

## BIAS LAUNCHES STADIUM ACTION GROUP

Following press coverage of the recent Hounslow Council meeting at which the Feltham Arenas development was discussed, BIAS received a great deal of criticism on the Internet for the decision it took some time ago to pursue a 'softly, softly' approach with regard to this issue.

Although we believe we have adopted the correct strategy at each stage, we also realise that we have allowed a situation to develop where people are wondering what's going on. It's fair to say that the whole stadium issue has gone very quiet in recent months whilst the Club and the Council have pursued confidential discussions. However, we do recognise our responsibility to keep things moving along in this area and that is why we are now proposing to establish an action group that will be tasked with keeping everyone informed as to what is happening at all times.

Given the vocal criticism of BIAS's previous role in the stadium debate, we hope that the new action group will get the response from our membership that it deserves. We also hope that new members will come forward and join BIAS to participate in the campaign.

### Supporter Involvement in Football Clubs

The issue of increased supporter involvement in the management of football clubs has been mentioned in previous issues of *The Bee* and a new organisation has now been set up by the Government to achieve this aim.

Following reports from the *Football Task Force, Supporters Direct* is designed to give assistance, information and advice to groups of fans who wish to take a responsible role in the life of the club that they support.

BIAS has begun discussions with this Group to examine the feasibility of establishing a Brentford Supporters Trust that can become a stakeholder in the Club. To qualify for assistance, we must demonstrate:

- a democratic structure;
- an openness that allows all fans to join at a reasonable cost; and
- a broad representation of Brentford's supporter base.

As the BIAS constitution meets all of these requirements, we do expect to be eligible for help

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**BIAS  
NEEDS YOU!**

BIAS is setting up a Stadium Action Group and we are looking for interested volunteers to take a leading role in its activities.

The Group will receive funding from BIAS and will be tasked with researching the views of a wide cross-section of Brentford Supporters. The Group will also be asked to establish the opinions of local residents and of businesses in the Brentford, Feltham and Bedfont areas with regard to the Club's plans to move to a new ground. Action Group members will be asked to liaise with both the Club and the Council and make regular reports on the project for future editions of *The Bee*.

To take part in this project, please contact John McGlashan on Tel: 020 8899 2159 or Email: john.mcglashan@ram.co.uk. Alternatively you can write to BIAS at PO Box 19346, London W4 4WW or leave your details in the BIAS postbox inside the Brentford Club Shop.

## Free Membership for Children

Membership of BIAS is free for all children, when an adult from the same family joins the Association.

Children taking advantage of this facility will receive their own BIAS membership card and are entitled to all of the preferential club discounts that membership entails.

## BIAS Events

The Committee is currently considering a number of ideas for supporters' events during 2001.

Suggestions made so far include a meet the players evening to raise money for Target 10,000 and a classic Brentford video evening hosted by a local pub.

If you would be interested in attending an event such as this then please let us know.

## Predict the League

Unfortunately, Dave Merritt recently had his laptop stolen, containing all of the current data for this year's Predict the League contest.

Undaunted, Dave will be re-assembling the league table from scratch but would like to apologise for any delay.

Oh, and if anyone finds a laptop wandering around the streets of Edinburgh then please give him a call!

## Brentford AGM

BIAS representatives were in attendance at Brentford's recent AGM.

Ron Noades announced that he is currently not intending to appoint a new manager as no suitable candidates have come forward.

Shareholders present at the meeting complained about the attitude of some supporters in New Road B Block, particularly during the Millwall game.

Further complaints were also registered regarding refreshment queues and the PA system, particularly in the Ealing Road area. The Club says the PA system would cost £30,000 to upgrade

## CONTACT BIAS

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THE  
BIAS  
COMMITTEE  
WOULD LIKE TO  
WISH YOU ALL  
A VERY  
MERRY  
CHRISTMAS

We hope that the Brentford Trust will be able to acquire shares in the Club and pool the voting power of individual supporters to further its aims and objectives. In the longer term we will also seek to secure the democratic election of an official supporters' representative to the Club's Board of Directors.

Obviously the Trust is not intended as the beginning of a takeover bid, on the contrary it is intended to establish a stable partnership between the Club, its supporters and the community as a whole.

There is still much work to be done before we can put forward any firm proposals but Gary Hargraves has indicated that the club will give careful consideration to any plans as soon as they are submitted. He has also indicated that the current management has no objections to the concept of a Trust being formed in principle.

Keep an eye on future editions of *The Bee* for further updates!

**BE BIASED  
ABOUT  
BRENTFORD**

**Membership  
Forms are  
available now at:**

**[www.bias.org.uk](http://www.bias.org.uk)**

## TARGET 10,000

For some time now, BIAS has participated in a supporters' group that has met with the Club on a number of occasions to discuss ideas for increasing attendances. Before Target 10,000 was launched at the recent Wigan game, this group was given a preview of the campaign, including a few aspects that have yet to be made public. If these are approved then it should be very exciting indeed.

Overall, this initiative looks very promising and deserves our full support. The central aim is to build towards achieving regular attendances of 10,000 people at each home game. This is undoubtedly an ambitious target but the plan is a long-term one and includes several intermittent goals that the Club is hoping to achieve along the way. These include:

- 10,000 addresses on the Club database;
- 10,000 community tickets given away;
- 10,000 at any one game during the season; and
- 10,000 at two consecutive games.

BIAS applauds the Club's long-term thinking on this issue, and its desire to involve the fans directly in achieving these targets. One of the main objectives of BIAS is to build support for the Club and Target 10,000 should allow us to turn that aim into real action.

To succeed, Target 10,000 will require supporters to offer real assistance and that's where you come in! You may not have much spare time but we hope you'll be able to put some of it to good use and invest in the future support of Brentford FC.

No matter how much or how little time you have, BIAS would like to hear from you.

### New Road B Block Shut Down

Season ticket holders in New Road B Block received a letter from the Club on 16 December 2000 announcing that this section of the Ground has been closed for the remainder of the season following discussions with the Metropolitan Police.

Stadium Manager, Roy King, said in the letter that he wished to thank all those supporters "who have tried to assist the club in keeping this area open by co-operating with the stewards' requests. It is quite clear now that a minority section of the spectators in Block B were not going to listen to any amount of reason and therefore, in order to avoid further confrontation, the police have taken the decision to shut the block entirely."

He went on to say that "The club does understand that Brentford supporters would like to stand and watch football under cover and will now explore all avenues that may enable home supporters to return to the Brook Road stand for next season."

So far the reaction of fans to this development has been mixed but the BIAS committee would like to hear your views so that we can make appropriate representations to the Club before the start of next season.

Please contact us via our postbox in the Club Shop or at PO Box 19346, London W4 4WW.

Alternatively you can email us at [Brentford@hotmail.com](mailto:Brentford@hotmail.com) with your opinions on the Brook Road proposal.

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2nd BIAS Annual General Meeting took place at Waterman's Art Centre on Saturday 30 September 2000.

## New Stadium Manager

Roy King, Brentford's new Stadium Manager, attended the meeting and took questions from the floor.

He explained that the situation in New Road, where supporters have traditionally remained standing since seating was installed, was no longer tenable as both the Council and Police have insisted that seating must be enforced if that section of the ground is to remain open. Roy recognised that this is an unpopular decision and acknowledged that many supporters feel they can create a better atmosphere when standing. However, he also believes that a good atmosphere can be developed in seated areas and he stressed that Ground Regulations clearly prevent continuous standing in seated areas. He went on to say that there will obviously be portions of the game where people will rise to their feet, but this is not the same as standing throughout the full 90 minutes.

Roy also outlined his plans for changes at Griffin Park with the installation of better facilities, such as new bars, all around the ground. He stated that he sees these measures as important short-term fixes pending a transfer to a modern stadium, which was one of his main motivations for coming to the Club following his previous involvement with the re-development of Charlton's Valley ground.

Brentford Director Eddie Rogers had originally been scheduled to attend the meeting and discuss the latest developments with regard to Feltham Arenas but both the Football Club and the Council agreed not to comment publicly at that time. Council Leader John Connelly also declined an invitation to attend, presumably for the same reason. The Committee would

therefore like to extend special thanks to Roy King, both for attending at short notice and for his honesty when dealing with some frank questioning.

## Committee Activities

The outgoing Committee was pleased to report that BIAS has achieved financial stability during the past year and has repaid the loans which had financed its launch in 1999. BIAS has also been recognised as the 'official' supporters club and members are now entitled to a 20% discount on away travel. A post box has recently been installed in the club shop to help members correspond with the Committee. BIAS has held 12 prize draws, published 5 newsletters and organised a barbeque following the friendly against QPR this Summer. Committee members manned a stall at the Brentford Fun Day and obtained a free copy of the Hey Jude fanzine for each member to increase communication between everyone interested in the Club. The Committee would like to thank Pete Johnston, Editor of Hey Jude and BIAS member for his generosity with this project. Finally, due to the generosity of another member, BIAS now holds shares in both Brentford FC Ltd and Griffin Park Stadium Ltd.

## Elections

Both David Merritt and Russell Owen decided not to stand for re-election. The posts of Finance Officer and Newsletter Editor respectively have therefore been filled by Luke Kirton and Claire Marriott. Chairman, John McGlashan and General Secretary, Edmund Patton Walsh were re-elected unopposed. Both David and Russell have made extremely important contributions in establishing BIAS and we would like to thank them most sincerely for their efforts and enthusiasm. David, I am pleased to say, will continue to run our "Predict the League" competition.

## Prize Draws

As at last year's AGM, there was some discussion as to the validity of the monthly prize draw competition as a way of attracting publicity and new members. Unfortunately this debate, and a wider discussion about subscription levels was cut short due to the constraints of time. A vote was taken and it was decided that the subscription level will remain at £12 per annum for adults with free membership for children under 16 when nominated by an adult member. With regard to the prize draw, it was agreed that the Committee should conduct a wider consultation with BIAS members before making any firm decisions. To this end we would like to ask all members with any strong views on this subject to make them known to the committee by 31 January 2001. Contact details can be found at the end of this newsletter.

## Supporters Involvement in Football Clubs

The AGM ended with a lively discussion, prompted by a question from Pete Johnston, regarding the Government's sponsorship of supporter involvement in football clubs via the organisation known as 'Supporters Direct' which was established in September of this year. Supporters Direct aims to assist with the establishment of Football Trusts and BIAS has informed both Ron Noades and Gary Hargraves that it wishes to examine this possibility at Brentford. Gary Hargraves has pledged to assist our efforts by providing information and agreeing to consider any proposals of this nature that are presented to the Club

(an update on this issue can be found on page 1).