

**FAN
ENGAGEMENT
PLAN**
2025/26



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Foreword



The 12 months which have followed the launch of our inaugural Fan Engagement Plan have seen an unprecedented level of interaction between the Club and Stoke City supporters.

Having set out a clear commitment to strengthening the connection our fans feel to their Club, it was crucial that we listened to you and delivered tangible progress in our approach through dialogue and action.

We have made positive strides and, as we release our plan for the 25/26 season, we will continue to deliver on our promises.

Our fan engagement will continue to be underpinned by four key pillars; Leadership Commitment, Stoke City Connect, Fan Assemblies and Fan Events.

From a leadership perspective, our Chair, John Coates, continues to invest significantly in the facilities, initiatives and people required to improve our fan experience.

As a lifelong fan, John is committed to shaping the Club in the image and identity of our proud supporter base; a direction upon which we are all determined to continue to deliver.

Since their inception, both Stoke City Connect and the wide-ranging Fan Assemblies hosted within the past year have played a significant role in informing decisions made by the Club.

They provide us with forums through which topical matters, which impact the fanbase as a whole, can be discussed openly and transparently with supporters.

Positive changes are constantly being made on the back of the continuing feedback coming our way through direct communication, post-match surveys, and the assemblies and Connect meetings to which we are now committed.

It continues to be hugely important, meanwhile, that we strive to create the best possible experiences for our fans both on matchdays and elsewhere, as well as continually thanking you for your loyalty to the Club.

Our free of charge Season Card holder events in Ricardo's last year included legends nights, Q&As with first team staff and players, and a live podcast recording, while our junior supporters enjoyed special themed nights at Easter, Halloween and Christmas.

As we enter a new season, we are committed to trialling new concepts to reward loyalty and show our gratitude for your support.

As the 24/25 season drew to a close, it was especially rewarding to be named as the EFL's Family Club of the Year having been ranked 1st out of all 72 clubs across the divisions.

The Club had already consistently been among the leaders in providing memorable experiences for families for a number of years. However, to officially be recognised as the best in the EFL highlights a culture in which we are ready to go above and beyond for supporters attending Stoke City matches and our continued commitment to incremental improvement for the benefit of our amazing fans.

Simon King
Chief Operating Officer

FAN ENGAGEMENT PLAN 25/26





FAN ENGAGEMENT KEY AREAS



LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT





LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

- **Fans' forums** with our Chair, Sporting Director and Manager.
- **A minimum of two question-and-answer sessions** with senior leaders responsible for off-field matters per season, with the agenda driven by questions from fans.
- **Dedicated Head of Supporter Experience** employed at senior leadership level within the Club.
- **Senior Management representation** at all Stoke City Connect meetings and Fan Assemblies.
- **Publishing a new Fan Engagement Plan** each season, applying the learnings from previous years.

'A STOKE CITY SUPPORTER SHOULD FEEL LIKE THEY ARE PART OF SOMETHING AND THE CLUB IS A FEATURE OF THEIR IDENTITY. AS THE PROUD OWNER, I AM FULLY MOTIVATED TO ENSURING THAT WE HAVE A CULTURE WHEREBY OUR SUPPORTERS ARE AT THE VERY HEART OF EVERY DECISION WE MAKE.'

JOHN COATES, STOKE CITY CHAIR



STOKE CITY CONNECT





Stoke City Connect has had a really successful first 12-months, holding regular discussions with the Club's senior management team and also getting to meet and talk openly to the Club's Chair, John Coates, which was greatly appreciated by us all.

Our role is to raise matters of importance to the fanbase so the Club can provide updates accordingly, to check & challenge, and to have an overall positive impact on club initiatives and the decision-making process.

It's something we're continually endeavouring to do for the benefit of Stoke City, and the spirit of the dialogue with the Club has never been anything less than hugely responsive, empathetic and positive throughout."

Clare Beardmore
Chair, Stoke City Connect



STOKE CITY CONNECT: KEY INFORMATION



A new Fan Advisory Board inaugurated in 2024.



Following interviews with an independent panel, 15 supporters, from wide-ranging personal and professional experiences, were appointed as supporter representatives.



Meetings take place at quarterly intervals and comprise a 50/50 split between respective agenda items tabled by members and the executive of the Club.



Meetings centre around items of importance to the fanbase as a whole.



Connect members also meet independently prior to meetings with Club's senior management.



Connect representative(s) attend(s) every Fan Assembly hosted by the Club.



Minutes from each Stoke City Connect meeting published to Club's official website and social media channels.



Supporters able to contact Connect panel directly via email to info@stokecityconnect.com.



Fan Assemblies



FAN ASSEMBLIES

Last season, the Club hosted a series of Fan Assemblies in which all supporters were invited to discuss topical matters with Club representatives.

Assemblies in 24/25, included:

- **The design of the 25/26 home kit**
- **Matchday experience**
- **Junior fan experience**
- **Accessibility**
- **Environment and sustainability**
- **A dedicated women & girls focus session**
- **Memberships and loyalty**



FAN EVENTS





FAN EVENTS

The Club's commitment to regular interaction with our supporters in the form of special events at the bet365 Stadium and further afield remains steadfast. In the upcoming campaign, the Club has committed to:

- Several **thank you events** at the bet365 Stadium.
- Players and staff will **attend supporters' club evenings** throughout the year.
- Regular Season Card holder events to say **thank you** and **reward loyalty**.
- Junior Potter events at **Halloween, Christmas and Easter**.
- **Commitment** to trialing new event concepts.



**COMMITTED TO REGULAR FAN
EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.**





YOU SAID, WE DID.

More than 100 tangible improvements have resulted from feedback in post-match surveys completed by supporters following fixtures at the bet365 Stadium.

Inaugurated in 2023, each completion provides a series of ratings out of ten together with opportunities to provide qualitative feedback.

Examples of supporter designed changes to the matchday experience on the back of the process are as follows:

- **Return of the surfer flag in the Caldwell Construction Stand on selected matchdays.**
- **New shuttle bus service between the stadium and Stoke-on-Trent train station.**
- **Seasonal catering ranges delivered across concourse kiosks, additional staffing provided, extra beer pumps and coffee options created, and amendments made to menus at the request of fans.**
- **Enhanced team sheet layout on big screens to provide larger text.**
- **Leaning tables and improved queue management procedures in the Bothen Quarter.**
- **Trimming of overhanging foliage, and additional lighting provided, to make access routes more comfortable and accessible.**
- **Upgraded soap dispensers and additional baby changing facilities provided within restroom areas.**
- **Increased opportunities for photographs with Pottermus and Pottermis across the stadium, plus enhancements to family area entertainment.**
- **Secure bicycle storage facilities advertised, Memorial Garden benches refurbished and an increased number of female stewards for pre-entry searches.**





HAPPY TO HELP

In addition to the actions outlined within this Fan Engagement Plan, Stoke City retains a day-to-day commitment to outstanding customer service and fan experience.

We continue to urge fans who wish to raise a query to contact the Club via **supporters@stokecityfc.com**, to engage with our post-match surveys, or to approach members of our friendly team directly by email or in person.

You can be assured that our people, ranked as the best within the EFL in the prestigious 24/25 Family Excellence awards, will always be happy to help.

“THERE WASN'T A SINGLE STAFF MEMBER THAT WE SPOKE TO WHO WASN'T HAPPY TO ENGAGE OR SPEAK WITH US.”

EFL FAMILY EXCELLENCE, INDEPENDENT ASSESSOR.

Name	Role	Email
Simon King	Chief Operating Officer	simon.king@stokecityfc.com
Anthony Emmerson	Head of Supporter Experience	anthony.emmerson@stokecityfc.com
Thomas Holdcroft	Head of Marketing and Communications	thomas.holdcroft@stokecityfc.com
Laura Nicholls	Director of Community Engagement	laura.nicholls@stokecityfc.com
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Paul Richards	Head of Safeguarding & EDI	paul.richards@stokecityfc.com
Nick Robinson	Head of Facilities	nick.robinson@stokecityfc.com
Craig Simmonds	Head of Venue	craig.simmonds@stokecityfc.com
Clare Buckley-Prescott	Head of Safety Operations	clare.buckley-prescott@stokecityfc.com
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Courtney Allerton	Supporter Experience Executive	courtney.allerton@stokecityfc.com





2024/25 EFL FAMILY CLUB OF THE YEAR

Stoke City were crowned the EFL Family Excellence Club of the Season for 2024/25, with the Potters recognised for their 'outstanding' matchday experience at the bet365 Stadium.

Following visits from independent expert assessors to the Club's home matches during the 24/25 season, City received the highest ranking of any EFL club.

The EFL's Family Excellence Scheme measures the experience clubs provide for attending families through matchday assessors, who cover a range of touchpoints across ticket purchase, matchday activations, accessibility, facilities and communications.

Several areas of the Club's matchday operation were highlighted for praise within the reports, including:

- **The welcoming, friendly and proactive nature of knowledgeable Club staff, especially stewards, red coat matchday staff and those in the ticket office, club shop and concourse.**
- **The variety of items available to junior supporters in the club store, including personalised souvenirs.**
- **Pre-match communication of the activities and facilities available at the bet365 Stadium, including the Club's first-time fan guide on the official website.**
- **A personal first-time fan experience described as 'above and beyond' as young Stokies at their first game receive pitch side access, a signed letter and notepad to commemorate their special day.**
- **A plethora of kids' activities in the Club's well decorated family areas.**
- **Pottermus and Pottermis, the Club's mascots, who engage with junior supporters throughout the matchday.**
- **A wide range of hot food and drink options around the stadium, which are detailed in advance via the club website.**
- **Post-match club surveys and phone calls, which show the club genuinely wants to create a great fan experience.**





2024/25 EFL FAMILY CLUB OF THE YEAR



To achieve year-on-year improvement in our reports, in which our people are consistently championed for their commitment to making matchdays enjoyable for all, highlights a culture in which we are ready to go above and beyond for families attending Stoke City matches.

That continued commitment to listening to our supporters and striving to provide the best matchday experience possible for all is fundamental to ensuring we maintain the high standards we have set.

**Stoke City Chief Operating Officer,
Simon King**



ONGOING COMMITMENT

At Stoke City, we will strive for progressively more effective fan engagement by committing to the following:



Help existing supporters' clubs and provide player/staff appearances.



Circulate surveys after home fixtures and act upon the feedback gathered.



Trial new events and ways of engaging with fans.



Aim to increase the number of Stoke City supporters' clubs.



Share news, important information and content with fans via the Club's communications channels.



Strive for our fan engagement to continue to improve.



Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of the club.



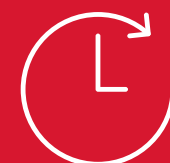
Maintain dialogue with local community groups.



Publish an updated Fan Engagement Plan each year.



Learn lessons from best practice at other clubs.



Timely responses to messages to supporters@stokecityfc.com and elsewhere.



Complying in full with the EFL's regulation 128 and its requirements regarding supporter engagement.



UNITED STRENGTH IS STRONGER



From delighting first-time fans with dugout and pitch side photos, welcome letters and gifts, through to offering action-packed family zone activities and memorable staff interactions, Stoke City's fantastic family experience has made a positive and lasting impact on both old and new supporters of the Club.

**EFL Chief Executive,
Trevor Birch**

