

Aston Villa Football Club

FAN ENGAGEMENT PLAN SEASON 2026/27

Summer 2026

Aston Villa Supporter Services

PREPARED

INTRODUCTION

Our supporters are central to the identity, heritage and future of the Club. This plan sets out how we will engage with fans throughout the 2026/27 season and work towards our ambition of delivering best-in-class fan engagement.

Our Fan Advisory Board will remain the principal forum for structured dialogue, supported by working groups, supporter organisations, surveys, fan forums and direct consultation. These channels will help supporters contribute to discussions on subjects including heritage assets, ticketing, matchday experience, accessibility, equality, diversity and inclusion.

We will communicate openly, listen carefully and report on our progress. By involving supporters from across our local, national and international fanbase, we aim to make better-informed decisions and strengthen the connection between Aston Villa and the people who represent it.



According to the Premier League's 2025/26 Matchday Fan Survey, overall fan positivity stands at **97%, with 74% of Aston Villa fans describing themselves as 'very positive' about the club** - substantially higher than the League average of 44%.

91% of fans agree the club is well-run (vs 73% League average) and **91% agree the club has a long-term vision** (vs 72% League average).

CONTENTS

- A message from the President of Business Operations
- Aims & Objectives
- Key personnel, roles & responsibilities
- Heritage Assets
- Fan Advisory Board
- Additional Working Groups
- Wider Consultation
- 2025/26 Fan Engagement Report

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Dear Villans

What a season. Winning the Europa League, our first major European trophy since 1982, and qualifying for the Champions League, this is something none of us will forget, and it belongs to Unai, his staff and the players, but also to you. The support you gave us, at Villa Park, on our travels across Europe, and from home, was a huge part of it, and I want to thank you for that.

At the start of last season, I promised we would do our best to build strong and constructive relationships with our fans, and in my review I said we had made good progress. That is still true, and now the challenge is to build on those foundations.

For 2026/27, I want us to go further, and to work more truly collaboratively, finding joint projects where that is feasible, not just consulting but building things together. I know very well that we will not always agree on everything, but if we stay open and transparent with each other, I believe we can keep making real progress.

We have set ourselves the challenge of being recognised as best-in-class for Fan Engagement, and I am well aware there is still more to do to get there. This plan sets out how we intend to do that.

Thank you again for everything this season, and I am looking forward to continuing our shared journey together.

UTV!





Francesco Calvo, President Business Operations

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- Aston Villa will continue to use a variety of consultation methods to assist with the necessary two-way communication process between the Club and its fans. **Our over-arching objective, measured over a number of years, is to be considered best-in-class for Fan Engagement**.

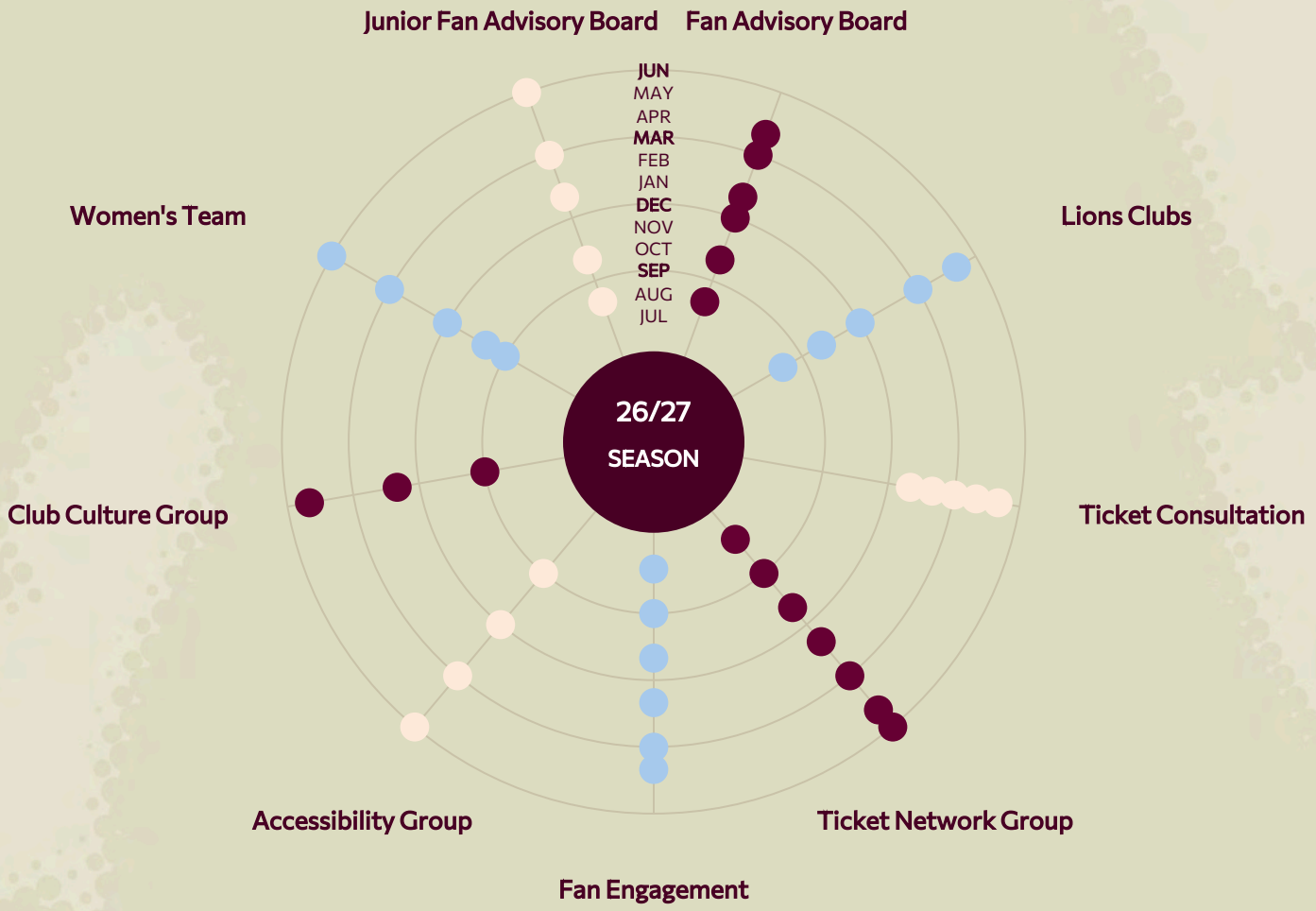
- The primary consultation method will be through the Fan Advisory Board (FAB). The objective being to provide fans with a direct link to senior management for feedback into the decision-making processes of the Club.

- The Fan Advisory Board provides fans with the opportunity to influence new initiatives which directly impact fan experience.

- The Club's Supporter Services department will ensure fans are communicated with and listened to on a regular basis.

- Lastly, the Club is committed to ensuring fans feel valued and that their voices are heard. Additional consultation through dedicated extended network groups will focus on areas of strategic importance, whilst the Club will host an open fans forum where supporters will be able to ask questions directly to senior management.

FAN ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR



KEY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (1/3)

- **Richard Stevens, Chief Strategy & Marketing Officer,** is the Nominated Board-Level Official and will have responsibility for compliance with the Fan Engagement Standard.
- Richard will be joined by senior management including; **Francesco Calvo, President of Business Operations**, and **Tommy Jordan, Director of Communications**, through attendance at FAB meetings and other fans forums.
- **Matthew Dainty, Supporter Liaison Officer,** will have day-to-day responsibility for the FES.
- Matthew will be assisted **by Anthony Richards, Assistant Supporter Liaison Officer**.

KEY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (2/3)

Gavin Forbes, Head of Marketing, and Alex Welsby, Head of Data & Insights, will coordinate supporter surveys.

Sam Ghataora, EDI Lead, will lead consultation with Fans for Diversity groups (Villa & Proud, Villans Together, Punjabi Villans and Villa Bellas).

Emily Peacock, Women's Team Marketing Executive will lead consultation with the Aston Villa Women's Supporters Group and Her Game Too.

Ashlee Milliard, Head of Safeguarding, Matt Norris, Safeguarding Manager and Anthony Richards, Assistant SLO, will lead the Young Persons Fan Advisory Board.

The Disability Access Officer (DAO), will lead the Accessibility Networking Group.



KEY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (3/3)

- **Premier League Rules –** The Club is committed to complying with all elements of the Premier League Rules relating to fan engagement contained within the Premier League Handbook, as amended and updated from time-to-time, including but not limited to Section R.
- **Accessibility –** The Club publishes communication channels for all fan-related queries. A designated supporter enquiries inbox, supporters@avfc.co.uk is displayed on all pages under the Fan Engagement tab as well as on the Contact Us page on the avfc.co.uk website.
- The Club has a designated X (formerly Twitter) account @AVFCSupport for supporters to raise queries via social media.
- The Club commits to respond to all supporter queries within 5 working days.
- The Club has nominated staff within the Stadium Safety & Security Team, Ticket Operations Team and Supporter Services Team who are responsible for responding with any queries raised by the Independent Football Ombudsman (IFO).

HERITAGE ASSETS



HERITAGE ASSETS

The Club has identified the following as Heritage Assets and commits to consult with fans in a timely manner prior to any material amendment to a Club Heritage Asset subject to contractual, legal and intellectual property obligations.

Name – Aston Villa Football Club

Crest – Club Crest as per image

Stadium Name – Villa Park

Stadium Location – Villa Park, Birmingham, B6 6HE

Club Colours – Claret & Blue (Home Strip only)



FAN ADVISORY BOARD



FAN ADVISORY BOARD (FAB)

The FAB is our primary vehicle for Fan Engagement.

The FAB has its own independent website here.

The FAB operates under a Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct, and with fixed terms for members.

Diversity of Representation: The FAB ensures fixed seats for AVFC Supporters Trust, Lions Clubs and AVDSA. The nominated Fans For Diversity groups represented on the FAB for the 2026/27 season are Punjabi Villans, and Villa Bellas. There are also 5 independent supporter reps.

Extended Network Groups: During the 2026/27 season the Club will host meetings with sub-groups for Ticketing, Matchday Experience, Culture & EDI, Accessibility, and Women's Football.

FAB Effectiveness Review: The Club will undertake an end-of-season FAB effectiveness survey to measure improvements against last year's scores.



FAN ADVISORY BOARD (FAB) - ANNUAL SUMMARY

The Aston Villa Fan Advisory Board has continued to provide a structured and independent mechanism for supporter engagement throughout the 2025/26 season. The FAB has met regularly with senior club representatives and has been consulted on a range of strategic and operational matters affecting supporters.

Key areas of engagement during the year included ticketing and pricing, the North Stand redevelopment and associated stadium capacity changes, supporter communications, fan culture initiatives, accessibility, and the UEFA Europa League fan experience, both at home and abroad. The FAB has also operated specialist working groups to facilitate more detailed consultation on specific topics.

The Club has demonstrated a commitment to meaningful supporter engagement by responding to our feedback and incorporating supporter perspectives into decision-making processes. During the season, the Club engaged with the FAB on proposed ticketing changes, resulting in constructive dialogue and a number of supporter-led recommendations being considered and, where appropriate, adopted. The FAB were also asked to provide comprehensive advice and recommendations on improving the stadium atmosphere.

Alongside formal consultation activity, the FAB has continued to support projects that celebrate and strengthen Aston Villa's supporter culture, including a pilot of a dedicated 1897 Group section of the stadium, helping to ensure that fan voices remain central to the future development of the Club.

The FAB looks forward to continuing its collaborative relationship with Aston Villa and supporting the ongoing delivery of the Premier League Fan Engagement Standard.

FAN ADVISORY BOARD (FAB) – 2025/26 ASSESSMENT

- **Approach Taken to Complete FAB Assessment**

- At the end of the 2025/26 season, all 10 members of the Fan Advisory Board were given the opportunity to complete a structured questionnaire covering five key areas: composition, meetings and administration, conduct and culture, communications, and fan engagement impact. Seven members responded in full, providing both quantitative ratings and qualitative comments. The assessment was completed in June 2026 and the anonymised survey data was also shared with the FAB Chair.

- **Summary of FAB Performance**

- This was the first full season of the newly formed FAB, and the overall picture from the assessment is positive. Scores across the 35 rated questions averaged between 3.0 and 4.9 out of 5. The FAB assessed most strongly in areas relating to its composition, the culture of its meetings, and the quality of senior Club involvement. The areas where scores were lower centred on the club raising the FAB's profile with the wider fanbase, the Club sharing information and timelines with the FAB, and the extent to which the FAB feels it can consistently influence Club decisions.

- **Areas of Strength**

- The composition of the FAB was rated highly, with members noting a strong mix of skills, diversity and fan group representation (average scores of 4.6 to 4.9). The conduct of meetings was also rated well, with open and honest discussion encouraged (4.6) and there was also praise for ensuring balanced contributions from all members (4.6). The involvement of the Nominated Board Level Official and other senior Club figures was considered appropriate (4.4). Members noted that a productive working relationship and a genuine sense of trust between the FAB and the Club had developed over the course of the season.

FAN ADVISORY BOARD (FAB) – 2025/26 ASSESSMENT

- **Areas of Development**

- The lowest-rated area was FAB members' familiarity with the Club's internal processes and decision-making timelines (2.4). The Club's communication of the FAB's work to the wider fanbase was also an area highlighted, with members requesting support to promote the FAB and its website. Meeting administration scores were mid-range, with areas such as strategic agenda time (3.1), quality and timeliness of minutes (3.6), and pre-meeting information (3.7) identified as being generally adequate but with having room for improvement. The FAB's view of its own profile within the fanbase is currently neutral (3.3).

- **Proposed Actions for 2026/27**

- Based on the assessment, the following actions are proposed for the 2026/27 season:

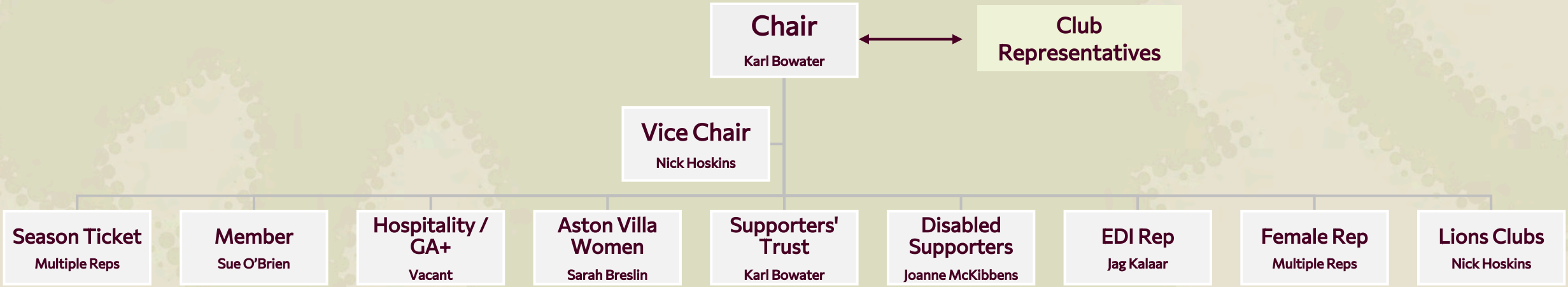
    1. The Club to increase promotion of the FAB and its website through matchday programmes, digital channels, appropriate social channels and QR codes, to raise the FAB's profile among supporters, and explore other sensible options to increase awareness.
    2. A forward agenda of FAB meetings to be agreed at the start of the season, with key dates set well in advance to allow adequate preparation from all parties.
    3. The Club to involve the FAB earlier in relevant decision-making processes, particularly on ticketing and supporter-facing policy changes, so that input can be meaningful rather than retrospective.
    4. A dial-in option to be made available for all FAB meetings to accommodate members who cannot attend in person.
    5. Ensure the Fan Engagement Plan for 2026/27 is shared with and co-developed alongside the FAB ahead of the season, rather than after it has begun.

FAN ADVISORY BOARD (FAB) – 2025/26 ASSESSMENT

Theme	24/25 Av. Score	25/26 Av. Score	YoY Change
Size of FAB	2.6	4.9	2.3
Involvement of NBLO	2.4	4.4	2.0
EDI of FAB Members	2.9	4.7	1.9
FAB member skills	2.3	4.7	2.4
FAB Staff Skills	2.4	4.6	2.1
Representation of Fan Groups	2.9	4.6	1.7
Section Average	**2.6**	**4.6**	**2.1**
Frequency of meetings	2.6	4.0	1.4
Length of meetings	3.1	4.0	0.9
Quality of advance information	2.4	3.7	1.3
Do meetings discuss strategy?	2.3	3.1	0.9
Realistic deadlines for actions	2.3	3.4	1.1
Quality of meeting minutes	1.9	3.6	1.7
Section Average	**2.4**	**3.6**	**1.2**
Open & Honest discussion	2.9	4.6	1.7
Did FAB chair encourage balanced contribution?	3.4	4.6	1.1
Do FAB members have a voice or impact?	2.1	3.7	1.6
Were differences of opinion resolved amicably?	2.3	3.9	1.6
How well did FAB communicate with fans?	3.4	3.7	0.3
How well did Club communicate success of FAB?	1.7	3.0	1.3
How familiar are FAB with AVFC processes?	2.0	2.4	0.4
Section Average	**2.6**	**3.7**	**1.1**

Theme	24/25 Av. Score	25/26 Av. Score	YoY Change
FAB effectiveness in advising decision making process	2.6	3.4	0.9
FAB performance vs objectives	2.0	3.7	1.7
FAB integration into fan group environment	2.3	3.7	1.4
Does FAB feel supported by club?	2.0	3.1	1.1
To what extent does FAB have a positive profile?	2.7	3.3	0.6
Does the club respond to fab timely and effectively?	1.7	3.7	2.0
How effective is the FAB at collating different perspectives?	3.0	3.6	0.6
Section Average	**2.3**	**3.5**	**1.2**
To what extent has fan engagement improved this season?	3.3	4.1	0.9
To what extent has the FAB had a positive impact with the fans?	3.4	4.3	0.9
How suitable are the board at promoting fan engagement?	1.9	4.0	2.1
To what extent has the club met its commitments in the FEP?	2.1	3.6	1.4
To what extent are fan engagement materials accessible to fans?	1.9	3.4	1.6
Section Average	**2.5**	**3.9**	**1.4**
Overall Average Score	**2.5**	**3.9**	**1.4**

FAN ADVISORY BOARD STRUCTURE



Note: Chair and Vice Chair are independently elected by the FAB members

FAN ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

- **Nominated Supporter Groups Representatives:**
- Aston Villa Supporters Trust – Karl Bowater (Holte End Season Ticket Holder)
- Aston Villa Official Lions Clubs – Nick Hoskins (Holte End Season Ticket Holder)
- Aston Villa Disabled Supporters Association – Joanne McKibbens (Trinity Road Season Ticket Holder)
- Punjabi Villans – Jag Kalaar (Trinity Road Season Ticket Holder)
- Villa Bellas – Sarah Breslin (Women's Team Season Ticket Holder, Member)
- **Independent Supporter Representatives:**
- TBC (Hospitality Season Ticket Holder, Trinity Road)
- Andrew Carlill (North Stand Season Ticket Holder, 26/27 in Doug Ellis)
- Maninder Grimshaw (Doug Ellis Season Ticket Holder)
- Craig Hamilton (Doug Ellis Season Ticket Holder)
- Susan O'Brien (Member)

- **Club**
- Richard Stevens – Chief Strategy & Marketing Officer (Nominated Board-Level Official)
- Matthew Dainty – Supporter Liaison Officer
- Anthony Richards – Assistant Supporter Liaison Officer
- Commitment from Senior Club Management to regularly attend meetings including Francesco Calvo, President of Business Operations

ADDITIONAL WORKING GROUPS



WORKING GROUPS – COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION



Ticketing

Consultation on seasonal and match-by-match ticketing, pricing and hospitality for 2026/27.



Fan Engagement & Communication

Focus on the matchday experience, customer service, catering and supporter insights.

WORKING GROUPS – COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION



Accessibility

Led by the DSA and Disability Access Officer to enhance provision for disabled supporters.



EDI & Club Culture

Focused on every area of the Club to keep Villa Park welcoming for everyone.

WORKING GROUPS – COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION



Women's Team

Supporting Aston Villa Women fans on matchday experience, ticketing and growing attendances.



Young Persons Fan Advisory Board

An informal group giving young supporters a voice and helping attract new fans to the Club.

WORKING GROUPS – COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION

Existing Initiatives - 1897 Group

The 1897 Group are a group of supporters who have a passion and focus on improving the matchday experience and atmosphere at Villa Park.

The Supporter Liaison Officer and the Marketing Department will meet with the 1897 Group on a quarterly basis to discuss game presentation.

Following the successful launch of the 1897 Group's dedicated section in the North Stand last season, the Club will look to work with the group to maintain momentum on this initiative whilst the North Stand redevelopment takes place during the 2026/27 campaign.

Working alongside the group, Tifos will be produced for selected Aston Villa home games. The 1897 Group will be invited to contribute to the design of these displays.

The Club will continue to work alongside the 1897 Group to enhance the matchday experience at Villa Park.



WORKING GROUPS – COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION

- **Existing Initiatives - Lions Clubs**
- The Club has a worldwide network of Official Lions Clubs. Clubs are identified geographically, based in the UK and abroad.
- Aston Villa will maintain direct dialogue with the chairpersons of each Lions Club through the Supporter Liaison Officer.
- The Supporter Liaison Officer will hold regular calls with the Lions Club Steering Group.
- The Club will host two meetings per season for Lions Club Chairs at Villa Park ahead of matchdays where senior management will be available to answer any queries or questions.



WORKING GROUPS – COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION

Existing Initiatives - EDI Groups - Activations

The Club will work alongside our Fans For Diversity groups to establish various matchday activations at Men's and Women's team home games throughout the 2026/27 season.

The Club is committed to the designated Premier League Fan Engagement Campaigns. For the 2026/27 season these include:

Inside Matters – Suicide Prevention

No Room for Racism – Celebrating Diversity

Premier League with Pride

Premier League – More than a game – Community Showcase

The Club will also support activations around initiatives to promote:

RBL – Poppy Appeal and Remembrance Day

Mental Health Awareness Week

Her Game Too





WORKING GROUPS – COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION

Existing Initiatives – Mental Health & Wellbeing Hub

Following a successful first season, Aston Villa will continue the Supporting the Supporters – Together Against Suicide campaign throughout the 2026/27 Premier League season.

Delivered in partnership with the Premier League, Birmingham Mind, Samaritans, Andy's Man Club and SHOUT, the project aims to raise awareness of suicide prevention, reduce stigma around mental health, and encourage supporters to seek help when they need it.

Throughout the 2025/26 season, more than 20,000 supporters engaged with the project through awareness activity, conversations with our partner organisations and the Matchday Mental Health & Wellbeing Support Hub, which operated at every home Premier League fixture.

Feedback from supporters has been overwhelmingly positive and has helped shape the continued development of the project for the coming season.





WORKING GROUPS – COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION

Mental Health & Wellbeing Hub - What's happening in 2026/27

Supporters will once again be able to access the Mental Health & Wellbeing Support Hub, located on the first floor of the Holte Pub, at every home Premier League fixture. Delivered by Birmingham Mind and Samaritans, the Hub offers a welcoming, confidential space where supporters can speak to trained professionals, access wellbeing advice and receive information about local and national support services.

Representatives from Andy's Man Club will continue to engage with supporters around Villa Park before each home fixture, helping to encourage conversations around mental health and signposting fans to the support available.

Building on the success of last year, the campaign will continue to expand beyond matchdays.

Supporters will see:

Increased awareness activity across Villa Park through digital screens, pitch-side LED boards, programmes and stadium signage.

Continued promotion of the SHOUT text messaging service, allowing supporters to access free, confidential support 24 hours a day by texting AVFC to 85258.

New digital content, including supporter stories, former player features and mental health awareness campaigns throughout the season.

Ongoing collaboration with fan groups to ensure supporter voices continue to shape the campaign and help reduce stigma.





WIDER CONSULTATION



WIDER CONSULTATION – SHARE

- **Communication from Ownership, Chair or CEO**

- Francesco Calvo, President of Business Operations, is committed to dialogue with supporters throughout the 2026/27 season. This engagement will be through attendance at in-person meetings, or via key videos to fans (free to view) on our Villa TV platform and via Club social media channels.

- Francesco Calvo will discuss his vision for the 2026/27 season in a free-to-view video, available for all on Villa TV, available in the first weeks of the season.

- Francesco has committed to attend all Fan Advisory Board meetings as his diary allows.

- Francesco will attend a meeting with the Lions Club Chairs during the 2026/27 season.

- Club Ownership are committed to providing updates on major projects such as the ongoing North Stand development.

- Fan Engagement and Sentiment to have a permanent position on Club Ownership meeting agendas.



WIDER CONSULTATION – SHARE

Fans Forum

Following the successful pilot of the Fan Forum at the Sports Illustrated Warehouse in April 2026, the club's leadership team has committed to continuing this initiative with the following key changes:

Ensure a longer lead time for fans so they have adequate time to make arrangement

Take place on a non-matchday, in the evening

Increase the available number of tickets and extend the event

The following elements will not change:

1. Free to enter
2. Open forum Q&A with no pre-scripting
3. Livestream for free on VillaTV



WIDER CONSULTATION – LEARN & IMPROVE

- **Surveys**
- As part of our ongoing objective to improve the matchday experience, fans will be consulted through targeted feedback mechanisms.
- Dedicated matchday surveys will be emailed to groups of supporters following each home matchday (including Women's fixtures).
- One survey will focus upon General Admission (GA), whilst the other will focus upon GA+ and Hospitality attendees.
- These surveys will be emailed to random groups of match attendees and can also be accessed by scanning QR codes on tables in Hospitality areas.
- Each season the Club also engages fans via additional surveys with specific areas of focus.
- Current areas of focus include Food & Beverage, Memberships, and EDI.

WIDER CONSULTATION – OTHER INFORMATION

Fans Charter

The Club will maintain our Fans Charter across the 2026/27 season which can be read here.

Official Complaints Process

Fan complaints can be registered by fans via our designated email address; fancomplaints@avfc.co.uk

Complaints are logged by the Supporter Services Team and forwarded to the appropriate department to respond accordingly.

The Club endeavours to respond to complaints at the earliest opportunity.

Club Contact Information

Key contact information can be found on the Contact Us page on our official website.

The Supporter Liaison Officer is Matthew Dainty.

The Supporter Services Team can be contacted via a designated inbox; supporters@avfc.co.uk



FAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2025/26



FAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT: 2025/26

Fan Engagement Report 2025/26

In line with Premier League commitments, the Club published its Fan Engagement Report for the 2025/26 season.

This can be viewed here.



THANK YOU

