

Hibs' season ticket prices to remain the same



Hibs CEO Leeann Dempster has told fans that the season ticket prices for the forthcoming campaign will remain the same despite the club's relegation.

On a statement published on the Hibernian FC website, Ms Dempster said: "Season Tickets have been a cause of some concern to me since my arrival. The Club has sold around 5400 Season Tickets to date – with the vast majority of those being bought before the Club suffered relegation at the end of last season.

"Since then, only a few hundred have been bought. That means thousands of fans bought in the expectation of Premiership football this season, only to be faced with their Club competing in the Championship.

"It also means that sales have all but dried up, and are running well behind the same point in time last year, when we had sold 7600, or the previous year when 6900 had been sold.

"There has been a lot of discussion and debate amongst supporters about the cost of Season Tickets, given the league, and what might or should be done. Needless to say, I have also received a lot of feedback – through my meetings, through telephone calls, through general discussion on forums, and, most of all, through email.

"I have been genuinely encouraged that through all of this, the overwhelming tone has been encouraging and positive. If I had to summarise, the message that has been relayed to me is that the Club should keep the Season Ticket money if it is used to sustain the budget available to Alan Stubbs to build a

squad capable of winning us promotion.

“The whole issue has caused me real concern. A small number of supporters – I would say around 5% – have been in touch seeking a refund, with the figure of £50 the most quoted. Simple arithmetic shows that if this was to happen and if the majority of supporters decided to take it up, it would equate to having to take about a £1/4 million out of the budget available to the Head Coach, at a time when we need to be investing to fight our way out of the most competitive Championship ever. We know that our opponents will be seeking to match or out spend us.

“This presents a risk I really don’t want to take. To maximise our chances of heading straight back up, I have decided that the best course of action is to leave prices as they are. If we are to compete with our rivals in this league, every ticket and every penny spent become crucial. It follows though that the kind of loyalty I have witnessed should not go unrewarded. For that reason, I have asked that Working Together looks at how we can reward those buying Season Tickets to support the Club through this difficulty with greater added value, and when would be most appropriate for this.

“I met with Working Together representatives, and a number of views were expressed. Some initially felt that a reduction in price was needed, but all understood the desire to give Alan the best possible chance to build a squad. All of those present were keen that I communicate honestly with supporters about the decision, the reason for it, and our desire to create added value as a reward. Those present also stressed that the Club should reintroduce the payment plan, and we are going to do this to help supporters finance the purchase of a Season Ticket, with the Club again meeting the interest costs.

“It was also felt important to stress that while our prices are higher than the vast majority of clubs in the Championship, they are in line (or less than) our biggest

rivals. Our best seats cost £405, while the best seats at Tynecastle cost £450 and at Rangers £495. Both of these clubs do, in fairness, offer a limited number of lower priced seats in less popular parts of their stadia.

“I realise that this decision will not meet with universal approval. I would rather we were not in this position. However, I have to do what I think is best for the Club in terms of giving us every chance of a successful outcome to the season. At the end of the day, that would be something that every supporters would celebrate.

“It is my intention to bring more young supporters and community groups to Easter Road this season, I am exploring a route that will see dedicated community and school seats for nearly every game and not just a few hundred, I want to get the number to at least one thousand. To do so we will need the support of Working Together, Kicks for Kids and the Community Foundation as well as the bigger community at large.

“There should and will be more support this season for those who run supporter buses. This means that the club will start to contribute to costs for selected games, we will also help to fund raise and generally try and make it easier for supporters to travel by helping those who run buses as much as we can.

“We have also, at the request of Working Together and from the support in general, started to look at implementing a long awaited loyalty scheme. The first discussions around how this might work will happen this week and I’ll report back on the timescale involved and if we have the technical ability, at the moment, to implement.

“I have also been asked to consider bringing back a new interest free payment plan – I am pleased to say that I have instructed a new trial of this offer – for this season to assess and monitor the need for this type of scheme and

hopefully any uplift in sales.

“These tickets will be available to buy from Monday 7 July for both regular Season Tickets and also for those who purchase Hospitality Season Tickets. We will publicise ways to buy from that date.

“I have said that I want to listen and that moving forward the club understands the needs to change – everyone associated with the club accepts this and is looking forward to the future. I’ll continue to meet with the Working Together representatives and from these meetings I am certain you’ll see further improvements.

“Finally, if you haven’t purchased a season ticket yet, or you are considering doing so then I’d urge you to get one.

“It’s time for us all to re-engage, listen and work towards what every supporter ultimately wants – a successful club both on and off the field.”