



## **Crystal Palace Independent Supporters Association Position statement re digital season ticket issues at CPFC - Sept 2024**

Whilst CPISA understands the direction of travel across the board is towards digitalisation. CPFC's stated aim to achieve close to 100% digital ticketing exceeds the 70% required by the EPL. In addition the pace of change being implemented by CPFC is causing significant anxiety to fans and a disconnect with a significant section of its fanbase.

CPISA believe fans should have the choice to access plastic season tickets where using digital tickets is a particular stressor for them, including those with disabilities, health issues, lack of smartphones or who are elderly. Forcing fans to purchase smartphones or collect paper tickets on matchdays to avoid issuing plastic tickets CPFC is seen by these fans as being punitive and not taking into account decades of loyal season ticket support.

This season has been especially challenging as Palace fans were not properly made aware of the process to apply for plastic tickets and eligibility criteria were not publicised ahead of renewal. Although the club advised CPISA that fans were emailed regarding the application process, significantly high numbers of fans we speak to and interact with via social media/matchdays had not received any communication from the club. The process was not front and centre on the website or App but placed in the 'Q&A' section of the season ticket renewal form meaning many fans weren't aware.

Before the renewal process started, there should have been a clear and actively publicised process in place with clearly articulated eligibility criteria taking account of vulnerabilities, age and lack of technology for those supporters who need or indeed particularly prefer a card. As a result of failing to provide this many fans have gone into the season without an agreed option or season ticket.

Pushing fans to purchase compatible smartphones or collect paper tickets on matchdays is proving a huge issue and personal struggle in terms of time, mobility and access as well in some cases cost. There is again a lack of consistency in the collection process with some fans being asked for ID and others not. Furthermore, there has been nothing publicised in advance as to what ID is required,

This issue hits our vulnerable fans hardest and is extremely anxiety provoking for them. We found research relating to phone usage and ownership in the UK carried out by Statista. This showed in 2023 smartphone ownership was close to 98% for people aged upto 54 years reducing to 91% from 55 to 64 and dropping significantly to 69% in the 65+ age group. Within the 65+ group it is reasonable to expect this %age is likely to reduce as age increases.

CPISA have been contacted by vulnerable fans and are working to achieve the best option for them. We have had reasonable success but this issue will undoubtedly become a challenge at next season's renewal time as the club try to lower the number of plastic tickets further. Also many of the older smartphones that currently work will not have NFC capability so we are going to have a second round of issues coming up with fans needing to update their phones which also has a cost attached.

CPISA is free to join and open to all Palace fans both in the UK and abroad. Joining is free just [click here](#) and subscribe to CPISA's mailing list or check out our website <https://cpisa.co.uk> for more info and to see what we do.