



Newport County AFC Fan Engagement Plan 2026/27

Prepared in accordance with EFL Regulation 129

Chairman's Introduction

Welcome to Newport County AFC's Fan Engagement Plan for the 2026/27 season. As Chairman, I am pleased to present this plan at an important time for our Club. The 2025/26 season was difficult for everyone connected with Newport County. Results on the field did not meet the standards or ambitions we hold for ourselves, and supporters understandably felt frustration and disappointment. At the same time, the Club continued to go through significant change away from the pitch as we worked to make every aspect of Newport County AFC more professional, sustainable and effective.

That process of change has not always been as smooth or as quick as we would have liked. We recognise openly that we did not meet every commitment set out in our 2025/26 Fan Engagement Plan. In some areas, engagement was not as frequent, structured or visible as supporters would like including on issues like seeking new investment. We must learn from that by being more open where circumstances allow.

This plan therefore sets out a clearer, more disciplined approach for the season ahead, with defined activities, stronger accountability and a renewed commitment to communicate regularly with supporters.

Our supporters remain the heart of this football club. Whether you are a season ticket holder, a Trust member, a volunteer, a sponsor, a community partner, an occasional attendee or someone following the Exiles from afar, your commitment matters deeply. We want Newport County AFC to be a club that listens, explains, involves and improves.

We will continue to work closely with Newport County AFC Supporters' Trust, recognising its important role as a democratic and inclusive voice for supporters and as part owners of the Club. We will also seek input from a wider range of supporters via a newly constituted Fan Council, including those who may not be members of formal groups but who care passionately about the future of Newport County. This plan is not an end in itself. It is a commitment to better dialogue and stronger accountability.

By working together, we can build a stronger, more professional and more united Club, rooted in Newport and proud to represent our community.

Thank you as always for your continuing support for our Club.

Huw Jenkins

Chairman, Newport County AFC



Review of Progress Against the 2025/26 Plan

The 2025/26 Fan Engagement Plan was produced during a period of continuing transition for Newport County AFC following the move away from majority community ownership and the embedding of a new ownership and governance model. The Club's intention was to maintain regular, meaningful engagement with supporters through forums, meetings with supporter representatives, communication updates, consultation on fan-related matters and continued work with Newport County AFC Supporters' Trust.

Good progress was made in some areas but we recognise we can do better in others.

We held two hybrid All-Fan forums where supporters were able to question the Chairman and other Directors about the running of the Club and, at the first of those, the First team manager David Hughes.

Fans also had the opportunity to question the assistant coach Wayne Hatswell and Club Ambassador/Community Liaison Officer Mark O'Brien at an informal event in July.

The Club issued weekly newsletter updates to supporters throughout the season and the Chairman was interviewed by national and local media/podcast providers on subjects including managerial appointments, team performance and plans for new investment.

Moreover, the voice of supporters continued to directly influence the decision making of the Club via the two representatives of the Supporters' Trust who sit on the Club Board.

The Club strengthened its collaboration with County in the Community and reinforced its links with the local community in general through the work of our Community Liaison Officer.

We consulted the Supporters' Trust on various supporter related subjects including ticket pricing for the new season (where increases were kept to an absolute minimum).

Some elements of the Plan proved harder to deliver. Relocating our training base to USW in Treforest made it impractical to hold open training sessions as we had planned. Staff changes delayed the establishment of the Fan Council which is now expected to convene from August onwards.

We also recognise that supporters have a thirst for real-time information on issues like managerial changes and investment which cannot be met for commercial and/or legal reasons but which leaves supporters feeling short-changed.

The purpose of this 2026/27 plan is therefore to build on what worked, address what did not, and provide a more reliable framework for engagement.



Our Commitment to Fan Engagement

Newport County AFC is committed to complying in full with EFL Regulation 129 and to maintaining structured, regular and meaningful consultation with supporters. We recognise that effective fan engagement is a core part of good governance and that supporters should have opportunities to be informed, consulted and heard on matters that affect them and the identity, operations and future of the Club.

Our commitment is to engage openly and respectfully, to provide timely information wherever possible, to listen to feedback with an open mind, and to explain decisions even where not every supporter will agree with them. We will consult supporters on significant issues, including heritage matters such as the Club's name, badge, colours, stadium arrangements and other matters connected to the history and identity of Newport County AFC. We will also consult on key fan-related matters including ticketing, matchday experience, retail, hospitality, accessibility, equality, diversity and inclusion, facilities and communications.

The Club will continue to work with Newport County AFC Supporters' Trust and other supporter representatives, while also creating opportunities for direct engagement with the wider fanbase. We recognise that supporters contribute in many different ways: through attendance, volunteering, membership, fundraising, sponsorship, community activity, constructive and respectful criticism and loyal advocacy. Our approach will seek to value all those contributions.

The establishment of the Independent Football Regulator in September 2025 provides a step-change in the requirements placed upon clubs for delivering fan engagement, as part of the new club licensing regime. We have reflected on the expectations of the Regulator when preparing this Fan Engagement Plan, allowing for a smooth transition into the licensing conditions for fan engagement.



Our Approach to Fan Engagement

During 2026/27, the Club will use a combination of formal consultation, open events, targeted engagement and regular communication to ensure that the views and opinions of supporters are heard and that they are better informed on matters affecting the Club.

We expect the newly established Fan Council to provide a step change in supporter engagement. It will provide a representative forum through which all supporters can help shape decisions that affect the fan experience and the long-term future of the Club. It will provide a structured channel for supporter representatives to meet with senior Club personnel, raise issues, review progress and contribute to the development of supporter-facing policies and initiatives.

The Supporters' Trust has consulted extensively with the Football Supporters Association (FSA) on establishing the Council to ensure that it is in line with best practice across the EFL.

The Council will initially include representatives from:

- The Official Supporters' Club
- The Smile Council
- Disabled Supporters Association (DSA)
- The Supporters' Trust
- The Newport County Business Club

Once it is established, we will hold an election to allow independent supporters who are not associated with those groups to join the Council to ensure the widest possible involvement from across the entire fanbase.

The Council will not replace the Supporters' Trust or other supporter groups; instead, it will complement existing relationships and broaden the routes through which supporters can be heard.

The Club will continue to hold supporter forums to provide open question-and-answer opportunities with the Board and senior staff. We will aim to offer access both in person and, where practical, digitally, so that supporters who cannot attend in person can still participate.

We will make better use of surveys and feedback channels, including post-event feedback, supporter polls and structured input through the Fan Council. The Club will ensure that feedback is captured, reviewed and considered by the appropriate staff or Board members. Where action is possible, we will seek to take it. Where action is not possible, we will explain why.



Fan Engagement Timetable 2026/27

Indicative Month	Engagement Activity	Purpose
July 2026	Publication of Fan Engagement Plan	Set out commitments, timetable and accountability for the season.
August 2026	Fan Council launch	Agree terms of reference, membership principles and priority issues.
August 2026	Fan Forum	Board and senior management question-and-answer session with focus on the season ahead.
January 2027	Mid-season progress update	Report publicly on progress against the plan and emerging actions.
January 2027	Fan Council second meeting	Review first-half delivery and agree priorities for the remainder of the season.
January 2027	Fan Forum	Provide a further opportunity for supporters to question the Board and senior staff.
May 2027	End-of-season supporter survey	Assess engagement, communications and matchday experience across the season.
June 2027	End-of-season report and planning session	Publish progress, lessons learned and early priorities for the 2027/28 plan.

In addition, and in association with the Fan Council, we will endeavour to engage with representatives from across our fan base on issues specific to them.

Initial thoughts are to hold an accessibility and inclusion roundtable to allow us to hear directly from disabled supporters and under-represented groups on improvements they would like to see, to hold a workshop to identify opportunities for supporters to assist Club and community activity and to hold a ticketing and benefits consultation to discuss pricing, packages, access, concessions and supporter value.



Updating Supporters on Progress

The Club will provide regular updates to supporters on progress against this plan. A mid-season update will be published in January 2027 and an end-of-season report will be published in June 2027. These updates will summarise the engagement activity delivered, key themes raised by supporters, actions taken, areas where further work is needed and any commitments carried forward.

Progress will also be discussed through the Fan Council and with Newport County AFC Supporters' Trust. The Club will aim to make updates accessible, concise and honest. Where commitments have not been delivered, we will say so and explain what will be done next. Supporter engagement will be reported internally to the Board so that delivery of this plan remains a leadership responsibility and not simply a communications exercise.



Statement from Newport County AFC Supporters' Trust

Newport County AFC Supporters' Trust welcomes the publication of the Club's Fan Engagement Plan for the 2026/27 season and endorses its aim of strengthening meaningful dialogue between the Club and its supporters.

The Trust has always believed that supporters should have a clear voice in the running and future direction of Newport County AFC. The past season has been challenging, both on and off the pitch, and it is important that lessons are learned from areas where previous commitments were not fully delivered.

The creation of the Fan Council is an important opportunity to improve structured engagement, broaden supporter involvement and ensure that issues raised by fans are properly considered.

The Trust will continue to work constructively with the Club and we encourage supporters to take part in the opportunities set out in this plan and to help ensure that Newport County AFC remains connected to our community and accountable to the people who care most about it.

Arnie Bartlett
Chair of Newport County AFC Supporters' Trust

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How Supporters Can Get Involved

Supporters can help Newport County AFC by taking part in the engagement opportunities set out in this plan and by contributing constructively to the future of the Club. This includes attending fans forums, responding to surveys, raising issues through the Fan Council, joining or engaging with the Supporters' Trust, volunteering time and skills, supporting County in the Community, helping with fundraising and encouraging others to attend matches and get involved.

The Club particularly welcomes supporters who can offer practical expertise in areas such as matchday volunteering, customer service, accessibility, digital communications, community outreach, facilities, events, fundraising and commercial development. We also want to hear from younger supporters, families, disabled supporters, long-standing fans, new fans and those who may not always feel represented in traditional engagement structures.

Throughout 2026/27, details of engagement opportunities will be promoted through the Club's official website, social media channels, matchday communications and direct engagement with supporter groups. By listening, contributing and working together, supporters can help the Club become more professional, more transparent and more connected to the community it represents.

Key contacts

Club Fan Engagement Lead: Chris Finn (chris.finn@newport-county.co.uk)

Supporters' Trust Fan Engagement Lead: Andrew Bartlett (arnie@ncfctrust.org)

Supporter Liaison Officer: Donna Linton (office@newport-county.co.uk)

Club Ambassador / Community Liaison Officer: Mark O'Brien:
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Supporters' Trust website: www.ncfctrust.org