



INAUGURAL FAN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING - SUMMARY

16/01/2024



The Fan Advisory Board/Executive Board meeting took place on 16th January 2024 at Ibrox Stadium. The meeting commenced at 2 pm and lasted for three hours.

Attendees:

Rangers F.C.

James Bisgrove, Chief Executive Officer

James Taylor, Chief Finance Officer and Company Secretary

Karim Virani, Chief Commercial Officer

Creag Robertson, Director of Football Operations

Greg Marshall, Head of Supporter Engagement

Rangers F.C. Fan Advisory Board

Fahd Bari

Matt Boyd

Jamie Cook

Craig Hannah

Kelly Johnstone

Stuart Langan

Gary Ralston



Topic 1: Introductions

During the introductions of the Fan Advisory Board/Executive Board meeting:

- JB addressed the structure of the meeting, acknowledging Chairman John Bennett's awareness and support of the FAB. JB recognised the specialised expertise of specific managers within the Rangers staff and anticipated involving them in future meetings as needed, to provide targeted insights and informed perspectives that will aid the discussions. The main attendees are confirmed as the four executives along with GM.
- GM extended thanks to the Fan Advisory Board for their dedication and involvement in 8 meetings over the last 6 weeks. He underlined the significance of maintaining confidentiality, ensuring mutual agreement on the publication of minutes and notes for transparent communication. GM discussed strategies to enhance communication between the boards, including understanding Season Ticket Holders' demographics and establishing direct email communication through contact@rangersfab.co.uk, which will be managed by the Fan Advisory Board.
- SL emphasised the necessity of broader club support for the FAB and the Fan Engagement Team, resonating with the points made by GM and JB about fostering a strong and supportive communication framework.



Topic 2: Rangers Strategy Presentation

Strategy Presentation & Discussion

- The board presented a draft of the Rangers Strategy aimed at establishing Rangers as a top 20 European club, with emphasis on Football, Supporters, and Business as the three main pillars.
- The strategy, still a work in progress, includes a vision for building a modern, winning Rangers, with supporters, our heritage and financial sustainability at the heart of the club.
- Discussions revolved around the importance of two-way and transparent communication with the fan base, transparency in operations, and the inclusion of fans' perspectives in major strategic developments.
- The huge potential of women's football and the potential impact on the club's profile were debated.

1. Fan Engagement & Communication

- The critical role of the FAB in shaping communication and engagement strategies was acknowledged.
- Emphasis was placed on the necessity of transparent, grounded communication with the fan base to rebuild trust and establish realistic expectations.
- Opportunities for collaboration with other clubs' FABs, to enhance fan engagement and communication strategies were discussed.
- The need for a versatile approach to engaging the global fan base, through both on-the-ground initiatives and digital platforms, was highlighted.

2. Club Development & Infrastructure

- The club's ambition is to expand and improve Ibrox, our home, and the wider club infrastructure, including the consideration of international supporters' groups.
- The potential for strategic investments, cost management, and the maximisation of both local and global partnerships for sustainable growth were discussed.
- The importance of aligning club developments with fan expectations and maintaining transparency about the club's direction and investments was emphasised.



3. Football Operations & Strategy

- Discussions on football operations included the restructuring of the scouting process, addressing market challenges in player acquisitions, and the concept of a 'Rangers Trained' player.
- The strategy for the B team and considerations for the women's team and the approach to player trading and scouting, were deliberated.
- The role of the management and the football board in aligning with the overall club strategy and the importance of proactive planning for future transfer windows were underscored.

Role of FAB in Strategic Communication

- JB emphasised the importance of FAB in aiding the club to understand and execute effective communication strategies, particularly in ensuring messages resonate with the fan base.
- The FAB's insight was recognised as crucial in determining the most impactful communication channels, given their close connection with the supporters' community.

1. Integrating Communication in Key Events

- SL and KJ discussed embedding strategic messages in significant club communications to highlight the important work that the club is doing behind the scenes, for example to significant positions the club hold in the European Club Association and influence with UEFA.

2. Innovative Communication Platforms

- The concept of a club podcast was proposed as a novel means of engaging with supporters.
- The feasibility of a podcast, including its format, frequency, and content, was deliberated, with a consensus on its potential to significantly enhance direct communication with the fan base.
- GR suggested the idea of hosting informal fan gatherings in various locations, including Inverness and Edinburgh, to foster a more personal connection with supporters.

3. Digital Expansion and Engagement

- The group agreed on the necessity of leveraging digital platforms, to reach a wider audience and sustain supporter engagement over time.



Topic 3: Feedback on Recent Club Announcements

Discussion

1. Singing Section:

- SL mentioned that the recent announcements regarding the Singing Section have been well-received by the supporters. He emphasised the importance of taking supporters on the journey and keeping them involved in discussions about the greater good.
- MB expressed that the positive response was due to the thoughtful approach taken in these announcements, including comprehensive surveys, clear contact information, and FAQs provided to the supporters.

2. Fan Engagement Meetings:

- KJ pointed out that the open meetings, accessible to all, have been appreciated by everyone in attendance. FAB members committed to support these going forward in whatever capacity would be helpful to the club and wider fanbase.

3. Engagement with Club1872:

- SL inquired about the renewed engagement with Club1872, JB explained that changes in the board and executive team have led to changes in the relationship with Club1872. The FAB are keen to build a collaborative relationship with Club1872.

4. Discussions with SFA:

- JB discussed the club's meetings with the Scottish Football Association (SFA) regarding VAR / refereeing, highlighting transparency and process. The club aims to improve refereeing operations for the betterment of Scottish football and is seeking to involve other Scottish clubs in these discussions. The FAB were supportive of the proactive stance the club took as well as maintaining a dialogue with the SFA. However, felt some parts of the communications approach could have been handled differently.



Discussion:

Since their appointment, the FAB members have been working to determine their main areas of focus to best represent the collective interests of the fanbase. There will be 5 areas of focus – 1. MyGers & Ticketing, 2. Inclusion, 3. Safe Standing/Singing Section, 4. Ibrox Experience and 5. Heritage. The group agreed that the best course of action for the focus areas would be for the dedicated FAB members to meet with the department heads and the people involved in the priority to start work on these as well as start working groups around the subjects.

1. MyGers & Ticketing:

- The FAB indicated that they believe Ticket allocations and MyGers are some of the highest priorities for a significant number of Rangers Supporters.
- JB mentioned that the allocation of tickets for away teams will be discussed further in meetings with the SPFL during February. There is much to be discussed in that meeting.
- The FAB expressed a growing desire for the SPFL to clarify allocations rules, as the current system is seen as too vague.

2. Inclusion:

- Various aspects of inclusion were discussed, including disability access, the "Everyone Anyone" campaign, facilities for female supporters within grounds, overseas supporters, local community engagement around the stadium, and the women's football club.

3. Safe Standing/Singing Section:

- There was an acknowledgement that this topic has broadly been discussed earlier, the group looks forward to the establishment of the Copland Moves Engagement Working Group.



4. Ibrox Experience:

- Edmiston House and the concept of a sports bar were mentioned as part of enhancing the Ibrox experience.
- Discussions focused on how to encourage fans to arrive early and stay longer, not just on match days but also on non-match days with activities like museum tours and dining options.
- The possibility of selling alcohol within the grounds was raised, with JB explaining that this is an important topic the club is supporting, with discussions on-going between the Clubs, League, and Scottish Government. Rangers is fortunate to have a licensed bar at Edmiston House fan zone but believes the current legislation has become obsolete with Football at an unfair disadvantage compared to other sports and entertainment events.

5. Heritage:

- GR raised the idea of the club publishing a report on heritage protection projects, including works on Ibrox, the John Greig statue, and the club deck.
- The possibility of unveiling a Walter Smith statue for the 125-year anniversary of Ibrox Stadium was discussed.
- The formation of a working group to plan events surrounding this anniversary was proposed.
- JB mentioned the presence of a dedicated Heritage team within the club, which was involved in creating the museum.

Date of next meeting:

Monday 4th March 3.30pm