



FAN ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING SUMMARY NOTES

11 March 2025



11 March 2025 6pm-9pm
Venue: St James' Park/Microsoft Teams

In attendance: NUFC/Other Attendees

Peter Silverstone (“ PS ”)	Newcastle United – Chief Commercial Officer
Simon Capper (“ SC ”)	Newcastle United – Chief Financial Officer
Brad Miller (“ BM ”)	Newcastle United – Chief Operating Officer
Yvette Thompson (“ YT ”)	Newcastle United – Director – Commercial Venue
Lee Marshall (“ LM ”)	Newcastle United – Director of Media and Communications
Sarah Medcalf (“ SM ”)	Newcastle United – Head of Supporter Services
Matt Willis (“ MW ”)	Newcastle United – Supporter Liaison Officer
Luke Denton	Newcastle United – Legal Counsel
Dan Ginger (“ DG ”)	Newcastle United – Director of Brand, Marketing & Digital
Kenny McIver (“ KM ”)	Media
Natalie Raine (“ NR ”)	Newcastle United – Creative Director
	Newcastle United – Head of Brand & Marketing

Fan Advisory Board Attendees

Michael McCarthy (“ MM ”)	STH (Chair)
Marion Williams (“ MW ”)	STH (Vice Chair)
Rajat Nayyar (“ RN ”)	Member Representative
Thomas Symonds (“ TS ”)	Young Person Representative
Natalie Noyes (“ NN ”)	International Representative
Paul Karter (“ PK ”)	NUST
Adam Stoker (“ AS ”)	NUST
Claire Wintrip (“ CW ”)	United with Pride
Chris Baker (“ CB ”)	Disability Representative

AGENDA

Time	Lead Department	Description	Owner
6.00pm	Welcome	Welcome to FAB meeting	MM
6.02pm	Chair Update	Meetings Held/ Events Attended	MM
6.05pm	FAB/NUFC	Learning and Feedback from Cup Final Scheme	MM
		Supporter Services Fan Insight – Cup Final	SM
6.15pm	FAB	Memberships – insight	MM
6.20pm	NUFC	FAB Action Tracker – key FAB next steps for consideration	SM/MM



6.25pm	Finance	Finance Update Presentation	SC
7.30pm	Venue	Stadium Development Update	BM (Online)
7.50pm	AOB		All
7.55pm	Meeting Ends		

WELCOME

MM, chair of the Fan Advisory Board (“**the FAB**”), welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Members of the FAB introduced themselves.

CHAIR’S UPDATE

MM expressed gratitude to NN, the International Fan Representative on FAB, for attending the meetings in person (at her own expense).

MM noted a recent increase in emails to the FAB inbox, primarily attributed to distribution of tickets in respect of the cup final.

MM shared that he has engaged with several Premier League clubs to explore best practices for fan consultation and confirmed his attendance at the PL FAB Chair’s meeting on 22 March, which will focus on this topic.

Newcastle United is one of three clubs participating in a Premier League pilot project aimed at improving match day experiences for women and girls through men's allyship. The project seeks to create safer and more enjoyable environments at Premier League matches, supporting women and girls in all areas of football.

As part of this initiative, Newcastle United will collaborate with White Ribbon UK, a charity dedicated to preventing violence against women and girls by addressing harmful attitudes and behaviours associated with gender norms and masculinity.

Three fan representatives (MM, AS, and Thomas Concannon), together with NUFC SLO Matt Willis, will support the project until the end of the season. Following the cup final, a new working group will be established to advance the initiative further. This group will include female fans, such as CW, alongside the four male ambassadors who have committed to training as White Ribbon Ambassadors. MM praised the Club for its efforts, noting that Chelsea FC and Bournemouth FC are also involved in the initiative. NUFC participated in an induction meeting at Stamford Bridge.

MM expressed a collective thank you to the FAB, acknowledging the three formal meetings held annually. Additionally, MM emphasised the importance of recognising the considerable efforts involved in informal FAB discussions that occur beyond these scheduled meetings. SM highlighted the FAB Terms of Reference (ToR), which provide guidance on the structure and conduct of FAB meetings.



LEARNING AND FEEDBACK FROM CUP FINAL SCHEME

MM collated emails that the FAB inbox received on this matter, which included circa 30-40 emails in total. MM noted that we are not expecting answers on all of the questions raised tonight (mainly due to the time we have during this meeting), however, it would be key to establish how to progress action points for next season in order to allow better communication ahead of next season on some of the main points raised, e.g. queries about transfer of tickets out and instances of supporters being knocked down pots as a result.

The overarching question being raised to FAB was in respect of the transfer of tickets to a game to another supporter – the main theme of the queries was that people did not realise it would be an issue to transfer tickets and there was a lack of communication and therefore understanding that actual attendance would be the key to secure a cup final ticket. The FAB suggested a key learning from the ticket transfers in respect of the cup scheme was that future eligibility should be based upon actual attendance and the club needs to ensure that measures are put in place to track actual attendance (i.e. to ensure seats cannot be left empty and/or transfers of tickets via email).

MM also highlighted that FAB had received feedback that Mags Members/Mags+ Members did not feel appreciated, particularly in relation to any clear availability or pot of tickets being allocated to Members/Mags + Members. In addition, there were messages from season ticket holders (not part of the cup scheme) who had lots of loyalty points (for away games) but did not join the cup scheme and felt 'worthless' – it was acknowledged that it is a balancing act and in reality it would have been impossible to please every population of supporter as the reality of the situation was that demand far outweighed the available supply of cup final tickets. However, in hindsight, MM suggested that Pot 6 could have been split differently.

SM and YT suggested that the FAB could start thinking now as to what the Pot differentiators could be for future discussions.

PK mentioned a negative feeling of members being put into Pot 6. RN agreed; particularly in respect of those members who had applied for and been successful in the ballot to attend the home cup games. YT mentioned that within this group there are a lot of anomalies e.g. also ST holders who did not opt in.

PS mentioned if Club were thinking of commercials only, more tickets would have gone to members, but again acknowledged the difficulty in achieving this at the detriment to season ticket holders who had opted in to the cup scheme. MM and FAB agreed the main hindsight learning was to change Pot 6 in the future. YT mentioned that while many fans have unique circumstances, the club needs a broad approach for fair and efficient ticket processing. Fan feedback remains valuable for future planning. MM gave other examples from supporters who could not attend cup games such as people who work away and international season ticket holders.

It was generally acknowledged that satisfying everyone is challenging, especially with high demand.

MM noted that whilst we have not covered every specific example during this meeting, the FAB would continue to consult with the club about specific examples in order to learn from these experiences and build a way forward for future seasons.

MM highlighted concerns about individuals removed from the cup scheme, questioning why they were notified via email rather than receiving a phone call.



SM explained the email communication process for the cup scheme:

1. An initial email to notify when the club will process payment.
2. A follow-up email if payment fails, including 24-hour reminder emails about the outstanding payment.
3. For the Brighton FA Cup fixture, an email was sent to confirm removal from the scheme.

This email notification process will continue next season.

AS mentioned numerous NUST members who had got in touch because they had been removed from the cup scheme due to a failed payment but when those individuals contacted their banks, they have no record of NUFC attempting to take payment. SC said the club can check each stage of transaction – could be NUFC's card processor's fault, could be NUFC. PS said happy to review test cases. PK asked if it is not disproportionate amount of people, phone calls could be made. YT and SM confirmed that there are three notices given for payment. YT says T&Cs explain money will come out within 7 days of date, followed by an email to say if funds have come out or failed payment.

PK stressed the fact that there is only one email communication given in the event of a failed payment. MM stressed overarching point is – if the numbers allow, would there be the option for a follow up phone call? LM said it is what is reasonable, and three notifications is reasonable. YT said the Club must have policies and procedures to allow NUFC to maintain operations.

RN asked about read receipts – YT noted that club can see when supporters have read an email. MM said Trust have a bit more feedback and could raise numbers with SM offline but key thing is what communication goes out so we can communicate early as possible for next season.

SUPPORTER SERVICES FAN INSIGHT – CUP FINAL

SM covered insights on key issues into the Supporter Services Inbox with regards to the cup final ticket distribution.

2.7% of supporters eligible for a ticket contacted a General Enquiry. Themes were:

1. Did not receive email (rectified the next day).
2. Sitting together with friends and family in different pots.
3. Enquiring what Pot they are in.
4. General support with purchasing.

0.2% of supporters sent an email with a complaint. Themes were:

1. POT allocation
2. Members who requested access to tickets
3. Those no longer in the cup scheme
4. Hospitality clients



Season Ticket Renewals - insight

447 enquiries into the club since season ticket announcement. Themes were:

1. Fans wanting to buy a season ticket.
2. Fans enquiring about waiting list.
3. Clarification on process
4. Change payment details.
5. Seat moves.

Supporter Services had received nine complaints to date in total focused on:

- Price increase
- Ineligible seat moves
- Renewal date brought forward

AS expressed surprise that only individuals completing a 10-year tenure were allowed to move seats. SM clarified that seat relocations are not typically accommodated by the club, except in cases of medical necessity.

An increasing number of fans are moving out of the family stand, often because they no longer have children, and there has been a significant rise in relocations among those coming off long-term deals. AS shared an example of a fan who left a long-term deal a couple of years ago, requested a seat change through the Box Office but was denied, while fans exiting such deals now are being granted the opportunity to move.

YT advised fans to contact Supporter Services via email, as requests for seat moves can be assessed individually, in accordance with the particular individual supporter's circumstances. MM noted a similar case involving another family and mentioned referring them to the club. PS asked if the club is open to reviewing its seat move policy, aiming to ensure fairness and equality while avoiding forcing fans to relocate. YT confirmed that seat move requests are handled based on the order in which they are submitted.

PK provided positive feedback on the auto-renewal system, noting that it has resolved issues where fans previously missed out due to the manual process. PK also mentioned that his stepson initially did not receive the renewal email but contacted the club, and the issue was resolved promptly, again expressing that supporters in a similar position should contact Supporter Services to rectify any problems

MW said they felt the response from the Club on season ticket prices showed a lack of understanding fans. PS stressed the importance of Season Ticket pricing regarding the Club's finances and development on and off the pitch.



MEMBERSHIPS – Insight (FAB)

MM mentioned that FAB were working with NUST and had started a temperature check from members on the membership offer. SM said NR and the memberships team will be engaging with members as they look to offer the best membership product to fans.

PK said NUST membership survey has closed and feedback should be ready for next meeting. RN said biggest membership issue at present is access to tickets.

PS stressed the focus needs to be beyond ticketing as simply we do not have enough tickets so this will always be a topic of frustration. Membership benefits also include retail drops, mascot opportunities and membership and retail events. FAB will work with the NUST to review the membership offering.

FAB Action Tracker

SM was conscious of all the FAB actions and tasks going on in between formal meetings so collated these onto one action plan tracker which can be viewed by all relevant parties. Key themes include:

- Best practice examples from other clubs on consultation.
- FAB Topic leads to be put forward – Retail, Merchandise, Sustainability, EDI, Ticketing
- In respect of Sustainability MW, NN and SM held a meeting with Helen Hughes, Sustainability Manager immediately prior to this meeting to obtain an update on the club's sustainability initiatives which the FAB group found very impressive.
- Young Person's Workshop – next steps
- FAB Communications Plan
- Season ticket waiting list – first scoping workshop Friday 28th March.
- Chairman/Vice Chair re-election
- FAB Chairman/NBLO meeting – confirmed March 2025

The FAB asked if data around season ticket holders, memberships and waiting lists could be shared as it is something that some other clubs publicly share.

Young person's workshop

TS described the workshop as a positive experience, with the central themes being access and affordability. Feedback highlighted that the current away points scheme poses challenges for young or new supporters trying to accumulate points (to attend away games). Additionally, some young fans emphasised the importance of proper spot checks to prevent older fans from passing on tickets. It was also suggested that a reduction in ticket prices could encourage greater attendance from young supporters.



TS expressed a desire to discuss strategies for increasing the presence of younger fans in the away end. He noted that many fans are excluded because tickets cannot be transferred to family members, particularly younger relatives who need opportunities to build loyalty points.

SM confirmed that a comprehensive review of the young fans' feedback has been shared with TS and expressed willingness to follow FAB's guidance on next steps. MM thanked TS for his efforts on this initiative.

FINANCE

PSR

SC provided an update on the Club's finances and its efforts to operate within the framework of PSR. PS emphasised that the Club is working closely with the Premier League on financial regulations and noted that Newcastle United's growth remains remarkable.

SC presented to the FAB UEFA's benchmarking report, which compares financial performance across leagues. He explained that UEFA rules permit losses of up to €60m over a three year period for clubs competing in European competitions as compared to the Premier League's £105m. He noted that the UEFA Squad Cost Ratio is set at 70% over calendar years and includes salaries, player costs, and amortization, with UEFA's regulations being more stringent than the 85% SCR proposed by the PL.

When AS asked who determines UEFA's rules, SC clarified that UEFA establishes these rules, partially in collaboration with the ECA. He also mentioned that Newcastle United currently ranks 15th on the Deloitte Football Money League 2025.

Regulator

SC provided insights into the proposed regulator, highlighting its focus on promoting the sustainability of football clubs and the broader football industry. The proposal includes granting every club a license and implementing an owners and directors test, although the process is still under development and undergoing amendments in Parliament. SC mentioned the need for clarity regarding certain aspects, such as consulting "fans" - a term not yet fully defined. PS acknowledged that some areas of the proposal are still under consideration and need further refinement.

SC, having reviewed the bill, noted uncertainties about its practical application, highlighting scenarios such as the current situation at Reading. He added that the bill is expected to progress through Parliament this summer, at is subject to amendment during this process after input from various stakeholders. SC concluded that it was unclear how this would impact NUFC at this stage, however further updates would be provided to the FAB in due course.

2023-24 financials

LM relayed the club's latest financial results which were publicly announced.

Turnover increased to £320m from £250m. Within this increase, £20-30m accounted for UCL revenue.

Operating Expenses also increased to £291m from £229m in 2022-23.



Profit on player sales increased to £69m from £3m

Amortisation increased to £98m from £89m

Total acquisition cost of the Squad as at 30 June 2024: £605m (before amortisation)

Investment in players included £111 million in cash paid, with gross assets valued at £206 million. The total cashflows raised from issue of new share capital (i.e. cash invested into the club by the owners) was £97 million (compared to £127 million in 2023). The club continues to benefit from unwavering support from its owners, with PSR being the primary constraint on spending.

The club recorded an overall loss of £11 million last year (compared to an overall loss in the prior year of £72m), which fits well within the 3-year cycle. LM highlighted that this is not solely about player spending but also involves managing the lifecycle of player costs.

Ticketing and hospitality revenue increased significantly to £50 million, up from £38 million, driven by all matches, mainly due to the fact that there were more home cup games and particularly UCL games during this financial period. Media revenue saw a slight dip, falling to £154 million from £165 million, due to a lower finishing position.

Commercial income has increased significantly to £84 million, up from £44 million, driven by new deals, tours, events, friendlies, and the launch of retail operations. RN queried if this was before the Adidas deal came in to effect, PS confirmed that this deal only went live at the start of June 2024 so effectively only one month of this income would have been in this set of results. AS emphasised that this milestone should be shared with fans as it represents a substantial achievement.

TS inquired about the timeframe for the club competing with major clubs commercially. PS responded that while competing with big clubs is the Club's ultimate goal, Newcastle United is currently growing faster than the top six clubs in the modern PSR era. However, this does not imply that other clubs are not progressing; instead, Newcastle needs to accelerate its growth in both commercial and football aspects.

STADIUM DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

BM provided the FAB with a brief update on the stadium development, however it was noted that the details of this topic remain under NDA and as such details of this discussion have been redacted. BM mentioned that further public announcements will be made in due course.

Meeting ended at 21:00.

AOB

The FAB would like to extend their best wishes to the team ahead of the historic trip to Wembley this coming week.