



# TALKING CITY MATTERS WITH ALEX HOWELL

Ahead of the Brighton match, we sat down with City Matters' Under 25s Representative, Alex Howell, to talk about his role at the Club's official fan network.

**Firstly, when did you start supporting Manchester City and who was your first footballing hero?**

I've been a City fan for as long as I can remember - which I know is a cliché. To put some figures behind that, I was born around a week before the Gillingham game and one of my first memories of watching City was being 4-0 down away to Wigan at halftime - so it hasn't all been success for fans of my age!

I was a central defender in my playing days, so Richard Dunne was a worthy role model. That said, Vincent Kompany soon became my hero.

**Moving on to City Matters. What is your role at our official fan network?**

My role is to represent the interests of supporters to the club, but more specifically those under the age of 25. That includes proposing new ideas, scrutinising existing practices, as well as promoting good governance at City Matters. I am always open to hear the views of supporters and I would encourage fans to get in touch.

**How do you hope to make the Club more inclusive to Under 25s?**

I have been extremely lucky growing up, having a parent with the time and resources



to take me over land and sea to watch City. Above all, I want to promote initiatives at the club that help other younger supporters to witness similar fantastic moments, in spectacular venues, with close friends. In many ways that starts with easy and affordable access to tickets, especially at the Etihad and particularly for those who do not have guardians to take them, which is a something that I am actively exploring with the club. However, it also includes creating a supporter experience at the Etihad that is attractive to young people and I think that the club have started to make progress here with the introduction of local beer and food for instance.

**Our supporters have been amazing away from home this season, and part of the reason why is because of our younger supporters travelling to watch the team. How important has**

**the introduction of an 18-25 allocation been for these matches?**

First and foremost, I think that City fans of all ages contribute to one of the best away followings in the country. Having said that, I think the 18-25 allocation alongside other methods such as the junior pull-through have been critical in allowing our younger supporters to have access to away matches. I think there is a real novelty for many young fans in being alongside friends as part of a band of travelling supporters, who are representing their club and city across England and indeed Europe - all of which contributes to a raucous atmosphere. It also allows them to catch the away 'bug' at an early age, which ensures that the club are backed by a healthy away support for years to come.

**How can supporting a football team such as Manchester City help people under the age of 25?**

Above all, following a football team can give young people a sense of purpose - something that I think many often struggle to find. In the case of football clubs, that can foster a pride in a local area - in our case the fantastic city of Manchester. It also brings together like-minded people and provides opportunities to make friendships for life - that is not to mention the ability to explore and experience many towns, cities and villages across the land and all the world.