

ARSENAL SUPPORTER

www.aisa.org



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ARSENAL INDEPENDENT SUPPORTERS' ASSOCIATION NUMBER 7

TICKET PRICE INCREASES "NO HIGHER THAN INFLATION"

Arsenal are aiming to limit ticket price increases to no more than the rate of inflation once the move to the new stadium has taken place. The current inflation figure is 3.4%.

Keith Edelman also told AISA representatives during recent discussions that "There will be a price increase for the last year at Highbury but not a large one. We would expect that prices for the move to Emirates would be the same level as the last year at Highbury."

Acknowledging that increases to match ticket prices and season tickets have caused serious problems and concerns for many long-standing fans, the Arsenal Managing Director responded positively to views expressed by AISA representatives Paul Matz and Graham Stone.

Welcoming the news, which slows down the very substantial increases of the last five years, Paul Matz described the meeting as "friendly and constructive" and added:

"We accept that the Club has to balance many different factors when coming to such decisions, notably the massive wages that now have to be paid to keep and attract world-class footballers.

"However, over the last three years AISA has become increasingly concerned

that the level of prices is effectively excluding many fans, including supporters who have stuck with the club through thick and thin."

Graham Stone added: "During the period when the new stadium proposals were in serious doubt AISA put in a major effort to win over the support of the key politicians, and to counter the propaganda of the very vocal and well-organised protesters.

"At the time we were assured that there would be a significant number of cheap seats."

The cheapest matchday seats at Highbury are currently £28, and AISA is arguing that there should be a significant number of seats available at the new stadium priced under £30.

Mr Edelman also confirmed that the Club are developing plans for price banding. The way banding will work is there will be 7 Premiership matches at plus 15% of the standard price; the other 12 will be at 10% below the standard. Prices for Champions League and FA Cup matches will be variable, depending on the quality of the opposition and stage of the competition.

A further meeting between AISA and the Club to follow up these and other issues is currently being arranged.

Information about other matters, including season-ticket allocation and other arrangements regarding the new stadium can be found on page 3.



The AISA campaign to reduce ticket price increases started over three years ago



Ticket price protest

ARSENAL fans fed up with ticket price rises are to campaign to the club in an attempt to avoid being left in the pocket again next season.

The Arsenal Independent Supporters Association (AISA) has appealed to the Highbury board after some tickets increased by as much as 20 per cent at the start of the current season.

"Following the very substantial increases at the start of the season, we call on the Arsenal board to limit increases next season to no more than the rate of inflation," said AISA secretary Paul Matz. "We also suggest that priority be given to lower percentage increases for the cheaper seats and for junior supporters," added Mr Matz, after many ticket prices at Highbury rose by as much as £8 back in August.

"We don't argue for pie in the sky Utopia but believe that more needs to be done to ensure there are tickets available to all every season," he concluded.

JOIN AISA — IT'S FREE!

Membership of AISA is open to all Arsenal supporters. Whether or not you are one of the 4,800 fans already signed up please complete the form on the back page

Benefits include:

- regular Enewsletters
- news and views about the new stadium, ticket pricing and much more
- information about travel and ticket offers

Supporting members will additionally be:

- guaranteed to receive The Arsenal Supporter
- given priority access to ticket offers
- able to participate and vote in AISA decisions

REDACTION – MAKING SOME NOISE FOR THE BOYS



RAYMOND HERLIHY

REDaction is an independent group of Arsenal fans committed to improving the matchday atmosphere at Highbury.

We were formed in 2003 and, with support from the club, we have been able to organise various activities at home and away games.

Members of the group sit in all different parts of the ground, and include Gold, Silver and Red members and members of the family enclosure. Many of us also attend most away games.

After a slow start, we have managed to have some of our ideas integrated into the stadium. Witness the WHL '71', 'ANFIELD '89' and other banners now permanently fixed to the front of the North Bank upper. We also put together the 'Greatest Moments' montage of famous players, goals and trophy wins which is shown on the Big Screens pre kick off and at half time of most games.

Other initiatives we have spearheaded include Fancy Dress at Fulham last season (listen closely for the 2005 venue to be announced soon), free flags at the Everton Carling Cup game, and 2,000 free Santa Hats with club crest, which we gave away pre-Chelsea (which didn't take long...), plus use of the stage in the North Bank concourse to belt out a few AFC favourites with the help of a mike and amp.

REDaction, with help from the local newspapers, have organised a Red and White card display for the Manchester United game on February 1. 35,000 cards will be distributed onto every Arsenal fans seat, to help turn Highbury Red and White for this crucial game.

This will require a lot of manpower, so if you are available to come to Highbury from 10am on the day of the game to help put cards on seats, please send your name and contact details to redaction@btinternet.com, and we will be in touch. The plan is for Arsenal fans to hold these cards aloft as the teams take the field, during the coin toss, and hopefully after Arsenal goals, maybe even a Man United red card!

Plans still in the pipeline include an end of season tribute to Dennis Bergkamp for 10 wonderful years, plus our aim of being involved in the seating arrangements for the new Stadium.

*An experimental 'singing' area in the North Bank Lower for the Everton Carling Cup game was a success and hope springs eternal of also changing the music played as the teams run out . . .

REDaction is an open group and we welcome suggestions and feedback from

all Arsenal Fans, so please get in touch with us at redaction@btinternet.com if you have something to contribute.



GRAHAM STONE

SUPPORT

You may have seen the reports of the Fans Forum in the club programme or on the website.

They tend to follow the style of a typical Arsene Wenger press conference i.e. they present a sanitised view of the main incidents but are myopic when it comes to any controversy!

The Forum meets four times a year and is a real mixed bag. Some members go to all Arsenal matches while others attend rarely; some are passionate and challenging at meetings, others are passive or say little.

The Club send their senior officials to attend led by Chief Executive, Keith Edelman. Generally, they are positive and open, although questions that constructively challenge can be met with a defence that would put George Graham's backline to shame.

The best aspect of the Forum is the direct access to senior club officials and the opportunity to put our concerns. The Club are very responsive to specific issues raised, and on occasions have an open mind, for example on improving the atmosphere at Highbury.

It is limited in what it can achieve.



REDaction are planning a tribute to Dennis

NEW STADIUM – MORE NEWS



PAUL MATZ



The key aim for AISA over the next eighteen months is to work in co-operation with the Club, and ensure that supporters' views and needs for the new stadium are fully understood at every level.

It is crucial that the Club adopts policies and makes decisions that are sustainable. We need decision-making that maintains the loyalty of existing fans, and that makes the Club attractive and accessible to new fans, returning fans and everyone whose support can help Arsenal achieve enduring success at home and abroad.

The biggest single issue raised with AISA by season-ticket holders (gold members in new money) has been the desire of groups of friends to come together when the move takes place.

We spent a good deal of time discussing ways in which this can be achieved when we met Keith Edelman recently, and he has promised to discuss this internally before we meet him again.

The "reservation fee" of 15% expected from season-ticket holders and the timetable that had appeared on the Arsenal

website was another matter raised, and it appears that these plans may be open to some revision.

Cheaper prices and much-improved catering are firmly on the Club's agenda, with a recognition that the move will create a "one-off" opportunity to attract more supporters and change pre and post-match habits.

That opportunity is likely to come early with pre-season home matches at the new stadium increasingly likely, especially as the building schedule is apparently ahead of time.

Other issues touched upon were the away-ticket season ticket scheme ("no plans to change it"), the refinancing of the club debt touched upon at the Club AGM and the 'no smoking' issue (Club likely to make an announcement soon) and the 'variable' standard of service that supporters encounter (from very good to . . . well, I will leave that to your imagination).

Further information about all issues regarding the new stadium from Paul Matz at paulmatz@arsenalfc.net

ABOUT AISA

Established in October 2000 the Arsenal Independent Supporters' Association is run by and for Arsenal fans.

For the past four years AISA's top priority has been campaigning for the new stadium. Our grass-roots work was widely acknowledged as playing an important part in persuading Islington Council to grant planning permission, and we also helped to drive the successful lobbying campaigns of Ken Livingstone and John Prescott.

Our work with the Club on the new stadium has moved on. Now we attempt to ensure that supporters' preferences are prioritised, and that watching Arsenal is accessible and affordable for all.

AISA also drafted plans which would enable every Arsenal fan to be able to buy into ownership of the Club through a mutually-owned trust. This baton has now been passed to the Arsenal Supporters' Trust, a separate and equally independent organisation.

Arsenal FC has proud and honourable traditions. We aim to work positively with the Club's Directors and management, and indeed everyone who wants to see Arsenal Football Club both successful and respected.

Arsenal has been a leading club for 75 years now – the involvement of fans in the modern era can help to make the next 75 years even better.

The AISA annual meeting will be held in central London on Thursday 31 March. The venue and exact time (it will be early evening) will be notified to supporting members as soon as the details are finalised.

SUPPORTERS FORUM UPDATE

The Club sees the Forum as something akin to a focus group. They come to meetings seeking endorsement of an approach or method that they have developed rather than supporter input on how to do something.

This has been true on the membership scheme arrangements for the new stadium and merchandising. The move to the new stadium has been used to avoid discussing some of the more difficult and controversial issues. We are

often told that an issue will be resolved (or a practice cannot be changed) until we enter our desert palace at Ashburton Grove.

Ticketing is a favourite topic, and not just from me as the AISA representative. The woes of Ticketmaster and problems related to the box office are regularly discussed. Away travel and the safety of Arsenal fans (especially at Spurs and European fixtures) often crop up and, as a result, the Club has been really pro-

active in this area.

In summary, the Forum is as good as its members and the issues that are raised. If you care about the kind of topics I've mentioned, and want to work with other fans then you might want to take part - watch out for the regular requests from the Club for new members.

Further information about the Supporters Forum from Graham Stone at graham.stone@morganstanley.com

After a long, hard campaign AISA members celebrated the final decision to allow the new stadium to be built



JOIN OR RENEW HERE!

AISA is made up of Arsenal supporters throughout the UK and beyond. We strive to give a voice to fans views and to articulate opinions through a constructive relationship with the Club. Membership is free.

I APPLY TO JOIN AISA

Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS**

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

EMAIL (H)

EMAIL (W)

PHONE (H)

PHONE (W)

MOBILE

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SUPPORT AISA FINANCIALLY BY BECOMING A SUPPORTING MEMBER

Membership costs minimum £5 per annum
(£4 standing order, £2 concessions, £10 overseas)

I ENCLOSE A CHEQUE FOR £

In payment of full/concessionary/overseas membership (payable to Arsenal Independent Supporters' Association)

I ENCLOSE A FURTHER DONATION OF £

TO SUPPORT AISA'S WORK, MAKING A TOTAL OF £

OR I WOULD LIKE TO PAY BY STANDING ORDER

THE MANAGER

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

Insert the name/address of your bank/building society

PLEASE PAY TO THE ARSENAL INDEPENDENT SUPPORTERS' ASSOCIATION ON DATE

Insert the date of your first payment one month ahead

THE SUM OF £

AND THE SAME AMOUNT ON 1 JULY EACH YEAR THEREAFTER UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE £

ACCOUNT NUMBER

SORT CODE

SIGNED

Date

ARSENAL INDEPENDENT SUPPORTERS' ASSOCIATION

ACCOUNT NUMBER 65066801. SORT CODE 08-92-99.

CO-OPERATIVE BANK PLC, BUSINESS DIRECT,
KING'S VALLEY, YEW STREET, STOCKPORT SK4 2JU.

REFERENCE (OFFICE USE ONLY)

**RETURN TO AISA MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY,
FREEPOST LON 18942, LONDON N5 1BR**

WHO'S WHO IN AISA



Paul Matz (Chair)

For information about AISA's work on the new stadium contact Paul at paulmatz@arsenalfc.net or 07850 920899 or 020 7359 8687



Graham Stone (Vice Chair)

Graham represents AISA on the official Arsenal Supporters Forum - to find out more contact Graham at graham.stone@morganstanley.com



Tony Ward (Secretary)

To sponsor or support AISA activities please contact Tony at tonyw@turnerrawlinson.co.uk



Geoff Bedingfield (Treasurer)

Membership renewals should be sent to Geoff at 21 Stock Orchard Crescent, London N7 9SL



Lisa McGuinness (Membership Secretary)

For more information about joining AISA please contact Lisa at lmcguinness@hotmail.com



Raymond Herlihy

Raymond represents AISA on the Red Action Group: the supporters' coalition working with the Club to improve the atmosphere at Highbury. To find out more contact him at raymond.herlihy@deluxemedia.com



Steve Goodwin

Steve has been active with work regarding Junior Gunners and the Family Enclosure, and was also previously a member of the Supporters Forum. Steve can be contacted at steveg@zeusnetworking.com



James Hildreth

James is the temporary webmaster of the AISA website. Contact him via www.aisa.org

AISA NEEDS A NEW WEBMASTER

AISA needs a new webmaster to take up the work started by Richard Leeming. It's not a massively onerous task but we need a volunteer who can ensure our site is kept accurate and up to date. We would also welcome other volunteers to join the AISA committee and help with our campaigns and development. Contact Tony on **07836 737095** if you are interested.

ARSENAL SUPPORTER is published by Paul Matz on behalf of the Arsenal Independent Supporters' Association. Designed by Teresa Dearlove. Printed by Hartington Fine Arts.

