

Meeting Summary: Fan Advisory Board Meeting 2 – 2025/26

On Thursday 15 January and Thursday 22 January, Chelsea Football Club's Fan Advisory Board (FAB) met with senior club officials for the second Fan Advisory Board meeting of the 2025/26 season.

The meeting was chaired by Neil Beard, supporter advisor to the board, and all FAB members were in attendance, including Lord Daniel Finkelstein OBE, nominated board level official. Across the two meetings, the FAB members were also joined by:

- James Murray, club chief operating officer
- Nerissa Chesterfield, director of corporate communications and corporate affairs
- Bonnie Rolfe, venue director
- Bhavesh Morar, director of strategy and transformation
- Michael Cornall, head of supporter relations
- Gareth Harkin, head of client services
- Andrew Prickett, head of ticketing
- Megan Clarkson, senior supporter services manager
- Laura Allen, senior strategy manager

Andy Regan joined as an independent advisor to the FAB and produced the meeting minutes.

Meeting Topics

After going through the previous meeting minutes, the meeting began with the club and the FAB discussing the various initiatives for the 2026/27 ticketing policy.

The first topic was the strategy of club communication to supporters for any upcoming policy changes. Tailored communication to those fans directly affected by the proposals will take place and there will be considerations such as FAQs and "how to" guides to be rolled out, as well as workshops where appropriate.

It was raised that transfer of tickets was not clearly explained when changes took place. The club confirmed that communication will be prioritised for such aspects in the future which will include the scheduling of on-sale dates.

The next topic discussed was the exploration of a new approach to the selling process.

The club confirmed that all policy proposals being explored are with the intention to provide a fairer and more transparent process for supporters who want to obtain a ticket. A version similar to balloting would assist those who are unable to be online during a particular sales window due to a longer window for a member to apply for a ticket while still ensuring the various membership benefits.

The objective is to sell more tickets to genuine fans. The communication plan and title of a new selling system was discussed.

The club said there continues to be significant consultation with season ticket holders and members via multiple communication channels, including forums, so the club is aware of a range of views which help inform decision-making.

A representative suggested that a category of membership could guarantee a certain number of tickets and loyalty could be rewarded according to length of support. The club continues to consider these issues.

Balloting was also discussed in more detail in the second meeting.

The club said that, with the current system, the effectiveness of anti-touting measures can be limited. A representative said that communication is key to fans to ensure that it is understood to be a fair and transparent system. The club confirmed identifying ticket recipients is a key aspect for the exploration of the format.

A FAB rep stated that having more supporters obtain a ticket would be ideal. The club said that this is the objective as the club considers adaptations to the current system. Representatives said that communication remains key.

The club added that clubs who ballot can share greater data. The club cannot give precise numbers for a system that has not been introduced as demand on a match-by-match basis going forward cannot be assessed until it is implemented. Many fans may obtain membership with no intention of applying for a ticket. The club added that the ticket exchange option will hopefully encourage more fans to obtain tickets.

The next policy topic that was discussed was the transfer of away tickets.

The club said for next season it will be looking to implement stricter parameters on the transfer of away tickets. Most Premier League clubs do not allow transfers and the few that do have restrictions in place.

The club will look at the refund mechanisms if a supporter cannot attend. Away tickets are scarcer than home tickets which contributes to the decision on how they should be transferred. Tickets for supporters with access needs may require a different threshold for this process and there may be exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

A representative questioned whether this would assist in countering touting and requested evidence. The club said this measure should be seen in tandem with the balloting of tickets as strong anti-touting measures.

A representative said that the approach taken for tickets to be passed on to other high loyalty point fans would be preferable to the outright ban.

Away ticket transfer was also discussed in more detail in the second meeting.

The club said that the final policy will acknowledge practical issues that may arise for supporters.

A key objective of this work is to help more genuine fans access away tickets. There are few tickets available and the club wants to ensure as much as possible that they go to genuine Chelsea fans.

The next policy topic that was discussed was seat utilisation.

The club wants to make sure season tickets are used fairly and ensure that unless there are extenuating circumstances, an individual can only hold one season ticket. The club added that it would look for disabled supporters to have their own separate procedures.

There may be exceptional circumstances for an individual, which would be considered by the club. Use of the ticket exchange or forwarding the ticket would still count as utilisation rather than non-attendance.

The club also provided an update on its anti-touting measures.

The club has invested into the implementation of ticket collection points at both home and away fixtures. A significant number have resulted in valid suspensions and there has been a substantial

increase in suspensions from last season. Communication has been a priority in explaining the reasons for collection and the club has instigated a dedicated communications channel.

The final agenda item discussed was the development of the matchday atmosphere.

The club said it has trialled a singing section for European matches via engagement with We Are the Shed, whereby approximately 200 seats in Blocks 3 and 4 in the Shed End have been provided for like-minded fans. Some of the challenges have been discussed with the group and being next to away supporters can reduce the impact of the singing section on occasions.

The club sought FAB guidance on the impact of the singing section, and the impact the trial has had on fan sentiment. A representative said the Shed has been popular as the location to date.

The club will investigate this in more detail and welcome further feedback on enhancing the matchday atmosphere at Stamford Bridge.