



Supporter Collective Meeting

25/09/25

Sunderland AFC: David Bruce (DB), Paul Kingsmore (PK), Oscar Chamberlain (OC), Chris Waters (CW), Ashley Lowerson (AL), Georgi Rusev (GR), Emily Jewitt (EJ)

Supporter Groups

Branch Liaison Council: Jim Gilling (JG), Joanne Youngson (JY), Cath Reid (CR)

Red and White Army: Andrew Hird (AH), David Rose (DR), Ian High (IH),

Senior Supporters Association: Michelle Barraclough (MB), Lynn Glendenning (LG)

Individual Representatives: Zaf Iqbal (ZI), Matthew Foreman (MF), Daniel Stokell (DS), Patricia Phillips (PP)

Welcome

Introductions: DB/CW welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new season. The four new co-opted members gave a brief introduction followed by the others present.

2025-26 season: DB concluded by stressing the importance of the collective meetings and collaboration and outlined the plan for there to be three during the 2025-26 season.

Summer review

Election process: CW reviewed the election process that resulted in the selection of four new members joining the collective and acknowledged that the election process will continue moving forward.

Fan engagement plan: Confirmation that the Premier League fan engagement plan has been published on safc.com for this season.

Working Groups: CW shared dates for the ticketing, stadium, atmosphere and accessibility working groups for the season ahead.

Board representative: In line with Premier League regulations, Leo Pearlman has agreed to become the nominated board-level official for the supporter collective and has agreed to a minimum of one of one meeting per season.

'Til the End: The Club's communications, digital, and marketing teams were praised for the excellent work done throughout the Play Offs, and into the new season.

Kevin Ball: DB noted how pleased the Club was to be able to bring back legend Kevin Ball in the role of Club Ambassador, and this was welcomed by fans.



PL Mornings Live: DB/CW commented on the recent Premier League Mornings Live engagement, which took place in Kansas City, referencing the opportunity to develop new revenue streams and broader international visibility.

Mexico: DB acknowledged the Club's new link to Mexico, which has resulted in adding 600,000 followers to the Club's digital platforms since the start of the season.

Finance

Revenue opportunities: DB confirmed the Club is keen to take advantage of new revenue streams that are now open to them following promotion to the Premier League.

Mike Papadimitriou: DB commented on the strength of the Club's finance team and pointed to the appointment of Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Mike Papadimitrou, who has a strong track record in the sports and entertainment industries.

Winter transfer window: IH asked if the Club's summer transfer business would limit further investment in January, should it be required. DB replied that the Club is prepared for every eventuality.

PSR: DB confirmed there are no current concerns relating to PSR. DB confirmed that the Club is working with long-term strategies across multiple scenarios for effective future budgeting and planning.

Long-term outlook: Following a summer of unprecedented investment in the Club's history, DB renewed the Club's commitment to long-term financial sustainability. DB acknowledged the risks associated with any result-driven environment but expressed confidence in the Club's operating model.

Experiences and stadium

Investment: DB referenced a second successive summer of development of the Club's stadium, with almost £10m invested ahead of the 2025-26 season.

Broadcasting: These developments included the creation of new broadcast and media facilities to not only comply with Premier League regulations but also provide a best-in-class experience. The tunnel area has been redeveloped.

Delaware North: DB highlighted the importance of new business partnerships, including Delaware North, who are a globally renowned operator in F&B.

Staff: DB praised the ownership group's ambition and the operations team for delivering on the summer aspirations to such tight deadlines. The volume of work completed over such a short space of time was testament to the staff and the vendors involved.



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Concourses: Significant upgrades were made to general admission spaces as part of the Club's ambition to provide its supporters with a world-class experience. More than £1.5m was invested in the concourse areas, with an immense level of work also undertaken to improve the food and beverage provision from products to purchasing, including e-bars.

Tommy Banks: Attracting double Michelin star chef Tommy Banks was deemed a real coup for the Club. Banks on the Wear is Tommy's signature restaurant in the stadium, and this offers the most premium dining experience in the city.

Premium: The Founders Bar also opened last season and has been positively received. Black Cats bar was reimagined to create 76 Yards, with Tommy Banks providing a tailored concept in this space. The collective developments have resulted in a far greater hospitality experience, and now caters to the growing needs of our fans.

Jimmy Montgomery Stand: The renaming of the West stand as the Jimmy Montgomery stand was seen as a real positive and a fitting honour to bestow on a true Club legend.

Stadium expansion: IH asked when the Club would consider stadium expansion. DB confirmed that the Club has explored this and the opportunities available, the club wish to ensure that the stadium is fit for purpose and enables us to compete.

Scoreboards: Issues relating to the stadium scoreboards were raised, and DB confirmed that action was taking place to address this.

Parking: LG raised supporter parking. One fan, who is unable to walk long distances, has lost their usual parking space, which they held for many seasons. The Club explained that the scale of a Premier League matchday operation, including broadcasting, has unfortunately impacted parking space availability.

Wear-Tyne derby: The upcoming fixture versus Newcastle United was discussed. AL confirmed there are no plans for the fixture to be a 'bubble match' at this stage, so away supporters will be free to choose how they travel to the Stadium of Light. There are challenges as the footprint of the Stadium or Light has changed in recent months, and the Club is working closely with the police and fan representatives to make sure it's a safe experience for all supporters.

RAWA Survey: It was agreed that the previous RAWA matchday survey was very beneficial. The group discussed re-doing the RAWA survey to measure how supporters are now feeling, with the expectation that satisfaction will have increased giving the great work that has gone on with the stadium and players.

Ticketing

Season tickets: Season tickets sold out for the first time in the Club's history following promotion to the PL. There is now an ever-growing waiting list.



Seatgeek: DB praised the significant efforts of the ticketing team following the transition from Ticketmaster to Seatgeek. This was a complex task after an extended season and during a period of unprecedented demand. There were ambitions to run a test event, but this was not possible due to time constraints. As with all new systems, there have been some hurdles to overcome, but attendees agreed it was a much-improved fan experience.

Match-to-match: PK confirmed that 5% of the stadium capacity is held for general sales on a match-by-match basis, as per PL regulations.

Membership: Consultation is taking place to assess the appetite for a membership program, and the scope of this offering.

Phonelines: It was agreed that there were still some issues with answering calls at the ticket office, but that response times were improving all the time.

Servicing: DR stated that ticketing and related customer service are the main areas of concern for some supporters. PK recognized that further improvements are needed in this area of business, and there has been a recruitment drive for temporary and full-time ticketing staff.

Touting: The Club is witnessing recent incidents of ticket touting, and it is a growing issue that needs careful attention.

Ticket resale: It was raised that there is interest in a service where season ticket holders can re-sell their match day tickets if they are unable to attend. It was confirmed that testing on the new system is due to take place to make this possible.

Cup fixtures: The Club is reviewing its cup ticket sales process following the recent Carabao Cup fixture versus Huddersfield Town.

Turnstile entry: Points were raised about the confusion over gate entry for matches, which causes large queues, and PK advised that fans can access via different turnstiles to those highlighted on their tickets.

Ticket release: It was noted that the Club must hold an allocation of tickets for Premier League partners, and if these tickets are not taken, they are released for general sale closer to match day. The Club will make its best efforts to promote when these do go on sale.

Ask SAFC: DS commented on the timescales it sometimes takes the Ask SAFC service to respond to queries, with supporters saying it often takes longer than the advised five working days for a response. The club confirmed that they are aware of certain instances but are committed to reducing the timeframe for responses.



Retail

Scale: DB highlighted the immense expansion in relation to Club merchandise, with retail now three times as big as it was twelve months ago. The Club has sold 75% more home kits than last season and 127% more away kits.

Stock: Levels are performing much better, and the Club is working closely with Fanatics, who continue to learn and adapt from world-leading data and insights. There is a large stock supply in place to support Christmas demands, with additional new product releases planned.

Back panel: There was a discussion on the number zone featured on the player's matchday shirts, which is required by the PL for visibility purposes. This will result in the red and white stripes having a panel break for all future PL seasons. Examples shared in the room that looked at different ways to deliver. The Club asked whether the panel shirt should be sold, or whether fans preferred the full stripe option. The Club also wants to maintain the same quality of shirt at retail than the players wear on pitch. Many clubs offer a pro and replica version, but this was not in the short-term plans. The idea of a supporter survey in relation to this was raised.

Replica shirt pricing: The Club mentioned that kit prices were held for another year and offered the lowest in the PL.

Any other business

Disabled supporter experience: JY commented on a disabled supporter's experience at a recent game, relating to curbs and barriers impacting accessibility, and the views of the disabled supporters when people in rows in front of them stand.

Disabled supporters' group: JY is pleased the Club is looking to work with the newly formed Disabled Supporters Association.

Memorial garden: JY also asked for an update on the memorial garden and the Club confirmed plans are moving forward, with an update to be issued shortly.

Women supporters: DR thanked the Club for listening to and acting on previous feedback from many women supporters, who appreciate the Club now providing sanitary products in the women's toilets.