



FAN ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING ONE - 16 OCTOBER, 2024

Supporter Representatives:

Paul Angrave
Emily Burditt
Ian Bason
Jo Lee
Ravi Tara
Graeme Smith

LCFC Representatives:

Susan Whelan
Chief Executive
Anthony Herlihy
Communications Director
Imogen Ward
Head of Fan Engagement
Jim Donnelly
Supporter Relations &
Accessibility Manager

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION – SUSAN WHELAN

Chief Executive Susan Whelan opened the meeting and was pleased to welcome everyone for the first FAB meeting.

There was an acknowledgment that the FAB is an evolving forum and there is a need for the FAB to work together to make sure it's a success and fulfils its high ambitions.

SW was eager to encourage open discussion and provided personal contact details to all members of the FAB.

AGENDA ITEMS

FAB COMPOSITION AND HOUSEKEEPING

Co-Chair selection:

One Co-Chair for the first year of the FAB was recommended to ensure consistency in the meetings and one lead point of contact for the Premier League. The Supporter Representatives were informed that the Supporter Representatives would vote for a Co-Chair and Deputy Co-Chair at the end of the meeting. All acknowledged and agreed to the process.

Meeting dates:

FAB meeting dates were proposed for year one, which were agreeable to the FAB:

Wednesday 27 November, 2024

Wednesday 26 February, 2025

Wednesday 21 May, 2025

Agenda:

Members were advised that they should submit agenda items to Louise Hollingsworth (Supporter Engagement Manager) at least 10 working days in advance of the meeting and, following that, LCFC will circulate the agenda to members of the FAB at least five working days in advance of the meeting.

Minutes:

It was confirmed that LCFC would circulate minutes to the Co-Chairs in the first instance, before circulating to members of the FAB by Wednesday 30 October, with the opportunity for FAB members to raise comments. A consolidated summary will be published on the Club's website w/c 4 November.

Methods of communication and wider fanbase consultation:

Discussion around the appetite for fans to be able to contact FAB members directly and methods to do so. Discussion about whether individual Supporter Representatives should have Club email addresses so fans could contact them directly. There was some concern about the volume and detail of potential emails and the requirement for representatives to respond, given member status as volunteers and their other professional and personal commitments. It was agreed that there should be a FAB@lcfc.co.uk email address, which all Fan Advisory Board Supporter Representatives requested access to. It was suggested that a digest of emails to that address was created and circulated by the Club and there should be an automatic response set up to acknowledge emails from fans.

Supporter Representatives were keen to ensure there was clear communication to fans about their role and the relationship between the FAB and fans and that they will not be operationally involved in the Club.

FAB announcement, visibility of members and support required:

Public announcement was made this week including names and photographs of the FAB's composition. This was included on LCFC.com. LCFC and the Premier League are working on general guidelines and training relevant to public profile of FAB members.

Supporter Representatives were all happy to be visible and accountable for their role on the FAB.

FCC WORKING GROUPS

- Information was presented about the FCC Working Groups, which will support the strategic work of the FAB by allowing a more diverse range of opinions on more operational matters.
- It was confirmed that the FCC Working Groups will meet four times per year in July, November, January and April. The November meeting will take place w/c 18 November.
- Each FCC Working Group meeting will split off into three groups, which will focus on three different topics – matchday experience, ticketing and products, and LCFC culture.
- A FAB Supporter Representative will Chair each of the three groups – they will Chair the same group for the duration of the year. Each group will also include relevant LCFC representation, which will also remain on the same group throughout the year.
- The 12 Supporter Representatives and representation from six Supporter Organisations will be divided among the three working groups, with all participants rotating around each working group across the year to ensure diversity of opinion.
- The FAB was told it would have the opportunity to vote for the Chairs of each of the three FCC Working Groups at the end of the meeting, with the opportunity to declare if they would not like to be available for selection or would like to Chair a particular group.
- The FAB was shown the Club's proposal of 12 FCCWG members from the recruitment process and noted the variety and level of expertise in the group.

LONG-TERM AUDIENCE GROWTH AND SUPPORTER PATHWAY

An introduction to LCFC's long-term project to enhance the supporter pathway and generate long-term growth was presented for discussion.

A current indication of the LCFC framework was shown and the Club recognised the opportunity to evolve the established pathway to enhance fan engagement opportunities and help re-emphasise an audience-first culture that values engagement as well as spend.

A Supporter Representative raised the point that increasing opportunities for supporter spend among those supporters for whom it was possible should be encouraged as it might allow the Club to maintain more accessible price points for some supporters.

There was discussion about the need to maintain a 'one club city' culture in Leicester and ensure young people are part of the Club and can access the Club and that it's at the heart of the local community.

It was acknowledged that not everyone can become a Season Ticket Holder so the FAB should look at other ways young people can become fans, and that LCFC Women and Cup games would offer more opportunities for this.

LCFC presented the long-term objectives it hopes to achieve through an enhanced supporter pathway. There was feedback that a focus on deeper engagement could come earlier in the supporter pathway and that easy accessibility for any new pathway was key. A need to personalise experiences and engagement for different groups of people was also recommended.

Schools outreach was highlighted as a key opportunity for growth and the Club gave examples of its recent work to enhance this.

Some insight into the development of LCFC's Content Strategy was presented, which demonstrated the direction of travel LCFC are taking to evolve tone of voice and focus areas for improved engagement on digital platforms.

There was positive feedback from the group and acknowledgment from some members that they had noticed the different tone of voice on social media recently. The group emphasised that the Club and fans need to feel in unity and that honesty, transparency and being listened to is particularly important in communications with fans.

There was an acknowledgment that Club staff who are customer facing have a challenging role and should be supported and there was an ambition to encourage self-policing of social media abuse by fans.

ACTION

The Club's strategy for long-term audience growth and enhancement of the supporter journey to become a regular discussion point at FAB meetings and to be subject to further supporter consultation through the wider engagement framework.

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND MATCHDAY EXPERIENCE

Your 90 Minutes feedback, survey process and further feedback:

Information was presented about the three most entry-level tiers of the Fan Engagement Framework – Your 90 Minutes, supporter surveys and LCFC Help.

Three Your 90 Minute sessions have already taken place since the Fan Engagement Framework was published:

31 July, 2024: Matchday Experience

8 August, 2024: LCFC Women

17 September, 2024: Open Forum

There is a Your 90 Minutes focusing on Fox Memberships due to take place on 24 October, 2024 and the Club are reviewing options to engage remote and overseas supporters.

Matchday experience supporter surveys have now been introduced after every men's and women's game, as well as surveys for ticket holders who don't attend games in order to help the Club improve experiences and highlight the opportunities for supporters to transfer and resell tickets.

There was discussion about how the introduction of the surveys had been perceived among supporters and whether we can encourage supporters to report anti-social behaviour or poor matchday experience at the games themselves.

ACTION

LCFC to ensure surveys are not too long and look at other ways to generate feedback from fans at matchdays. LCFC to provide a digest of information from Your 90 Minutes, supporter surveys and LCFC Help in advance of each FAB meeting.

Safe standing latest

An update was presented including a timeframe on the Club's actions for the feasibility of introducing safe standing. The FAB were shown the supporter consultation that has already taken place across supporter surveys, Your 90 Minutes and Foxes Trust surveys and informed them that the Club was investigating the potential to use an independent rail, which has been implemented at Coventry City. The following timeframe was shared:

October

- Confirm timeline with external Project Manager – live conversation already taking place.
- Review of possible use of standalone barrier install – site visit to Coventry City w/c 21 October.

November

- Discussions with Sports Ground Safety Authorities (SGSA) around possible new solution of independent rail and LCFC's proposal – to take place once options investigated.
- Discussions with Local Authority – to take place following SGSA discussions.
- Update FAB.

December

- Fan consultation and implications to current seating locations.
- Confirm costs and implications to other stadium users and plan to mitigate those implications.
- Confirmation of supplier ability to source and install in closed season.

January

- Safe standing feasibility completed.

February

- Decision on project including feasibility and timing.
- Update FAB.

There was mention from the FAB that the timeline was ambitious, which was encouraged to ensure meaningful and timely actions are upheld.

It was mentioned by the FAB that supporter education about what safe standing is and how it affects seating areas should be prioritised as part of the supporter consultation. It was also suggested that the Club communicates to fans that it is considering safe standing.

In-bowl and stadium external developments:

The Club confirmed that they would trial a post-match offering in the 1884 Sports Bar and potential for a further concourse offering. It is also looking at possibilities to create a fan zone area which would be open pre and post-match. It was felt that reasonable food and beverage prices were important.

ACTION

Update the FAB on fan zone plans at the next meeting.

MANAGEMENT OF SUPPORTER BEHAVIOUR

The Club's Sanctions and Sanctions Appeals Committees were discussed and the Club's desire to have a member of the FAB involved in the process to ensure supporter perspective was considered.

The increase in anti-social behaviour since Covid was discussed by the group, alongside a desire for the FAB to look at ways to ensure fans from all backgrounds feel safe attending games and are comfortable to raise any bad behaviour they see. It was mentioned that it's the responsibility of all fans to help police anti-social behaviour at games and a desire for the FAB to support with this.

Publicising sanctions – who has received them and what for – was raised and the FAB were shown where sanctions information is housed on the website and the requirement for it to be anonymised.

There was discussion about the option of FAB members rotating joining the Sanctions Committee or Appeals Committee given it's a significant time commitment as the meetings occur after every game and can last up to 90 minutes. It was noted that the Appeals Committee would likely be the more suitable place for a FAB member to reside. FAB Supporter Representatives were asked to contact the Club after the meeting if they would like to be involved.

The option of a Foxes Trust board member being involved in the Sanctions Committee was put forward as an alternative to a FAB member.

There was a request for more steward training for dealing with the reporting of anti-social behaviour on matchdays.

ACTION

FAB Supporter Representatives were asked to contact the Club after the meeting if they would like to be involved. Review steward training for dealing with reporting of anti-social behaviour on matchdays.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND SAFETY ADVISORY GROUPS (SAG) FEEDBACK

- Safety concerns around persistent standing is the primary challenge currently raised by the SAG.
- Pyro incident at Crystal Palace game following similar incident at Stoke in 2023/24 season.
- Pitch invader at Walsall and missile thrown onto the pitch at Chelsea – both perpetrators had no ticketing history.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

Upcoming engagement including Diwali and Christmas engagement was presented. The Club confirmed it would be supporting the Premier League and WSL's Rainbow Laces campaigns.

AOB AND FEEDBACK

- There was positive feedback about the transparency and detail provided by the Club at the meeting.
- There was a desire from the FAB that they should use their platform to drive a culture of transparency and inclusivity.
- It was mentioned that the Club should demonstrate where it has listened and responded to fans more – ‘you said, we did’.
- The need to improve fans’ sense of belonging and recognising that different audiences need different approaches was highlighted, as well as the need to engage grassroots players.
- Fan experience at away games was raised, particularly the need to ensure all fans feel safe attending away games as some supporters have told FAB members that they have stopped attending away games due to anti-social behaviour. Ticket strategy for away games was highlighted as being particularly important.

VOTING

The outcome of the Supporter Representatives vote for a Co-Chair was:

Ian Bason,
2024/25 FAB Co-Chair

Graeme Smith,
2024/25 FAB Deputy Co-Chair

The outcome of the FCC Working Groups vote for a FAB Chair for each group was:

Matchday Experience:

Chair:
Emily Burditt

Deputy Chair (if required):
Ian Bason

Ticketing and Products:

Chair:
Ravi Tara

Deputy Chair (if required):
Paul Angrave

LCFC Culture:

Chair:
Graeme Smith

Deputy Chair (if required):
Jo Lee

