



## **Watford Supporters Board Code of Conduct**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. This document sets out the standards of behaviour that Watford Supporters Board (“WSB”) Members and representatives shall adhere to as a condition of their position on the WSB. Failure to observe the Code of Conduct may result in the removal of the representative from the WSB.

### **2. Duties of the WSB and Representatives**

- 2.1. All business of the WSB and its Members and representatives shall be conducted in accordance with this Code of Conduct and the following constitutional documents:
  - 2.1.1. Memorandum of Understanding
  - 2.1.2. Terms of Reference
  - 2.1.3. Election Policy

### **3. Standards of Behaviour**

- 3.1. In all activities, WSB Members and representatives shall show an appropriate standard of behaviour and commitment. This is to ensure that the WSB maintains its reputation and relationship with the club, fanbase and other organisations that it may encounter. All WSB Members and representatives shall:
  - 3.1.1. Act with truthfulness and honesty in all dealings on behalf of the WSB
  - 3.1.2. Treat all people with fairness, dignity, and respect in all dealings with each other and when representing the WSB, refrain from offensive, aggressive or intimidating language and behaviour and uphold at all times the Club’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
  - 3.1.3. Commit to attending all Board Meetings, and being available for further meetings with WSB representatives and Club staff
  - 3.1.4. Be willing to work collaboratively and represent the views of supporters at meetings
  - 3.1.5. Be willing to have a public profile, be contactable by fans, and provide feedback to fans on relevant matters
  - 3.1.6. Make known any potential conflicts of interest
  - 3.1.7. Adhere to all relevant laws, The FA's, The Football League’s and any other relevant governing bodies’ rules, and the Club's ground regulations and policies
- 3.2. These standards apply to all forms of verbal and written communication, including social media.

### **4. Meeting Etiquette**

- 4.1. Board and Full Meetings shall be managed in line with both the latest versions of the WSB Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference.
- 4.2. When attending meetings WSB Members and representatives shall:
  - 4.2.1. Come prepared for the meeting, having read previous minutes, completed actions and gathered questions and comments from the fanbase.



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- 4.2.2. Listen to the views of attendees, seek clarification where needed, express their own views and come to their own decision on individual matters in good faith and in what they believe to be in the best interests of the fanbase.
- 4.2.3. Not resort to behaviour that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, aggressive or intimidating.
- 4.2.4. Keep to the agenda, raising other issues under “any other business” and not engage in discussions during the meeting which are not relevant to the issues of the meeting.
- 4.2.5. Remain present in the meeting, their mobile phone on silent.

### **5. Collective Responsibility and “Chatham House Rule”**

- 5.1. Once a decision is reached by the WSB, all WSB Members and representatives should support it publicly unless the WSB has agreed otherwise.
- 5.2. Unless otherwise agreed Board and Full Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Chatham House Rule, ie: "When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed".
- 5.3. Unless confidentiality rules apply, and only after any relevant minutes have been published, Board or Full Meeting participants may report what was said, but not who said it. This applies to all forms of dissemination, including social media.

### **6. Confidentiality**

- 6.1. A major objective of the WSB is to improve the flow of information between the Club and its supporters, and to be open and transparent in its dealings. Nonetheless there are occasions when all or part of a discussion will need to be treated in confidence. The WSB accepts that for legal reasons (such as data protection and employment law) the Club will not be able to share certain information. These restrictions will, however, be the exception and not the rule, and the Club will explain clearly (and to the satisfaction of the WSB) why information cannot be provided or must be treated in confidence.
- 6.2. Any matter offered by WSB Members, representatives or the Club on a confidential basis will not be disclosed beyond those present at the meeting except where non-disclosure puts an individual or group at risk of significant harm.
- 6.3. Any comments in the minutes that are agreed to be confidential will be included as a “Part Two” section of the minutes which will be redacted from the published version of the minutes.
- 6.4. WSB Members and representatives shall not publish or discuss any details of the meeting before the minutes have been approved by the Chair and the Club and published on the webpage, unless specifically allowed for in the minutes, and should not at any time discuss or disclose any “Part Two” minutes outside of the WSB.
- 6.5. This shall continue to apply to individual WSB Members and representatives after their term of office has ended in respect of confidential information they received during their term of office



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### **7. Communication**

- 7.1. WSB Members and representatives must not use their position on the WSB to promote personal opinions, agendas, or grievances. When speaking publicly, WSB Members and representatives must distinguish between personal views as supporters and official WSB positions. Only statements agreed upon by the WSB are to be presented as representing the WSB.
- 7.2. Except for communications issued under 7.3 any communication intended to express an opinion, respond to a question or otherwise represent the WSB (such as press releases, public statements, social media posts, or letters to the club) must be:
  - 7.2.1. Drafted by the Chair or a designated WSB Member.
  - 7.2.2. Circulated to all WSB Members for review.
  - 7.2.3. Approved by a majority vote (or consensus, if agreed in advance).
  - 7.2.4. Issued through the WSB website or other official WSB media or a designated WSB spokesperson.
- 7.3. Short, benign social media statements which do not express an opinion or respond to a question but do represent the WSB may be issued by the WSB's "Socials Team" without further approval. The WSB Socials Team consists of the Chair and 2 other WSB Members.
- 7.4. WSB Members and representatives must not disclose confidential discussions or misrepresent WSB decisions. Communications must be factual, respectful, and aligned with the club's values.
- 7.5. Any requests from media for official WSB comment must be referred to the Chair or designated spokesperson.
- 7.6. Individual WSB Members and representatives may engage with media or fans in a personal capacity but must state clearly that they are speaking as individuals, not on behalf of the WSB.

### **8. Conflicts of Interest**

- 8.1. WSB Members and representatives must disclose to the Chair any material interest which they, their spouse or partner, close family member, or close friend or business associate hold in any agenda item listed for discussion. It is the responsibility of each WSB member to be proactive in notifying the Chair of any potential conflicts. Any such interest will be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- 8.2. Unless the WSB collectively decides otherwise, the Chair's decision as to whether there is a conflict is final.
- 8.3. Unless a prior decision is taken to the contrary, no WSB member or representative may take part in any discussion on a matter in which they have an interest, or take part in any decision, or vote on any associated resolution.



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### **9. Breaches of the Code of Conduct**

- 9.1. Any breach of this Code of Conduct shall be notified in the first instance to the Chair for consideration (unless the alleged breach is by the Chair, in which case the notification should be sent to the Secretary who will arrange for it to be considered by the WSB as a whole).
- 9.2. An initial informal investigation will be conducted. If it is found that there is a case to answer then a formal Disciplinary Committee (comprising a minimum of three impartial WSB Members or representatives not directly involved in the breach) will be constituted to hear the case. The accused WSB Member or representative will have the right to present their version of events to the Disciplinary Committee.
- 9.3. Where a breach is found but considered to be minor the member concerned will be issued with an "advisory notice". Any WSB Member receiving two or more notices within a 2-year period will be required to resign from the WSB.
- 9.4. Where the breach is found and considered serious the appropriate sanction will be considered by all WSB Members apart from the Member who committed the breach. Sanctions must be communicated in writing to the WSB Member concerned. Possible sanctions include suspension from the WSB for a defined period or immediate removal from the WSB.
- 9.5. The accused WSB Member will have the right to appeal a disciplinary decision. An appeal will typically be based on the process not being followed correctly, new evidence, or the severity of the sanction. The appeal must be submitted in writing within 14 days of receipt of the sanction notification. The appeal is heard by a separate, independent panel whose members were not involved in the Disciplinary Committee. This Appeal Panel will review the case and can uphold, reduce, or potentially increase the original sanction. The decision of the Appeal Panel will be communicated to the WSB Member concerned in writing and is final and binding.