

Working Together forum meet to review Hibs loyalty points scheme



A sub-group of the Working Together forum met at Easter Road on Monday night to review the loyalty points scheme which has been the subject of much discussion in recent months. The group included Leeann Dempster, board members Frank Dougan and Amit Moudgil alongside a number of fans, some of whom are involved in supporters clubs and some who are not. Hibernian Supporters Limited (HSL) were also represented and Colin Millar, Communications Manager, and Greig Mailer, Head of Marketing & Commercial Operations, made up the group.

The aims of the loyalty points scheme were outlined:

- To help grow the fanbase
- To encourage fans to attend more matches
- To reward fans who attend the most matches
- To reduce queuing times for the busiest away matches
- To encourage more fans to register and purchase tickets online
- To help ensure that the club database is kept up to date and accurate.

A number of discussion points and issues were raised and debated:

- The number of waves of sales based on the number of loyalty points should be reviewed, the pros and cons of more/less waves was debated.

- Fans who attend all games, home and away, should have priority access to tickets.
- Issues relating to disabled fans to ensure they are able to purchase tickets with their carers where needed.
- The decision to award HSL members with loyalty points was debated, as was the concept of rewarding fans for other commitments, for example the purchase of shares or merchandise. Linked to this was the idea that the club could operate a separate system of 'reward' points that is not linked to attendance at matches.
- The current structure, where points are accumulated on a three-year rolling basis, was discussed. There was mixed views as to whether this was fair or if this reinforces the position of the fans with the most points at the top of the scale.
- While many fans have no issues in managing their online accounts, the number of enquiries which the club receives suggests that some supporters have difficulties – the suggestion was raised as to whether the scheme could be simplified.
- The need to ensure that season ticket holders benefit from whatever structure is put in place.
- The use of the term 'loyalty points' was questioned in that it can be seen to be provocative/divisive to some fans.
- Complaints had been received that the scheme has unintentionally devalued the season ticket offering.
- It was noted that only three matches, since the introduction of the scheme, had not went to public sale – two matches at Ibrox against Rangers and one match against Hearts at Tynecastle.
- That some fans were feeling excluded from the scheme if they could not afford to attend every match or were only able to

attend some matches due to other commitments.

- The ticket office faces a growing amount of pressure and enquires relating to the scheme which has taken up a considerable amount of administrative resource.

The achievements of the scheme to date were also noted:

- Despite the above issues, many fans have welcomed the introduction which had been called for by fan groups for a number of years – meaning tickets can be allocated on a fairer basis.

- Over 5,000 additional supporter records are now active on the club database.

- More and more fans are purchasing tickets online.

- HSL membership grew noticeably following the loyalty points announcement – helping to generate additional investment into the club.

Some solutions were floated but it was agreed that the club reflects on the session and brings forward recommendations and options for review at the next meeting which addressed the issues that have been raised.

The date of the next meeting was set to be held on Monday 21 March at Easter Road.

If any supporters would like to join the debate they can email their suggestions on the loyalty point scheme by 14 March to enquiries@hibernianfc.co.uk.