

Hounslow Council Leader to address BIAS Open Forum

As you will be aware from the last edition of The Bee, BIAS announced its first AGM shall take place at 11:00hrs on 25th September, 1999 in the Cinema Lecture Hall of The Watermans Arts Centre, Brentford. Following on from this there will be an Open Forum discussion and we are pleased to confirm that John Connelly, Leader of the Council, will join us for what will hopefully be an open and productive debate. As we have said previously, BIAS has been in contact with Hounslow Council in the last few months regarding the issue of Brentford getting a new stadium in the borough. In reply to some of our questions, Mr. Connelly wrote to BIAS, and the main text of his letter is reproduced below:

"I recognise the concerns that supporters of Brentford have over the future of the club. I do not, however, think it is helpful for the club's Chairman to aggravate supporters' concerns by irresponsible statements in the press.

In relation to the future of the new stadium, I hope the following points might be helpful to your members:

1. The Council is committed to finding a site for a multi-purpose sports venue with a capacity of, perhaps, 25,000. Funding for such a centre will, however, have to come from outside sources.
2. The Western International Market site has been mentioned as a possible location. In relation to WIM, the Council's first priority is to rebuild and upgrade the market on the site in order to ensure that the many jobs provided there for borough residents are maintained.
3. The WIM site is mainly in the Green Belt, providing major planning difficulties in relation to any development on the site. Moreover, there is a lack of public transport in the area and the local network is also at capacity.
4. Personally, I would prefer Brentford to remain in the historic location. However, mistakes by management in the past - such as the sales of land at Brook Road South - and the limited space at Griffin Park make redevelopment of the site problematic."

Point 4 of this letter is particularly telling as this is directly opposed to the principle of Brentford spending thousands of pounds on a feasibility study, let alone actually doing so. Mr. Connelly does not give his reasons why Brentford should not move. Given this and the importance of this issue to the future of Brentford FC, we can only emphasize the need for you to attend this meeting and to have your questions ready.

BIAS believes it is time for Hounslow Council to start working positively with Ron Noades and Brentford Football Club in finding a suitable site for a new stadium. Backed by the members' survey revealing overwhelming support for the proposition, BIAS fully supports Ron Noades' desire to find a new location for Brentford to play within the borough. The Club needs a modern stadium for the new millenium to match the quality of the football that the team is now producing under Ron Noades.

To date the Council has remained silent in public on the matter, other than referring to the long awaited feasibility study. The Council has said that it wants a new sporting arena within the borough but we feel that they should publicly declare whether they see Brentford Football Club as an integral part of this plan.

Again, we urge you to come along on the 25th and use this opportunity to ask your questions of Hounslow Council's Leader.

Predict-The-League Winner

The first Predict-The-League winner is PAUL RIDLEY who had a score of -77, just two points better than the person in second position. Paul correctly forecast three teams in the correct positions, three more one position away and three more two positions away! Loads of bonus points!! The team most accurately forecast was Chesterfield (18th) with people averaging just over 3 league places away, whilst Reading (23rd) has been most inaccurately forecast with people averaging a massive 18 league places away! Most people were about 4 league positions out for Brentford - probably due to the game in hand.

BIAS Draw Winner

The BIAS monthly prize draw was made during the half-time break of Brentford's 2-0 home victory over Blackpool by young Bees player Michael Dobson and the name of KEITH PIGGOTT was duly drawn from the membership. A £40 gift voucher is on its way to Keith.

Northern Hatred??

The day after Brentford's 2-2 draw at Gigg Lane, Bury, BIAS received a letter from member Tony Marks, on the subject of abusive behaviour by some Brentford fans towards their hosts. Tony writes:

"Sir,

I feel it incumbent on myself to complain about the disgraceful behaviour of some Brentford "fans" at Bury, Sat 21/8/99. Why do these ill informed people insist on throwing abuse at fans from the north, or the Midlands each time they visit? To say that calling Northerners "slum dwellers" and worse, bastards, is outrageous and at least moronic, is perhaps not a strong enough statement. These people are insulting the many Midland/Northern Bees fans who have like myself decided that Brentford are the team we wish to see since moving down. Indeed Ron Noades complains that low crowds will not help to buy players, well I have news for him, he had better root out the Northern Haters or, even less will go to games, especially the away games if it continues. I feel ashamed and personally insulted to hear their rhetorical garbage, it really is disgusting.

I am sorry to have to write in such sad tones, but, it does the good name of BRENTFORD no service whatsoever to listen to "them". If they cannot appreciate beer at £1.53 a pint and good Northern/Midlands hospitality then do not go there. Stay in London and pay £2.20! All this does is compound the idea that the South is NOT friendly.

PS: I feel this should be in your next newsletter, as I was not alone in being upset."

Clearly there will always be what could be described as "enthusiastic banter" between rival football fans and this can add to the atmosphere at a game. Fortunately, this rivalry tends, in the main, to be restricted to chanting and of a non-violent nature. Some of these chants and songs go beyond the bounds of acceptability so far as some are concerned, while others hold the opinion that all is fair in love, war and football. Whilst BIAS does not claim, nor can it be, the conscience of any Bees fan, perhaps those responsible for the remarks highlighted in Tony's letter would consider whether everything they chant and shout is appropriate, even in the environment of a football ground. Moreover, there is always the threat of being ejected from a stadium and/or arrest by the Police, which may lead to prosecution and the possibility of being banned from all football grounds in the country, including Griffin Park. Due to the limited space of The Bee, this is a subject which may be better covered in one of the excellent fanzines produced by Brentford fans and if you feel strongly enough, we recommend you write an article expressing your views. Replies to BIAS relating to this subject will be included within future editions of The Bee, subject to the availability of space.

Win a free away-day to support the Bees

To kick off the new season, we are looking to carry on building our membership and who better to help us with that than you - our members? As we are sure you will all agree, the more members BIAS has, the stronger it is. So why not ask a friend to join? Does the person who sits or stands next to you belong to BIAS? If not then why not ask them to join? In the five months since we re-launched, we have successfully established BIAS, produced five newsletters, held six prize draws - with £240 worth of prizes to date - and built a very positive relationship with the Club. Just think what we could do if every member persuaded one other person to join. So please find a friend to join and you will be entered for a prize draw to win an away-day trip for two to watch Brentford. The prize is two match tickets plus supporters coach fares to the game (subject to a maximum of £40 and ticket availability). You can choose whichever away league game you want. The draw will be held at the same time as the October monthly draw (maybe you could be a winner twice on the same day?!) and you will have as many entries to the draw as people you sign up. So if you persuade five people to join BIAS you will be entered five times into the draw! To enter, please ask your friend to use the form enclosed with this newsletter and write your name and membership number at the top of the form. If you need more forms, feel free to make copies. The deadline for entry to the draw is 2nd October (i.e. the membership application form (s) must have arrived at BIAS by that date).