

RAFC CLUB ADVISORY BOARD**Date and Time:** Tuesday, 10th August 2026 - 18:00**Location:** Online Only via Teams**Attendees and Apologies**

Present	Jamie Willoughby (Chair), Laura Thomas (RAFC CEO), George Delves (RAFC Head of Football Operations), Ryan Bradley, Ruby Loynd, Ian Birchenough, Alison Mills-Daggatt, Murray Knight & Emma Loynd (Dale Trust), Matthew Devine (DALE 1907), George Brigham, Leanne Connolly & Fiona Murray & Isabelle Whiteley (Her Game Too), Ken Flether, Liz Holt, Charlotte Cromarty, Howard Munson, Jacob Wright
In Attendance	N/A
Apologies	Nicola Toolan, Kieron Babington, Steve Jones, Emma Thetford

Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with no additional comments being added.

This meeting had no agenda**Stadium Refurbishment and Infrastructure**

- The kiosk refit is fully underway. They have been stripped out with new equipment and ovens installed creating a full rebrand.
 - The home fan kiosks live before the Crawley game with the Willbutt's Lane (Away End) kiosks live for the Oldham game.
- There is a brand-new EPOS system (Toast) that has been rolled out across all bars and kiosks throughout the stadium. The system will be in use from the Farnham game where staff will still be training.
 - Toast provides detailed sales reporting which includes what's selling, when, and where. This will help us gauge specific target markets.
- A full power upgrade has been completed across the stadium to ensure all the kiosks are supplied with the necessary supplies.
- New broadcast infrastructure installed: sky-ready, OB truck connection, doubled gantry for two Sky HD cameras.
- The safe standing works within U Block of Pearl Street has been completed and load tested.

New Staff

- Andy Dawson has joined RAFC as the new facilities manager along with John Barton as the new Stadium Manager.
- Etienne Jones has become the third member of the media team within a video content role to accelerate social media strategy.

Season Tickets and Commercial Performance

- To date the club have sold 3,125 season tickets whereas last season 2,318 were sold in total. This is a 35% increase on 2025/26. The season ticket revenue is up 42%.
- Junior season tickets (U14s go free): doubled from 341 to 701.
- Young persons (under 22s): 483 sold vs. 361 last year.
- Replica kit sales up 53% overall; away shirts up 77%
 - Another away shirt order has been placed due to high demand and the sell-out of specific sizes.

- HY Solicitors are sponsoring the 1907 Lounge (now the HY 1907 Lounge) for the 2026/27 season
- The Academy has had its Category 3 status confirmed; Kia are sponsoring the Academy with two new cars.

Toast and Fanbase App Integration

- Toast (EPOS) and Fanbase app being integrated
 - Will allow personalised push notifications based on purchase history
 - Example: money-off offers at specific kiosks for known preferences
- Long-term: gift cards and loyalty features planned as phase two

Will food be able to pre-order in the Ratcliffe to help reduce queues?

- Yes, this will be integrated within Fanbase allowing pre-orders throughout all stands and kiosks.

Family Excellence Scheme

- Within the EFL there is a secret shopper scheme. This consists of two scored visits per season. The first visit is in September/October with the second visit happening in the early new year (score doubled). The 'mystery shopper' family don't come to Tuesday night games or derby's so we can work out potential dates they may visit.
 - The club are aiming for silver or gold award.
- A pre-season survey was sent out to everyone who purchased a ticket, this covered the 11 EFL touch points where we scored well overall.
 - 49% of written feedback was received on food and drink with 22% of feedback being on facilities and cleanliness.
- Internal Family Excellence Working Group being set up, led by Ryan
- Key initiatives planned:
 - "Here to Help" branded wayfinder team on match days
 - New welcome signage at stadium entrance and each turnstile
 - Travel guides for different supporter groups
 - Children's area (interim solution near the bus, replacing Desmond's Den)
 - Post-visit surveys for all new visitors; regular surveys for season ticket holders
 - Affordable family meal deal packages
- Accessibility: period products in toilets being actioned; direct follow-up with Fiona

Bowlee Planning Update

- Planning application being submitted Wednesday 12th August.
- Determination expected towards end of October.
- If approved, site targeted to be ready for pre-season next summer
 - Pitch to be seeded/stitched (hybrid) from late April/early May
- Key consultee: Sport England (concern over loss of community field, countered by three AGPs, gym, café, community rooms, and playground)
- Council relationship: two separate but coordinated projects under a shared planning application
 - Club likely to maintain all pitches; community use of pitches built into operating agreement.

If RMBC have a stakeholding in the Bowlee Project would it not make sense for them to also have shares in the football club, either purchased or donated?

- Rochdale Borough Council and Rochdale Football Club are treating Bowlee and 2 separate projects. Both organisations will be working together with some ideas overlapping and use of land crossing over between the two. The club don't see why this would be a necessary or good idea.

Golden Share

- The golden share will proceed as originally described
- Timing linked to converting Ogden shareholder loans into equity (likely at AGM)

- Articles of Association amendment needed for both the equity conversion and the Golden Share, so both will be done together.
- No intention to abandon; purely a timing issue.

Oldham Game Operations

- Away allocation: approximately 1,800 (in line with York), based on police/SAG/ambulance advice
 - Full morning safety session held with all relevant parties
 - Offering more risks home-stand ticket buying by away fans
- Ratcliffe Bar will be available to home fans only.
- Ticket checks on entry to enforce home/away segregation confirmed
- Sandy Lane exit: remains closed on police advice; stewards will manage egress
 - Bollards near club shop: gate being repainted bright yellow; stewards stationed there for Oldham
- Wilbutt's as permanent away end flagged as suboptimal: limits home sales, complicates ingress/egress, affects atmosphere; longer-term review needed but not imminent

Kit Design and Consultation

- Home kit: red chevron sourced from a 1993/96 shirt as a heritage throwback; sold well despite some fan criticism
- There is no official record found of a 2008 decision to restrict home kits to blue, black, and white only.
 - This will be investigated to see if any records are found.
- Commitment to a more consultative kit design process this season
 - Earlier fan involvement before shortlisting, potentially including a heritage expert from the fan forum
 - Fanbase app floated as a controlled channel for kit surveys (avoids open-survey hijacking)

Will we be ordering a goalkeeping shirt?

- There are no immediate plans however, a pre-order model has been suggested to test appetite before committing to stock. Minimum order requirements (12 per size) have historically made it commercially unviable.

Next Steps

Review bollard visibility improvements with Andy and John (Laura)

- Explore lighting or additional markings beyond the yellow gate repaint ahead of the season.

Explore Sandy Lane exit options with CSG and SAG

- Longer-term review of away fan placement and ground layout to improve home sales and egress.

Test goalkeeper kit appetite via pre-order

- If demand is strong, consider stocking for next season; explore options with O'Neil's.

Set up kit consultation process for next season's shirts

- Involve heritage-knowledgeable fans earlier; use Fanbase app for a controlled vote.

Contact Fiona directly on period product accessibility (Laura)

- Follow up on the work already underway following strong negative feedback.

AOB

Date of next meetings

- Monday, 12th October at 6pm
- Monday, 7th December at 6pm