

**FINAL Minutes**

SSAG Meeting held on Friday 7 February 2025 @ 11am  
at the London Stadium

<b>Attendees:</b>	Sheila Roberts	LBN – Licensing and Regulatory Services - Chair
		LBN – Licensing and Regulatory Services - minutes
	Edward King	LBN – Licensing and Regulatory Services
	Leah Pratten	LBN – Licensing and Regulatory Services
	Jessica Dempse	LBN - Highways and Traffic Management
	Barry Vasselin	British Transport Police
	Jamie Smith	London Ambulance Services
	Peter Swordy	London Stadium 185 Limited (LS185)
	Darren Raczkowski	London Stadium 185 Limited (LS185)
	Andy Fraser	London Stadium 185 Limited (LS185)
	Anna Jankowski	London Stadium 185 Limited (LS185)
	James Clarke	London Stadium 185 Limited (LS185)
	Jason Eglash	London Stadium 185 Limited (LS185)
	Dawn James	London Stadium 185 Limited (LS185)
	Andy Sheldon	Metropolitan Police Services
	Catherine Wattley	Metropolitan Police Services
	Matthew Atkinson	St John Ambulance
	Ann Ramage	Sports Ground Safety Authority
	Darryl Morgan	West Ham United Football Club
	Peter Smith	West Ham United Football Club
	Catherine Smith	West Ham United Football Club
	Robin Ramen	London Borough of Croydon
	Jennifer Corr	London Borough of Croydon

MINUTES	ACTIONS UPDATE FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES	Action
1 Nov 24	<b>Strategic learnings and actions</b> Discussions continued around colour scheme options for digital tickets to help clearly identify zones. WHUFC plans to implement these changes for all non-season tickets in the 2024-2025 season, with a phased approach leading to a full rollout in the 2025-2026 season. The SGSA also emphasised the importance of considering colour-blind accessibility when selecting the scheme.	WHUFC
7 Feb 25	<u>Update</u> <i>It is a SAG request to include all away tickets into the colour scheme. Colour scheme for digital tickets in the uppers and lowers is in place. A time line is needed for when paper tickets will be phased out or included in the colour scheme.</i>	WHUFC
1 Nov 24	<b>Safety related issues raised by fan groups</b> <u>First Responder Response timeline</u> They respond as swiftly as practical, with all incidents thoroughly reviewed. Timely reporting of an incident is essential to ensure a prompt response. The SGSA noted that the medical services and procedures at the London Stadium are of top quality, with an over provision of medical responders available. Pre-event communications on how to report emergencies or incidents could be developed for distribution. Emergency protocols are covered in all briefings, and incidents are fully logged for review.	LS185
7 Feb 25	<u>Update</u> <i>Full Medical Plan will be reviewed and an update issued.</i>	LS185

1 Nov 24	<u>Roller skaters on Bridge 5 &amp; E-bike</u> LS185, Police, LLDC, Westfield and other partners are collaborating through a joint approach. A council led working group is in place and an update will be provided.	
7 Feb 25	<u>Update</u> <i>There has been positive work carried out by the Council led working group and good progress and will remain under review.</i>	ongoing
1 Nov 24	<b><u>Westfield Avenue Cycle track and Public Space Project update</u></b> Next phase of the project presented and discussed in detail, with plans to begin in mid-January 2025 and last for approximately 8 weeks. Details of the Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be shared once finalised. On completion of the works, Olympic Park Avenue will function as a one-way road. LS185 will assess egress and ingress for each game and provide their calculations to the Local Authority; early initial review show no impact on egress times. TFL has requested updates to any changes to egress times. AP is willing to arrange a trial walkthrough of the route if it would benefit partners. Westfield expressed concerns regarding potential traffic slowdown during egress, and ongoing discussions will continue with AP.  WHUFC will evaluate egress times and send out comms to fans as necessary ahead of Christmas games to allow for more time on egress if needed.	
7 Feb 25	<u>Update</u> <i>AP to facilitate a walk-through for any interested partners.</i>	CLOSED
AGENDA ITEMS		Actions
<b>1. Introductions and apologies</b>  Apologies received from: Graham Beers & James Ryan (LFB), Jonathan Fleet (SIA), Gary Ashe (TFL), Graham Gilmore (LS185), Nicola Keye (WHUFC), Dan Widows (MPS), Amy Longhurst (URW).		
<b>2. Minutes</b>  Minutes from the last meeting held on 1 November 2024 agreed and published.		
<b>3. Strategic learnings and actions</b>  9 Nov 24 – WHUFC v Everton 30 Nov 24 – WHUFC v Arsenal 9 Dec 24 – WHUFC v Wolverhampton Wanderers 21 Dec 24 – WHUFC v Brighton & Hove Albion 29 Dec 24 – WHUFC v Liverpool 14 Jan 25 – WHUFC v Fulham 18 Jan 25 – WHUFC v Crystal Palace  Overview of above fixtures since last SSAG shared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>358,319 total attendance</li> <li>172 ejections of which 114 were Away fans in the Home ends</li> <li>Medical incident with patient taken to hospital (not football related)</li> </ul>		

<p>Events were well organised, with good staffing and no major issues. Control room now has additional screens installed for better visibility.</p> <p><u>MPS</u> Fixtures were low risk apart from the Arsenal game with a medium risk category. No major issues with events resourced according to risk categories. 113 fans subject to football bans. Working closely with WHUFC on club bans.</p> <p><u>BTP</u> Minor issues at the Arsenal fixture reported, fixtures resourced according to risk.</p>																						
<p><b>4. Upcoming Premier League fixtures</b></p> <table><tr><td>15 Feb 25</td><td>WH v Brentford</td><td>KO: 3pm</td></tr><tr><td>27 Feb 25</td><td>WH v Leicester</td><td>KO: 8pm</td></tr><tr><td>10 Mar 25</td><td>WH v Newcastle</td><td>KO: 8pm</td></tr><tr><td>05 Apr 25</td><td>WH v Bournemouth</td><td>KO: 3pm</td></tr><tr><td>19 Apr 25</td><td>WH v Southampton</td><td>KO: 3pm</td></tr><tr><td>03 May 25</td><td>WH v Tottenham Hotspur</td><td>KO: 3pm</td></tr><tr><td>18 May 25</td><td>WH v Nottingham Forest</td><td>KO: 3pm</td></tr></table> <p>It was noted that the Spurs and the Nottingham Forest fixtures might be rescheduled to a later kick-off time. BTP and MPS advised that this change would elevate the risk categories to high.</p> <p>Fixtures will be resourced based on assessed risk. BAU procedures will continue, including steward briefings and pre-fixture police meetings.</p>	15 Feb 25	WH v Brentford	KO: 3pm	27 Feb 25	WH v Leicester	KO: 8pm	10 Mar 25	WH v Newcastle	KO: 8pm	05 Apr 25	WH v Bournemouth	KO: 3pm	19 Apr 25	WH v Southampton	KO: 3pm	03 May 25	WH v Tottenham Hotspur	KO: 3pm	18 May 25	WH v Nottingham Forest	KO: 3pm	
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<p><b>5. Ticketing issues – sales to away fans in the home end</b></p> <p>Members discussed the issue of away fans in the home areas. Potential solutions include reviewing purchase history and closing ticket sales 48 hours before the game. SGSA suggested implementing a membership system for away tickets to monitor purchase history, emphasizing that the goal is to ensure fan safety through segregation. Issues with ticket exchanges and half-and-half scarves were also highlighted. West Ham FC can collaborate with local authority Trading Standards for brand protection. The Premier League faces similar challenges with away fans in home areas, discussions continued regarding the insufficient availability of away tickets.</p> <p>Post-ejection ticket history is reviewed by LS185 and WHUFC. The Chair inquired about best practices from other clubs that WHUFC could adopt. WHUFC acknowledged that there is always room for improvement.</p> <p>New Premier League guidelines for 2027-2028 season still to be introduced to assist with this issue.</p>	<p><b>WHUFC</b></p>																					
<p><b>6. Persistent standing working group update</b></p> <p>LS185 noted their ongoing efforts with the club on social media and with the SGSA to develop potential solutions and strategies. There will be a meeting arranged with the SGSA for a comprehensive review, with ongoing discussions focused on persistent standing and mitigations.</p>	<p><b>LS185</b></p>																					

<p>Guard rails were installed in the upper section for safety. The SGSA emphasized that the stadium is licensed as an all-seater, and presence of rails does not permit standing. The Chair clarified that SAG is not advocating for rail seating; the decision rests with the stadium operator (LS185) and based on risk.</p>	
<p><b>7. Zone Ex barrier storage prior to deployment</b></p> <p>Discussing with LBN Highways.</p>	
<p><b>8. CCTV provisions on Westfield Avenue</b></p> <p>Additional CCTV requested in the areas along Road House Lane, International Way and Westfield. Avenue. Under review by LBN.</p>	<p><b>LBN (EK)</b></p>
<p><b>9. Safety related issues raised by fan groups</b></p> <p><u>Steward response and timings of ejecting fans in home areas</u> Comms shared by the stadium and club instruct supporters to text the control room if they spot a fan in the wrong area, ensuring the issue is addressed promptly. Responses are risk-based and handled accordingly. WHUFC stated that all requests received are triaged, with a proportionate and progressive response to each individual case. It is crucial to understand the varying levels of steward responsibilities.</p> <p><u>Searching and queue times</u> Searching protocol is random, targeted, and audited by SGSA and local authority. There is no change in the searching protocol, consistency or quality due to late arrivals. It is important for WHUFC to communicate this to fans, ensuring they are aware that the quality of searches will not be compromised by lateness. Security standards at the stadium remain high.</p> <p><u>Stairways blocked at half time @ block 104</u> Stairwells are monitored every match day and stewards are briefed to monitor and keep clear.</p>	<p><b>WHUFC</b></p>
<p><b>10. Any other football safety related business</b></p> <p><u>Annual Audit</u> Stadium passed their annual audit. LBN thanked LS185 for all their hard work and submission of documents on time.</p> <p><u>Flags at games</u> LS185 stated that guidance from the Premier League on the presence of flags at fixtures would be beneficial. On match days, LS185, in consultation with the police, will make a dynamic decision regarding flags and their impact of safety.</p> <p><u>SGSA update</u></p> <p><b>Near misses</b> The SGSA introduced a process of monitoring near misses that have occurred in grounds in October 2023. This is an important and useful process to help identify trends and areas for learning. It has already benefitted a number of local authorities and clubs who are taking action as a result of these near misses.</p>	

Since we started to collate the data, there has been:

- A total of 20 near misses recorded (15 from last season and 5 from this season).
- Of the 15 from last season, 6 were progressive crowd collapses, related to the 'limbs' trend, and 3 were due to overcrowding/congestion/uncontrolled crowd movement. Other near misses included a barrier failure, large-scale use of pyros and a pitchside gate collapse.
- Of the 5 near misses from this season, 3 of them have been uncontrolled crowd movement, due to surges forward incited by players. Whilst this is not a large number by itself, we are keeping a close eye on this to see if the trend continues, particularly as we get closer to the end of the season. It's also something that clubs and local authorities should monitor locally.

As a reminder, the SGSA expects all grounds and Safety Advisory Groups to monitor and track near miss events, and has produced guidance to support this, available on the website: <https://sgsa.org.uk/training-events-advice/specific-safety-issues/near-misses/>.

### **SGSA Licensing 2025/26**

The SGSA will commence its licensing process for the 2025/26 season from the end of January. As usual, application forms and accompanying instructions will be sent directly to clubs, with a deadline of Friday 28 February 2025.

### **Guide to Safety Certification**

In December, the SGSA published an update to its Guide to Safety Certification, which can be found here: <https://sgsa.org.uk/document/guide-to-safety-certification/>.

This includes a new Annex for local authorities to use during its annual inspection of grounds. The Annex outlines the how annual inspections should be conducted, as well as including a template annual inspection form.

The guidance aims to assist a local authority to identify, apply and enforce the terms and conditions that are prescribed in the safety certificate. It has been updated to ensure that the contents reflects recent updates in SGSA guidance.

### **SGSA Conference 2025**

The SGSA Conference 2025 will take place on Tuesday 20 May at Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool.

Bookings will open from mid-January, and info will be available on the SGSA website: [www.sgsa.org.uk/conference](http://www.sgsa.org.uk/conference).

The programme is being put together at the moment, but topics to be covered include: Dynamic risk assessments, Safeguarding, The use of data and technology in enhancing spectator safety, Fan engagement and safety advisory groups.

### **Adverse weather plans**

Make sure in place and contacts list are up to date.

### **Government related - Independent Football Regulator**

The Football Governance Bill is currently progressing through Parliament, which will establish the Independent Football Regulator (IFR).

The IFR will have three primary objectives:

DCMS has published a handy factsheet about the IFR, available on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/football-governance-bill-2024-supporting-documents/fact-sheet-the-independent-football-regulator-ifr>

<p>SGSA visited the Brighton fixtures on 21 December 2024 against Brighton. It was well planned for and well implemented. Points to note were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- PS, ongoing talks with the stadium and meeting to be scheduled</li><li>- Excellent safeguarding arrangements in place and implemented</li><li>- Away fans in Home areas continues</li><li>- Excellent medical arrangements, briefings, and facilities</li><li>- lighting into pudding Lane Station referred to the LA who have rectified this. Well done team work has achieved this.</li></ul>	
<p><b>11. Date of next Football SAG</b></p> <p>Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July @ 11am via Teams.</p>	