



Aston Villa Fan Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday 20th August 2026

Time: 6:00pm – 8.00pm

Location: Villa Park, Birmingham / Teams, Virtual

Chair: Richard Stevens

Attendees

FAB: Karl Bowater, Jag Kalaar, Maninder Grimshaw, Craig Hamilton, Susan O'Brien

AVFC: Francesco Calvo, Richard Stevens, Tommy Jordan, Matt Dainty, Luke McNulty, Guy Rippon

AVFC Apologies: Chris Hornbuckle, Dan Walker

FAB Apologies: Andrew Carlill, Nick Hoskins, Sarah Breslin, Joanne McKibbens

	Topic	Content	Owner
1	Welcome & Introductions	Opening remarks	Rich Stevens
2	Francesco Update	Club update from President of Business Ops	Francesco Calvo
3	FAB Update	Overview from the FAB of any activity over the summer break	Karl Bowater
4	FAB Working Group Updates	2-3 minutes per Extended Network / Working Group Lead on progress and status	Working Group Leads
5	FAB clarifications from Submitted Questions	Opportunity for FAB to seek any clarifications on club response to submitted questions	Karl Bowater
6	Fan Engagement Plan 26/27	Check in on any open questions from the FAB on the Fan Engagement Plan for the coming season	Matt Dainty
7	Guest Speaker – Guy Rippon, Social Impact & Community Director	An overview of the club's work in the community, particularly through the Aston Villa Foundation	Guy Rippon
8	AOB	Any other points to address	All
9	Next Steps & Close	Summary of key actions and agreed follow-ups	Rich Stevens



Minutes

- Francesco Calvo welcomed members to the season-opening Fan Advisory Board meeting and delivered his opening remarks.
- Francesco reflected positively on the progress made by both the Club and the Fan Advisory Board over the past 12 months, recognising the significant strides taken to strengthen the relationship, while also acknowledging that further work remains to be done.
- He noted that spending more time together would lead to even greater collaboration, stronger engagement and the development of new ideas.
- Francesco also addressed supporter sentiment on social media regarding the current transfer window and the Club's activity to date. He stated that there is currently a strong sense of energy and positivity around Unai Emery and the squad, in contrast to the mood at the same stage last year.
- Francesco also referenced the team's very encouraging performance against Paris Saint-Germain in the UEFA Super Cup.
- An update was provided on the ongoing redevelopment work at Villa Park and Francesco reported that all stadium projects are progressing well:
 - o Seats have been reordered and new capacity added in the Trinity Road Stand, alongside work to fill the corner between the Holte End and Trinity Road Stand.
 - o He also highlighted recent investment of more than £3 million in refurbishing and renovating the stadium's central kitchen facilities, the first time these have been upgraded in 20 years.
 - o The North Stand work is on track and the Club intends to cover the top section with a modular graphic design for the season. The possibility of covering the lower tier of the North Stand is being explored, although it presents some operational challenges.
 - o Following a query from the FAB, Richard assured members that early stadium access for supporters affected by the North Stand closure, as well as the Trinity Road seat optimisation, remains under consideration. The Club is also exploring the possibility of opening turnstiles earlier ahead of the Arsenal fixture.
 - o Jag Kalaar commented that a 6pm opening time ahead of an 8pm kick-off would help alleviate operational pressures and improve the supporter experience.
 - o Richard confirmed that the Ticket Office will be open from 9am on the day of the Arsenal match.
 - o Francesco noted that communications regarding the North Stand project had been handled well, a view supported by the FAB.
 - o A recently circulated video showing a hole in the Villa Park roof was discussed.
 - o The Club explained that this was linked to work being undertaken as part of the installation of a new roof section in the corner of the Trinity Road Stand nearest to the Holte End and that it would be fixed before the Arsenal match.



- Richard outlined a range of GA concourse improvements completed over the summer, at a cost of £250,000, including:
 - Introduction of a homemade pie offering, aligned with the recent developments in the CPU/Main Kitchen.
 - Increased draught dispense capacity across all three stands of the stadium, with an additional 57 taps installed and upgraded nozzles to improve dispense times, plus five brand-new draught bars.
 - Installation of MDU (multi-dispense units) on Lower Holte Kiosks 2 and 3, scheduled to be completed ahead of the Nottingham Forest fixture.
 - Launch of The Holte Tandoor kiosk in Lower Holte and the new Lux Greek x Pop Street kiosk on Lower Trinity, providing a more curated menu suitable for both men's and women's fixtures.
 - Upgraded confectionery and snack ranges, including the introduction of Brown Bag Crisps, Tony's Chocolate and AVFC Jelly Mix.
 - New kiosk branding across retail concessions, delivered in collaboration with partners Carlsberg and Guinness.
- Francesco confirmed Richard Stevens' expanded role, which will now include responsibility for Marketing and Content, alongside involvement in a wider review of the Club's organisational structure.
- Members were informed that a new senior member of staff, focused on technology and innovation, has joined the Club and is supporting improvements for both staff and supporters in the Club's technology infrastructure.
- Karl Bowater praised the effectiveness of the Ticketing Working Group and the initiatives introduced by the Club's ticketing team, particularly Chris Hornbuckle and Daniel Walker.
- FAB members suggested that understanding average supporter spend-per-head on matchdays would help inform future recommendations and improvements. Richard confirmed he would be happy to share relevant spend-per-head figures at the appropriate working group.
- The Club continues to encourage supporters to visit The Warehouse after matches.
- Matthew Dainty added that the Junior FAB had provided positive feedback on the enhancements.
- Maninder Grimshaw raised the issue of VillaTV access for Season Ticket Holders.
- Richard responded to the query and provided an update on the current position.
- Richard also suggested that broader discussions regarding the stadium experience should take place later in the season once operational changes have bedded in.



- Matthew Dainty presented the Club's Fan Engagement Plan and explained that the plan is intended to build on the previous season's report by outlining key actions and priorities for the 2026/27 campaign.
- The meeting concluded with a presentation from Guy Rippon, Social Impact and Community Director.
- Guy provided a comprehensive overview of the Club's community work, with particular focus on the activities and impact of the Aston Villa Foundation.
- Before closing the meeting, Matthew confirmed that the current banners displayed in the Holte End will be removed and new banners will be installed following the conclusion of the summer transfer window.