



Watford Supporters Board Annual Report 2025-26 Season

1. Introduction

As set out in its Constitution the Watford Supporters Board's (WSB) presents its first Annual Report which summarises:

- Key developments and progress during the WSB's inaugural year
- Key matters raised with Watford Football Club (the Club) and their resolution
- The WSB's plans and objectives for the following year

2. Developments and Progress

2.1. Establishment of the WSB

The six elected WSB representatives (James Bateson, Reza Bitaraf, Steve Cutmore, Flis Irving, Alex King and Nick Trigg) and the two appointed WSB representatives (David Butler for WFC Enables and Steve Temple for the Watford Supporters Trust) were appointed in September 2025.

Following introductory meetings in October Alex King was elected as WSB Chair and Nick Trigg as WSB Secretary.

While the representatives were appointed in September and leadership roles agreed in October, a significant amount of preparatory work was still required before the WSB could operate and communicate effectively. The eight volunteers subsequently undertook the necessary preparations to establish the Board's governance, processes, and communication channels.

These resulted in:

- A bespoke website (<https://www.watfordsupportersboard.co.uk/>)
- A full set of workable constitution documents (<https://www.watfordsupportersboard.co.uk/governance/>)
- An appropriate IT and email infrastructure including an email address to which supporters can submit questions (questions@watfordsupportersboard.co.uk) and a contact form (<https://www.watfordsupportersboard.co.uk/contact/>)
- Establishing an appropriate social media presence on X (WatfordSupBoard), Facebook and LinkedIn

These tasks were broadly complete by the end of January 2026 and the WSB was formally launched.



Watford Supporters Board Annual Report 2025-26 Season

2.2. Meetings

2.2.1. WSB Meetings

WSB members meet regularly and informally to discuss progress, any matters or key questions arising and how to respond and to agree matters such as communications, agendas for club meetings, etc.

2.2.2. Formal Meetings with the Club

The first formal meeting with Club representatives took place at Vicarage Road on 19th March.

Announcements were made in time for supporters to submit questions via email, the website or the specific form prepared for the purpose. The Club ensured that the meeting was attended by representatives who were appropriate to discuss the matters on the agenda. The WSB members found the discussions to be open and candid, as was intended.

Minutes which appropriately reflected matters discussed were agreed and published within ten working days of the meeting, in line with the objective set out in the WSB's constitution.

2.3. Establishing Relationships

A crucial part of the WSB's progress during this first year has been to establish relationships with key members of Club management, build a level of confidence and trust and thereby position the WSB to make an effective and meaningful contribution over the long term.

As with any new organisation this takes time, but progress has been made. Where appropriate, WSB members feel able to contact relevant Club staff to discuss relevant matters and assist with certain specific questions that can be dealt with outside formal meetings (such as ticketing or ground infrastructure matters).

In June 2026, the WSB was grateful for the opportunity to meet senior management, including the Club's Chairman and CEO, Sporting Director, and Head of Legal. The meeting provided a valuable opportunity to discuss the role of the WSB, share perspectives, and begin developing productive working relationships. We were pleased to hear the subsequent positive comments from Scott Duxbury and the commitment to attend the formal meetings where appropriate.

Perhaps this initial meeting with the Chairman and CEO took longer to arrange than some may have expected. The WSB's view has been that it is better for the long-term success of the Board to take the necessary time to establish effective working relationships and build trust, understanding and mutual respect. The WSB hopes these relationships can be nurtured to enable supporters to be represented effectively and constructively in the years ahead.



Watford Supporters Board Annual Report 2025-26 Season

3. Key Matters Raised

Key matters discussed and minuted at the first formal WSB meeting with the Club:

Matter Raised	Response / Resolution
Fan Atmosphere	• The Club had already implemented initiatives to try to improve pre-match engagement and build matchday atmosphere including fan zones; former player welcome pre kick off, “Your Song” with big screen animation. This will be kept under review.
Safe Standing	• Quotes had already been obtained. Initial installation is likely to be in the away section, with a home section also to be considered. • A Club / WSB action group has been established to explore this and other initiatives to improve atmosphere.
Pre-season friendly security	• The Club is confident that the planned security measures will be effective. • These were communicated to supporters prior to matches (in common with other profile fixtures).
Matchday Security	• The Club explained the rationale for searches and bags and prohibited item policies. • Security is taken extremely seriously. Evolving guidance and legislation is likely to result in the introduction of further restrictions.
Supporter Engagement	• The Club is considering the effectiveness of “At Our Place” events, including the potential for similar events for longer distance supporters (such as local pre away match gatherings). • The Hornets at Home initiative remains available on request. • A new, dedicated Junior Hornets interactive digital platform will shortly be launched (replacing the existing page on the Club website).

The WSB also issued a commentary on the Watford Association Football Club Limited’s financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2025 as well as statements on various other relevant matters during the season.

4. Focus Areas for the Year Ahead

4.1. Improved Communications

The WSB recognises that, during its first year of operation, supporters who submitted questions did not always receive an acknowledgement that their submission had been received. During the Board's initial set-up phase, our focus was on collating supporter feedback and understanding the volume and nature of enquiries being received.



Watford Supporters Board Annual Report 2025-26 Season

To address this, an automated acknowledgement process was introduced to confirm receipt of submissions and explain how supporter questions are considered for inclusion within formal meeting agendas.

Whilst it will not be possible to respond directly to all questions, WSB members have begun to respond to certain questions where appropriate and which can be addressed with the Club outside the formal meetings. Having now developed a better understanding of the volume and type of enquiries received, the Board has been able to provide direct responses in selected cases where this is practical and appropriate.

The WSB also recognises that there will inevitably be occasions during the season when significant events occur and supporters may expect an immediate response. Whilst we are committed to representing supporter views and raising appropriate matters with the Club, we also believe it is important to do so in a fair, proportionate and constructive manner. This may mean that, before responding publicly, the Board takes time to engage with the Club and other relevant parties to establish the facts and understand the context of the situation.

Our intention is not to burden Club staff with constant individual correspondence. Instead, the WSB is working with the Club to establish a regular cadence of engagement outside the formal quarterly meetings, enabling questions, concerns, and supporter feedback to be collated and raised in a structured and effective way. We believe this approach strikes an appropriate balance between ensuring supporter voices are heard whilst maintaining the productive working relationships that have been established during the Board's first year.

In addition, the WSB wishes to increase the frequency and variety of its communications with supporters. Alongside written updates and meeting minutes, we hope to engage more regularly with supporters through podcasts, media outlets and informal discussions at both Men's and Women's fixtures. We believe these channels offer valuable opportunities to explain the Board's work, discuss key issues openly and answer supporter questions in a more accessible format.

Whilst the WSB has worked hard to communicate through its website, social media platforms, and supporter networks, we recognise that these channels do not reach every supporter. We have therefore appreciated the support of local media, including the Watford Observer and podcasts, in raising awareness that the WSB is established, active and working on behalf of supporters and we hope this will continue.

We also hope that those reading this report will help communicate that message, ensuring that supporters who may not use social media are aware of the Board's role and the opportunities available to engage with it.

The WSB would welcome appropriate engagement with podcasts and media outlets, or individuals interested in discussing the Board's activities.

We can be contacted via X or by email at questions@watfordsupportersboard.co.uk.



Watford Supporters Board Annual Report 2025-26 Season

Our objective is to ensure that communication is as open and accessible as possible, whilst continuing to develop meaningful and constructive dialogue with supporters and the Club.

4.2. Formal Meetings

We recognise that the WSB may have been expected to hold more than one formal meeting during its first year of operation.

Following the first formal meeting in March 2026, the next meeting would ordinarily have fallen during the summer period. It was therefore agreed by both the Club and the WSB that the next formal meeting would take place in September 2026.

Whilst not a formal Board meeting, as noted in 2.3 above WSB members did have a very valuable meeting the Club's Chairman and CEO, Sporting Director, and Head of Legal during June 2026.

Positively, preliminary dates have already been agreed with the Club for four formal meetings during the 2026/27 season. The first of these is expected to take place in September, which the Club Chairman and CEO has committed to attend. Further meetings are currently scheduled for November 2026, February 2027, and May/June 2027.

4.3. Elections:

In accordance with the WSB's Elections Policy, elections will be held for a minimum of two elected WSB Members each season.

The first re-election process is expected to commence during the second half of the 2026/27 season, with final dates to be confirmed. Successful candidates will take up their positions before the start of the 2027/28 season, replacing two of the original elected members who will step down in accordance with the Board's rotation arrangements.

One of the key learnings from the Board's first year, reinforced through discussions with the Football Supporters' Association (FSA), is that the role of a WSB member is more fluid than originally envisaged.

Whilst early thinking focused on representatives having areas of specialism, such as finance, commercial matters, or supporter engagement, in practice Board members have frequently contributed across multiple workstreams and areas of Club activity.

As a result, the WSB will not be seeking candidates for specific roles. Instead, we are looking for individuals who are willing to take on a broad range of responsibilities and contribute across multiple aspects of the Club's operations and supporter experience. Experience in areas such as finance, governance, commercial activity, or stakeholder engagement would be beneficial, but will **not** be an absolute requirement.

If you are considering putting yourself forward and would be interested in learning more about the role, please contact us at questions@watfordsupportersboard.co.uk



Watford Supporters Board Annual Report 2025-26 Season

5. Acknowledgements and Closing Remarks

As the WSB reflects on its first year of operation, we would like to extend our thanks to everyone who has contributed to its development and success.

The WSB wishes to acknowledge and thank all at the Club, in particular Kevin Affleck, Chris Hall, and Paul O'Brien, as well as Scout Digital, for their valuable and ongoing assistance with the set up work, enabling the WSB to operate effectively. The Board would also like to thank Simon Parkins, Peter Remnant, and Steve Temple for their efforts, working closely with the Club to establish the WSB.

We would like to thank the Club's Board, senior management, and staff for their continued support as we have worked together to build an effective Supporters' Board. Building constructive relationships takes time, and we appreciate the willingness shown by individuals across the Club to engage positively with us throughout this process.

We would like to thank Watford supporters for their continued support, feedback, and engagement that is crucial to the success of the WSB. The questions, suggestions, and challenges that we receive help ensure that the WSB remains focused on the issues that matter most to supporters, whilst also providing accountability. This dialogue is invaluable to the Board and plays a vital role in helping us represent the supporter base as effectively as possible.

The WSB looks forward to building on the progress made during its first year and to continuing to strengthen its relationship with both supporters and the Club throughout the 2026/27 season. We hope that the season ahead is a successful one, not only on the pitch but also in the continued development of supporter representation and engagement at Watford FC.

Finally, the WSB would like to formally congratulate Watford FC Women on their promotion to the Barclays Women's Super League 2 (WSL2.) This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the players, coaching staff and everyone involved with the team. We wish them every success for the season ahead.