monitor whether it can complement our existing

channels. But right now, the size of the audience on X makes it the most effective way to keep fans informed in real time.



Q: What are the long term plans for the training ground? Why was original plan to remove portacabins and replace them with a new pitch shelved?

AC: We continue to invest in the training ground following the move in Summer 2024 of the first team into much improved facilities. This summer we extended the players' changing rooms at the training ground. We then moved the Academy into their own dedicated hub providing them with their own distinct identity, changing rooms for players and match officials, offices, Scholars Common Room, safeguarding offices, analysis suite, lecture theatre and physio room. We also created a new reception for the training ground to properly welcome visitors. The next month will see completion of new changing rooms for the first team staff and a new external look from the entrance gates into the training ground, smartening up the whole environment.

The decision to move the Academy into the newly restored and much changed building to the south of the training ground involved significant investment. However, this does not mean the pitch has been shelved. The pitch is planned to be within the next phase of training ground development and will be sited in the area formerly occupied by the Play Football pitches.

- Minutes by Donald Vass