



FAN ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting notes

19th September 2023

Fan Services

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Fan Advisory Board Meeting

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Club Attendees

Russell Jones	General Manager – Marketing & Commercial Growth
Matt Wild	General Manager – Football Operations
Matt Hobbs	Sporting Director / General Manager – Football Technical
Max Fitzgerald	Communications Director
Steve Sutton	Facilities, Safety and Security Director
Dave Wood	Fan Services Manager

Meeting Guest

Ashley Brown	Football Supporters Association (FSA)
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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

The meeting was an introductory session to set aims and clear goals for the Fan Advisory Board (FAB). FAB members were introduced to each other as well as members of the club's senior management.

Meeting Notes

Ashley Brown from the Football Supporters Association (FSA) gave a presentation on fan advisory boards and best practice.

The primary focus of a FAB is to provide representative engagement on strategic issues such as business plans, significant stadium changes, finance, governance, heritage, EDI and communications. A FAB should also have a secondary focus on operational and matchday issues.

It was agreed within the group that it is important to respect alternate opinions and also to allow time for the FAB to evolve.

Following the FSA presentation, focus turned to early aims and goals for the FAB.

The FAB members and club were in agreement that this initiative was an opportunity to be able to consult with supporters at an earlier stage than currently provided by the club's existing consultation platforms. It was raised by the club that football is very dynamic and that on some occasions there is only a very small window for consultation with supporters, but the establishment of the FAB should assist with this process. There was commitment from the club and FAB members to have honest and open discussions and opinions.

The club's fan focus groups will remain an important tool in how the club consults with supporters and it is important that each focus group will be represented within the FAB. This will create consistency and ensure there is a flow of information between the FAB and the focus groups. The FAB could also be used to plan strategies for the club's fan focus groups.

It was agreed that it is important for FAB members to stay in touch in between meetings and to take a flexible approach to organising future meetings. Zoom and Teams mean it is easier to arrange break out meetings on specific subjects as and when they arise.

The club indicated that the FAB is an exciting and welcome project which should be a progressive forum to work towards positive changes for supporters, not a forum to just ask questions.

An agenda point was suggested prior to the meeting by the FAB around communications from the club.

The FAB indicated that they appreciated the open letter from chairman Jeff Shi, but felt that the communication could have been earlier as various reports in the press and social media created uncertainty amongst the fanbase and had affected trust between the club and the fans. FAB members went on to say that they felt the Wolves Express and Wolves Weekly podcast series were excellent and a welcome addition, in terms of regular communication from the club.

It was agreed by all that in order for the club to be open and honest in their communications, there must be an acceptance that there will be times when communication will contain information that fans might not want to hear. FAB members stated that most fans appreciate honesty as indicated by the great support shown in previous seasons where the club has faced adversity.

The club view the open letter from Jeff Shi as a communication that was exceedingly honest and transparent, and not something that is regularly seen from other Premier League clubs. The club understands the points raised around timing of this communication, and acknowledge that it was a reactive communication based on events that were fast moving. A decision at the time was made to deliver information in an open and honest way at the earliest possible opportunity.

The club were very happy with the feedback on Wolves Express. Three podcasts are released every week, sharing a mixture of news and insight from across the club. It is viewed internally as a regular version of the Ask Wolves series.

The change in approach to the Ask Wolves series was due to the club feeling the series was hindered by only being released annually, and the second season suffering from a considerable decrease of submitted fan questions. The strategy now is to communicate little and often as opposed to just once a season. The FAB will be a useful tool for the club to understand what fans want to hear more of and what communication channels are resonating.

The FAB members indicated that it was important for supporters to understand the direction of the football club in order to set their expectations accordingly, however it was agreed that the growing impact of social media and reaction on social media makes open and honest communications to supporters more challenging.

Finally, it was raised by the FAB that it is important to ensure there is diversity in communications, particularly female representation.

As requested, Matt Wild presented on Financial Fair Play/Profit and Sustainability Rules, following an agenda point being raised by the FAB members.

Three aspects come into FFP; the first bracket is losses up to £15 million on a three year basis. The club in this bracket would need to prove to the Premier League that it can meet its liabilities for the next 12 months.

The second bracket is where losses of up to £105 million are permitted over a three-year period. In this scenario the club are required to provide future financial information for a further two year period as well as detail evidence on secured funding.

The third bracket is losses exceeding £105 million over a three-year period. This is in breach of Premier League regulations and would lead to any club in breach being put forward to a Commission which may result in financial or sporting sanctions (or a combination of both). A club in this position may have to have every transfer deal sanctioned by the Premier League for a period of time. This is a situation that the club very much want to avoid and hence want to adhere to the rules as opposed to 'rolling the dice'.

The club spent a lot in the summer of 2022 ahead of the 2022/23 season but found themselves bottom of the league going into January 2023 Transfer Window. The Board had a decision to make and chose to bring in a new Head Coach and additional players which were not forecast. This additional expenditure led to the situation ahead of the 2023/24 season where the club was required claw back some losses to attempt to avoid exceeding the £105 million loss threshold over a three-year period.

It was noted by the club that FFP is not as simple as just money in and money out and was very complicated. The sale of Nathan Collins and Ryan Giles were used as examples of what effect the players purchase value, sale value and length of contract remaining had on their respective FFP calculations. The club added that it was important to strike a balance when it comes to player sales in order to ensure the squad stays strong. Financially, it could have been seen appealing by some to sell a player like Max Kilman, for example, as he came to the club for a very low transfer fee. However, he would be considered crucial to the club's plan, as a home-grown player, his quality and also as the new captain.

FAB members understood that there will be difficulty communicating this type of information to supporters, especially when there is a perception amongst supporters that other teams do not care about FFP. The FAB felt that ensuring the long-term sustainability of the club should be prioritised.

The final discussion point for the evening was around Heritage Items, assets that are crucial to the club's history and identity.

The club understands that certain assets are crucial to the club's history and identity and are committed to reflecting this by identifying 'heritage assets', which cannot be altered without consultation with supporters.

Crest and colours have already been identified as heritage assets and if the club wishes to make a material change to the club crest or the recognised home kit colours, they must undertake a thorough and extensive consultation process with supporters. Aside from this, the club felt it was important to consult with the FAB on this to understand their values with a view to looking at adding further assets to the heritage items list.

The FAB members suggested the stadium name, stadium location, club name, Molineux clock and Molineux statues as items that should be considered as heritage assets.

The subject of redevelopment of Molineux was also raised. The club felt that this was not a heritage item as such, but the club had always been committed to consulting with supporters ahead of any significant stadium redevelopment. It was noted that the club's 150th anniversary was on the horizon and would be discussed at subsequent meetings.

Thank you for reading.



Fan Advisory Board

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