FAN Advisory Board – Final Ticketing Consultation Minutes – 28th May 2025

This follows previous FAB Ticketing Consultation Meetings on 24th February, 26th March and 23rd April.

Attendees – Ben Hatton, Chris Hornbuckle, Richard Stevens, Tommy Jordan, Daniel Walker and Matthew Dainty (Aston Villa Football Club)

FAB Members – David Michael (My Old Man Said), Mo Razzaq (Aston Villa Supporters Trust), John Gillett (Lions Clubs), Joanne McKibbens (Aston Villa Disabled Supporters Association), Jag Kalaar (Punjabi Villans), Lena Curran, Ben Redding, Kerry Lenihan, Simon Lines, Max Stokes (Supporters Representatives).

Apologies – Nilesh Chauhan (Villans Together), Sarah Breslin (Villa Bellas), Steve Gough (Aston Villa Independent Supporters Clubs), Connor Smith

Introduction – CH outlined that this meeting was the final part of the ticketing consultation process with the FAB, a presentation was to follow which has been formulated following the consultation and feedback from the FAB. CH thanked everyone for their attendance and invaluable contributions which have helped to formulate the ticketing strategy for the 2025/26 season.

Club Update – CH informed the FAB that communication would be sent on Friday (30/05) to any supporters who may be impacted by the Villa Park stadium developments during the off-season. Some STH will be displaced due to the realignment of gangways in the Trinity Road Upper and Middle, plus two additional rows will be added at the front of the Doug Ellis Lower. There will also be some adjustments in the corner of the Trinity Road and the Holte End. This work will create an additional c.400 seats and 15 additional wheelchair spaces across the stadium. No supporters will be impacted in terms of a change of price point by these works. Supporters impacted by the changes will be given the first option to relocate after the season ticket renewal process should they wish to do so with family groups allowed to move together and those with existing aisle seats allowed to move to a new aisle seat should they wish to do so.

Ticketing – CH outlined the Club's ticketing principles.

- **A Packed Villa Park** – We want every home game to be played in front of a full house while continuing to meet the financial regulations that we must follow.
- **Fairer Access for All Fans** – We want to balance loyalty with new opportunities - rewarding those who've stood by us while opening the gates to more Villans.
- **Embracing the Next Generation** – We're making it easier for more young supporters to be part of the matchday magic.

- **Loyalty Matters** – Your continued support means everything, and we want to recognise that commitment in how we structure access and pricing.

FAB members were then invited to ask questions relating to the ticketing principles.

JG queried why the front rows of seats in the Doug Ellis Upper are not sold when home fans occupy this area when an away club does not take the full allocation. BH explained that this is on advice from West Midlands Police.

DM asked about what plans the Club has to protect local fans, with the growing trend across the Premier League of increased numbers of football tourists. BH advised that the Club analyses the data on match attendees regularly and if a creep towards more football tourists is identified then the Club will put measures in place to protect local fans. RS informed the group that where and when possible the clubs makes tickets available to the local community, for example through the Foundation. RS also informed the group that Villa's current split of season tickets vs match-by-match tickets as a proportion of stadium capacity is in line with the current Premier League average. BH reiterated that everything the Club does now moving forward will relay back to the Ticketing Principles. The FAB agreed that the Ticketing Principles were well founded.

2025/26 Season Ticket Prices – After extensive dialogue and recommendations from the FAB regarding season ticket pricing in the previous ticket consultation meetings, the Club formulated their proposal for the 2025/26 season. A price grid was shown of the proposed season ticket prices for the 2025/26 season. **Adult prices will rise by 5%, whilst concession prices in the under-21, under-18 and under-14 categories will remain frozen.**

DM asked for an explanation for the 5% rise [*the FAB has lobbied throughout this consultation for a total price freeze and for any increase to be kept as low as possible*]. BH explained that one of our ticketing principles is to ensure that Villa Park is sold out for every match we play, however the Club has to be conscious of the financial realities around PSR. The FAB's feedback was taken on board and in-line with the Ticketing Principle of 'embracing the next generation' we have been able to freeze concession prices for under-21s and below. The Club has fought to find a happy medium and fair balance between keeping season ticket prices as reasonable as possible, whilst juggling PSR constraints.

BR queried whether the increased revenue generated from the increase in adult season ticket prices could've instead been sourced from additional commercial income. BH reaffirmed that all revenue streams matter when it comes to meeting PSR requirements. The Club will achieve record revenues for the 2024/25 season, some of this is down to on-pitch performance, whilst other revenue records have also been broken in off the

pitch departments, such as commercial. The Club also has a record high cost base and will record a significant loss for the financial year. RS highlighted that teams from across the club continuously monitor the club's status against all financial regulations.

Whilst the FAB would've preferred a full price freeze, they acknowledged that the Club had taken on board their feedback and tried their best to keep prices increases as low as possible whilst taking into account the business requirements.

Interest free credit – CH confirmed that the interest free credit on season tickets will stay with the club covering the interest and the set up fees at zero cost to fans. MR highlighted that this was a big positive and asked if it was something the club would consider running in house. RS advised that running this in-house would require a banking license and bring the club into the remit of various financial regulators, which would increase both cost and complexity within the Club. BH pointed out that the interest free facility costs the Club circa £600k per season, but that the Club knows how vital this facility is to supporters, with 36% of existing Season Ticket Holders taking up the interest free option. All agreed that this scheme is a huge positive.

2025/26 Match Ticket Pricing – CH outlined that the same principle applied to season ticket pricing will be applied to match ticket pricing – **a 5% rise for adults and a freeze for concessions aged 21 and under.**

There was a discussion around the pricing for Europa League fixtures with a mixed response from FAB members. DM asked if the Club would consider ticket bundles for the Europa League Phase games. BH advised that whilst this was unlikely, the Club would look at every option once the draw was made with the primary objective being to ensure that Villa Park is sold out for every fixture. BH highlighted that ticket priority for fixtures in latter rounds of the Europa League will be based upon attendance at the League Phase fixtures.

The feedback on the proposed ticket prices for domestic cup fixtures was overwhelmingly positive from the FAB members. BH outlined that the Club had learnt lessons from previous seasons where cup fixtures were poorly attended, this played a part in the competitive pricing implemented for the FA Cup fixtures last season as the primary objective is to keep Villa Park full. The FA Cup fixtures last season saw 15,000 new fans come to Villa Park for the first time and for cup games 13% of match attendees were under 14, compared to ~5% for Premier League fixtures. BH asked the FAB to note that cup ticket pricing must be agreed with the away club, and whilst the Club will always lobby for it, it can't be guaranteed if an away club disagrees with the pricing structure.

Season Ticket Usage Scheme – As discussed throughout the ticket consultation process the club is looking to implement a season ticket usage scheme to help with the objective of ensuring that every seat at Villa Park is filled for every game.

The FAB has been clear throughout the ticketing consultation process that the existing 20% charge to season ticket holders for reselling their seat is unfair and a barrier to supporters doing so.

The Club has taken this feedback onboard and will remove the 20% charge with immediate effect.

CH outlined the proposal, including ticket resale, ticket share or ticket use. Supporters will be required to use their season ticket, share their season ticket or list their season ticket for resale for 14 of the scheduled 19 home Premier League fixtures as part of this scheme. The Club will prioritise educating fans throughout the campaign of the need to use, share or resell. The Aston Villa app is being developed to make the sharing of tickets much easier. Supporters will be able to add up to 8 friends or family they can share their ticket with prior to end of August, with a further 3 friends or family allowed to be added in January. Extensive testing will take place prior to the start of the season and the technology the Club is using is already in use by other football clubs. The listing of the ticket for resale is the qualifying act, if the ticket doesn't sell, it will still count.

DM asked if the resell option could be turned on earlier than at present, particularly to allow groups to be able to purchase seats together, rather than there only being single seats available. The current process sees the resale option only become available once GA has sold out. BH outlined that whilst that will be taken into consideration, at the moment the plan is for the resale option to only be activated once GA has sold out. Supporters will be encouraged to share their ticket in the first instance if they are unable to attend a particular match. DW confirmed that during the 2024/25 season, 17 of the 19 home Premier League fixtures went to resale.

MR asked if tickets can be upgraded when sharing with friends and family e.g. a child ticket to an adult ticket and what the cut-off point would be for listing a ticket for resale. CH confirmed that tickets could be upgraded at the GA price and that the cut-off for listing a ticket is 90 minutes prior to kick-off in line with turnstiles opening.

JM queried whether this technology is suitable for the elderly or those with disabilities. BH advised that the Ticket Office will be happy to help anyone with questions or who needs assistance.

Match categories – fixtures for the 2025/26 season are to be split into six categories.

1. UEFA Europa League knockout stages

2. UEFA Europa League qualification and group stage

3. Top Premier League teams and key fixture dates

4. Remaining Premier League teams and fixture dates

5. League & FA Cup: Quarter Final stages and beyond

6. League & FA Cup: Rounds up to Quarter Finals

The FAB was supportive of the match categorisation but encouraged the Club to be flexible regarding categories 3 and 4 when it comes to fixture rescheduling.

KL asked if the Premier League fixture categories could be listed alongside the sale dates for each fixture on the website which the Club agreed was a good idea.

Season Ticket Waiting List – In previous FAB ticketing consultation meetings it has been discussed and agreed that the current waiting list is unsustainable and not fit for purpose. The current waiting list boasts over 45,000 members, 46% of whom have not purchased a match ticket within the previous two seasons. The FAB challenged the Club to come up with a new proposal for the waiting list which would benefit supporters who make the effort to attend matches at Villa Park on a regular basis.

CH presented the new proposal for the waiting list. At the end of the current 24/25 season the Season Ticket Waiting List will be reordered based on a points system with points awarded as follows:

- 100 points for current members of the AVFC Membership scheme
- +1 points for attendance at each Premier League home game over the last two seasons
- +2 points for attendance at each Domestic or European Cup home game over the last two seasons
- Those on the Waiting List with zero points will be removed from the list
- From the 2025/26 season, attendance at Women's home matches will also earn points

All those supporters wishing to join the list from the point of its reorganisation, will need to pay a one-off £10 fee which will be redeemable against the price of a season ticket when supporters are able to purchase one.

All supporters on the Season Ticket Waiting List will be informed of their position on the new list ahead of any new season tickets being offered for sale.

It is likely that a number of new season tickets will be offered for sale each season. Furthermore, any new season tickets offered for sale following the completion of the North Stand extension will be offered to those supporters on the waiting list.

The removal of those with no qualifying points will see circa 15,000 removed from the list.

The FAB were positive on this new proposal.

On sale dates and times – CH confirmed that the Season Ticket renewal window will open on Wednesday 4th June at 9:30am and will run until Friday 4th July at 5pm. The season ticket relocation window will then run from Monday 7th July to Tuesday 8th July. Match tickets will go on sale four weeks prior to the fixture date as per the process during the 2024/25 season.

Away tickets – At the first ticket consultation meeting it was agreed with the FAB that the Club needed to look at a way of democratising access to away tickets. There was a feeling that the current system created a closed shop and encouraged unsolicited passing on of tickets.

As part of the ticketing consultation the Club presented an idea of a ballot system with a loyalty pot. The feedback from the FAB was to attempt to identify a solution that still accommodates the most loyal supporters whilst attempting to allow more fans the opportunity to purchase tickets.

BH outlined that the feedback from the previous ticketing consultation meetings has been essential in helping the Club to create a way for those who can't get access to away tickets to have the opportunity to do so, whilst protecting those supporters who loyally follow the Club away regularly.

Whilst the away ticketing process is yet to be finalised, the intention is to ensure that, where allocations and fixture lists allow, those supporters that attend most away games, be able to attend a similar number of matches in the 2025/26 season.

SL asked if the Club had any considerations regarding away European games. CH advised that this is being reviewed as part of the current process but those who have attended all away European fixtures will be protected.

MR pushed for more detail on what the away ticket changes will be. CH emphasised the importance of being able to deliver tickets to those in the top loyalty brackets. BH added that if the Club cannot find a solution then no changes to the existing criteria will be made until a solution can be found.

FAB Questions

LC asked if Members who attend all home FA Cup fixtures next season will still get priority over season ticket holders who don't attend any FA Cup fixtures next season should the Club make it to Wembley again. BH confirmed that this would be the case. RS outlined the decision-making process and the data used to calculate the demand for ticket in each priority category. The process for FA Cup semi-final tickets still ensured that everyone who wanted a ticket for the semi-final managed to get one. DM agreed that the system was fair.

LC asked what the Club could've done better to generate an atmosphere at Wembley with Palace's fans significantly louder than our own. DM argued that supporters need to take some responsibility themselves and organise into groups who want to sit together and to create an atmosphere. MD advised that the Club wants to hear from supporter groups with suggestions and ideas, but that they must be willing to put solutions into action themselves once authorised by the Club.

KL said how fantastic the youth games at Villa Park were and that the £1 price point was a massive positive. Not only did it help generate a brilliant attendance and a fantastic atmosphere, but it allowed new fans and local residents who can't usually afford to attend a game to be able to come to Villa Park. Were there any plans for the Club to have youth games at Villa Park next season?

BH agreed that it was positive for the Youth team to have the opportunity to play at Villa Park and that where possible, such as the FA Youth Cup, that the Club will look to do this again.

The FAB asked about the current set up with Women's team in relation to matches played at Villa Park, sponsorship agreements and PSR. BH outlined that the Women's team will still play all of their league matches at Villa Park, and that Villa are one of only two WSL clubs to do this. Sponsorship negotiations are ongoing with various interested parties, with announcements to follow in due course.

LC asked when Women's season ticket pricing will be announced. BH confirmed that this was still being reviewed and that the primary objective with the women's team will be to drive match attendance.

AOB

The feedback from FAB members regarding the new Bullring Villa Store was overwhelmingly positive, with members who have yet to visit the store encouraged to do so.

MD talked through the process for the reconstitution of the FAB.

- The Club is working alongside the Premier League and FSA and the feedback from both bodies has been positive.

- The Club needs to introduce a terms of reference, code of conduct and fixed terms for members to comply with Premier League regulations
- 500 applicants have been received to date and the Club is pleased with the level of interest and the quality of applicants.
- The recruitment panel will include independent representatives to ensure a fair and just recruitment process.
- A set number of positions on the FAB will be reserved for prominent supporter groups with their representatives elected by their respective members.
- Interviews will begin in June, with the first meeting scheduled for July.
- The closing date for applications is Friday 30th May.