



## WELLINGTON PHOENIX – FAN REPRESENTATIVE GROUP (FRG) MEETING MINUTES

Date: 3 March 2026

Time: 8:12 PM – 10:46 PM (approx. 2h 34m)

Location: MS Teams

Chair: Ethan Fransen

Minute Taker: Ethan Fransen (recording transcription), compiled by Copilot

Attendees: David Dome (GM), Stephanie Owens (Ticketing), Kya Stewart (Matchday), Niki O'Connor, Holly Eades, Steve Still, Ethan Fransen, Avi Gandhi (FRG members)

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### 1. Opening, Introductions & Transparency of FRG

*Time window: 00:00 – 00:57*

#### **Discussion:**

- Holly notes recurring fan questions about who is on the FRG and whether notes are ever published. Agreement that publishing structured notes and bios will improve transparency and trust.
- Stephanie proposes a dedicated FRG web page with member names, bios and post-meeting notes; she will work with Ethan on layout and content. Niki volunteers to post notifications in fan groups before and after meetings to drive discovery.

#### **Decisions:**

- Proceed with an FRG public page containing bios and published notes.

**Actions:**

Owner	Action	Due
Stephanie Owens & Ethan Fransen	Draft FRG page layout/content (bios + notes) and propose go-live plan <sup>1</sup>	Before next FRG
Niki O'Connor	Post pre-meeting reminders and post-meeting notes links in fan groups each cycle	Ongoing

**2. Pub Quiz Q&A – Recap**

*Time window: ~01:03 – 04:47*

**Discussion:**

- David highlights two focal points raised at the Q&A: (a) Samba's 'Givealittle' fundraiser and (b) men's ALM head-coach succession ('Greeny').
- Samba fundraiser: criticism stemmed from the idea of a professional player seeking public funds. Club context: women's salaries are significantly lower; Samba remits much of her income home; objective was to expedite surgery to return for Phoenix and Nepal.
- Men's ALM head-coach succession:—Club has a preferred candidate. Discussion around Greeny, DD highlighted how club supported him through badges; gave him reserves for three seasons; transitions have been deliberate, not knee-jerk.

**Decisions:**

- Reinforce messaging that the women's programme context differs materially from men's and that the fundraiser targeted her home community.
- Affirm succession planning narrative for head-coach role Greeny.

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<sup>1</sup> 28/5/26 | SO | Request made internally – will be actioned at the same time these notes are published



### 3. Women's Programme – Two-Year Investment & Support Staff

*Time window: ~04:49 – 06:57*

#### **Discussion:**

- David confirms a two-year, club-wide investment cycle into the women's programme—among the largest in the league—including full-time staffing (two assistants, S&C, physio, analysts).
- Project horizon realistically spans the end of the Bev Priestman chapter before transitioning to the next phase.

#### **Decisions:**

- Maintain the two-year investment plan and full-time staffing model.

### 4. Samba Injury & Surgery Plan Update

*Time window: ~05:57 – 09:07*

#### **Discussion:**

- Initial plan to operate in Qatar disrupted (doctor no longer available; hospital closed; broader Middle-East access issues).
- Best-case scenario had been a six-month rehab overseas to target early availability next season; now likely a reassessment for NZ-based surgery.
- Club emphasises player preference/trust in prior surgeon but acknowledges perception challenges.

#### **Decisions:**

- Reassess surgery options in New Zealand given Qatar is not viable currently.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Update post-meeting – Samba had her surgery in Auckland in late March and then travelled to Qatar in April for recovery.



## 5. Senior Men's Team – Structural Reset & Football Committee

*Time window: ~11:59 – 14:03*

### **Discussion:**

- Following two disappointing men's seasons, the club convened a lengthy football committee session to reset the programme and hard-code identity: youth minutes targets, roster bandwidth (bottom/middle/top tiers), and contract mechanisms that bind the head coach to the model.
- Committee composition: Domey, Mark Chote, Henry, Gilly (recommendations escalate to the Chair).

## 6. Ownership Visibility & Communications

*Time window: ~14:20 – 21:34*

### **Discussion:**

- Persistent fan perception that ownership (Rob et al.) is silent. Supporters request a regular 'State of the Club' update 1–2x per season.
- Plan: Explore club-run podcast or appearances on existing fan podcasts to maintain cadence.
- Dome's written notes appear in each matchday programme but need amplification across fan channels (Yellow Fever front page; screenshots to fan pages).

### **Decisions:**

- Promote Dome's programme note more widely. Explore further options to owner visibility.

**Actions:**

Owner	Action	Due
Media/Comms/David Dome	Explore ongoing strategy for more engagement/visibility – State of the Club e.g	Prior to 26/27 season kickoff
Niki O'Connor	Cross-post matchday programme/Dome's note to fan pages each home matchweek	Ongoing
Ethan/Yellow Fever mods	Pin/Feature Dome's note on Yellow Fever front page pre-match	Each home matchweek

**7. Matchday Programme – Link, Archiving & Visibility**

*Time window: ~24:42 – 26:32*

**Discussion:**

- Digital programme URL remains constant; content is updated weekly. Users returning to prior weeks see the current edition, not an archive.
- Proposal to PDF and archive editions on the club site; promote via stories and fan groups.

**Decisions:**

- Create an online archive (PDF) of each programme and keep the evergreen link for current matchday.

**Actions:**

Owner	Action	Due
Stephanie/Comms	Stand up a PDF archive page and backfill recent editions	By next home match <sup>3</sup>
Socials team	Ensure programme link runs early in IG stories; add fan-page reminder post each matchweek	Ongoing

**8. Porirua (Playoffs) & HNRV (Grand Final) – Finals Logistics**

*Time window: ~26:32 – 37:18 & 33:24 – 36:47 (interleaved)*

**Discussion:**

- Women's team preference is to host through the semis at Porirua Park; grand final at HNRV Stadium if reached.
- Capacity realities at Porirua: ~1,300 seated; ~500 hill; ~300–400 along sides. Temporary stand costs ~NZ\$30 per seat; financial viability variable under APL ownership of finals.
- Transport/parking: shuttles from Wellington Station and / or from Porirua rail; consider use of fields 3 & 4 for overflow parking on Gear Tce.
- Traffic management was not ideal at Porirua and high congestion at Hurricanes pre-season match as informed by attendees. Suggest an after-match event concept or shuttles at various times to stagger egress.

**Decisions:**

- Semifinals locked to Porirua (with cap for H&S). Grand Final at HNRV. Club to advocate for temporary seating and shuttles subject to APL approval/budget.

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<sup>3</sup> 28/5/26 | SO | Steph discussed this internally and this was decided against. Having them available to download would decrease fan engagement with emails – there is evidence to show people will click on emails and links when there is an expectation of scarcity and time limitations. If we post all meetings online and people don't have the urgency and drive to click, engagement decreases which gives us more negative marketing metrics. However we will continue to download copies of each match day programme and keep these on a shared drive internally so that we can provide PDF copies to anyone who requests.

**Actions:**

Owner	Action	Due
Kya Stewart (Ops) + APL	Model temporary seating options and breakeven at NZ\$30/seat <sup>4</sup> ; seek council/government contributions	T-4 weeks from potential semi
Ops/Traffic	Design shuttle plan synced to rail timetables; publish travel guidance <sup>5</sup>	T-2 weeks from potential semi
Matchday Experience	Explore on-site post-match activation to smooth exits	Pre-semi <sup>6</sup>

**9. Yellow Fever Fan Tour to Aus & Matchday Atmosphere**

*Time window: ~37:25 – 41:17*

**Discussion:**

- Fans report a hugely positive tour; club support (tickets/promo) appreciated. 'Samba effect' noted with sell-outs/large turnouts away; banners and stickers strongly enhance broadcast optics.

**Decisions:**

- Continue light-touch support for banners/stickers that read well on broadcast.

<sup>4</sup> 28/5/26 | SO | The \$30 per seat was an initial quote, we managed to get this reduced to \$20 per seat. Loss made on all seats sold at child price, and only marginal gains from adult seats sold. Additional update: post this meeting we realised that we in fact own the semifinal not APL (model is different to ALM finals series) so we take any profits or losses from the match.

<sup>5</sup> 28/5/26 | SO | Shuttles were decided against, in favour of two Yellow Fever buses, one Football For All bus, and a robust traffic management plan (all incurring costs). We encouraged patrons to drive to the venue due to increased car park availability. This option was successful and remains a possibility for large matches with increased attendance forecasts.

<sup>6</sup> 28/5/26 | SO | No issues with egress that we are aware of, despite no shuttles – will discuss at next meeting

**Actions:**

Owner	Action	Due
Comms/Brand	Maintain small discretionary fund for banners/stickers; quick-turn approvals	Ongoing <sup>7</sup>

**10. Player Welfare and Playing Status**

*Time window: ~41:17 – 44:39*

**Discussion**

- Discussions regarding players' mental health and support from club – details redacted

**11. Merchandise & Kits – Dynasty Performance, Windows & Women's Cuts**

*Time window: ~44:42 – 1:06:35 (extended)*

**Discussion:**

- Fan frustration with various aspects of kit availability, delivery, communication and the Retail program following its move from Paladin to Dynasty.
- Key frustration points being lack of A-League Women Shirts available, limited timing in the pre order windows for fans to purchase (Example Charity Round).
- Commercial context: Dynasty chosen via a thorough RFP process conducted by the Club.

**Decisions:**

- Head of Commercial to join next FRG meeting to discuss context to the details of the program, working solutions moving forward and to answer specific fan questions from action points below and previous FRG meeting.

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<sup>7</sup> 28/5/26 | SO | Steph has emailed all known fan group leaders to remind them that we are here to support.

**Actions:**

Owner	Action	Due
Head of Commercial (Tom) & Dynasty	Head of Commercial to liaise and provide feedback to Dynasty on fan feedback on pre order windows and to review options for longer pre order windows in season 26.27	Before next pre-sale
Commercial & Retail	List women's/men's/youth cuts concurrently for all core kits; fix GK/away listings; audit stock pages <sup>8</sup>	ASAP
Commercial	Assess Football Central and other retail partners for inventory carry <sup>9</sup>	Q2 2026
Design/Comms	Lock kit timelines earlier where possible; align with sponsor renewals to avoid late releases <sup>10</sup>	2026/27 cycle

**12. VAR & Match Control – Club Position**

*Time window: ~1:19:58 – 1:22:14 and elsewhere*

**Discussion:**

- Three VAR overturns this season have materially impacted results; inconsistency between foul thresholds inside vs outside the box noted. The club avoids public criticism to protect grassroots refereeing, but continues to query decisions through formal channels.

<sup>8</sup> 27/5/26 | TS | This is currently being reviewed. We are looking at consolidating the number of different styles, cuts and fits to avoid similar issues in future, Head of Commercial can answer questions on this at next FRG.

<sup>9</sup> 27/5/26 | TS | Head of Commercial will provide an overview of our Retail Distribution model via our partnership and where rights sit.

<sup>10</sup> 27/5/26 | TS | We acknowledge the feedback. There are several factors and considerations that work into the process, Head of Commercial to share more in next FRG.

**Decisions:**

- Continue formal queries; seek clarification on 'clear and obvious' standards and penalty-area thresholds.

**Actions:**

Owner	Action	Due
Football Admin	Maintain dossier of VAR incidents; escalate through league processes and seek guidance notes for publication	Ongoing

**13. Stadium Experience & Alternative Venue Workstream**

*Time window: ~1:23:19 – 1:31:31 & 1:29:06 – 1:29:58*

**Discussion:**

- HNRV Stadium [suboptimal, but alternatives extremely limited](#)

**Decisions:**

- Continue venue workstream with owners' backing; focus on fan-first experience (food trucks, craft options, periphery activations) within regulatory bounds.

**14. Security, Supporter Marshals & Behaviour Standards (Derby Learnings)**

*Time window: ~1:33:22 – 2:21:06*

**Discussion:**

- Recent derby described as 'over the top' security. Incidents: patron nearly arrested for querying police about flares; fans removed aggressively; separate spitting and chip-throwing incidents (offenders banned; spitter 5 years).<sup>11</sup>
- Supporter marshals (Leon, Samir) were active; plan to expand pool to 4–6 (Victory model).
- Banners: five Auckland banners removed for lack of APL approval or prohibited imagery (flares, face coverings).
- Safe smoke proposal for goal celebrations discussed; mixed views; potential trial subject to board approval and logistics. Police presence in NZ is by need (unlike Australia where clubs are charged for large deployments).

<sup>11</sup> 29/5/26 | SO | Event manager to facilitate a meeting between YF, Phoenix and stadium prior to next season to discuss security expectations with a derby-specific focus



### Decisions:

- Expand supporter-marshall programme; remove any security personnel acting outside protocol; clarify banner approval standards; maintain zero tolerance on contraband; investigate controlled 'safe smoke'.

### Actions:

Owner	Action	Due
Matchday Ops	Recruit/train additional 2-4 supporter marshals; schedule for high-risk fixtures <sup>12</sup>	Before finals
Comms + APL	Publish simple banner/Tifo approval guide with prohibited imagery list	Before next derby <sup>13</sup>
Ops/Board	Cost and risk-assess controlled smoke (home goals); decision paper to Board	Pre-finals <sup>14</sup>

## 15. Fan Group Ops, Funding & Memorabilia

*Time window: ~2:26:59 – 2:33:58*

### Discussion:

- Yellow Fever workstream acknowledged as a 'part-time job' for volunteers. Club has previously funded small items (e.g., \$240 for 500 stickers and a banner). Storage of legacy memorabilia noted; suggestion to run Trade Me auctions to fund Tifos/banners. Yellow Fever bank account transfer is pending; some costs still paid personally.

<sup>12</sup> 29/5/26 | SO | Leon and Samir to continue, with the addition of Kya. At this stage we are comfortable with x3 SMs but can look to expand if necessary. Event manager to draw up agreement similar to volunteer contract to formalise.

<sup>13</sup> 29/5/26 | SO | Event Manager to put this in writing early next week and we will include on the Match Day Guide pages on website

<sup>14</sup> 29/5/26 | SO | Safe smoke trialled and approved for Porirua Park, no issues raised. To put cost and risk assessment in writing to board prior to next season – derby specific focus (cost too high to approve for all matches).

**Decisions:**

- Encourage formalising supporter finances and using auctions to fund visual atmosphere. Club willing to consider small-ticket funding on application.

**Actions:**

Owner	Action	Due
Yellow Fever Committee	Complete bank-account transition; publish light governance note for transparency	By next FRG
Yellow Fever + Niki O'Connor	Catalogue memorabilia and run staged auctions for Tifo funding	Q2 2026
Comms/Brand	Maintain micro-fund (NZ\$150-\$250 approvals) for banners/stickers on fast turnaround	Ongoing

Note: These minutes are compiled from the full FRG meeting transcript and arranged chronologically in a verbatim-style format. Names and timings reflect the source recording.