SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY F.C.

Fan Advisory Board I Executive Summary

Date: Tuesday, 3 November 2026
Venue: Directors' Lounge, Hillsborough

Attendees

Sheffield Wednesday Football Club	David Bruce, Oscar Chamberlain, Rebecca Smith, Joe Braithwait, Richard Stanforth, Brandon Furse
National Regional Collective	Martin Randerson, Eve Winstanley
Rainbow Owls	Chris Ledger, Rachel Antcliffe
SWFC Supporters' Trust	Jake Lee, Live McGuinness
The Wednesday Voice	Shaun Bamforth, Tony Haywood
Wise Old Owls	John Gilling, Robert Metcalfe
Women's Supporters' Group	Bethany Patrick, Liz Rickett

Introduction

Sheffield Wednesday held the inaugural and first quarterly meeting of its Fan Advisory Board (FAB) on Tuesday 3 November 2026, bringing together senior club representatives and representatives from six recognised supporter groups.

The meeting established the FAB as a forum for structured, constructive dialogue between the club and its supporters, providing an opportunity to discuss strategic priorities, review progress to date, raise concerns and contribute to the club's future development.

The club outlined progress made since the change of ownership, while supporter representatives raised questions and proposals across ticketing, matchday experience, fan engagement, equality, diversity and inclusion, and stadium infrastructure.

The FAB was recognised as an important part of the club's wider approach to supporter engagement, complementing established channels that facilitate regular, real-time dialogue with supporters.

Existing supporter liaison arrangements and touchpoints remain in place, with more detailed matters progressed through relevant working groups and club departments, and significant themes brought back to the FAB for wider consideration.

1. Club progress, strategy and governance

Chief Executive Officer David Bruce provided an overview of the club's progress since the change of ownership, outlining investment across three principal areas: infrastructure and operations, football, and commercial development.

The club reported approximately £11.5 million of investment in stadium and training ground improvements, including more than £2 million of essential works to the North Stand. It explained that much of the initial expenditure had been directed towards longstanding infrastructure issues, with further investment required.

The meeting also took place following the appointment of Dave Challinor as Head Coach. The club outlined its commitment to building a competitive football operation and acknowledged the work undertaken during the summer to rebuild the playing squad.

On commercial performance, the club reported significant progress in rebuilding its commercial operations and increasing revenues. It emphasised the importance of supporter backing in driving continued commercial growth, enabling further investment across the club and, crucially, strengthening the playing squad.

Representatives questioned the club's governance arrangements, the involvement of its ownership group and the potential for future external investment.

The club explained its board structure, confirmed that formal board meetings take place quarterly and outlined the distinction between ownership, board oversight and day-to-day executive management.

It confirmed that there were no current plans to seek additional investors, while acknowledging that major future infrastructure projects would require careful consideration of funding and investment priorities.

The club expressed an intention to align future FAB discussions with its wider governance and board reporting processes where appropriate.

2. Ticketing

The club outlined its approach to ticketing, emphasising the importance of affordability, accessibility, supporter loyalty and long-term commercial sustainability.

It highlighted reductions introduced across season tickets, matchday tickets and memberships, alongside the wider affordability of attending matches in relation to other products, including F&B and retail.

Representatives welcomed the introduction of interest-free season ticket payment options and asked whether these would remain available in future seasons. The club confirmed that spreading the cost of season tickets was an important part of its approach and something it intended to continue pursuing.

The club also outlined its preference for rewarding existing season ticket holders through a loyalty-based pricing structure rather than relying solely on traditional early-bird sales windows. Detailed proposals for the 2027/28 season will be considered through further consultation.

Representatives raised concerns about the affordability of attending matches, particularly given the club's historically high-ticket prices relative to other clubs. The club acknowledged these concerns and committed to sharing comparative pricing information and its approach to setting prices through the ticketing working group.

Additional discussion covered:

- **Regional supporters:** Representatives proposed multi-match ticket packages and membership options for supporters who cannot regularly attend home fixtures. The club welcomed further exploration of these ideas, while recognising the need to balance flexibility with the value offered to full season ticket holders.
- **Away season tickets:** Representatives sought clarity on the future of the scheme. The club confirmed that no decision had been made to discontinue it and that any review would involve consultation with affected supporters.

- **Ticket misuse:** The club outlined concerns regarding inappropriate use of concessionary, companion and away tickets. It expressed a preference for working with supporter representatives on proportionate approaches to protecting fairness and preventing misuse.
- **Ticket office services:** Representatives highlighted difficulties contacting the ticket office, including telephone waiting times and unanswered enquiries. The club outlined changes to staffing arrangements and plans to introduce a new customer service platform, including improved enquiry management and online self-service information.

A ticketing working group is planned for December, providing an opportunity for more detailed discussion of these matters and the club's future ticketing strategy.

3. Matchday experience and atmosphere

The club outlined its ambition to improve the complete matchday experience, from purchasing tickets and travelling to Hillsborough through to entering the stadium, accessing facilities and supporting the team.

Summer updates included improvements to overall look and feel, catering provision, payment systems, concourse facilities, hospitality spaces and stadium presentation. The goal to create fast, frictionless experiences that supporters would want to invest in.

The club acknowledged that catering service, product availability and queues remained areas for improvement, despite investment in additional beer dispensing facilities, equipment and operational processes.

Representatives raised questions about the range of drinks available, including the absence of stout options. The club agreed to relay this feedback to its catering team.

The development of premium hospitality spaces was discussed alongside the importance of improving general admission facilities. The club explained that these developments provide supporters with greater choice in how they experience matchdays, while generating additional revenues to support wider investment and financial sustainability.

It also recognised the importance of delivering improvements that benefit supporters across the stadium.

Family experience and younger supporters

Representatives highlighted the need for more attractive experiences for families and younger supporters, including better facilities, activities and potentially enhanced family-oriented GA+ and premium options.

The club welcomed these suggestions and acknowledged the importance of attracting and retaining future generations of Wednesday supporters.

Potential opportunities within the West Stand Lower were discussed, including family-oriented experiences and dedicated areas to support atmosphere. No decisions have been taken, and the club recognised the need to consider safety, accessibility, the stand's history and the impact on existing supporters before progressing any proposals.

Stadium atmosphere

There was an extensive discussion about improving the atmosphere at Hillsborough, including the Kop Band, supporter-led singing, flags, banners, pre-match music and the relationship between different areas of the stadium.

Representatives expressed differing views about the Kop Band, including concerns about its effect on spontaneous singing and coordination between supporter sections.

The club welcomed these contributions and proposed progressing the discussion through a dedicated atmosphere working group, with wider supporter involvement.

The existing scoreboard and stadium audio systems were also discussed. The club acknowledged their limitations and outlined ambitions to deliver significant improvements, with the start of the 2027/28 season identified as a target for a substantially enhanced presentation.

The club also confirmed that it was exploring opportunities for a new fan zone, although no location, investment or delivery decision has been finalised.

The atmosphere at Hillsborough was discussed, with recognition that it had been underwhelming at times this season. There was a shared ambition to make Hillsborough a fortress, with the club and FAB acknowledging the collective role supporters play in creating a positive and intimidating home atmosphere.

The discussion also covered supporters leaving before the final whistle and the limited acknowledgement of players at the end of matches, including following significant victories. Difficulties exiting the stadium were recognised as a contributing factor.

4. Fan engagement, communications and retail

The club acknowledged that its existing digital platforms require significant improvement.

It outlined plans to introduce a new website, mobile application and streaming platform during summer 2027, subject to the completion of procurement and implementation work.

These developments are intended to improve access to information, content and services, and provide a more connected experience for supporters.

Women's football and community engagement

Representatives raised the importance of women's football and opportunities for closer engagement with the wider Sheffield Wednesday football community.

The club clarified that the women’s team currently operates independently, without a formal licence to use the club’s intellectual property, presenting potential risks that would need to be addressed. Initial discussions have taken place with those responsible for the women’s team, with the club expressing a desire to establish a closer working relationship, subject to appropriate consideration of any future arrangements.

The club also outlined its ambition to strengthen its relationship with its community charity, supporting greater engagement with local communities, particularly younger supporters and those who face barriers to attending matches.

Retail

Representatives raised concerns about stock availability, the range of merchandise and the limited choice of products for women, girls and younger supporters.

The club explained the challenges associated with changing its technical kit supplier within a compressed timeframe and acknowledged that the current retail offering was not yet where it wanted it to be.

The club outlined plans to introduce a range of new products ahead of Christmas, with further launches expected in the coming weeks. Looking ahead, it also highlighted ambitions to broaden its merchandise offering in future seasons, including more frequent product releases and potential collaborations.

Representatives encouraged the club to communicate forthcoming availability more clearly so supporters could plan purchases.

The club also confirmed that it was exploring additional retail locations and improved access to merchandise around the stadium.

5. Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equality, diversity and inclusion was identified as a significant priority, having been raised by all participating supporter groups ahead of the meeting.

Discussion focused particularly on discrimination, supporter behaviour, incident reporting, accessibility and the importance of creating a welcoming environment for everyone attending matches.

Discrimination reporting

The club explained the introduction of the Football Safety App, intended to provide an additional mechanism for reporting incidents directly to stadium control, including the option of anonymous reporting.

Representatives supported the need for effective reporting but raised concerns about the app's introduction without sufficient prior consultation.

Specific questions were raised about its privacy policy, data storage, the potential use of personal information by third parties and the commercial features within the app.

The club acknowledged these concerns and agreed to review the issues raised, undertake further due diligence and provide clarification.

It was recognised that an app alone cannot address discrimination and that a broader approach is required, encompassing prevention, stewarding, reporting, investigation, enforcement and communication.

Representatives also highlighted the importance of providing feedback to those reporting incidents and demonstrating publicly that unacceptable behaviour is being addressed.

The club agreed that these matters should form a central part of the EDI working group's discussions, including how the club communicates its actions and works with supporter groups on positive campaigns.

Supporter safety and behaviour

Representatives raised concerns about instances of discriminatory and antisocial behaviour, particularly at away fixtures, alongside difficulties experienced by some supporters in reporting incidents or receiving appropriate assistance.

The club acknowledged these concerns and stressed the importance of timely reporting to enable evidence to be gathered and appropriate action taken.

The deployment of Sheffield Wednesday stewards at away fixtures was also discussed. The club confirmed that it was reviewing these arrangements and intended to trial their return at a forthcoming fixture.

The meeting recognised the importance of addressing unacceptable behaviour while also acknowledging the positive reputation and atmosphere created by the overwhelming majority of travelling Wednesday supporters.

Accessibility

The club confirmed that it was working with Nimbus Disability on an independent accessibility review to inform future improvements.

Representatives emphasised the importance of considering different accessibility needs, including physical disabilities and neurodiversity, and ensuring that these are reflected in facilities, communication and the wider matchday experience.

6. Stadium and infrastructure

The club outlined its long-term commitment to improving Hillsborough and the Middlewood Road training ground.

It explained that substantial investment had already been made in essential infrastructure, with further priorities including concourse facilities, stadium technology, accessibility, supporter amenities and training ground improvements.

Future capital investment plans will be considered through the club's board and governance processes.

Safe standing

The club provided an update on the safe-standing trial in the West Stand Lower and confirmed that further opportunities were being explored in consultation with the relevant safety authorities.

Representatives sought clarification on how future installations might affect existing season ticket holders. The club explained that any proposals would be subject to safety requirements

and consultation with affected supporters, with assistance provided on relocation where necessary.

The club also highlighted the complexities and commercial challenges associated with making structural improvements to an ageing stadium such as Hillsborough. No final decisions have been made regarding additional installations.

Transport and stadium access

Representatives highlighted the disruption caused by changes to Supertram services and replacement transport arrangements, particularly where information had not reached supporters sufficiently prominently ahead of fixtures.

The club acknowledged that transport information could be communicated more effectively and agreed to consider how significant disruption could be made more visible through existing matchday information.

It also outlined ongoing discussions with transport partners regarding improved services and potential ticketing arrangements.

Future digital developments may provide opportunities to integrate more timely travel information into the club's owned platforms.

7. Looking ahead

The meeting identified several areas for continued dialogue, including ticketing strategy, matchday atmosphere, supporter safety, EDI, accessibility and future stadium development.

The club reiterated its intention to involve representatives in the development of relevant proposals before decisions are finalised wherever practicable.

It was acknowledged that not every issue could be resolved within a single meeting and that detailed discussions would continue through the appropriate working groups, operational departments and future FAB meetings.

The club also encouraged representatives to continue raising issues between meetings, rather than treating the FAB as the only opportunity for engagement.

8. Reporting, accountability and next steps

The meeting concluded with a discussion about how FAB activity should be reported to the wider supporter base.

Representatives expressed a clear preference for concise executive summaries rather than verbatim minutes.

It was agreed that the club would work towards publishing summaries within 10 working days of meetings, with additional, accessible content considered for its digital channels.

The importance of timely reporting, accurate representation of discussions and clear communication of outcomes was emphasised.

Principal next steps

Area	Next step
Ticketing	Convene the ticketing working group in December to discuss pricing, loyalty, away ticketing and future options.
Football Safety App	Review concerns regarding privacy, data handling and commercial features, and provide clarification to representatives.
EDI and supporter safety	Progress discussions through the EDI working group, including discrimination prevention, reporting, enforcement and communication.
Matchday atmosphere	Develop the atmosphere working group to consider music, the Kop Band, flags, banners, and other supporter-led initiatives.
Accessibility	Use the Nimbus Disability review to inform future priorities and improvements.
Stadium and transport	Continue consultation on safe standing, stadium facilities and communication of transport disruption.
FAB reporting	Establish a timely, jointly reviewed executive summary process and communicate the outcomes of future meetings.

Closing summary

The inaugural meeting provided an opportunity for the club and supporter representatives to discuss both the progress achieved since the change of ownership and the significant work that remains.

Representatives welcomed improvements already made while raising constructive challenges on affordability, consultation, supporter safety, accessibility and the matchday experience.

The club acknowledged that meaningful engagement must be demonstrated through continued dialogue, clear explanations and tangible progress.

The FAB will continue to provide a structured forum for these discussions, with its effectiveness judged not simply by the issues raised, but by how those discussions inform decisions and improvements over time.