



WELLINGTON PHOENIX – FAN REPRESENTATIVE GROUP (FRG) MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Overview

Date & Time: 3 June 2026, 8:06pm – 10:02pm

Facilitator / Lead: Stephanie Owens

Attendees: Stephanie Owens, David Dome, Tom Shaw, Steve Still, Ethan Fransen, Holly Eades, Niki O'Connor, Kya Stewart, Avi Gandhi, Oska Rego

Objective: To discuss FRG membership, supporter engagement, merchandise performance, event operations, supporter communications, loyalty initiatives, club finances, academy strategy and future fan engagement opportunities.

Executive Summary

This meeting focused on improving supporter representation, addressing ongoing merchandise concerns, reviewing the successful Women's Semi-Final at Porirua Park, discussing supporter communication practices, considering the club's financial position, reviewing academy investment, and identifying opportunities to strengthen the relationship between supporters and the men's team. Club representatives were candid about operational and financial challenges while acknowledging supporter concerns and agreeing to several follow-up actions.

Detailed Discussion Notes

1. FRG Membership and Governance

The group agreed that rebuilding FRG membership before the start of the 2026/27 season is a priority. Members discussed maintaining approximately 50 percent Wellington representation while ensuring geographic diversity. Concerns were raised regarding low engagement from some current members. Suggestions included introducing attendance expectations, asking members to reconfirm their commitment, and creating alternative volunteer roles for those unable to attend meetings regularly but willing to contribute in other capacities.

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2. Recruitment Process

Stephanie Owens offered to provide previous Survey Monkey recruitment material used in earlier selection rounds. Recruitment is expected to occur during the off-season and members agreed the process should focus on active participation and supporter representation.

3. Merchandise and Retail Issues

The Club's Head of Commercial dedicated a portion of the meeting to discuss fan issues with the retail service and stock availability across the 2025/26 season. These issues were addressed directly with FRG members and acknowledged a commitment to improved processes going forward.

4. Women's Kit Availability

Members highlighted difficulties purchasing women's jerseys, particularly in larger sizes and men's cuts of Women's jerseys. The Club acknowledged supplier commitment to the women's playing jersey range and dates of availability was inadequate and provided context from the Partners perspective and lens. along with the dates of The Club confirmed it continues and will always advocate for equal treatment across men's and women's merchandise. This is a key topic in the review for the retail program next season with Dynasty.

5. Retail Strategy Review

A number of options and feedback points were discussed in the session to improve the overall experience for fans in particular around Sku's, Stock availability, Pre order windows and key periods such as Christmas. The Club has taken these on board and is working on these and solutions to improve the overall program for next season alongside its partner Dynasty.

6. Club Communication Regarding Merchandise Issues

Supporters noted the Club had not publicly acknowledged the extent of merchandise issues this season. The Club confirmed this was not a reflection of satisfaction with supplier performance and there were improvements to make following year one of the new partnership.

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7. MatchWornShirt Experience

FRG members raised concerns about their experience with MatchWornShirt, including high international shipping costs and process frustrations. The Club acknowledged these concerns and confirmed it will not continue using MatchWornShirt for future auctions, given the customs and freight costs involved.

8. FRG Minutes and Transparency

Stephanie Owens confirmed that FRG meeting minutes have now been published online. Members welcomed the move and agreed future minutes should be published much sooner. The group also discussed gathering supporter questions ahead of meetings and maintaining stronger communication between meetings.

9. Women's Semi-Final Event Review

The Porirua Park Women's Semi-Final was broadly considered a success. Positive feedback included atmosphere, temporary grandstands, food options, shuttle services and overall match presentation. Kya Stewart explained operational learnings including the loss of a planned third gate due to weather conditions. Future improvements include additional seating, more activations and refined entry management.

10. Event Operations Feedback

Some supporters reported restricted sightlines caused by attendees standing within seated grandstand areas. Parking congestion and slow exits were also raised. These issues were considered manageable and will inform planning for future high-attendance events.

11. Matchday Traditions and Culture

Supporters discussed the importance of maintaining club traditions, supporter songs and walkout music. Various views were expressed regarding preferred songs, although there was general agreement that traditions help build supporter identity and should not be altered frequently.

12. Club History and Memorabilia

David Dome discussed long-term ambitions to establish a Phoenix memorabilia display featuring historical shirts, programmes, tickets and supporter items. Members shared examples of memorabilia held in private collections and expressed support for preserving club history.



13. Loyalty Programme Transparency

Members expressed concern that loyalty programme prize winners were not sufficiently promoted. Suggestions included publishing winners, using first name and surname initials, and communicating prize delivery outcomes. Members believed visible prize announcements would improve trust and encourage future participation.

14. Financial Position

David Dome provided a candid overview of the club's finances. The club's losses are somewhat systemic (Australian TV rights a major source of income for all clubs), but increased due spending on women's football and the largest private investment into any academy programme anywhere in NZ do impact Wellington more than some other clubs. Commercial revenue growth opportunities remain challenging and attendance remains heavily influenced by team performance. Despite all this, membership pricing is not expected to increase next season.

15. Wellington Market Challenges

Discussion covered broader challenges associated with operating a professional sports club in Wellington. These included a relatively small population base, government sector workforce changes, student mobility and fluctuating attendance patterns.

16. Academy Strategy

Members asked whether a lower-cost model similar to Auckland FC could be adopted. David Dome explained Wellington's geographic challenges, player development requirements and staffing limitations. The club continues to review academy operations regularly but remains committed to long-term development outcomes.

17. Men's Team Supporter Connection

Ethan Fransen raised concerns regarding an increasing disconnect between supporters and the men's team. The women's team was viewed as more approachable, visible and engaged with supporters. Examples were provided involving supporter events, travel experiences and post-match interactions.

18. Player Accessibility

Members discussed the importance of player appearances, supporter acknowledgement, autograph opportunities and interactions with travelling supporters. David Dome accepted the feedback and committed to raising expectations with Football Operations and coaching staff.

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19. Future Supporter Events

Potential initiatives included member events at Fraser Park, watch parties, player meet-and-greet sessions, supporter forums and pre-season launches. Members felt these activities would strengthen relationships between players and supporters.

20. Women's Venue Planning

No significant venue developments were available at the time of the meeting. Current expectations indicate Porirua Park may continue to host women's matches while alternative solutions remain under consideration.

Action Items

Task	Owner	Deadline
Provide previous FRG recruitment survey and materials ¹	Stephanie Owens	Off-season
Review FRG membership numbers and recruitment process	FRG Leadership / Ethan Fransen	Before 2026/27 season
Establish participation expectations for members	FRG Leadership	Before 2026/27 season
Contact inactive members regarding future involvement	FRG Leadership	Off-season
Continue to work with retail on an aligned strategy and programme for 2026/27	Tom Shaw	Pre-season planning
Continue publication of FRG minutes ²	Stephanie Owens	Ongoing

¹ 16/7/26 | SO | Sent these to FRG Chair on 1/7, awaiting approval of wording

² 16/7/26 | SO | Publishing today

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Promote minutes and gather supporter feedback	Niki O'Connor	Ongoing
Improve reporting of loyalty programme winners	Club Marketing Team	Before next campaign
Document lessons learned from Porirua Park semi-final	Club Operations	Prior to next major event
Review men's team supporter engagement expectations	David Dome / Football Operations	Pre-season
Develop supporter events and watch party opportunities	Club Operations	2026/27 season
Progress memorabilia collection initiative	David Dome	Ongoing

Parking Lot / Next Steps

- Commence FRG recruitment and membership renewal activities.
- Finalize 2026/27 merchandise and retail approach.
- Review supporter engagement initiatives and player accessibility expectations.
- Continue monitoring women's venue developments.
- Expand supporter communication and transparency initiatives.
- Develop memorabilia collection and display opportunities.
- Review academy sustainability and future investment returns.
- Plan supporter travel, watch parties and engagement activities once fixtures are released.