



# FAN ADVISORY BOARD

## Meeting notes

8th November 2023

Fan Services

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## Club Attendees

Russell Jones	General Manager – Marketing & Commercial Growth
Matt Wild	General Manager – Football Operations
Max Fitzgerald	Communications Director
James Davies	Head of ticketing
Richard Pepper	Head of digital
Dave Thomson	Head of partnerships
Dave Wood	Fan Services Manager

## FAB Members

Martyn Willis	Wolves DSA
Daniel Warren	Wolves 1877 Trust
Jonathan Keeling	Ticketing Focus Group
Jack Finch	Matchday Experience Group
Lyndsey Harris	Equality Advisory Group
Andy Nicholls	Retail Focus Group
Marcus Passant	Independent Supporter

## Meeting Notes

**The topic of the Wolves v Chelsea fixture that had been selected for TV broadcast on Christmas Eve was raised.**

The club explained the process that is in place for when fixtures are selected by broadcasters and the Premier League for one of the broadcast slots.

FAB members highlighted that the change of date would make travel difficult for some supporters and also mean that some supporters will have to make a choice between visiting family or going to the game. The club acknowledged the concerns but added that supporter transport would have been more of an issue had the game been moved to an evening slot on the 23rd December for example.

Incentives to make the fixture change more palatable or accessible to supporters were discussed. The club indicated that budgets and setting a future precedent for future fixture changes had to be considered but agreed to continue dialogue on this subject further.

Concerns had been raised within the Equality Advisory Group around behaviours and the influence of alcohol on Xmas Eve, particularly in relation to domestic violence.

The club acknowledged that given the festive season, there may be an increase of supporters under the influence of alcohol, however this would likely have been the case if the game remained in its original time slot on Saturday 23rd December. The club confirmed that fan behaviour was already high on the agenda for this fixture following issues at the corresponding fixture last season.

UPDATE - [please click here](#)

**The club shared ideas for colour combinations of the kits for the upcoming 24/25 season following a discussion in the retail fan focus group.**

There was a largely positive reaction to the proposed ideas from the FAB. Some concerns were raised regarding the traditional colour combination of kits and how this may be seen as a negative to some supporters. The club confirmed that this feedback would be shared with the retail and marketing teams.

No designs were shared, the discussion solely focused on colours.

**The club presented ideas on a digital subscription service to the FAB and invited further feedback and suggestions on what supporters would like to see in this space.**

The club explained that they are working hard to grow their international fan base, with currently 1.6 million verified supporter email addresses, however due to a lack of compelling offerings for overseas supporters, only a small percentage have purchased anything from the club. Merchandise was always popular with overseas supporters but logistics and restrictions on delivery mean this can be challenging in some regions.

It was explained that this digital subscription is aimed at offering new and existing digital services and experiences as a package to those predominantly international supporters at a low monthly price. The club confirmed that content would be important as part of a digital subscription, but additional digital benefits and experiences are also crucial to ensure the package is appealing to supporters.

Benefits were discussed in more detail and FAB members were encouraged to suggest ideas for what they believe would make this a compelling service for supporters. Price points were also discussed.

The FAB welcomed concepts that would encourage more fans to engage with club and to encourage

further engagement from those currently engaged through additional benefits. It was highlighted by the FAB that it was important that the service was available to season ticket holders with the service adding value to a season ticket or membership package.

The club expressed a desire to close the commercial gap with other clubs – half of current Premier League teams currently have a paid for subscription service. For example, Manchester United have 22 million paid subscribers for MUTV, this allows them to generate significant revenue - Wolves don't currently have any comparable service bringing in this additional revenue and covering spiralling digital platform and content creation costs.

The FAB members were encouraged to share further suggestions with the club following the meeting.

**The club presented on the concept of digital ticketing, a method of delivery for supporters to access their match or season tickets digitally through a mobile device.**

A brief overview of digital ticketing was provided, and it was confirmed that technology allows tickets to be fulfilled digitally using either NFC technology or a QR Code. Digital ticketing has been adopted by several other Premier League clubs as well as other entertainment or sporting events. The majority of Premier League clubs now offer some form of digital ticketing to supporters, notably Liverpool and Tottenham who operate 100% digital ticketing.

The club confirmed they have the facility to offer digital ticketing to supporters, furthermore, turnstiles were upgraded to support digital ticketing during the World Cup break in 2022. The club plan to introduce some form of digital ticketing for the 2024/25 season, giving season ticket holders an option to switch from their tradition smartcard to a digital version.

The club confirmed its intention to work with the FAB to understand the appetite for digital ticketing, to understand any queries or concerns on the subject and to form a strategy for further consultation with supporters.

The FAB members accepted that digital ticketing is now widely used at other venues and events. Concerns were raised around the ability to transfer tickets, supporters who do not have access to a smartphone, accessing the turnstiles with young children and supporters who may collect physical tickets as souvenirs. The club acknowledged these concerns and agreed they would be mindful of them.

The FAB acknowledged that there were benefits to digital ticketing and the introduction of some form of digital ticketing would be inevitable, however the club has a duty to introduce it in a responsible manner. There was agreement that if the system works well and the technology is easy to use then it would be adopted quickly.

The club were keen to stress that options would remain available supporters and would also look for volunteers to assist with trialling. The club agreed that consultation would continue on this topic within various fan focus groups.

**The Head of partnerships explained his role at the club and provided context around partnerships and the club's approach.**

It was acknowledged that the subject can be a hot topic at times, on this basis the club wanted to provide the FAB with a bit of a background and an opportunity to ask questions.

The club confirmed it is on track to hit sponsorship budget for the season, the biggest sponsorship budget the club has ever delivered. This has been done with the removal of a betting sponsor from the front of the shirt.

New legislation was voluntarily voted through by Premier League clubs meaning that, from the 2026/27 season, there will be no more betting brands on the front of playing shirts. This would not apply to shirt sleeves or training kits.

The clubs partnerships are broken down into various levels. Principal partner, currently AstroPay. Main partners, any company that features on the playing or training kit and finally category partners such as official energy drink partner. The club currently has 22 partners across these levels. The current landscape for partnerships is difficult as seen by some Premier League clubs going into a season without a shirt sponsor.

The club speaks to approximately 10,000 perspective new partners per year, working a season ahead. Due diligence is carried out on all perspective partners with the club looking at both reputational and financial risk. The club confirmed there are examples of the club turning down proposals following due diligence being carried out.

The club stated that it was difficult to bridge the commercial gap with the traditional 'big 6' Premier League clubs and now Newcastle, however the club positions itself as a challenger that does things differently. The club are keen to work with partners that share this philosophy. The clubs colours and badge are instantly recognisable and appealing to any perspective partner however league position continues to be the main driver for obtaining partners and increased partnership fees with the Premier Leagues global audience surpassing 2.8 billion.

**To close, the club raised results of a recent survey shared within fan focus groups in relation to the use of betting kiosks within stadium concourses.**

Survey results were unanimous that supporters felt that the space used for betting kiosks could be utilised for something else that would be more beneficial to the matchday experience. The club confirmed that they would immediately look to replace betting kiosks within the stadium. The club would explore options for in stadium supporters who wanted to bet on the game to utilise the clubs partner Leo Vegas.

The club and FAB agreed that the next steps should be to consult further with supporters, utilising the matchday experience focus group to identify what fans would like to see and to discuss available options.

**Thank you for reading.**



**Fan Advisory Board**

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