

NEW STADIUM - FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT

At a meeting in Heston on Thursday evening, November 4th, the report of the feasibility study into the proposed stadium was presented to Hounslow councillors and Brentford FC. Following the presentation, the Council executive and Brentford directors met to discuss some of the key issues that arose. BIAS was present at both the presentation and the meeting, at the invitation of the Club.

The plans for the stadium are tremendously impressive. The architects, Hok & Lobb, have worked on many of the world's finest and most spectacular stadia, such as the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, as well as smaller scale, but still high quality stadia like the Reebok and Alfred McAlpine. The plans presented for Brentford's new ground are on the smaller scale (25 - 30,000 seats), but in terms of overall technology and associated developments (hotel, cinema multiplex, pubs, a night-club, restaurants, offices, etc) are far more advanced than anything else this country has seen. If the plans reach fruition, the Bees may not be playing in the largest stadium in England, but they will have the best ground. The Madejski Stadium will look like Elm Park in comparison! Perhaps even more to the point, with retractable pitches and/or a roof, this stadium makes the plans for Craven Cottage look distinctly unambitious.

Financially, the scheme requires the participation of at least one other sporting club, but the consultants revealed that the newly merged rugby union club (London Irish / London Scottish / Richmond) have expressed a firm interest. Furthermore there is the possibility of another football club and maybe even a rugby league team participating. The stadium would be built in two phases, with the first phase providing 15,000 seats. With the second phase the capacity would rise to 25 - 30,000. If the project reaches this stage, the stadium will be a key feature in a bid to bring the Olympic Games to London in 2012.

The plans are undoubtedly exciting and the financial projections suggest the scheme is very viable. However, the plans are not without problems and these relate mainly to the traffic implications. The plan as presented envisages a "stadium-plex" where cars are actively discouraged to the extent that parking will not be provided for "event audiences" (that's you and me going to watch the Bees!). Instead, tickets to see games will include travel to the stadium by tube / rail / bus / park-and-ride. It has to be questioned whether this idea is really practical and the traffic questions were at the forefront of the councillors concerns.

The other main stumbling block relates to Western International Markets (WIM). Rising Health & Safety standards mean that the market must be modernised in the very near future. This is the Council's priority, given that 1,200 local jobs are at stake. Planning approval for a new WIM on the current site is an urgent need. Martin Lange put forward a case in the strongest possible terms that the Council should look for a solution to the WIM problems that doesn't preclude the stadium development. The Council executive suggested that they were sympathetic to this point. We must hope that a common approach can be found which allows both to proceed. It remains to be seen how co-operative the market authorities will be.

The Council also revealed that it was seriously investigating whether a stadium development at Feltham Arenas was possible. It hopes to come to a decision on this early next year. It is unlikely that a stadium at Feltham would be anywhere near as impressive or spectacular as the one proposed for the WIM site. This is because the main reasons that the consultants felt the wonder stadium is feasible are because the location of WIM is so perfect. But that doesn't mean that a Feltham stadium would necessarily be inadequate to match the ambitions that the supporters and Ron Noades have for Brentford FC.

The Council has promised to communicate its formal reaction to the proposed scheme in the near future and we will keep you fully up-to-date with how things develop. BIAS is delighted that both the Council and the club are committed to involving supporters and keeping them informed.

A final note on the stadium plans. The consultants envisage a process whereby full planning permission wouldn't be sought until 2001 (they want to avoid the mistakes made by Barnet FC and this means taking time to do things properly) - so it seems that the "BeesDome" is not likely to happen for quite some time.

BIAS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT

The first BIAS AGM took place on 25th September 1999 at the Watermans Arts Centre, Brentford. Over 50

members came along to voice their opinion and to hear what John Connolly had to say regarding the plans for a new stadium. We were joined shortly after the start by Ron Noades - more of that exchange of views can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter. For the record, the existing committee members were nominated for re-election of to their positions and they were duly elected, unopposed.

Members raised a number of issues, the monthly BIAS prize draw being one and the level of subscriptions being the other. A number of members questioned whether holding a monthly draw was in fact relevant and should it be discontinued. Although the majority of the meeting was in favour of abolishing the draw, the fact that some members had joined on that basis was deemed to prevent us from abolishing the draw outright. Members who do not wish to participate in the draw should notify us. Their names will remain in the "hat", but if drawn the money will stay within BIAS.

It was proposed that subscriptions remain at £1 per month. The question was asked whether this was sufficient for any potential campaigns BIAS may wish to run in the coming months, particularly with the new stadium project being very much to the fore. Since there is no definite plan at this time, it would be impossible to decide what would be a suitable increase and it was decided that subscriptions should remain the same. Should there be a requirement for BIAS to raise funds, then members would be notified as appropriate. Finance could then be raised by increasing subscriptions (which requires a vote) or by special donation from members.

BIAS would like to take this opportunity to thank International Imaging Products Limited for providing the services of an accountant who audited the accounts for the year-end.

BIAS MONTHLY DRAW WINNERS

The winner of the September BIAS draw, made during the half-time interval of the home game versus Preston, is Paul Gorham of Hampshire, whilst the winner of the October's prize is Peter Gates of London N1. Peter's name was drawn at the match with Gillingham. A voucher to the value of £40, redeemable from the Brentford club shop, goes to each member.

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RON NOADES & JOHN CONNOLLY AT THE BIAS AGM

After the formal business of the AGM, BIAS members listened to John Connelly, Leader of Hounslow Council, and Ron Noades, Chairman and Manager of Brentford Football Club, who put forward their views on the prospects for a new stadium for Brentford FC.

John Connelly spoke first and while drawing attention to a variety of potential obstacles in relation to the Western International Markets site said, "In principle we would accept any proposal the Brentford board make to us about a relocation and look at its benefits and costs." In contrast to his previously stated view that he would prefer the club to remain in its historic location, he agreed that "the idea of redeveloping Griffin Park is a non-starter."

Councillor Connelly proposed a three-way working party, involving the Council, the board of Brentford and the supporters to do away with speculation and rumour.

Ron Noades explained why he had been upset at reports that the Council was not keen to develop green belt land when it had allowed the feasibility study to proceed to a second stage. He also expressed concern that there had been a planning application submitted to redevelop Western International Markets that had made no reference to the possibility of a stadium, which he feels is very compatible with the market redevelopment.

However, Mr. Noades also praised Hounslow Council as the "most co-operative local authority" he has been involved with. Responding to Councillor Connelly's question regarding the Brentford board's ambitions, Mr. Noades said, "We would like to be able to have Brentford as a Premier League side in London. I could put a Premier League side in a Premier League stadium"

The meeting ended with Ron Noades and John Connelly agreeing to try and bring forward from early November their meeting to discuss and hopefully agree a joint position on the report of the feasibility study.

The feeling after the meeting was that the event had helped to move the situation forward and BIAS is pleased that it has been able to facilitate this progress. John McGlashan, Chairman of BIAS, said, "We feel that the meeting has helped clear the air and remove some of the negative speculation relating to Brentford's future location. The overwhelming majority of our members want Brentford to have a modern stadium to allow it to progress towards the Premiership."

"While we acknowledge that there are still many obstacles to be overcome, we are encouraged at the positive attitude shown by Ron Noades and Councillor Connelly. Having called on them to work more closely together, we are naturally pleased that this will now happen. We will also be working to follow up Councillor Connelly's suggestion of a three-way working party so that supporters of Brentford can contribute to the project and remove the need for speculation."

"MEMBER GET MEMBER" COMPETITION WINNER

At the start of this season, BIAS launched a campaign to increase its membership, this being called the "Member Get Member" competition. The prize for the current member who nominated the most new members is two match tickets plus supporters coach fares to any Brentford away league game of the winner's choice, subject to a maximum of £40 and ticket availability. BIAS is pleased to announce the winner of this competition is Neil Smith of Sunbury-on-Thames.

ST. JOHN'S APPEAL

The Club has approached BIAS regarding possible donations towards a youth team stretcher, and also regarding donations to fund replacements for St. John's Ambulance equipment used at Griffin Park on match days. We have explained to the Club that we as an Association didn't feel giving away our members money was something we ought to do, especially given the current state of BIAS finances. However, we recognise that these are good causes, which many of our members may wish to support. If any of you wish to make a donation towards either or both of these causes, please forward your donations either to ourselves or directly to Gary Hargraves at the Club.

"PREDICT THE LEAGUE" RESULTS

The September winner is Chris Beesley (A1035) with a score of +8. August's winner (Paul Ridley) plunged to 28th position! Best predicted team was Brentford (average 2 positions out), and worse predicted team was Reading (average 13 positions out). The winner for October is Phil Cook (B1263) with a score of +3, 26 points ahead of second place Chris Beesley (A1035). Best predicted team was Oldham (averaging 3 positions away), worst was Notts County (averaging 14 positions away). Brentford averaged 4 positions away. The full table for the end of October is reproduced below:

Position	Name / Membership / Entry Score	Position	Name / Membership / Entry Score
1	Phil Cook (BIAS No. B1263, Entry 1 of 1)	3	22 Martin Hughes (BIAS No. B1264, Entry 1 of 3) -71
2	Chris Beesley (BIAS No. A1035, Entry 1 of 1) -23	23	Phil Roker (BIAS No. ??, Entry 1 of 1) -76
3	D.S. Wilcox (BIAS No. B1187, Entry 2 of 3) -25	24	Ian Anderson (BIAS No. A1112, Entry 1 of 1) -80
4	Neil Smith (BIAS No. B1211, Entry 1 of 2) -25	25	Paul Sabine (BIAS No. B1184, Entry 1 of 1) -87
5	Rod Scales (BIAS No. A1101, Entry 1 of 2) -28	26	Paul Ridley (BIAS No. B1252, Entry 1 of 2) -88
6	Gary Piggot (BIAS No. A1032, Entry 1 of 1) -42	27	Michael Turner (BIAS No. ??, Entry 1 of 1) -89
7	Chris Dean (BIAS No. B1244, Entry 1 of 1) -49	28	Malcolm Harrod (BIAS No. B1206, Entry 1 of 1) -89

8 Chris Wickham (BIAS No. B1205, Entry 1 of 1) -52 29 Martin Hughes (BIAS No. B1264, Entry 3 of 3) -93
9 John Hirdle (BIAS No. A1121, Entry 1 of 1) -52 30 Paul Gorham (BIAS No. A1014, Entry 1 of 1) -94
10 Mark Croxford (BIAS No. B1209, Entry 1 of 1) -54 31 Neil Smith (SB) (BIAS No. B1211, Entry 2 of 2) -105
11 Rod Scales (BIAS No. A1101, Entry 2 of 2) -58 32 Seth Dalton (BIAS No. B1233, Entry 1 of 1) -113
12 Martin Hughes (BIAS No. B1264, Entry 2 of 3) -60 33 Larry Signy (BIAS No. A1042, Entry 1 of 1) -113
13 Keith Piggot (BIAS No. A1081, Entry 1 of 1) -61 34 David Merritt (BIAS No. A1084, Entry 1 of 2) -115
14 John Sear (BIAS No. A1109, Entry 1 of 1) -62 35 Paul Ridley (BIAS No. B1252, Entry 2 of 2) -117
15 Pete Johnston (BIAS No. A1056, Entry 1 of 1) -63 36 Paul Fitzsimons (BIAS No. A1083, Entry 1 of 1) -124
16 David Maton (BIAS No. ??, Entry 1 of 1) -66 37 John Gillespie (BIAS No. A1132, Entry 1 of 1) -124
17 Ian Jarvis (BIAS No. B1172, Entry 1 of 1) -67 38 Geoff Rogers (BIAS No. A1139, Entry 1 of 1) -139
18 Paul Harrison (BIAS No. B1273, Entry 1 of 1) -68 39 Graham Hall (BIAS No. B1247, Entry 1 of 1) -141
19 S Hayes (BIAS No. B1188, Entry 1 of 1) -69 40 David Merritt (BIAS No. A1084, Entry 2 of 2) -142
20 D.S. Wilcox (BIAS No. B1187, Entry 3 of 3) -69 41 D.S. Wilcox (BIAS No. B1187, Entry 1 of 3) -152
21 Paul Minkkinen (BIAS No. B1182, Entry 1 of 1) -71

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