



## LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PUBLIC PROTECTION

#### WALSALL FOOTBALL CLUB (LTD) STADIUM SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP ROUTINE REPORT

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The report seeks to provide Committee with an update relating to the safety certification of Walsall Football Club, and the operation of the Stadium Safety Advisory Group.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are recommended to note the minor amendments made to the group membership set out in Appendix A, note the report of activities and agree to receive a further report in approximately 6 months.

#### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Licensing and Safety Committee (15.4.09) received a report describing the arrangements for the discharge of the Council's functions in respect of certified sports grounds and the role and constitution of the Walsall Football Club (Ltd) Stadium Safety Advisory Group.
- 3.2 Since December 2008 the role of Chair of the Walsall Football Club (Ltd) Stadium Safety Advisory Group (WFCSSAG) has transferred to the Head of Public Protection enabling full compliance with Football Licensing Authority guidance which recommends that Special Advisory Groups are chaired by an officer from the local authority with delegated powers to act quickly and appropriately to protect the safety of the public and prevent dangerous situations arising.
- 3.3 Since the Licensing and Safety Committee meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> April 2009, WFCSSAG has met once on 6<sup>th</sup> June to discuss and agree arrangements for the annual review of the sports ground and the safety certificate, with the intention that these measures are in place before the new season began. In addition, wider representation of various partners at the meetings was discussed and accordingly, some minor changes have been made to the terms of reference as regards Membership as detailed in Appendix A.

## 4.0 MATCH INSPECTIONS

4.1 Seven formal match inspections were conducted during the 2008/9 season by Building Control officers at the following home games:

Versus	
Wolverhampton Wanderers	29 <sup>th</sup> July 2008.
Leyton Orient	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2008.
Peterborough	11 <sup>th</sup> October 2008.
Northampton	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2008.
Leeds	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2009.
Brighton	17 <sup>th</sup> March 2009.
Oldham	2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2009.

All matches passed off without any major incidents within the ground, and no further actions were necessary.

4.2 During the 2008/9 season there have been 29 first team games, including 3 Pre season friendly games played against West Bromwich Albion, Wolves and Aston Villa. Four of these home fixtures had policing where the policing costs were chargeable to the club, and there were three policed fixtures which were not charged to the club.

4.3 Match statistics relating to spectators have been prepared regarding attendance as follows:

### Attendance

Season	Season attendance	League attendance	Average attendance at home	Average attendance away	stewards	injuries
2007-08	163476	128530	5588	784	85	13
2008-09	129075	105182	4573	763	89	14

### Injuries

During the current season 14 spectators reported injuries. Of these injuries 4 were as a result of tripping or falling, 3 can be attributed to self inflicted injuries (one was a member of staff who cut their finger on the till). 6 spectators received treatments for previous ailments, and 1 person was hit by the ball during warm up. Although netting was not present for goalkeeper warm ups this season, it would not have prevented this injury as the lady in question did not receive her injury near the goalkeeper. Nets are planned for the start of this coming season. Only one spectator required hospital treatment, this being a lady who fell down 4-5 stairs on her exit from the ground causing a facial injury. Two persons went home and the remainder returned to the game.

## Spectator interventions

Season	Spectators refused entry - Home	Spectators refused entry - Away	Spectators ejected - Home	Spectators ejected - Away	Spectators arrested - Home	Spectators arrested - Away
2007-08	1	35	35	84		11
2008-09	3	18	29	38	2	1

4.4 Both the football club and local police have worked at a range of early interventions to reduce the numbers of spectators that need to be challenged on match days. This includes the football club community programme and police interventions working with families and Football Behaviour Contracts. It is worth noting, also, that Club policy is to eject spectators found to be smoking in the toilets or around the stands, who also face a 3 match ban.

4.5 As part of the annual review process, the football club is required to produce a number of annual test certificates to demonstrate that the stadium is adequately maintained and safe. All required test certificates have been produced and discussions have been ongoing in order to ensure that the safety arrangements are in line with new Football Licensing Authority guidance.

4.3 A letter has been sent to the football club confirming that all safety arrangements are in place as required before the season formally starts.

## 5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. There is no fee chargeable for the annual review of the safety arrangements. Should the football club wish to make substantial changes to the safety certificate it is possible to charge a fee on a cost recovery basis relating to the extent of work entailed in reviewing the changes.

## 6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None

## 7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Legal Services have been consulted on the contents of this report and there are no legal issues arising from this report.

## 8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from the report. The costs of administration of the Walsall Football Club (Ltd) Stadium Safety Advisory Group Advisory Group are met from existing budgets.

## 9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report has no direct equality implications as it relates to the way the Council discharges specific responsibilities across a range of sports premises. All stadia must demonstrate full compliance with the access requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

## **11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Minutes of the Safety Advisory Group meetings.



### **WALSALL FOOTBALL CLUB (LTD) STADIUM ADVISORY GROUP**

The following amendments have been made to the membership as detailed in italics below:

#### **3.0 MEMBERSHIP**

3.1 The Walsall Stadium Safety Advisory Group shall comprise of the following or their authorised representatives:-

- **Walsall Council**
  - Head of Public Protection
  - Environmental Health Manager
  - Building Control Manager
- **West Midlands Police**
  - Superintendent
- **West Midlands Fire Service**
  - Watch Commander
- **West Midlands Ambulance Service**
  - Group Station Manager
  - Emergency Preparedness Manager
- **St John Ambulance Service**
  - Operational Events Manager
- **Football Licensing Authority**
  - Appointed inspector by invitation as required
- **Walsall Football Club**
  - *Chief Executive*
  - *Safety Officer/ Stadium Manager*

The views of the various spectator groups attending Walsall Football Club's 'Fans Forum' shall be represented at the Walsall Football Club (Ltd) Stadium Safety Advisory Group by officers of Walsall Football Club.