

Thank you for the email. Apologies for the delay in responding - have arrived home late and have been looking through some of the messageboard accounts of what happened on Tuesday night. It is not me in the picture. You may have checked yourself on the cpfc - bbs or Holmesdale online - much of what has been written seems to reflect people's experiences. Members of the Holmesdale Fanatics appear to have stormed the turnstiles at Brighton, which included those that had not obtained tickets. This may have been partly due to the delays in getting into the ground. There were also smoke bombs set off by them in the ground sounded like one in the concourse at the end. Cannot condone the actions of members of the HF - they put others safety and enjoyment at risk.

I had gone to a meeting at the Amex which is reflected in the message on the cpst website - however, I am not sure what BHA and Sussex police put in place. There seemed to be police and stewards that were not fully briefed - I gather from reading various posts that they came from various police forces and steward agencies.

This was a significant fixture for Brighton and Palace fans and the first they would look for when the fixture lists were published. However, there may need to be a reflection on decision making:

- Fixture date and time - what was fed in - should this have been commented on when the draft listings were circulated - were they commented on.
- Away allocation - the clubs agreed on a 2000 reciprocal allocation - the Amex will usually take 3000 - was the inadequate away allocation rather than for safety - a significant safety risk.
- Premier League - the PL consented to the clubs agreement - how much consideration and scrutiny did they apply to giving consent.
- Sussex Police Arrangements - in advising re the allocation and how the arrangements should be conducted - was there too much reliance on previous play-off semi-final arrangements and lack of consideration of time and situation change.
- Amex Meeting - held with reps from police, clubs and supporters organisations from both clubs - but post decisions being made - should this have taken place pre-decisions
- Allocation and Distribution of Tickets - was this properly undertaken and what was the position re allocation of tickets to members of the HF - would most have had tickets.
- Ticket Checking - were arrangements to check tickets and ID away from the turnstiles undertaken - this should have identified those able to get near the turnstiles.
- Security Checks and Sniffer Dogs - are these being effectively utilised especially with known groups that are more likely to have to be checked.
- Briefing - is sufficient briefing information provided to police and security staff on duty.
- Intelligence - did the police have specific intelligence that warranted 'riot police' - would more normal policing been as effective

- Separating Out - what prevented the police from separating out those creating trouble and enabling innocent supporters with tickets to enter the ground.
- Train - why were supporters escorted to the train station and required to board a train that may have been inappropriate for their journey.
- Communication - should there be better communication with supporters especially when arrangements change.
- Holding - what was the reason and necessity to hold Palace supporters closed in on the concourse post-match contrary to previous information.
- Lesson - what information and lessons were gathered from the post match review.

My train to Brighton was delayed, apparently due to a slow train in front, then at Brighton, there was a queue for some time for the train to Falmer, so many people both Brighton and Palace fans were arriving late from the trains - there seemed to be no problem. As I came from Falmer station I was struck by the huge number of police and stewards, and the sound of yapping dogs - looked and sounded OTT. To get to the away end away supporters have to pass a number of entrances for home fans. When I arrived they seemed to have largely cleared. I was walking towards the South Stand - just about when I arrived at the edge - there was a surge of riot police - I suddenly found myself trampled down and a police officer trying to get me to hold up - suddenly a steward was by my side and taking me towards the stand entrance - I was rather shaken. Discovered that the entrance was not the away part of the entrance to the South Stand - so walked towards the next entrance - but there was just a barrier of police/stewards so I was unable to get through to the queueing Palace fans on the other side. The police officer that trampled into me came over to apologise for what had happened. I was waiting near the barrier when the Crystal Palace police liaison officer came up to me and advised that the Holmesdale Fanatics had been responsible for rushing the turnstiles, including those without tickets. Shortly after this a small number of us that were on the other side of the barrier that had tickets were ushered through doors to the away end. When I arrived inside - someone was standing in my seat area, completely ignored me and was clearly not going to move, so someone pointed me to a seat in front, which was fine.

During the course of the match there seemed to be more people appear, especially second half - standing in the aisles towards the back of the away area. Over nearer the goal there were smoke bombs let off during the match, and at the end. Post match the away area was surrounded by stewards - which was fine. People made there way towards the exits and into the concourse. I am unsure what happened here. I was given to understand that people would be able to walk outside while waiting for the special train, or sit in the stadium and that those needing to go to park and ride or other trains and to the coaches would be able to do so, possibly after a short delay. I was not tall enough to see - only know it was very cramped and no-one could move - I had hoped to make my way to the ladies - but this was impossible. There was no information - I had asked about communicating to supporters post-match at the Amex meeting, but the thinking was that the stewards would be able to advise - one could not even see them. Eventually, supporters were allowed out, and I took the opportunity to get to the ladies. When I came out the vast majority of supporters seem to have left - there were some still partaking of the bar facilities. I saw several CPFC stewards that appeared to be bewildered as to what was going on - however, I discovered the

supporters had been directed towards the station. I was walking down - there were barriers of stewards and police. Just in front on the opposite side to where I was walking there was a fellow who fell into others - I think he may have just tripped on a kerb. However scuffles started to occur, and police started to move towards them - I was caught with two huge horses coming towards me - fortunately a female steward suddenly grabbed hold of me and held me safely and then walked me through to the main stream of supporters - although I seemed to land up on the Brighton fans side, so had to get the police cordon to let me through on to the other side, which was not immediately recognised. There seemed to be confusion regarding which fans supported which team. There was some initial hold up going through to the station, but then we were let through and people were directed to the platform depending on where we were heading. Once on the train although crowded - everything seemed fine.

The focus will be on the behaviour of a group of Palace supporters (the HF), which clearly led to the closing down of the turnstiles and to many totally innocent supporters being prevented from entering and then finding themselves marched to the station to board a train they might not have wanted to catch. There have been some comments about people in the away end that did not look familiar - suggesting that some season ticket holders may have sold their tickets on or some touting was going on despite the requirement for name ID. Also it is thought most of the HF would have sufficient points to get tickets, so those causing problems may be 'hangers on'. I certainly feel sorry for the Palace fans that were unable to get entry through no fault of theirs, and then effectively experiencing being squeezed before being directed to the train station. I was fortunate that I had a couple of stewards that came to my assistance, but I think this kind of policing and stewarding with constantly yapping dogs is more intimidating for supporters and possibly helps ratchet up the situation and creates more risk than actually helping safety.