Fan Advisory Board (FAB) 20th December 2023 Villa Park

Fan representatives

Joanne McKibbens	Aston Villa Disabled Supporters Association
John Gillett	Lions Clubs
Nilesh Chauhan	Villans Together
Lena Curran	Fan Representative
Guri Nandra	Punjabi Villans
Connor Smith	Fan Representative
Mo Razzaq	Aston Villa Supporters Trust
Steve Gough	Independent Supporters Clubs
Sarah Breslin	Villa Bellas
Ian Stokes	Vital Villa
Ben Redding	My Old Man Said
Dave Woodhall	Heroes & Villans

Apologies

Scott Jones	Villa Talk
Sam Timms	Villa & Proud
Nick Sanders	Avillafan.com

Club representatives

Chris Heck	President of Business Operations
Ben Hatton	Chief Operating Officer
Paul Tyrrell	Chief Corporate Affairs & Security Officer
Tommy Jordan	Communications Director
James Lamb	Head of Estates Development
Lynne O'Reardon	Head of Ticketing
Lee Preece	Supporter Liaison Manager

Club representatives

Chris Heck	President of Business Operations
Ben Hatton	Chief Operating Officer
Paul Tyrrell	Chief Corporate Affairs & Security Officer
Tommy Jordan	Communications Director
Lynne O'Reardon	Head of Ticketing
Lee Preece	Supporter Liaison Manager

Agenda items and comments provided by Fan Representatives are shown in normal text.

Club agenda items or responses are shown in blue italics.

1. *Accessible Seating update*

The club continues to work on a road map to compliance, given that we need 220 wheelchair spaces and currently have 105 spaces, with that number increasing in each of the last two seasons.

Any new areas that are introduced will need engineering and structural works and will require the loss of existing seating areas (to reach compliance, we need accessible

seating in all four stands). However, as discussed in item 2, we are looking to increase capacity by maximising the efficiency of existing seating which will help mitigate seat loss for anyone affected by the loss of their seat.

There is an issue with the lack of dropped kerbs near Holte Pub. Trinity Road does not have a dropped kerb until the burger vans.

This will be an issue for the council. We will ask our newly appointed Transport Officer to liaise on this accordingly.

2. Villa Park re-development

Whilst the plans for the North stand have been announced as being on hold, the commitment to improve facilities across the stadium will begin as soon as possible. For clarity, rumours on social media suggesting that this decision will result in a new stadium elsewhere are entirely false. Moving away from Villa Park is not part of any plans.

To increase capacity, we can change the seating layout in some areas to add approximately 2 to 3,000 seats. Any increase in seat numbers will clearly need to be aligned with improvements to concourse, toilets, food & beverage provision etc. Our owners will be investing significantly into upgrading facilities across Villa Park.

We are working closely with UEFA and the FA with regards to Euro 2028.

3. Club Commercial Strategy

How will the club maximise sponsorship and what targets are in place to "close the gap"?

The club is active across the globe, with staff on two continents pushing hard. All options are being explored. Fans need to be mindful that we are operating within the parameters of existing deals and contractual commitments, some of which are multiyear deals. Sponsorship can have the most significant positive impact on our compliance with FFP.

4. V Sports Partnership

What do the club gain from a sporting and commercial perspective?

The V sports partnership provides access to a network of sporting talent.

Update on Las Vegas Villans?

This is unlikely to happen.

5. Terrace View & Lower Grounds

Are these areas selling out?

Both areas are selling well. Terrace View has over 500 season ticket holders, and spaces are being sold on a match-to-match basis. Lower Grounds patronage is also growing, with over 600 fans using the facility versus Arsenal.

As we get used to selling patterns etc we are beginning to balance ticketing between GA and GA+, ensuring tickets are released back to GA when appropriate.

6. Ticket Office Opening Times

When tickets go on sale at 5pm the ticket office is closed.

The 5pm window was originally designed to encourage on-line sales and has been successfully operating for approx. 6 years. We always have staff monitoring sales windows and as recently demonstrated when there was a (worldwide) issue with the payment system, we were on hand to contact 3rd party providers.

Phone Lines close between 1pm and 2pm when some fans might need to call during their lunch break.

We have recently recruited an additional two staff in the call centre, so can review this policy. However, having half the staff available between 12pm and 2pm might not make it easier to get through (compared to having all staff take their break at the same time).

To help reduce the number of calls, are we any nearer allowing fans to upgrade tickets on-line?

We are in the final stages of testing, where season tickets are held within the app. Once this testing is concluded this will allow fans to upgrade (via the app) on occasion where concessions cannot attend.

7. Matchday Music

Fans have provided feedback to Fan Reps on volume levels in the build up to kick-off.

Anyone who feels the volume levels are too high or too low in their area can drop the club a note and we will investigate. However, achieving the perfect balance for everyone across the stadium is impossible to achieve! We have received feedback in the past from fans in the same area with differing opinion on sound levels.

We do aim to build the volume towards kick-off, but as experienced in the last home matches, the noise from the crowd can drown out anything from the speakers!

8. Middlesbrough FA Cup allocation

The club took the full allocation available to us and sold out at the season ticket holder window.

9. *Crest*

The club confirmed the recently released AV 150 mark is not the new crest and will be used as a mark to help celebrate our 150th year. For example, it is likely to appear on the back of our shirts next season.

The club outlined to the group thoughts on the previous consultation that resulted in the round crest, reasons why it was felt that a change was needed and confirmed results from the fans survey which have played the major role in creating our new crest.

A video was shown to the group which outlined the results of this process and introduced the new crest. Discussion was held around the consultative process, and the club confirmed that the FA have been consulted throughout.

The video highlighted that the Club had 16,000 responses to the 85,000 survey mailings with the suggested crest being designed as a result of those responses.

81% of respondents wanted the name of the Club in the crest whilst 85% wanted the European Cup commemorative star incorporated. The majority of respondents felt that the shield shape was preferable and within that the left facing lion rampant completed the responses.

The Club presented a draft crest for discussion and whilst not universally popular neither was it universally unpopular. There were no suggested changes.

Having now completed the detailed consultation process, the Club will look to announce the new crest in approximately two weeks from the meeting, and the crest will then be rolled out across the summer.

Meeting end

Next informal meeting is 31st January. The club will invite Andrew Watkin, Transport Officer and Sam Ghataora, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead to meet with the group.