Fan Advisory Board **Thursday 20th April** **Villa Park**

Fan Representatives

Scott Jones	Villa Talk
Mo Razzaq	AV Supporters Trust
Sarah Breslin	Villa Bellas
Stephen Gough	AV Independent Supporters Clubs
Joanne McKibbens	Aston Villa Disabled Supporters Association
Nilesh Chauhan	Villans Together
John Gillett	Lions Clubs
Dave Woodhall	Heroes & Villains
Ian Stokes	Vital Villa
Lena Curran	Fan Representative
Connor Smith	Fan Representative
David Aston	Guest Fan Representative
Alan O'Neill	Guest Fan Representative

Virtual attendance

David Michael	My Old Man Said
Harjit Badesha	Punjabi Villans
Nick Sanders	avillafan.com

Apologies

Sam Timms	Villa & Proud

Club Representatives

Christian Purslow	Chief Executive Officer
Paul Tyrrell	Chief Operating Officer
Nicola Ibbetson	Chief Commercial Officer
Tommy Jordan	Communications Director
Adam Lowe	Head of Marketing
Lynne O'Reardon	Head of Ticketing Operations
Susannah Barnes	Commercial Manager
Lee Preece	Supporter Liaison Manager

A general discussion took place on subjects including:

The New Holte Experience, Rail Seating & Season Ticket Pricing.

Fan Advisory Board Minutes

Holte End Survey

The club provided an update on the results of the recent Holte End survey which was conducted by YouGov. Just over 3,500 responses. Key themes were matchday experience, new fan experiences and safe standing.

As a result of the survey findings, work is already underway to create and invest in new experiences for fans.

The was a clear majority who believed that Food & Beverage was in need of more improvement. The new facilities which have been added to Lower Holte (self-serve, tap & go, pour your own pint) scored highly. Connectivity and post-match entertainment were also highlighted with the club looking at various solutions and initiatives to improve the fan experience.

Almost half of fans stated that they would be interested in a new enhanced GA+ style experience within the Holte End as a bolt-on to their ticket. Key inclusions fans would like to see are:

- a social bar area with good food & drink options and views
- wifi access
- good quality street-style food
- other entertainment (villatv/legends visits/post-match access etc)

The Club presented plans of work to upgrade the Ramsey's Bar space on the middle floor of the Holte End to meet these requirements of supporters. This would have no impact on existing fans seats/season ticket pricing and would be available as a seasonal bolt-on or a match-by-match basis.

Accessible Seating

Following the successful introduction of accessible seating in the away section of Lower Doug Ellis this season, 8 additional accessible seating spaces will be created within the Holte End as part of a long-term plan to introduce accessible seating within multiple stands and to become compliant with the Accessible Stadia legislation. The creation of 8 wheelchair and 8 companion seats within The Holte on a new accessible platform impacts more than 100 season ticket holders who will be prioritised for relocation.

Safe Standing / Rail Seating

The Holte End survey showed that three quarters of fans were supportive of safe standing, with two thirds happy to have their seat updated to safe standing.

The Club has been monitoring trials of safe standing at other PL clubs and been in regular contact with the Sports Grounds Safety Authority. The SGSA has advised us that as persistent standing in areas of Villa Park continues to give them cause for concern, the Club should introduce rail seating during the 23/24 season if it wishes to avoid the prospect of stadium capacity being reduced.

Therefore, rail seating will be introduced on a gradual basis at the back of Upper Holte (approximately 2500 seats). Anyone currently occupying standard seats in the back of Upper Holte who doesn't wish to have a rail seat will be provided with the option to relocate. Approx 1,000 rail seats will also be introduced to the away section in Upper Doug Ellis.

It is important to note that current legislation compels clubs to introduce rail seats on a "1 for 1" basis with standard seats rather than as in other European countries where the ratio of rail seat/ standard seat can be as high as 2:1. Therefore installing rail seats is a costly process which results in no extra revenue for the club.

More details on the rail seating arrangements will be provided in the coming weeks.

Season Tickets

The club presented some of the findings of extensive analysis and benchmarking carried out to compare against our Premier League competitors. Our analysis demonstrated we are towards the lower end of Premier League when comparing the price of an Adult Season Ticket.

Increasing Season Ticket prices will enable us to continue aligning our pricing more closely with our Premier League competitors and to help bring our revenues more in line with the costs of competing in the upper reaches of The Premier League, while remaining compliant with all the required financial regulations.

The meeting was informed that the Club intends for the majority of Adult season ticket prices to increase by 15% and our 23/24 season ticket prices will move us into the top 8 of the Premier League benchmarking.

Christian Purslow explained to the meeting that he is acutely aware of how everybody is experiencing the effects of the cost of living and inflation increases, however the Club itself is not immune to those economic pressures.

He said our brilliant owners have supported Aston Villa with over £400m of their own money, but football finance rules only permit them to do so much. Now we have an elite manager who has already made incredible progress in such a short time, the Board's desire is to give Unai the best opportunity to continue his work.

He said the Club's strategy is to make Aston Villa competitive with the very best teams in the country, on the field and off the field and to do that we have to try to balance our revenues with our ever-growing costs.

Other ticketing

Stadium bowl analysis reveals an imbalance between pricing of the Holte End and the North Stand. Many Premier League Clubs operate consistent pricing behind each goal. Consequently, T2, T3 and T4 will move from Price Zone 4 to Price Zone 3 to reflect pricing in the Holte End and remain consistent with our pricing across the stadium – continuing our fair approach across all fans. The view from the Upper North is significantly better than the view from other Price Zone 4 blocks around Villa Park.

As discussed with the previous FCG in April 2022, the Club continues to reduce concessional discounts across all categories in line with wider Premier League benchmarking. Current concessional Season Ticket Holders in Price Zone 4 will enjoy a greater discount to protect our entry price points for fans. Current U14 Season Ticket Holders in Price Zone 4 will still be able to watch a game of live Premier League football for c.£8 a match – ranking as one of the lowest prices on our benchmarking of other Birmingham-based leisure activities including other local teams.

Cup Tickets

Aston Villa are one of the only clubs in the Premier League to include free domestic home cup games within their season ticket product offering. The Club believes it is reasonable to remove this benefit from next season whilst ensuring all of our loyal season ticket holders continue to have priority access to Cup games.

North Stand Redevelopment

Mr Purslow told the meeting that the club remains in dialogue with all external stakeholders regarding the plans to redevelop Villa Park and the Board was delighted that we were selected as a host stadium in the UK & Republic of Ireland's Euro 2028 Bid.

He said a timetable for demolition and rebuilding work will be announced soon following full consideration of logistical and economic factors.

Our new Inner-City Academy in Brookvale is scheduled for opening in time for the start of the next season.