



# GRIMSBY TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

## CUSTOMER CHARTER 2018

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE / COMPLAINTS**

If you have a legitimate concern, complaint or constructive comment, please contact the Club's Customer Services Designate at the Club Offices between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday - Friday or by the following methods:

**By Post**                      Grimsby Town Football Club plc  
Stadium Manager & Ground Safety Officer  
Blundell Park  
Cleethorpes  
North East Lincolnshire  
DN35 7PY

**By Telephone**              01472 605050 Ext: 8008

**By Facsimile**                01472 693665

**By Email**                      customerservice@gtfc.co.uk

If a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved at club stage in line with stated club correspondence timescales, supporters should be advised they can now refer the matter directly to The Independent Football Ombudsman (IFO) using the following details:

The Independent Football Ombudsman Suite 49, 33 Great George Street Leeds LS1 3AJ  
contact@theifo.co.uk | 0800 588 4066

### **STAFF CONDUCT**

Grimsby Town Football Club staff will conduct themselves in a courteous and responsive manner in all dealings with customers.

Please also refer to the club's anti-discrimination, equal opportunities & inclusion policy. Any issues can be reported via email to the Senior Management team: customerservice@gtfc.co.uk where you will receive a response within 21 days.

### **CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION**

The Club publicises its position on major policy issues in an easily digested format on the Official



Website, Facebook, Twitter, and in the Official Matchday Magazine.

The Club continues to develop ways to consult with supporters, shareholders, sponsors, the local authority and other interested parties.

The Club actively seeks where possible the involvement of the supporters with regards to the design of new strips, safeguarding and general welfare.

Under regulation 111[Commitment to supporter consultation and engagement], the Club will hold at least 2 open meetings/fans forums per season, that is open for all to attend. During these forum's supporters or their nominated representatives will be invited to discuss any and all significant issues relating to the club.

## **TICKETING**

### **Pricing**

The Club continues to strive for wider access to matches by offering a broad range of ticket prices.

The Club operates a scheme to enable supporters to pay for season tickets by instalments at a reasonable rate of interest.

### **Allocation**

At least 5% of tickets to each game will be made available to non season ticket holders.

### **Concessions**

Concessionary prices are available to junior supporters, senior citizens, the unemployed, students and disabled supporters. All concessionary rates are non sex discriminatory.

**Ancient Mariner** 85 and over, free entry with paying accompanying chaperone, proof of age is required.

**Senior Citizen** 65 and over, proof of age is required.

**Junior** 14 years and younger, proof of age is required.

**Young Adult** 15 – 18 years old, proof of age is required.

**Student** 19+ in full time education, proof of full time education is required.

**Pontoon Stand Only.**

**Unemployed** In receipt of unemployment benefit or similar, proof of benefit is required.

**Pontoon Stand Only.**

**Disabled** Disabled supporters will be charged the full applicable rate for their age however their carer (if required) can enter for free. Main Stand & Osmond Stand Only. Proof of receipt of disability could be asked for.



## Facilities

The Club provides:

The Main Stand is clearly signposted as an area for the use of family groups, junior supporters, disabled spectators and their carers. The Stadium Manager can be contacted for details of our disability facilities and ticket allocation however we currently have 22 wheelchair bays available in the Main Stand.

In addition to this there are 20 wheelchair bays available in the Osmond Stand with W/C facilities for visiting supporters.

The Club clearly identifies restricted view seats on match tickets but does not offer a discounted price for such seats.

## Loyalty and Membership Schemes

The club operates an early bird discount for home and away supporters that allow a discount of £2.00 when purchased by 5pm on the day before the match.

**[Excluding the Youngs Upper Stand where the full price applies at all times]**

## Away Matches

The Club's supporters are allocated tickets for away matches, with preference given to season ticket holders if necessary. The home club determines the cost of these tickets.

Supporter's behaviour at away stadiums is monitored and reported back to Grimsby Town Football Club. The Club reserves the right to exclude supporters from Blundell Park or impose conditions for entry as a result of bad behaviour at away stadiums.

## Cup Competitions

Tickets for Cup Competitions at Blundell Park are priced as per league matches unless agreed otherwise with the visiting club. Season Ticket Holders and sponsors will have first refusal on their seat during a designated period prior to the match and the club reserves the right to implement a voucher system to ensure as fair an allocation of tickets as possible. Season ticket holder seats will be reserved up until 5pm on the day before the match.

## Mariners Trust Members

Mariners Trust members will have a recognised priority for specific home & away fixtures. Details will be made available on the club and trust web site prior to tickets being made available for sale.

## Supporters Liaison

We have dedicated supporter liaison officers that work independently of the Club, with a specific aim of improving communication, information and the sharing of ideas between supporters and the Club. They are also available on a match day to improve the overall customer experience when visiting Blundell Park. They also deal with disability issues and all charity requests on behalf of the club.

The supporter liaison officers can be contacted via email and will normally respond within one working



day. Their contact details are as follows:

*supporters@gtfc.co.uk*  
*disability@gtfc.co.uk*  
*charity@gtfc.co.uk*

Any issues with regards to the Support Liaison Officers should be emailed through to the Customer Services Department: *customerservice@gtfc.co.uk*

### **Returns/Refunds**

**Prior to a match:** The club will issue a full refund or exchange on any unwanted tickets.

**After a match:** No refunds will be given after the match has taken place.

If a match is postponed before kick-off, ticket holders are entitled to free admission to the re-arranged game. If a match is abandoned after kick-off, but prior to half time, spectators are entitled to half price admission to the re-arranged match.

### **ACCOMMODATING AWAY SUPPORTERS**

The Club abides by League Regulations governing the allocation of tickets to visiting clubs.

The Club does not charge admission prices to supporters of a visiting club, which are higher than those charged to our own supporters for comparable accommodation unless we have a local offer as a promotion for a match. In particular our concessionary rates offered to senior citizens and junior supporters apply to supporters of a visiting club. Proof of concession must be provided on a Matchday, failure to provide proof will result in the full adult rate of £21 being charged.

Away supporters will predominantly be accommodated in the covered corner of the Osmond Stand. The Club reserves the right to change the seating allocation for away supporters and their location depending on the home support ticket demand, safety steward directions must be obeyed at all times regardless of the allocated seat number on the Matchday ticket. Away supporter ticket numbers will remain in line with the league regulations with regards to the overall percentage of the stadium's capacity.

### **MERCHANDISE**

The Club endeavours to ensure that all replica Strip designs shall have a minimum lifespan of one season.

Details of the next intended change of kits are available from the club shop.

The Club carries out its obligations under English Football League Regulations to prevent price fixing in relation to the sale of replica strip.

The Club offers refunds on merchandise in accordance with its legal obligations.

### **SMOKING POLICY**

It is illegal as per the Health Act 2006 to smoke inside any enclosed building or work place, this includes all football stadia. To accommodate supporters as per our fellow EFL members, designated



open areas have been created inside Blundell Park that permits supporters to smoke during half time only. Smoking outside of this time in the designated areas is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**. Electronic or Vapour cigarettes can only be used in the designated areas during half time. Any breach of the smoking regulation will result in supporters being asked to leave without a refund of ticket.

## **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

The main objective of the Community Project is to encourage fun and participation amongst all ages, particularly children aged 5-16 years, in the hope that many of these will develop affection for the Club.

The emphasis is on encouraging boys and girls to enjoy football and to take an active part in all football related activities, no matter what level of ability.

We support active integration of the Football Club into the local community through player appearances, fundraising activities and supporting local charities and businesses.

## **CHARITY ACTIVITIES**

The Club has appointed the local SSAFA branch [The Armed Forces Charity] as our nominated charity for the 2018 – 19 season. This is in addition to supporting the EFL chosen partner charity MIND, with priority given to these charities for any collections made on a match day.

Any other charity requests must be in writing or via email: [charity@gtfc.co.uk](mailto:charity@gtfc.co.uk) where consideration will be given to offer support. Understandably all Football Clubs get inundated with requests and therefore with regret we are not able to support every request that we receive however we are very keen to support local causes.

It is not possible to accommodate charity football matches at the stadium during the football playing season, although we do have spaces available at the end of each season. Please email: [stadium@gtfc.co.uk](mailto:stadium@gtfc.co.uk) for availability as these are booked well in advance.

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

Grimsby Town Football Club acknowledges and accepts it has a responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people and vulnerable adults who are under the Club's care or utilising the Club's facilities. It is the duty of all adults working at the Club to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults by creating an environment that protects them from harm.

We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. Grimsby Town Football Club recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club whether they are volunteers, match officials, helpers on club tours, football coaches, club officials or medical staff.

All current staff who is regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of children and young people will be DBS checked at an enhanced level.

The Club provides a range of services and activities that impact on the lives of vulnerable groups both directly and indirectly. Safeguarding individuals, ensuring their welfare, their safety and their health is of paramount importance.



Grimsby Town Football Club is also committed to creating opportunities for individuals to participate in a broad spectrum of activities at the Club at the same time as creating a safer culture for the participants.

All children aged 12 and under attending a match at Blundell Park Stadium must be accompanied by a responsible adult for the duration of the game. This policy has been introduced to safeguard our younger fans in the event of an emergency on match day. We reserve the right to refuse entry to any supporter under the age of 12 if they are not accompanied by a responsible adult.

Any children who become separated from family or friends should approach a uniformed steward who will take the appropriate action by escorting them to our 1st aid station [Pontoon Stand].

If children enter the stadium unaccompanied, the club reserves the right to treat them in the same manner as older supporters, including asking them to leave the stadium if they are in breach of the ground regulations however every measure possible will be taken, to ensure that they are met by a known responsible adult when leaving the stadium.

#### **The Club's Policies include:**

- Having commitment from senior managers, trustees and board members to safeguarding
- A safe recruitment, selection and induction processes consistent across The Club
- Ensuring that all relevant staff are DBS checked at the appropriate level
- Providing training at the appropriate levels for staff and volunteers
- The Club has designated Safeguarding/Welfare Officer Contact information, easily accessible for staff, children, young people and their families
- Having an easily understandable reporting and monitoring system
- Working co-operatively with partner organisations and services
- Having a commitment to manage and monitor allegations of discrimination, harassment, abuse, and bullying

Grimsby Town Football Club has a Safeguarding Policy which complies with Government legislation and is in accordance with the rules outlined by the Football Association and the English Football League, which is available on request.

Grimsby Town Football Club has appointed Martin George to the post of Designated Safeguarding/Welfare Officer he has overall responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of all vulnerable groups. He can be contacted via e-mail at [martin@gtfc.co.uk](mailto:martin@gtfc.co.uk) to discuss any issues or concerns in these areas and reports directly to the Chief Executive of the Club.

#### **ACCEPTABLE SUPPORTER BEHAVIOUR**

Supporters are expected to uphold the values of Grimsby Town Football Club and behave in a manner that does not cause distress or alarm to other supporters both home and away. Foul and abusive language is not acceptable and supporters could find that they are asked to leave the stadium if they persist in its use without a refund of their ticket.

The Club operates a zero tolerance towards abuse of away supporters. Gesturing, threats of violence or abuse of away supporters could result in ejection from the stadium. Any supporter that is asked to



leave due to a breach of the Ground Regulations will not be entitled to a refund of their ticket.

All supporters are asked to respect the match officials and the decisions made on the field of play. Abuse of the match officials could result in you being asked to leave the stadium, together with the potential for further action to be taken.

The Main Stand is a family stand, abuse of any kind will result in supporters being relocated to the Pontoon Stand (Subject to Capacity) for the remainder of the match. If any supporter refuses to move then stewards will be within their rights to ask supporters to leave the stadium. If a supporter is asked to leave, their ticket will hold no value and refunds will not be available. **Any supporter concerns over this policy must be put in writing to the Stadium Manager.**

### **Pyrotechnic Devices:**

Grimsby Town Football Club has zero tolerance for supporters discharging pyrotechnic devices. Any supporter found with (used or unused) or caught discharging a pyrotechnic device will be detained by safety stewards and subsequently arrested by Humberside Police. **Custodial Sentences** have been issued to supporters found with these devices by local Crown Courts. Supporters found with any pyrotechnic device will automatically be issued with a minimum 3 year club ban and subject to conditions of entry once their ban has expired as per the defined details for Club / Court Banning Orders in the Customer Charter.

Full details of the EFL Ground Regulations can be found on the Club website:  
[www.grimsby-townfc.co.uk/club/ground-regulations](http://www.grimsby-townfc.co.uk/club/ground-regulations)

### **CLUB & FOOTBALL BANNING ORDERS**

Any supporter that has finished a club or court imposed Football Banning Order will have to write to the Senior Management Team and request permission to attend football matches at Blundell Park. The Senior Management Team will consult with all relevant parties to determine the risk exposure to Grimsby Town Football Club. Any supporter given permission to attend football matches once again at Blundell Park will be subject to conditions for entry. Conditions for entry are as follows:

- Supporters may be asked to purchase a full season ticket. If the season is part way through this will carry through to the following season.
- Supporters may be asked to sit in a specified location.
- Supporters may have entry refused for fixtures deemed by Humberside Police to be at risk of rival supporter disorder.

All conditions last for one full season and will be removed subject to supporters displaying acceptable behaviour during that season. Any displays of unacceptable behaviour could result in any of the following:

- Supporters having their conditions enforced for a second season.
- Information being shared with Humberside Police.
- Removal of their season ticket without a refund given.
- Issued with a club ban.
- Information being shared with other clubs in our league



Any supporter displaying unacceptable behaviour will be informed in writing by the Senior Management Team. The Senior Management Team will determine the facts and present these to the designated club director, where a decision on further action to be taken will be determined. Supporters will be given the chance to make representation to the Club before any further conditions are imposed. Any further conditions imposed will be notified in writing to the supporter.

Any supporter that has been subject to a Court imposed Football Banning Order for duration of 5 years or more, or that has been subject to more than 2 Football Banning Orders will be subject to a permanent ban from attending any match involving Grimsby Town Football Club. This is due to the seriousness of the offence or due to the high likelihood to repeat offending.

**An appeals process is in place and must be put in writing to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will respond to the appeals within 28 days. The Board of Directors decision is final with no further appeals process available.**

## **HATE CRIME REPORTING**

Grimsby Town FC and Grimsby Town Community Sports and Education Trust are a new Community Hate Crime Reporting Centre.

Community hate crime reporting centres provide a valuable service to help people report their concerns about hate crime and harassment, particularly where they may not feel confident to approach the Police or Council directly. There are a number of voluntary and community sector organisations in Grimsby who are hate crime reporting centres. Together, they support a wide and diverse range of community members.

### **What is a hate crime?**

The Police and Crown Prosecution Service have agreed a common definition of hate incidents – this is any incident that the victim or anyone else thinks was motivated by hostility or prejudice based on one of the following personal characteristics:

- Disability (including physical disability, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental ill-health, long term illness or health conditions)
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation (for example lesbian, gay or bisexual people)
- Transgender identity (for example trans, women or men or gender reassignment)

Hate incidents can be verbal abuse, like name-calling or offensive jokes; bullying or intimidation; physical attacks; threats; online abuse for example on social media; displaying or circulating discriminatory literature; damage to your home or possessions; or abuse of friendships – this is sometimes called “mate crime”.

When hate incidents become criminal offences they are known as hate crimes. Hate incidents often escalate to crimes or tension in a community. For this reason the Police are concerned about hate incidents as well as hate crimes. The Police can only prosecute when the law is broken but they can





work with the Council and other partners to try and prevent any escalation in seriousness.

If you are attending any home match days and you have received or been witness to, or have any concerns about any Hate incident, you can call or text directly to the club hotline number **0792657610** giving your location within the stadia.

You can also contact the Club Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer by email: **adrianmerrikin@gtfc.co.uk** or by phone on **07850464884** and/or The Stadium Manager Nick Dale on **nick@gtfc.co.uk** or by phone to **01472 605050**.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Grimsby Town FC are committed to communicating, when appropriate, incidents relating to discrimination or inappropriate behaviour to its supporters and the general public in order to reduce the incidence of such occurrences.

The club will use every means to ensure that anyone associated with the club is aware of what is considered to be unacceptable behaviour on match days and non-match days. Communication on match days will also be provided in the club match day programme, through the stadium public address system and via the stadium video screen and concourse TVs.

In the event of a serious breach of the club's safeguarding or anti-discrimination policies, communication to the general public will be made following consultation with the Football League/FA or when deemed necessary through taking legal advice.

Any further communication will be conducted through our official website, [www.gtfc.co.uk](http://www.gtfc.co.uk) or alternatively through statements which will be communicated to the Press and Humberside Police.

Grimsby Town FC would like to emphasise that we operate a zero tolerance policy on discrimination of any sort. Anyone found to be in breach of this rule will receive a lifetime banning order. Any reported acts of disciplinary conduct by club's supporters are also highly likely to lead to formal disciplinary action by the FA under rule E20.

You can also use the Kick it Out reporting app which provides users with the ability to attach video, photo and audio evidence to complaints to help support investigations into discriminatory abuse and behaviour.

## **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, EQUAL OPPORTUNITES & INCLUSION**

1. Grimsby Town Football Club and Sport and Education Trust is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all the people with whom we work, and who work for and support us.
2. Grimsby Town Football Club is an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to equal opportunity within our own organisation.
3. We believe it is essential for the future of the Club and Trust that diversity is adopted as a universal principle, enabling individuality to flourish regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic or national origins, marital status, age, religious belief or disability. [Equality Act 2010]
4. Grimsby Town Football Club will not tolerate sexual, homophobic or racially based harassment or other discriminatory behaviour, whether physical or verbal, and will work to ensure that



such behaviour is met with appropriate disciplinary action in whatever context it occurs. We are fully committed to the 'Kick It Out' Campaign and have a zero tolerance policy to any form of discriminatory behaviour including the use of foul language. All staff and supporters are encouraged to report any concerns and incidents. Any proven incidents will be referred to Humberside Police for the consideration of prosecution and the Football Club will also consider issuing a club banning order.

5. The differences within our community are highly valued by the Club and we will take whatever measures possible to build cohesion and ensure inclusion for all.

**Contact process for any issues relating to Safeguarding, Disability, Inclusion or Discrimination is as follows:**

***Martin@gtfc.co.uk***

Martin George [MSc] – Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer

***Disability@gtfc.co.uk***

Adie Merrikin – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, for Kick it Out