



11th April 2016

Dear Mr Hollis

Ticket pricing for 2016/17 season

During our recent meeting with Tom Fox and Lee Preece on 29th February 2016, we discussed ticket pricing for the forthcoming season. Whilst some of our comments were noted for input into the process, we would like to formalise our input below.

It is critical that the ticket pricing for the forthcoming season is done correctly to maximise attendances in the Championship and not become another PR disaster. A full 40,000+ Villa Park getting behind the team will be more advantageous to us in picking up points for an immediate return than a half empty Villa Park with no atmosphere being detrimental to team spirit. Although there would be a reduction in match day pricing, we hope that increased revenue spend from other match day activities (club shop and kiosks for example) would assist in compensating. We should be maximising season ticket renewals where possible and incentivising loyalty, as well as developing a youth supporter base which will be with the Club into the future. As a consequence, we need to take an aggressive approach in reducing ticket pricing to ensure fans attend every home game.

Reduced Match day pricing

Gross pricing per match should be significantly reduced from Premier League levels to a Championship standard product. We acknowledge that the gross price can in the future be increased on the return to the Premier League, but we hope that any future rises are consulted upon with ourselves and will reflect the need to maximise a full Villa Park.

We recommend that Twenty's Plenty is a useful benchmark for this aggressive pricing policy (which [Coventry City](#) have used). We recommend that the bulk of the ticket categorisations within Villa Park should be benchmarked at an average of £20, where we would expect for example for central Holte End positions to be at £20 with wing seats at below £20.

This gross pricing should be the basis on which the season ticket pricing discount should be offered as below.

[Note: Hyperlinks to Internet pages are shown in blue underline]

Season tickets



We have noted that Championship clubs such as [Wigan](#) and [Huddersfield](#) have been more aggressive at sub £200 season to boost numbers; likewise [Bradford City](#), who have resurrected interest in their club with similar pricing, now enjoy a similar number of season ticket holders to Villa despite being in Division One.

Given our above rationale, we believe a similar aggressive stance must be taken and Villa fans should have access to affordable football next season to win them back for the promotion push ahead. Pricing of season tickets should be on a four pronged attack:

1. Normal discount on gross match day pricing – the net pricing for a new season ticket (prior to any renewal criteria) should be set as a minimum 10% lower than match day to attract fans to pay in advance. This would mean on average pricing of £18 per game or circa £410 for the season (23 games).
2. A one off rebate for past loyalty for 2016/17 season – to ensure existing season ticket holders renew and to incentivise returnees, we should reward them for their past attendances over the last 5 seasons, where they have suffered the worst home form in Club history. We propose a cash rebate is given towards their renewal cost:

Number of years with season ticket in past 5 years	Rebate % (Cash equivalent)
1 season ticket in any year in past 5 years	5% (~£20) = £390 = ~£17.00/game
2 season tickets in any year in past 5 years	10% (~£40) = £370
3 season tickets in any year in past 5 years	15% (~£60) = £350
4 season tickets in any year in past 5 years	20% (~£80) = £330
5 season tickets	25% (~£100) = £310 = ~£13.50/game

3. Ongoing loyalty discount for future season tickets – season ticket holders should be rewarded for their ongoing loyalty from 2017/18 season with a percentage reduction against a brand new season ticket:

Number of years with season ticket in past 5 years	Discount to New Season Ticket price
1st Renewal (2nd continuous year)	10% reduction
2nd Renewal (3rd continuous year)	20% reduction
3rd Renewal (4th continuous year) + beyond	30% reduction

The price discounts on season ticket prices like in 3) can be seen at other clubs like at [Derby](#).

4. Interest free monthly debit scheme – we believe that an interest free monthly debit scheme to spread the cost of tickets would be attractive, direct with the Club rather than a third party financier. This would be similar to Wigan’s membership scheme offering in spreading cost to a fixed value per month.



Junior pricing and season tickets

We propose that the football club introduce the “kids for £1 (accompanied by a paying adult)” principle and should be applied to all home matches. A junior season ticket (accompanied by a paying adult season ticket) should be set at £20.

In the absence of an accompanying adult, young adults (16 and above) should be set at 50% of adult prices, and the above rebates & discounts applied.

Villa fans at away fixtures

In the absence of the Premier League's agreement to cap away fan pricing, we believe that Aston Villa Football Club should take steps to ensure that loyal Villa fans who travel away with the team are not going to suffer. Reciprocal pricing agreements must be established as soon as possible over the summer to set pricing at £20 in line with the home pricing category. Where reciprocal agreements cannot be reached, then we request that the Club introduce a price guarantee that away fans will not pay more than the £30 cap being introduced by the Premier League (so if Leeds charge £40, then supporters will only pay £30 with the Club guaranteeing the gap).

Away fans at Villa Park

We believe that a sizeable away following should be welcomed to Villa Park to increase the atmosphere on match day. An away following should be encouraged as we have outlined above by charging away fans at £20 in line with our home match day ticket pricing.

Should have any queries on the above, then please feel free to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Barnes
Finance Director, AVST

On behalf of the AVST & its Executive Board