



LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

20 OCTOBER 2010

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides Committee with an update relating to the safety certification of Walsall Football Club, and the operation of the Stadium Safety Advisory Group and a review of arrangements over the 2008/9 football season .

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are recommended to note the contents of this report.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The role of Chair of the Walsall Football Club (Ltd) Stadium Safety Advisory Group (WFCSSAG) has been carried out by the Head of Public Safety since December 2008, in compliance with Football Licensing Authority recommendations 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. 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, and in September 2009 received a further report reviewing arrangements over the 2009/10 football season.
- 3.2 WFCSSAG has continued to meet at quarterly intervals to discuss and agree arrangements for spectator safety and to enable the annual review of the sports ground and the safety certificate to be completed.

4.0 MATCH INSPECTIONS

- 4.1 6 formal match inspections were conducted during the 2009/10 season by Building Control officers at the following home games:

Home game versus	Date
Wolves	27/07/09
Leeds	18/08/09
Oldham	24/11/09
Charlton	02/01/10
Bristol Rovers	06/02/10
MK Dons	08/05/10

All matches passed off without any major incidents within the ground, and no further actions were necessary. The 'S' and 'P' factors have been assessed using the methods prescribed in the 'Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds' and both the S and P factors have come out as 1.0 which reflects the high standard of safety and ground management at the club. Using the 'S' and 'P' factors, calculations for safe crowd capacities for the individual stands have been calculated. Evacuation times for the Blue stand have been calculated at 5.8 minutes, Red stand at 5.2 minutes. Yellow stand at 5.2 minutes and finally the Green stand lower at 6.16, Green stand middle and upper at 4.9 minutes. All of which are well within the tolerance given within the guide of 8 minutes.

4.2 During the 2009/10 season there have been 23 first team games, including 2 Pre season friendly games played against West Bromwich Albion and Wolves, both of which were policed games. Only one other game against Leeds United required policing. Policing of matches is chargeable against the football club based on a risk assessment model of potential spectator safety issues. Both the football club and police monitor closely potentially problematic spectators, and there are currently 27 football banning orders in place, and of these 4 spectators are banned for life.

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
2009-10	104357	91773	3990	700	88.5	7

Injuries

During the current season 7 spectators reported injuries. Of these injuries 3 were as a result of tripping or falling, 3 spectators received treatments for previous ailments, and 1 person was hit by the ball during warm up. No spectator required hospital treatment.

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
2009-10	0	11	19	48	1	3

4.4 Both the football club and local police have continued to work on 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. The supporters club have also been working closely with the police to strengthen relationships between the police and supporters.

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 indirect environmental implications arising from this report, as there can be traffic congestion on match days. Work has been ongoing to look at the sequencing of traffic lights to improve the movement of traffic into and away from the ground at times of peak usage.

11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Minutes of the Safety Advisory Group meetings.