

Charlton Athletic Supporter Forum
Thursday, October 16th, 2025

Chairs:

LB – Lucy Bishop – Charlton Athletic Fan Advocate, LC – Lewis Catt – Charlton Athletic Fan Advocate

Club representatives:

EW – Ed Warrick – Chief Financial and Operations Officer and Board Member, JB – Jon Blythe – Head of Operations, TR – Tom Rubashov – Head of External Relations, ME – Mick Everett – Head of Matchday Safety

Fan representatives:

HA – Heather Alderson – Charlton Athletic Supporters' Trust (CAST), CC – Cathy Catlin – East Kent Addicks, PC – Peter Catlin – East Kent Addicks, MD – Mark Doyle – Armed Forces Addicks, TG – Tony Garrett – Charlton Athletic Disabled Supporters' Association, AH – Adrian Howlett – Charlton Fans in Scotland, LL – Lars Liljegren – Swedish Addicks, LD – Lorraine Dean – Her Game Too, JP – John Perkins – Valley Express, AM – Alan Malloy – Reminiscence Group, MT – Marilyn Toft – Charlton Advisory Board, IW – Ian Wallis – Bromley Addicks and Charlton Athletic Museum, DW – David Wood – Charlton Athletic Supporters' Club West Country Branch

Catering Review

EW said the service was not good enough for the opening games of the season (Watford and Stevenage). He said the club had robust discussions with the club's caterers as a result. He said there were a number of immediate operational improvements that were able to be made. He said within those elements there have been significant improvements, which is reflected in the post-match supporter survey where the catering scores have improved.

EW said that we are now only up to the minimum standard. He said there is a long way to go and the club are working with their catering partner in order to make more improvements to matchday catering.

He said one of the things the club recognises is the growth in the people that come to The Valley. He said the numbers at games are two-and-a-half to three times that of some fixtures nearly a year ago, and used Crawley as an example. He said the club doesn't have two-and-a-half to three times that capacity in the kiosks.

He said in the West Stand Lower, Fan Zone and Meantime Fans' Bar, where there is room, the club have been able to get through a lot of the queuing quite quickly. He said this has been done through reorganisation, in consultation with a helpful supporter in the trade. He said despite that, his pre-game walks, particularly in the Covered End Lower and Alan Curbishley Stand, highlight that the club will need to do more structural work. He said it is therefore a challenge for those areas of the stadium to do anything that makes a big impact, quickly.

He said the club are working with the club's catering company on refreshed menus and will start having a wider range of products available on matchdays.

He said the final point that we get a lot of feedback for is about the staff's knowledge of the products. He said the club need them to be more knowledgeable about the products and act as ambassadors for Charlton. He said alongside the operational changes, the club have been working with Gather & Gather to implement a culture of service.

LB asked what the best way was to feedback about what they'd like to see on the menu etc. EW said the best way for supporters to contact the club on anything is fans@cafc.co.uk.

He said it is important that supporters are aware that the club take feedback on board. He said as an example at the start of the season Gather & Gather were set to provide all food in the Meantime Fans' Bar, but, based on supporter feedback, the club acted and the likes of Larry's Mobile Bar and Perkalcious Coffee are now back in the Meantime Fans' Bar.

Valley Express

TR said club have worked closely with CAST and the Fan Advocates over the last few years. He said that the club lost around £20,000 running Valley Express in 2023/24 which brought into question the sustainability of the service. He said since then the adjustments, made in conjunction with the fan representatives, meant that last season Valley Express broke even and has started this season very well.

He said with that in place the club are now looking at how the service can grow to help get more supporters to games. HA asked if a Bluewater stop was possible and TR said it was something the club was looking at.

EW said he is a big fan of Valley Express. He said he remembers the launch and was impressed with the idea. He said it is an important part of Charlton and a great example of the very best of the club.

DW said there used to be a coach from Andover and Basingstoke and asked if that would happen again.

EW said the club wants to grow its supporter base, he said the club would look at new routes and that it was important to make sure there were enough people. He said the club want to serve areas where the club has a strong fanbase and hopefully could help with the formation, or retention, of supporter groups.

DW said the West Country Branch were looking at setting something up.

JP asked if Valley Express would be able to park on Saturday given the roadworks in place. JB confirmed the club had been in discussions and Valley Express and the away coaches would park in the normal places.

Valley Away

TG asked if the club would plan ahead to allow for booking of Bayliss' mobility coach for away games, especially as the away stadiums in the Championship have better facilities for disabled supporters. TR said he would speak to the team that manages it to plan ahead. He asked TG to send through fixtures that would be worth targeting.

PSA Testing

The club confirmed PSA testing will take place at The Valley ahead of Charlton's game against Preston North End on Saturday, April 11th, 2026.

Matchday Operations – Millwall fixture

EW said the game was the highest attendance for that fixture in more than 50 years and therefore the highest risk fixture the club has had with The Valley in its current format. He said that the club were prepared for a wide variety of matchday operation issues. He said what transpired at the match was at the better end of scenarios given the full away stand of Millwall supporters.

He said the club had a lot of liaison with police beforehand. He said the club did not agree with the police's post-match arrangements and made that very clear to the police. He said the club felt, as strongly as the club's supporters do, that the diversion to Charlton station and the effective closure of Floyd Road to home supporters should not have been put in place. He said that when the club made this representation, a concession was made by police to allow those with mobility issues to leave via Ransom Walk. ME explained that, despite this agreement, police on the ground didn't follow through with the agreement initially. He said this was due to a breakdown in police communication.

EW said what the club are not privy to is the wider police operational issues and their specific issues when policing specific teams and fixtures. He noted that five days later at Selhurst Park they did the same thing for Millwall's fixture against Crystal Palace and that it is happening again this Saturday when Millwall face QPR.

EW said that the communication pre-match was not effective. He said that the police had asked to be in control of the communication. He said that didn't work and for future games of this nature the club will lead on communication. He noted that was a recommendation that CAST made and the club agreed with. He said as well as communicating more broadly in advance, the club can also do more in communicating on the matchday itself too and referenced utilising the new big screen as an example.

HA said the club and supporter representatives had a reach which can be used if they have the information. EW referenced that CAST were on the Safety Advisory Group and that the Millwall fixture operation was also discussed with the Charlton Advisory Board and so will have been aware in advance. HA referenced that while she did not attend either meeting the Safety Advisory Group is not an operational meeting but a general advice group. HA emphasised that for a match like this specific consultation with supporters would be worthwhile.

HA said the other point to discuss was the post-match incident at Gate 21 [between the Jimmy Seed Stand and the Alan Curbishley Stand]. HA acknowledged the gate is an evacuation route which can't be locked but said it was a point which distressed fans. ME said there had been no issues at Gate 21 in his 29 years at the club. EW confirmed it isn't locked as it is an evacuation route. He said the first thing the club had done to address what happened was what was in place for the Blackburn game where there was a team of stewards there. He said that for high profile fixtures, the club may look, in conjunction with the

Safety Advisory Group, to see if they can lock that gate for the last 10 minutes of a game but added this may not be allowed. EW said the club upgraded its CCTV system in the summer, so the club had shared footage with the police of those involved in the disorder. EW said some people within the stadium witnessed things that we do not wish people witness at the club's home. He said that it is important that people feel safe at The Valley.

EW said the club had been asked why police weren't involved in the incident at Gate 21. EW said the police were in the club's control room and by the time they had reviewed whether they'd intervene or not, the need for their intervention had dissipated. EW said the police make operational decisions on whether they intervene based on experience.

ME said he'd read stuff on social media about the management of the gate incident that wasn't true. He said there were two stewards on site and there was radio comms to the control room about the incident. He said the police started to organise themselves to go there but it was resolved before they were needed. He said although it felt to him, and likely some supporters, that the incident was going on for ages, the whole thing was about four minutes long. He said police going in may have agitated the situation that had calmed, which is why the police commander decided not to send them in.

EW said that when something happens that hasn't happened before, the club need to change how they do things, namely what happened with Gate 21 and with pre and post-match communication around high-risk fixtures.

JP said it was similar last time Charlton played Millwall in terms of some home supporters being diverted. PC said people with mobility challenges coming from the Alan Curbishley Stand wouldn't be able to get to Ransom Walk because of the crowds.

JB said this looks like a police operation for Millwall in general when travelling away. JP said why can't Millwall fans be locked in like Charlton are when they go to Millwall. JB said it is how the police want to deal with Millwall fans, as evidenced by them doing it at Crystal Palace five days later and with QPR this week. LB said it is a police operation and their jurisdiction. JB said with that in mind the club will be stronger with its communication beforehand and on the day and have more wayfinding information around the stadium.

EW said the club don't like it and wish it was different, but the police are in charge of the policing of Millwall and we're not. He said if we play Millwall at home again it is quite likely they'll want to do the same thing and when we play Millwall at The Den it may be possible that they have a different arrangement for away supporters which may mean Charlton fans are held back.

MD said from his experience with the Met Police their focus is to try and prevent a problem in the first place. He said they are well known for having poor communication. He said their commanders' dynamic risk assessments on the day will often be different to the way we see it. MD said the club could look to see if the police can move their cordon up Floyd Road, which would allow improved access to Ransom Walk. HA said now we know this is how the police will treat Millwall games the most important thing is to give clarity to fans. EW agreed and said the club would lead on communication to the club's fans for future games.

EW wanted to highlight a point where the club had been successful. He said initially there weren't going to be any trains running from Charlton Station that day. He said ME and the police were able to get Southeastern Rail to put a timetable in for the fixture.

EW concluded that there are learnings and the club will deal with the game differently next time, but there will be some things that are out of the club's power to change. He said the club will make sure it is communicated as well as it possibly can in the future - including messaging on the big screens and better wayfinding at The Valley.

West Stand Upper turnstiles

AM said some people have had issues with West Stand Upper turnstiles. JB said all the turnstiles are working operationally. He said sometimes handheld devices are used to alleviate pressure to get everyone in. He said supporters have been good at getting in early ahead of kick-off. JB said he would follow up.

He said a few turnstiles have been upgraded and more will be done over a period of time.

Hot water

HA said it had been answered before but, now there is a longer lease, where does hot water sit in the priority list in terms of the Covered End Lower and Alan Curbishley Stand. EW said everyone can see that

we're upgrading The Valley and that the process is continuing all the time. He said when you get promoted by the play-offs it shortens your ability to upgrade things by six weeks.

He said there are new floodlights, a new big screen, there will be new LEDs, there are the new P-rails. He said the club want to do more of this. He said when looking at priorities they look at where the current pain points are and where is best to enhance the offering to supporters. He said there is a full stadium review of all types of capital improvement. He said that could be the Fan Zone, or Bartram's and our concourses looking tired. He said that the provision of hot water is very expensive. He said that doesn't mean the club won't do it, but that it wasn't yet at the top of the priority list.

He said his main feeling with the Covered End Lower and Alan Curbishley Stand is the circulation space. He said with more people coming in, that they aren't well laid out. He said solving those issues would be up the priority list.

DW asked about hand dryers. JB said a lot have been upgraded. He said before every game he tests every hand dryer, tap and flush. He said the club would review the need for extra hand dryers.

EW said if people notice things that aren't working they should email fans@cafc.co.uk and that notices are up in each bathroom directing supporters as to how to report maintenance issues.

HA wanted to credit the club and JB. She said that when things are raised at the Supporter Forum, they are done or explained clearly why they can't be. She used the example of the safety rails that have been put in place in the Alan Curbishley Stand after being raised in the Supporter Forum.

Parking

JB said the club would review disability parking. He said the current demand, now in the Championship, outweighs the supply but that the process is probably still based on League One demand. TG added that Charlton offer better disabled parking facilities than most clubs.

P-rails

LB said the timeline for completion had been asked. JB said Phase One in the Alan Curbishley Stand is complete and there has been positive feedback. He said Phase Two would be the top steps in the Alan Curbishley Stand before looking at where else in the stadium could benefit. PC said the handrails have been a success. DW said they were slightly sharp, JB said they now have a rubber handle on them.

Ticketing

AH said he had a friend at the Millwall game who was surprised by the Zone 1 cost. AH said he had a very affordable season ticket and asked what the club can do to let more people know how affordable the ticketing is in certain areas of the stadium. TR said the club do a lot to push ticketing and pricing and would follow up with the individual to see if there is a certain demographic being missed in the club's marketing.

Loyalty points

IW said when he buys tickets and gets loyalty points on the purchase, he then has to come back after the ticketing purchase to get loyalty points for his friend on the second ticket. TR said he would look into this. EW said that the club will review the loyalty points system and will take advice from the Charlton Advisory Board on that because it causes debate and hasn't been reviewed for a while.

HA asked about loyalty for long-serving season-ticket holders. LB said longevity might be something for the Charlton Advisory Board to look at.

Staff and leadership updates

IW said a few staff had left recently and asked if that, combined with Dane Murphy not joining, was something to worry about. EW said that staff moving as their careers develop isn't a bad thing. He referenced that those who IW was referring to were all on the footballing side and the Supporter Forum was for non-footballing matters. He said the club has some incredible staff and he counts himself lucky to work with them. He said he couldn't say anything about a CEO appointment. HA asked for an update on the Supporter Liaison Officer role which was advertised recently. EW said the role had been filled that day. TR said an announcement would be made once the new person has officially joined.

U21s

IW asked if the club wanted supporters to attend U21s. EW said the club are focused on driving people to men's and women's first-term matches, he said the club has a wonderful academy and he'd give it some thought about how the club promote attendance at U21s games.

Fan Engagement website audit

HA said CAST had made some recommendations to the club on the Fan Engagement section of the website and wanted to check in on the status. TR thanked CAST for the audit and said many of the updates had already been made, but some of the pieces that require more work will take longer.

Response times

LL highlighted two separate occasions where response time from the club had been slow. One around International Supporters' Day and one around player sponsorship. He said both had been solved now, but said the club need to look at the processes in place around response time. EW said he took it seriously and would follow up. He said the club were lucky to have such a wonderful international supporter base, he said a lot of clubs don't have the same luxury and that they are an important part of the Charlton family.

Lounge use for women's games

HA said there hadn't been consistency on lounge access for women's games. JB said the system had changed this season and is in place. HA asked for the club to post something on it.

Bjorn Borg

HA asked if the club were doing anything about trying to connect with Charlton fan Bjorn Borg. TR said the club were looking into it. Any supporters who have a connection are asked to get in touch.

Ticket for troops

MD said the club used to do Tickets for Troops but don't appear to anymore. EW said the club has a close engagement with the armed forces and he'd look into it.

Next meeting

Thursday, April 16th, 2026