

Sports grounds reviewing security following tragic Manchester bombing

Sporting events and venues have been conducting major security reviews after the tragic bombing in Manchester that killed 22 people, including children.

Big sporting events, including the Europa League final between Manchester United and Ajax and the FA Cup Final between Arsenal and Chelsea, went ahead in the wake of the tragedy but work is continuing on reviewing security at arenas and sports grounds across the country.

An eight-year-old girl was among those killed in the suicide bombing at Manchester Arena, which happened at the end of a concert by US singer Ariana Grande on May 22nd.

The UK threat level was raised to its highest level of 'critical' after the attack but has since been put back to 'severe'. It has remained at that level despite a further terrorist attack on London Bridge and Borough Market, which killed seven people.

Crowded places and sports grounds remain a target for terrorist activity.

The police are reminding people to stay alert and to report any suspicious activity.

The FSOA is working with partner agencies and the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) to help share advice.

The NaCTSO website provides an update from the incident in Manchester and includes their recent Protective Security Advice. www.gov.uk/government/news/manchester-arena-incident

John Newsham, FSOA Business Development Manager, said: "First of all, I would like to say that our thoughts are with everyone affected by the appalling attacks in Manchester and London.

"Following the tragic event at Manchester Arena, sports grounds have been reviewing their current safety and security measures and contingency plans.

"We would encourage sporting venues to share information and advice relating to security measures with each other and all parties, including the police, other emergency services and local authorities.

"It is important that all parties work together to ensure the safety of spectators at sports grounds remains at priority."

The thoughts and prayers of all of us at the FSOA are with everyone affected by the arena tragedy & terrorist attack in London

Could safe standing be introduced at Plymouth Argyle?

Plymouth Argyle plans to possibly bring safe standing to Home Park as part of the redevelopment of the Grandstand, it has been reported.

The plans would increase the capacity of the stadium in its corners by almost double, if the plans are allowed to go ahead.

Devon Live reported that the moves would only happen after the completion of stage one of the redevelopment, which the club are hoping to start work on at the beginning of next year.

Club bosses said they hoped the development of the Grandstand would improve the quality of the experience for current supporters, attract new supporters and generate revenue to invest in the club.

Celtic FC recently introduced rail seating for 2,975 fans, effectively replacing existing seats with a standing spot and flip-up seats, with 900mm railings in front and behind each row. (Pictured opposite)



Reflections on 25 years of the FSOA

By Honorary President Jim Chalmers, MBE

On 29 October 1992 a group of 28 Football Safety Officers from English football clubs met at Nottingham Forest F.C. They discussed a proposal by Mike Holford, the Safety Officer of QPM, to form an Association which would represent all Safety Officers at Football Clubs in England and Wales irrespective of the League the club happened to be playing in at the time. The FSOA was born out of that meeting with the main aims of the Association enshrined in the Constitution as:

'Improving safety at football grounds by enhancing the role of safety management and the status of the Safety Officer within the football industry. The Association intends to achieve this by promulgating best safety management practices, enhancing the role of stewards and continually developing the expertise of Safety Officers'

It is perhaps a reflection on my advancing years that I have been privileged and honoured to have been part of the first 25 years of the FSOA. Firstly as a member of the Football Licensing Authority Inspectorate (The FLA and now the Sports Grounds Safety Authority- the SGSA) from 1991 to 2003. From 2003 until 2015 I was a practising Safety Officer at Kidderminster Harriers F.C. and a full member of The FSOA during those years. In 2005 I was honoured to be elected by my peers as the Honorary Life President of the Association, a post I still hold today. I therefore look forward to being part of our 25th Anniversary celebrations at our National Conference and Exhibition being held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon on October 3rd and 4th 2017.

When I was asked to write an article of my reflections of 25 years of the FSOA I have chosen not to write another history of The FSOA since that has already been done by me and others. If you want some light reading on the subject of our history you can find The History of the FSOA written by me and Doctor Steve Frosdick, one of our members, on The FSOA website. If you want a more detailed explanation of the development of The FSOA and its membership, safety management, Safety Officer training and qualifications, stewarding, Stadium Safety and safety technology please refer to Safety and Security at Sports Grounds, 2005: Frosdick and Chalmers and More Safety and Security at Sports Grounds, 2011: Chalmers and Frosdick. With that plug for our books over with I will get on with the purpose of this Article!

I pondered whether 'Reflections' is the correct word for looking back over 25 years of The FSOA and I believe it is. For me it means to be thoughtful and to think seriously about all our members and their dedicated service during all those years to the care, safety and well-being of the millions of football supporters who have entered our football stadiums in that time. It is also the time to think about the valuable part The FSOA has played in the development of service to our members and their clubs. It is the Safety Officer who bears the onerous responsibility at each match to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that everyone who visits their ground will have a safe, comfortable and pleasant experience watching what Pele called the beautiful game. Thankfully the Safety Officer can never be blamed for the result on the pitch.

My first reflection of the past 25 years is that there has not been a repeat of the dreadful tragedy of the 1989 Hillsborough Stadium Disaster when 96 innocent Liverpool F.C. supporters died in the Leppings Lane Stand. It took those tragic deaths to bring about the much needed catalyst for change not only in the physical structures of our stadia but also the way they were safely managed, something which was sadly lacking in 1989. I hope no one will argue with me when I say that football fans are no longer regarded as football hooligans but instead as valuable customers who should expect the highest standards of customer care when they visit a football ground and treated with the respect they deserve. They are no longer herded like cattle and fenced in pens and the combination of the changed stadium environment linked to professional safety management and stewarding have demonstrated how safe and comfortable our football grounds have become over the past 25 years.

Football however does not function in isolation from changes in our society and so issues affecting the society we live in will also affect the issues that Safety Officers have to consider in their match day operations. I believe the most significant change that Safety Officers have had to face in the past 25 years has been the growth and spread of international terrorism, something which was not considered 25 years ago. Terrorist incidents at the Stade de Paris, Nice, Paris, Belgium, Germany, London and most recently at the Manchester Arena show just how easy it is for the terrorist to commit horrific crimes against innocent members of the public.

Every public assembly facility such as a football stadium therefore presents a potentially attractive target for any terrorist organisation intent on gaining maximum publicity for their cause. Safety Officers therefore spend a great deal of their time, energy and professional skills in working with the police and other agencies to combat this threat. Physical barriers will never completely prevent the risk and this is where the FSOA and our members have shown their ability to respond to evolving and changing risks to their customers. Only by keeping pace with such challenges will our Association and members demonstrate their willingness and capability to adapt and change to threats to public safety within our society. **(continued...)**



I would now like to reflect on the people that The FSOA was formed for, namely football Safety Officers. From the embryonic meeting in 1992 with a membership of 28 the Association now has over 300 Full and Associate/ Affiliate members. In the past 25 years the Association has indeed grown not just in numbers but I would argue also in status and reputation as the lead body and exponent in the field of spectator and stadium safety management operations. Over the years our membership has changed from principally attracting recruits from an emergency services background to a wide diversity of career and skills backgrounds. Also from being a predominately male dominated organisation we now have many female members including those operating at the highest levels in the football strata. A prime example is Mrs Sharon Cicco our present Chairman who has risen through the ranks as it were to be the Safety Officer at Arsenal F.C. So, what was originally thought of as a career for retired emergency services personnel 25 years ago is now a career opportunity for anyone to pursue if they wish. It is the diversity of knowledge, skills and experience of our members which is just one strength of the Association.

Along with a diversity of backgrounds has come the desire to develop the professional knowledge and skills of our members. 25 years ago, Safety Officers had no relevant training or qualification. The Association recognised that if its members were to be regarded as competent in their chosen field they had to receive the appropriate training and qualifications to support their professional status. Today every Safety Officer has - or is working towards - a Level 4 NVQ in Spectator Safety Management. However, many Safety Officers now have degree qualifications or other safety related qualifications such as in Health and Safety or Crowd Safety management. During the past 25 years, the Association has led the way in the drive to improve the training and qualifications of our members. The Association was the first organisation to deliver a training Course specifically designed to meet the needs of Safety Officers. This was done in conjunction with Mrs S Watson of Watson Associates and this formed the basis for the present Safety Officer training courses currently available to our members. From an untrained and unqualified group our members can now demonstrate that their training and qualifications demonstrates their highly developed professional knowledge and operational skills.

Our members now operate in an environment far removed from what the Stadium environment was 25 years ago. Football grounds were just that being used just one day a week during the football season to play a game of football. Otherwise our grounds stood empty. Over the past 25 years our stadium have changed beyond all recognition and are now designed for multipurpose usage seven days a week. The safety management of these venues has had to change and adapt in line with their usage for such as pop concerts, alternative sports such as boxing and rugby, conferences, meetings, weddings and other social events. In other words, whilst a stadium is standing empty it is not generating income. However, with this diverse usage has come the need for Safety Officers to develop and adapt their operational planning accordingly.

Due to this diversity of stadium usage has the time now come for the Association to question whether the main aims of the Association (referred to at the start of this Article) are still as relevant today as they were 25 years ago or should they more reflect the diverse and multi-faceted role of the present-day Safety Officer?

The Sports Grounds Safety Authority is currently reviewing the meaning of 'safety' within their organisational statutory functions since their role is constantly expanding. In line with their research should the Association also examine whether the term 'Safety Officer' accurately reflects their function in a modern stadium. Alternative terms currently in use are 'Safety Operations Manager', 'Operations Manager', 'Contracts Manager Stewarding and Manned Guarding', 'Event Safety and Policy Manager' and 'Facilities Manager'. I don't believe in change for change sake but as we move forward into the next 25 years of the FSOA is the title of the Association just as relevant today as it was 25 years ago? During the past 25 years where The FSOA has led other parts of the UK and other sports have followed.

There is now a Safety Officer Associations in Scotland which we share best practice with. Those of you who attended the conference last October will have heard Ronnie Horthorne, the stadium manager and safety officer of Celtic FC, speak on rail seating which they had recently installed. In England sports such as Cricket, Rugby League, Rugby Union and Horse Racing also have their own independent Associations. All of these bodies and sports face the same challenges and demands as our members.

After 25 years is the time now right to consider forming an overall sports grounds Safety Specialist Representative Organisation to coordinate best practice safety procedures being developed in all sports and throughout the UK? The heads of those organisations could meet twice annually to discuss current trends and the challenges facing Safety Officers and the way to meet those challenges. In other words is there a need and costs benefit to be derived from an umbrella Safety Officer Executive Board to assist in providing a unified and cost effective approach to stadium and spectator safety Management over the next 25 years.

Whatever the safety policies, whatever the safety strategies whatever the event the Safety Officer needs people to make it all happen and that is where the steward comes into his or her own. Without them no sporting event will ever take place so I would like to reflect on the tremendous changes and improvements to stewarding at our stadia and the part the FSOA and our members have played in this.

It is true to say that 25 years ago stewards were no more than supporters in tabards and I say that from my personal experience as the Police Commander at Villa Park, the home of Aston Villa F.C. in the late '80s and early '90s. Immediately after the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster with my training unit we developed the first Steward Training Programme at the club which I and my Training Department delivered. I say this only to show my passionate belief for the need for stewards to be properly trained, equipped, managed and led to ensure their competence to play a vital role in every event safety management operation.

Over the past 25 years the Football Authorities have developed numerous training programmes, each one more complex and demanding than the previous versions. There is also the requirement for stewards to obtain a level 2 NVQ in Spectator Control. In the past 25 years therefore the training, assessment and qualifications for individuals who are part time volunteers has been ratcheted up constantly to the point where the question has to be posed of just what do we want from our Stewards. Do we want someone competent to carry out the role of a part time, lowly paid steward or do we want to turn out 'professional stewards', because if it is the latter they should be paid the professional rate to do so.

(Continued...)

That is why I support the view expressed in the May edition of the FSOA Newsletter that the steward training and qualification pendulum has swung too far from nothing to another extreme. The time and cost involved for a steward to obtain a Level 2 NVQ is far too onerous for most clubs when many have a high wastage rate of steward personnel. As the status, authority and competency of the Safety Officer has improved beyond all recognition over the past 25 years is the time now right to examine again the process of self-training (as clubs do now), self-assessment (as clubs do now) and self-qualification (something which clubs are not allowed to do). In 1999 the Football Authorities introduced the FSQ (Football Stewarding Qualification) as an alternative to the Level 2 NVQ. It was welcomed by all clubs as a cheaper, less time consuming and a less bureaucratic procedure than the Level 2 NVQ. This was replaced in March 2005 by the Football Authorities Certificate in Event and Match Day Stewarding but the need for an independent qualification meant their demise. So what started in 1996 with the first Football Authorities Steward Training programme has I believe grown out of all proportion and needs to be radically reviewed, reduced and streamlined to meet the actual training needs of a steward. There is also a need to review whether the Level 2 NVQ is too time consuming, bureaucratic and costly to sustain mainly due to the requirement for external assessment validation. I believe the time is right to allow and trust Safety Officers to train assess and qualify their own personnel by giving them a certificate in Stewarding Competency as was evidenced in 1999.

Having been part of the Association for the past 25 years I can reflect at first-hand how over the years the Association has had to constantly struggle to remain a financially viable organisation able to provide a valuable service to all our members. The Association does not receive financial support from the Football Authorities and in the early days relied solely on income from membership fees and gradually very limited sponsorship. There were times when we employed our only full time employee as General Secretary that there were some months when he could not be paid. So over the years it has on many occasions been a struggle to survive and I said at the 15th Anniversary of the Association that unless we could improve our financial income streams we might not see the 25th Anniversary of the Association. I am delighted that my prophecy of doom and gloom has been proven wrong. With the appointment in 2012 of John Newsham as our Business Development Manager and with the full support of our Chairman and Management Board, John has revolutionised our financial status and put us on a sound financial path for the present and the future. The income streams from sponsorship have enabled the Association to develop, expand and introduce new and better services for our members. These include financial assistance to Lower League Clubs who have to host a major fixture in a Cup Competition. Financial assistance is also available to help upgrade CCTV systems for those Clubs who cannot afford such upgrades. John has been able to attract substantial income from many companies including our major partners Showsec and Dallmeier. Our two National Conferences attract safety and security companies and service providers from all over the UK indicating the value they place on the FSOA brand. I am therefore confident that as the FSOA embarks on the next 25 years of service it does so on a secure and sound financial footing.

Since the Association was formed it has relied upon full time Safety Officers in the roles of Chairman and members of the Management Board to provide the management of the Association. All of these officers have to do this on top of their existing and demanding full time roles. Apart from the Treasurer they receive no remuneration for their time energy and commitment. Moving into the next 25 years is there a need to consider the appointment of a full time Chief Executive to take away many of the responsibilities placed on our Chair and Management Board. A Chair and Board would still exist for the Chief Executive to report to but in terms of easing the load on the existing Chair and Board members is this the way forward for the next 25 years?

Over the past 25 years the Association and our members have had to face new and substantial challenges but experience has shown their ability to respond positively and effectively to whatever those challenges have been. It is difficult to reflect on all the issues which the Association and our membership have had to contend with over the past 25 years and I have only touched in my Reflections what I consider to have been the key issues. My colleagues may feel that I have either forgotten or ignored other key challenges. If I have done so this has not been deliberate but perhaps more an indication of my advancing years and senility. The following therefore is only a snap shot of other challenges our members have had to contend with in our first 25 years.

The debate on a return to safe standing terraces in our top two Divisions in England and Wales is an unforeseen consequence in the aftermath of the Hillsborough Disaster inquiry when Lord Justice Taylor recommended that our top two Divisions should be 'all seated'. Scotland has shown a way forward with the provision of rail seating in Celtic Park and I suspect that in the next 25 years the English Government will relax the legislation preventing the provision of some form of standing terraces in our top two Divisions. Until then our members will have to continue managing this phenomenon which is of course not of their making.

Social media such as Facebook and Twitter did not exist in the early days of the FSOA. It is yet another phenomenon which affects the roles of a Safety Officer and illustrates how they and our Association has to keep pace with changes in technology and methods of communication. Social media can be used for the benefit of supporters in advising them of issues relevant to any fixture such as a game being delayed or cancelled. However, it also enables instant communication around the world of any incident at a match with a consequence of the world media clamouring to speak to the Safety Officer.

The use of technical devices can also threaten the safety of spectators. The perfect example is the use of drones over or around our stadia.

I have already reflected on the threat of terrorism and how this threat has changed over the past 25 years. What has also changed has been the method of delivery of the threat. The use of IEDs, suicide bombers or vehicles being used as a terrorist weapon by being driven into crowds only demonstrate how society has changed and how the attitude of Safety Officers has also had to change in planning their safety management operations. I know that at every match the terrorist threat is never far from the thoughts of the Safety Officer, a threat which did not exist in 1992. As safety management operations have developed so has the complexity and sophistication of the safety equipment and systems available to the Safety Officer to assist in his command and control of any event. In 1992 CCTV and radio systems were very basic and there was no such thing as a computer in the ***(Continued...)***

Stadium Control. If you had a turnstile counting system to assist in knowing how many spectators were in the stadium then that was about as modern a safety system that was available. Modern CCTV systems have brought in facial recognition. Stewards at some grounds now wear body cameras with instant sound and video transmission to the Stadium Control Room. The Control Rooms themselves resemble something from the 'Starship Enterprise'. In summary the Safety Officer now has at their disposal sophisticated safety management and control systems unheard of 25 years ago. As the Association moves into the next 25 years how long will it be before a robot is in the Control Room managing the event?

As stadium safety systems have become more sophisticated so has reliance on technology to enable any venue to function effectively. If those systems are hacked or crash due to some technical fault will venues be able to continue to operate safely? So, in creating one solution to improving safety at our sports grounds do we create another safety problem?

These are just some of the issues which have tested our members over the past 25 years and I would argue that our members and the Association have never been found wanting in their response. I have tried to reflect on the main issues of the past 25 years and whilst history will always have an impact on our present we should not dwell in the past. In the past 25 years, the Association and our members have shown just how dynamic and resilient they are in responding to and dealing with change, whether it be new safety legislation and Codes of Practice, safety guidance, safety training and qualifications, changing and evolving threats and risks, modern technology and a changing face of society. In all of those fields The FSOA has adapted, adjusted and contributed with our main stakeholders in ensuring whatever the changes might be our role in preserving the safety of our stadia and our customers will always remain paramount. I have no doubt that over the next 25 years leading up to our 50th Anniversary that one fact alone will never change.

Finally, I can only repeat that it has indeed been an honour to have been your Hon. Life President since 2005 and to have been able to share my life with an exceptional group of men and women who are The FSOA. Sadly over the years they have rarely received the thanks and recognition they deserve in making our football grounds the safe and secure environment for fans to enjoy. However I said in 2015 when I was honoured to receive an MBE for services to safety at sports grounds that I accepted the honour on behalf of past, present and future members of the FSOA, many of whom have given a lifetime to a service of safety at sports grounds. I can only repeat that it is they who were honoured and not me.

Over the past 25 years The FSOA and its members have put the word 'professionalism' into spectator and stadium safety management and it is they who will shape the future of sports grounds safety management under the leadership of Association over the next 25 years. I have tried to give some thoughts as to what that future might be in this Article but as someone who has more of a history than a future it will be others who will have to determine the way forward. So, in closing I wish both present and future generations who have chosen the role of a Safety Officer as their career path every happiness and good fortune. I wish the Association continued success over the next 25 years to that it has enjoyed for the past 25 years. Thank you all for the fond memories of my past 25 years with The FSOA and for being able to share that part of the history of The FSOA with such great and wonderful professionals. God bless all of you and keep you safe always.

Join us for our October conference to celebrate 25 years of the FSOA

Places are going fast for FSOA's Autumn Conference & Exhibition, which will mark the 25th anniversary of the organisation.

The event will take place on October 3rd and 4th at Crowne Plaza, in Stratford-upon-Avon, giving organisations in the events industry the chance to showcase their products and services whilst networking with experts. As it marks the milestone 25th anniversary of the FSOA, the event will include celebrations to honour the organisation's invaluable and ever-evolving work to improve safety procedures at stadiums across the UK.

Preparations are underway for the event, which will include a packed programme of talks, interactive workshops and Q&As with high-profile speakers. It will also include a boat trip along the River Avon, whilst football legend Kevin Keegan will relive tales about his illustrious career as the guest speaker following the evening dinner.

Events and venue security specialist, Showsec, is once again the main sponsor of the event whilst leading surveillance company, Dallmeier, is continuing its support of the FSOA as associate sponsor.

John Newsham, FSOA Business Development Manager, said: "Preparations are well underway for the event and we are looking forward to welcoming new and familiar faces from the events industry for what promises to be another fantastic conference and exhibition.

"The events are always well received as they bring together experts to network and share best practice. As the October event marks the 25th anniversary of the FSOA, we are hoping it will be an extra celebration of the wonderful work the organisation has done, and continues to do, to improve safety."

Autumn Conference & Exhibition 2017

celebrating 25 years of the



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Resources released by Kick It Out to tackle HBT at football stadia

Kick It Out, football's equality and inclusion organisation, has partnered with the Home Office and True Vision to release a series of informative and engaging resources that raise awareness of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) within football stadia.

Forming part of Kick It Out's 'Call Full Time On Hate' initiative for the 2016-17 season, which is urging the collective force of football to encourage inclusion and deter hate from the game, the resources have been launched on the same day (22 March) as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) host a roundtable meeting on homophobia in sport.

A short film raising awareness of LGB&T inclusion in the game has been created in partnership with Doodle Films. The film follows five individuals from the LGB&T community as they reflect on the impact of HBT behaviour on their lives and the importance of reporting discrimination in football.

To view the film, [click here](#).

A comprehensive booklet and small pocket guide have also been designed to assist stewards and safety officers in their understanding of HBT discrimination and how to effectively challenge this behaviour.

Following the recent publication of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee report on homophobia in sport, which stated that stewards and all staff at all levels must be supported when confronting and reporting homophobia, these new materials will equip matchday stewards and safety officers with the confidence to report HBT discrimination at football matches.

'Tackling Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Behaviour at Football Stadia' is a 12-page booklet which has been produced with support from Just A Ball Game? and Inside Inclusion. The booklet includes information on what HBT discrimination is and the role stewards and safety officers can play in reporting and challenging this behaviour.

Ten key steps to tackling HBT discrimination have been included in the small pocket guide accompanying the booklet. 10,000 pocket guides have been produced and distributed to stewards and safety officers across Premier League and English Football League clubs.

Discrimination reports relating to sexual orientation made up 17% of reports to Kick It Out in 2015/16, a rise of 4% on the previous season.

All these resources will be available to download digitally for free on the Kick It Out website – www.kickitout.org

(Article courtesy of our partners, SGSA <http://www.safetyatsportsgrounds.org.uk>)

Member News

The FSOA would like to welcome new members Neil Hant & Neil Cheetham, from Leeds United FC and Martin Greenhalgh, from Oldham FC.

Peter Wallace has joined as the member for Scunthorpe united in the NE Region.

We are also delighted to welcome new Corporate Partners, Pro-Audium.

Robert Stanley has left his role at Torquay United and Ian Weller has retired from Rochdale FC. We wish them both well for the future.

For more information about the FSOA, to learn more about the benefits of being a member, to book your place at our October conference or to enquire about advertising in this newsletter for as little as £50 per month (+VAT), visit www.fsoa.org.uk, email info@fsoa.org.uk or call 01254 841771

