FOUNDATION

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

2025/26

avfc.co.uk/foundation

FOUNDATION





INTRO

The Aston Villa Foundation is the charitable arm of Aston Villa Football Club, with a strong track record of community work across Birmingham for over 30 years.

Established as a charity in 2013, the Foundation generates over £3m of charitable funds each year through grants, donations, fundraising efforts and earned income.

The Foundation focuses its efforts on working with children, young people and young adults in the areas surrounding Villa Park, whilst our projects also benefit people across the city and greater Birmingham area.

Guided by the mission of 'Working together to Enrich Lives' the charity works with over 34,000 people each year, driving measurable social impact and addressing inequalities in some of the most underserved communities in England.

This report highlights the Foundation's measurable social impact, major partnerships, participant stories and future priorities, including the development of a new community hub and expanded opportunities for young people across Birmingham.



“As President of Business Operations at Aston Villa and Aston Villa Foundation Trustee, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the Aston Villa Foundation's End of Season Report.”

This report reflects the incredible impact that the Foundation continues to make across Birmingham and the wider region. While Aston Villa is known globally for its achievements on the pitch, we are equally proud of the positive difference our Foundation creates within communities every single day. Through its dedication, innovation and commitment to inclusivity, the Foundation continues to use the power of football and the Aston Villa brand to inspire, support and transform lives.

Over the past year, the Foundation has engaged over 34,000 individuals through programmes focused on engagement, sports, wellbeing, education & skills and community relations. Behind every statistic contained within this report is a personal story of growth, resilience and achievement. These outcomes are only possible because of the passion and expertise of our Foundation staff, the support of our partners and funders, and the unwavering commitment of participants and local communities.

The Foundation's work is a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when we harness the unique influence of and anchor institution such as Aston Villa Football Club. The Club badge represents far more than football. It opens doors, creates connections, breaks down barriers and provides opportunities for people who may otherwise feel disconnected from support and services. Through this trusted position within the community, the Foundation continues to deliver meaningful and lasting social impact.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Foundation's success this season. Whether as a participant, partner, supporter, trustee or member of staff, your commitment has helped ensure that Aston Villa remains a force for good both on and off the pitch.

As we look ahead, we remain ambitious about the role the Foundation can play in supporting healthier, happier and more connected communities. Together, we will continue to build on this year's achievements and create opportunities that enable people to fulfil their potential.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and learning more about the remarkable difference that the Aston Villa Foundation is making every day.



Francesco Calvo,
President of Business Operations &
Aston Villa Foundation Trustee


kaizen

REFLECTIONS

Social Value Numbers

Social value equates to the positive, wider benefit an organisation or project creates to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area.

£ In the 2024/25 season, the Aston Villa Foundation generated £65.2 million in social value. For every £1 spent by the Foundation, the social return on investment was £21.68.

17,483 Sessions Delivered, with activities and events taking place 7 days a week, 52 weeks of the year across 40 projects.

34,328 Participants Engaged in 2025/26.

31,658 participants engaged, focusing on children, young people and young adults in inner-city areas who face a range of social inequalities and barriers to opportunity.

64% of Participants from an Ethnic Diverse background.



*Premier League Social Value Report, Substance 2026.

Play it Forward

The Foundation's partnership with the Kaizen Foundation officially launched the 'Play it Forward' programme in October 2025. The initiative has successfully established four sites across the City of Birmingham, working with local organisations Birmingham United, Spark Active and Our Community Foundation to engage young people and inspire them through the power of football and sport.

Alongside support from the Premier League, the Professional Footballers Association and Birmingham City Council, funding from the Kaizen Foundation ensures the long-term sustainability of custodian organisations of the Play it Forward sites. We further strengthen these initiatives by providing expertise around Grants and Fundraising, Marketing and Communications, Governance, Monitoring, evaluation and impact, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and risk management.

To celebrate, the Foundation hosted two launch events in October and November 2025, with visits from midfielder Youri Tielemans at the Concord Youth Centre in Sparkbrook and Aston Villa Women's Sabrina D'Angelo and Maya Hijikata at Birmingham Settlement Sports & Community Centre in Kingstanding.

ZC, a young participant in the programme, has ADHD and autism, which have affected his confidence, focus, and engagement in everyday activities.







Initially reluctant to take part in physical activity, he began attending tailored SEND-focused PE sessions at the PlayZone, a safe and structured environment delivered with consistent routines and familiar staff.

These sessions helped him feel comfortable and supported, enabling gradual progress. Reflecting on his journey, ZC shared, "At first I hated doing PE, now it is one of my favourite lessons and I look forward to seeing the Aston Villa coaches."

ZC grew in confidence and was encouraged to attend a community football session, representing a significant step outside his comfort zone.

His teacher noted he "has grown massively in confidence... [and] now chooses to attend independently." Programme staff also highlighted that he "has made significant progress" and "grown in stature each week," with clear improvements in social interaction and emotional regulation.

> "Before I started coming to the PlayZone, I mostly kept to myself. Now I've made loads of new friends and always have people to play football and hang out with. It's made me feel like I'm part of something."
>
> Play it Forward Participant

88%
of participants feel a stronger sense of belonging.

81%
improved their confidence.

89%
saw an improvement in physical wellbeing.



Continued Collaboration with West Midlands Combined Authority

Throughout the season, the Foundation continued its successful collaboration with the West Midlands Combined Authority and South and City College Birmingham.

The expansion of the existing Catering Club programme, which with assistance from the Combined Authority, was cascaded into other football club charities, sports venues and training providers across the West Midlands, including local football rivals Wolverhampton Wanderers.

The Catering Club initiative was established to address the local skills gap in the hospitality industry consisting of an eight-week course with two full days per week where participants receive theory classroom-based work in the morning and practical kitchen-based sessions in the afternoon, making use of the hospitality spaces at Villa Park.

The aim is to provide a platform for learners to gain valuable insight and experience needed for a career within the catering and hospitality industry with South and City College, who provide a specialised tutor to deliver the course. Digbeth Dining Club CIC and Levy provide practical work experience to those who complete the course both at Villa Park on matchdays and externally.

‘I have learnt a lot and built a lot of confidence throughout the course. I have felt very supported. I received all necessary help, equipment and support to successfully gaining my qualification and secure work.” Catering Club Participant

The Villa Coaching Academy is a six-week course delivered by South and City College Birmingham and funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority. It supports young people entering the sport and coaching industry by funding entry-level qualifications, providing experience in different coaching settings, offering placements across our partner network of grassroots clubs and organisations, and helping participants progress into higher education and employment. While football may be the initial hook for many, the course also provides insight into coaching other sports, such as cricket.

The 2025/26 season saw the Foundation run a pilot for the programme, with seven participants successfully completing the course.



> “This course is the first time I’ve ever felt like I know what I want to do with my life, what kind of work I want to do and now have an idea of what I can work towards.”
>
> Coaching Academy Participant

ENGAGEMENT SPORT AND WELLBEING



Our Engagement Sport and Wellbeing provision explores promoting sport, physical activity and wellbeing to young people in the heart of their community, outside of a school or educational setting.

Our projects go beyond engagement, supporting young people on a journey of growth and development, empowering them to progress and realise their full potential.

The Engagement, Sport and Wellbeing thread aims to address that:

- 42% of Year 6 pupils in Aston are overweight or obese.
- Aston, Lozells, Nechells and Newtown are High or Very High hotspots for youth crime and violence.
- Young people with mental health issues are two to three times more likely to live in low-income households.

Matchday Ready: Players Project Launches

In April 2026, we launched our new Premier League and Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Players' Fund project 'Matchday Ready' in collaboration with midfielder Morgan Rogers.

Matchday Ready is designed to place healthy eating, physical activity and player-led inspiration at the heart of our local community. Working in partnership with schools across Birmingham, the project aims to tackle inequalities, raise aspirations, improve wellbeing and create positive long-term change for children and families who often face barriers to accessing high-quality enrichment opportunities.

Activities taking place on the project include weekly sessions delivered by the Foundation's Health & Wellbeing team, with healthy cooking demonstrations delivered in collaboration with Morgan's personal Performance Chef, Zena Weeks, featuring Morgan's favourite dishes.

We launched the project with a special event at New Heights Community Project & Café, where Morgan dropped by to meet participants and hear first-hand how the programme had already made an impact.

Premier League Foundation | Professional Footballers' Association

> "Premier League and PFA Players' Fund projects such as Aston Villa Foundation's Matchday Ready initiative place players at the heart of community work, empowering them to use their influence to make a real difference to people in the local area.
>
> By combining players' passions with the proven delivery of professional football club charities, projects respond to local need and create meaningful impact that extends far beyond the pitch."

Nick Perchard

Premier League Director of Community -

Everybody's Game supports Junior Football Leaders Award

The Aston Villa Foundation's Everybody's Game project is supporting young people to achieve the Junior Football Leaders Award, with support from Islamic Relief UK. Delivered through the Black Country Coaches Club, 100 CIMSPA-recognised qualifications will be offered to young people aged 13–18 across the 2025/26 and 2026/27 seasons.

Young people are recruited to the course through local grassroots clubs and community organisations involved in Everybody's Game. The course introduces them to the basic elements of coaching, including session planning and design, good practice when setting up a session, and tools and techniques for developing teamwork, communication and leadership skills.





“The one thing I have learnt from this experience is to be resilient. Learning to coach takes time, and have patience with those you are coaching, but also yourself.”

Madison

In March, the Women and Girls division of Everybody’s Game held a 6v6 tournament as part of Women’s History Month, with Aston Villa Women’s Sabrina D’Angelo.

This season Everybody’s Game programme took home the silver for the Sports Equality, Diversity and Inclusion award at the Sports Business Awards.

Follow the day through the eyes of Football Development Coordinator Wai.

SPORTS BUSINESS AWARDS 2026
10TH ANNIVERSARY

Disability:

The FA Para Talent Hub forms part of the Para Football Pathway for players aged 7–16 and supports young players who may have the potential to progress within impairment-specific formats, including cerebral palsy football. This season, the Foundation became one of 19 hubs across England, with monthly training sessions taking place to allow players to experience technical coaching and exposure to competitive games.

As part of the Talent Pathway, we welcomed players from the England Para squads in February. Corey Smith from the Men's Cerebral Palsy first team, Jake Heasman from the Men's Partially Sighted first team and Jamiah McLeary from the Men's Deaf Development Squad attended the session.

Collaboration opportunities within the Inclusive Sport Provision have strengthened delivery and extended opportunities for participants. We continued working with Smile Education to deliver the bi-monthly SEND Schools League and with the Dwarf Sports Association to provide termly dwarf football sessions.

Working collaboratively with other Club Community Organisations, Aston Villa were invited by Wolverhampton Wanderers Foundation to take part in their annual half-time fixture, with our Ability Counts U16 Squad taking on their counterparts at Wolves in front of 30,000 fans at Molineux.

Conversation Corner:

As part of the Foundation's Youth Mental Health Day Campaign in September 2025, we were excited to welcome Aston Villa Women's Captain Rachel Daly to meet with Year 12 student Hannah.

Hannah has engaged with the Foundation for the last four years, taking part in the Premier League Kicks provision, and now is a student in our Post-16 Further Education programme. She has worked closely with coach Stu during her Monday night sessions, with the emphasis on how important it is to have conversations about mental wellbeing amongst young people.

As part of the feature, she had the opportunity to interview the former Lioness about her techniques and coping strategies to manage her mental and physical wellbeing as a professional football player.



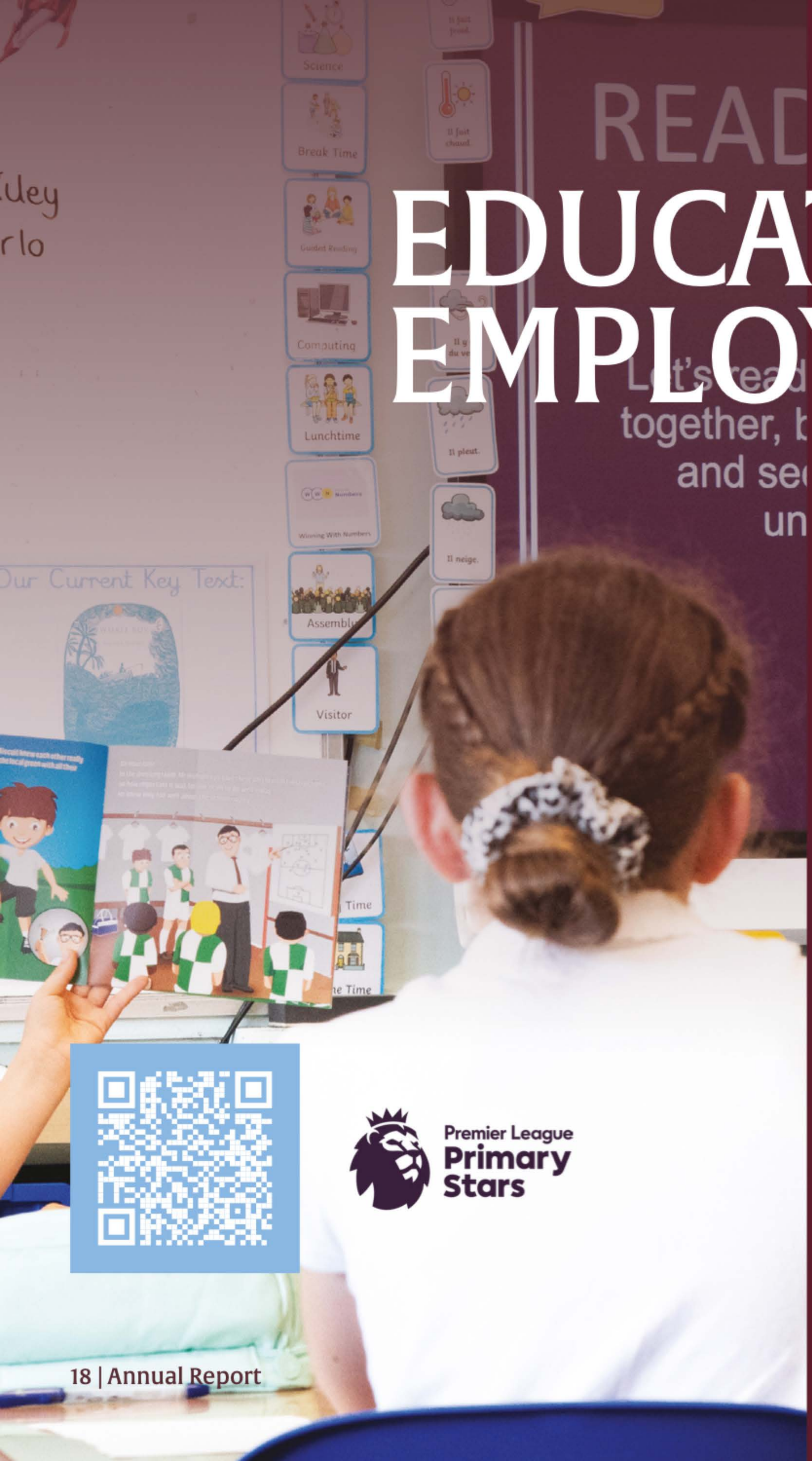


Beyond the Classroom: Premier League Inspires

At Aston University Engineering Academy, the Youth Engagement team delivered a deep learning day for Year 10 students, with workshops on misogyny, racism, gang violence, radicalisation and extremism, including the influence of social media. School feedback highlighted that the sessions were timely, engaging and created a positive learning environment for students to discuss challenging issues.

At Broadway Academy and their sister school, Radley College, 130 participants took part in a careers workshop exploring roles within football both on and off the pitch. The session broadened young people's understanding of the football industry beyond playing careers, introducing areas such as coaching, media, operations, community delivery, analysis, safeguarding, facilities and event management.

Aston Villa Women's goalkeeper Sabrina D'Angelo visited the Changemakers cohort at Aston University Engineering Academy. Sabrina delivered a Q&A session with female participants, focusing on leadership, confidence and teamwork. She shared her experiences as a professional player, both on and off the pitch, and engaged with the group in a personable and relatable way.



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Our Education and Employment thread aims at promoting education and personal development opportunities, offering a range of classroom and community-based working, training and qualifications to enhance young people's long-term prospects and potential.

Premier League Primary Stars

Education and employment aims to address that:

- Aston has nearly double the national average of residents with no qualifications.
- Erdington constituency is amongst the highest free school meal' rates in England.
- Erdington has the lowest employment rate across the 10 constituencies in Birmingham

Premier League Primary Stars

- 2,324 pupils across this academic year
- 33 Teachers supported in PE Delivery

STEM

- 312 participants for STEM, 160 of them female

Catering Club

- 37 Newly Qualified Skills First Individuals in Hospitality and Catering
- 11 individuals entered employment
- 4 individuals entered further training

Coaching Academy

- 7 Newly Qualified Coaches in Introduction to Coaching Football (L1) and ECB Foundation Coach - Cricket L1/ First Aid/ Safeguarding
- 3 participants entered into paid coaching roles
- 1 participant has entered full-time Employment within the Aston Villa Foundation

Villa Vision wins Times Higher Education Award

Recording nearly 20,000 individual interventions with their strategic support and funding on the Villa Vision programme, Aston University took home the 2025 Times High Education award for Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community through the Villa Vision project.

Aston University, alongside the project's other funders and supporters, the Premier League, Professional Footballers' Association, EssilorLuxottica's charitable Foundation OneSight and the Wesleyan Foundation, have been instrumental in the project and its success in countless ways, leading to a successful and impactful community engagement partnership.

THE Awards 2025

Premier League Primary Stars

Aston Villa Legend Brian Little, delivered an inspiring assembly and Q&A session at Birchwood Primary School, sharing insights from his football career and his children's book. Education Officers followed this with English themed workshops linked to Brian's writing, creating a powerful connection between football and curriculum learning. Pupils who often struggle with engagement in English demonstrated increased enthusiasm, participation and confidence, highlighting the value of using football as a catalyst for academic motivation.

With the development of our new SEND programme within Premier League Primary Stars, gaining meaningful pupil voice was essential to ensure delivery met the same high standards as our wider programme. To create a calm and safe space for reflection, we facilitated a draw and talk session in the school library. As pupils designed posters, their Education Officer held individual conversations exploring their experiences with Aston Villa Foundation, their views on the programme and how the sessions had supported their personal development.

100%

of pupils reported enjoying their sessions, demonstrating strong engagement and positive impact across the SEND programme.



Supporting Young People into Employment

We have received funding through Youth Trailblazer, to target economically inactive and unemployed young people aged 18-21 who are residents in Birmingham, to reduce the risk of them becoming 'Not in Education, Training or Employment ' (NEET). Running a pilot programme in the 2025/26 season, we support the Youth Trailblazer priorities by delivering an enhanced "Villa EmployAbility" project providing tailored employability and wellbeing support for young people aged 18-21.

The programme supports three priority cohorts identified within the Youth Trailblazer framework: young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Care Leavers, and young people who are NEET and experiencing complex barriers to employment, education or training. The project includes delivery of sport and physical activities, utilising the Aston Villa brand as a powerful engagement tool, One-to-one mentoring and wellbeing check-ins throughout young people's journey, and Employability support combining practical workshops, accredited learning opportunities and real-world experiences designed to improve participants' confidence, aspirations and job readiness.

Participants who demonstrate commitment and readiness will be supported into volunteering and work-based learning opportunities through our Coaching Academy and Catering Club, providing valuable hands-on experience within a professional sporting environment.

Participant recruitment will be achieved through our well-established partnerships with Birmingham City Council, education providers, social care teams, community organisations and voluntary sector partners, alongside referrals from our existing programmes and targeted community outreach.

The programme is delivered in collaboration with Movement to Work, helping to break down barriers to work for young people in Birmingham.

STEM Stars Launch in Primary Schools

In January, we launched our brand-new STEM provision in Primary and Secondary Schools in Birmingham, funded by National Grid.

Building on an existing provision, Primary school aged children will be introduced to how technology can impact their lives in a positive and safe manner, encouraging creativity and curiosity around STEM and coding, using advancing technology in the form of programmable Sphero Bolts and Kubos to complete football-related challenges and tasks.

Secondary school provision advances into exploring jobs within sport through employability workshops, and how STEM skills are used within them. The programme will also launch an exclusive offering to female students, encouraging increasing participation from females through STEM-based activities, which could lead into STEM-related employment, bridging the gap between males and females in STEM roles.

To celebrate the launch of the programme, Marco Bizot, Ian Maatsen and Jadon Sancho test drove the Sphero Bolts, taking on Foundation staff in a football challenge by moving the bolts through coding to score goals.

> “We’re thrilled to be working with the Aston Villa Foundation on this exciting project. The programme is going to have such a positive and lasting effect on so many young people in Birmingham and will hopefully inspire many of them to consider a future in STEM fields. We’re working together to provide an opportunity that these schools might not be able to access on their own, levelling the playing field and giving students a chance to unlock their full potential.”

Nick South,

Education and STEM Manager at National Grid

nationalgrid


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COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community Relations sees us implementing a place-based approach to our delivery, giving smaller organisations in Birmingham the opportunity to connect with us and the club, building and strengthening relationships and ensuring Aston Villa is a good neighbour.

We actively work with communities and third sector organisations in new ways that promote community engagement, providing training and support for organisations in well-defined areas of need, and work with individuals who wish to make a difference in their local communities and a better place to live for local residents.

Active Through Football, funded by the Football Foundation and Sport England, is a programme aimed to increase sport and physical activity participation levels for inactive individuals across targeted communities in the city.

The main outcome of programme looks to reduce inequalities from residents within Lower Social Economic Groups who find it difficult to keep active, using a range of sports and physical activities as a tool to remove barriers and increase their activity and participation levels.

Donated through Aston Villa Club Partner Coca Cola, our walking footballers had the opportunity to play on the pitch at Bodymoor Heath Training Ground. Walking football is a targeted programme for over-50's.

338	8%	83%	8,250
sessions delivered	with a disability	from an Ethnic Diverse Group	contact hours

Youth Endowment Fund

Through the Youth Endowment Fund Neighbourhood Programme, Aston Villa Foundation is working with local organisations to create safer, more connected communities and improve opportunities for young people across Lozells and Newtown.

Behind this growth are examples of young people developing confidence, building trusted relationships and taking positive steps towards their futures.

Sport and detached youth work have helped build relationships with young people who may not access formal services. Support Through Sport observed initially hesitant participants becoming confident enough to approach coaches, suggest activities and try new experiences.

As recipients of the Community Chest and Flexible Response Grants, local organisation ACT CIC have delivered detached youth work as part of their Sports & Outreach Programme.

Essence Youth Mentoring deliver weekly girls' youth clubs at The Lighthouse Young People's Centre, creating safe and supportive spaces for young girls.

Young people are also helping shape the programme's next phase through their role on the Steering Group, influencing proposals for safer outdoor spaces and a restorative neighbourhood approach focused on trust, relationships and belonging.

4,268
young people engaged with Youth Endowment Fund programmes.

> "I have learned that young people can make a difference in the community."
>
> Youth Endowment Fund Participant



CONNECTING AND SUPPORTING



Europa League Campaign

In arguably our biggest game since 1982, the Aston Villa Foundation became the first club charitable foundation to appear on the front of a shirt in a major European cup final.

The shirt, featuring the Aston Villa Foundation logo was limited to 1,000 official replicas which sold out within hours of its release in the Aston Villa stores at Villa Park and Birmingham's Bullring Shopping Centre. £10 from every shirt sale was donated to the Aston Villa Foundation, whilst a squad signed Final shirt also raised significant funds to support the Foundation's work with children and young people in Birmingham.

Recognising the wider social impact that football can have across the globe, the Foundation pledged to donate 10% of the proceeds to support the social responsibility and community work to both opponents SC Freiburg, and Final hosts Beşiktaş.

Beşiktaş will be utilising the donation for their 'Spread Your Wings for Goodness' project. This programme sees the club support children in rural schools across Turkey, by providing educational resources such as books, tablets, stationery, and other materials that contribute to their development and learning opportunities.

Ege Budak from Beşiktaş said "On behalf of the entire Beşiktaş JK family, thank you so much for your generous and meaningful donation. Your support will directly touch the lives of many children, and we are truly grateful for your contribution."

Meanwhile, SC Freiburg will be using the Foundation's donation for their 'Moving More Together' programme. This initiative supports clubs in creating new opportunities and further develop existing teams for children and young people with and without disabilities across the South Baden Football Association region.

"Despite all the sporting rivalry with our final opponents Aston Villa, we are very pleased about this generous gesture that reaches across national borders. It demonstrates the power of European football and the positive impact that clubs can have on society through their commitment. Together with local and regional clubs in the Freiburg region, we will use it (the donation) to further develop inclusive football and provide specific support in team development, skills development and a wide range of sporting events."

Arne Stratmann

Head of Sustainability and Fan Affairs at SC Freiburg

Mascots and Ticket Donations

This season has seen the Foundation benefit from several additional opportunities provided by the club including match day tickets and mascots.

We distributed more than 4,000 match tickets to local primary schools. Many of these pupils would otherwise never have been able to experience a football match. Participants reported that these opportunities gave them a sense of belonging; some became new Aston Villa fans and developed a love for the club.

Three pupils from St Edward's Primary School walked out at a Europa League match against RC Salzburg, whilst eleven pupils from Arden Primary School walked out in the FA Cup fixture against Newcastle United. For many, this was a once in a lifetime moment: meeting players, collecting autographs, and stepping onto the pitch in front of more than 42,000 supporters. Beyond the excitement, these experiences helped pupils overcome nerves, build resilience and step confidently outside comfort zones.

> "They absolutely loved it. For many of them it was the first ever football match they had attended so joy all around. It is so gratefully received by our most disadvantaged families."
>
> Mrs Bannister
>
> Headteacher, St Gerards Catholic Primary School



Ahmed is named 2026 Community Captain

Coinciding with the 20th anniversary of Premier League Kicks, clubs across the country named their Premier League 'More than a Game' Community Captain linked to their Premier League Kicks activity – someone who deserves recognition for their contribution to the game and society.

Ahmed was chosen for the award for his outstanding efforts to the Foundation and the local community, working for the Foundation for over five years as part of the Youth Engagement team.

Ahmed was presented with the award by men's captain John McGinn at Villa's Bodymoor Heath training base and took part in the pre-game coin toss. Seven Premier League Kicks participants also joined Ahmed pitch side to watch the team warm up.

Ross Alexander, Head of Foundation and Community "Ahmed is an unsung hero of the Foundation, a valued member of staff who represents Aston Villa and the Foundation in a positive and inspiring way to individuals in the local community.



Eleven Sports Media Community Partnership Scheme

Eleven Sports Media became an official partner of the Aston Villa Foundation, strengthening the club's commitment to its deep community roots while empowering local businesses through a unique new partnership programme.

Under the multi-year agreement, Eleven, leaders in hyperlocal sports marketing, will make a significant seven-figure investment into the Foundation, introducing its landmark Foundation Community Partnership to Villa Park, enabling small and medium-sized businesses across the West Midlands to showcase their brand on matchdays, connect at exclusive events, access bespoke marketing campaigns and engage with the fanbase of one of the most historic names in football.

40
Community Partners Engaged and Onboarded

ELEVEN

Sports Illustrated Warehouse Hosts Eid Prayer

The Sports Illustrated Warehouse at Villa Park played host to a community Eid Prayer that brought together 700 Aston residents to mark the festival of Eid al-Adha.

The event, which was held on 27 May, was organised by Aston Villa and the Aston Villa Foundation, in partnership with Councillor Mumtaz Hussain and the Witton Islamic Centre, creating of a welcoming space where residents could observe the prayer and connect with one another. The gathering created a sense of unity and inclusion, reflecting the values of faith, togetherness, and mutual respect at the heart of Eid. The prayer also served as a reminder of the shared commitment within Aston to strengthen community bonds and promote cohesion between residents, the Aston Villa Foundation and Aston Villa Football Club.





Christmas Meal

With thanks to Club partner Levy UK for their donation, we held our Community Festive Meal for over 80 guests from Age UK's Dementia Café and Ladywood and Perry Bar Neighbourhood Network Schemes. Targeted at socially isolated older people.

Hosted by friend of the Foundation and lifelong Villa fan Nigel Boyle, guests were treated to a delicious 3-course meal, and a game of bingo. 11 players from Aston Villa's U18's Squad were also in attendance, chatting with guests and distributing Christmas treats.

> "Gestures like this make a real difference people feel genuinely connected to Aston Villa. When the junior players came out to greet everyone, the joy on the attendees' faces said it all. It was a moment that truly captured the spirit of the afternoon."
>
> Cllr Mumtaz Hussain

Foundation Delivers Programme In Rotterdam

Aston Villa Foundation helped host a social and community exchange with our friends at Feyenoord, ahead of last week's UEFA Europa League meeting with the Dutch outfit.

Villa made a first visit to De Kuip since winning the 1982 European Cup there for their second Europa League outing of the season, triumphing 2-0.

And in the lead-up to the game, Feyenoord invited a delegation of staff from the Villa Foundation over to Rotterdam to work alongside staff from their Foundation in delivering a week-long programme of activities and events – linked to the UEFA Take Care programme.

Staff from the Primary School Sport and Youth Engagement teams made the trip and delivered a range of sessions, including classroom-based educational workshops, a mental health programme and football training.

150 local children and young people also attended a UEFA Europa League sporting event in the city centre, attended by former player Ron Vlaar who made over 200 appearances for Aston Villa and Feyenoord.

The idea of the initiative was a knowledge, information and cultural exchange for staff from both clubs to learn about each other's work in our respective communities, but also a valuable experience for children and young people from Rotterdam to meet with staff from other countries and backgrounds.

The programme harnessed the power of sport as a catalyst for social development, and helped strengthen the ties between the two clubs, on what was a hugely significant occasion for Aston Villa Football Club, as they revisited Rotterdam for the first time since the most famous day in the club's history in 1982.


STAFF
ASTON VILLA
Media Markt

Benjamin Zephaniah Localism Award Winners

The Aston Villa Foundation and the family of Benjamin Zephaniah have recognised eight inspiring individuals through the second annual Benjamin Zephaniah Localism Awards.

The awards celebrate the life and legacy of the legendary writer, poet and former Foundation ambassador, shining a light on people whose dedication, compassion and leadership embody the spirit of 'localism' - making a lasting difference within their communities.

Award winners were invited to a matchday hospitality experience, also receiving a trophy for their hard work and dedication.



Suze Carter was recognised for her community work in Brandwood through OurScene CIC, delivering local initiatives, events and volunteering activities that support residents and strengthen community connections.

Hafizah Bint Rashid was honoured for her leadership as Chair of the Youth Forum at Legacy WM and her volunteering efforts, helping young people build confidence, have their voices heard and access inclusive sporting opportunities.

Adil Parkar was recognised for his work promoting community cohesion in Aston, bringing people together across different backgrounds and helping local organisations become more inclusive and community focused.

Farooq Hussain was honoured for his dedication to grassroots football through Real Aston, creating opportunities for young people to develop, gain confidence and connect with their community.

Diane Powell was recognised for her long-standing commitment to education and community life in Handsworth, supporting generations of local families through her dedication and care.

Chris Smith was honoured for almost 50 years of voluntary service to youth sport, providing inclusive sporting opportunities and supporting thousands of children across Birmingham.

Theresa Senior was recognised for her volunteering with Witton Lodge Community Association, helping bring people together and strengthen the Perry Common community.

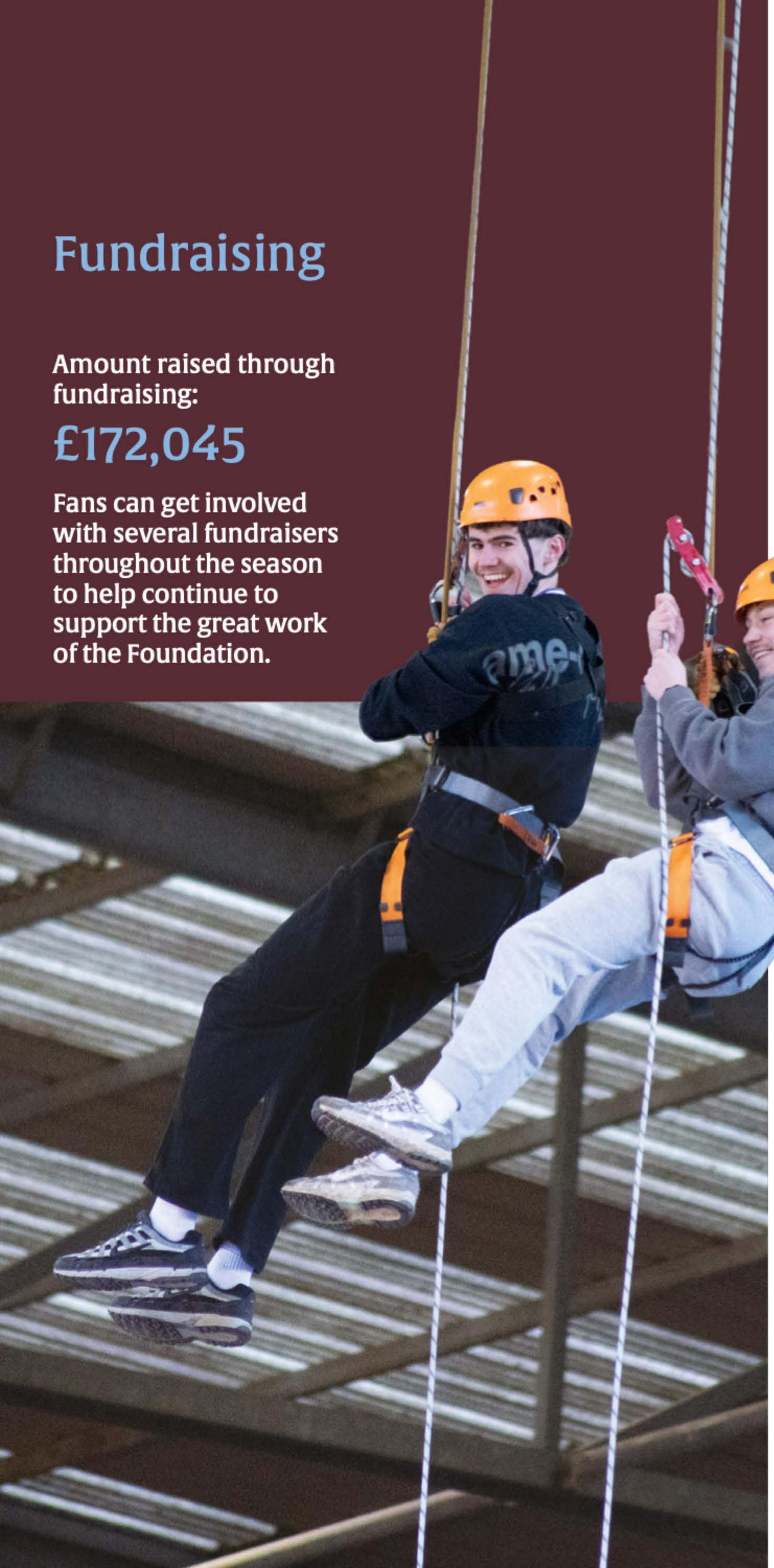
Shakeel Hussain was honoured for 15 years of dedication to Birmingham Youth Sports Academy, supporting young people through football programmes that promote confidence, teamwork and personal development.

Fundraising

Amount raised through fundraising:

£172,045

Fans can get involved with several fundraisers throughout the season to help continue to support the great work of the Foundation.



Heart of our Club: Round Up your Ticket Purchase

When purchasing tickets online, supporters have the option to either donate or round up their purchase to the nearest pound, with 100% of proceeds donated to the Aston Villa Foundation.

Funds raised have had significant impact on our disability programmes, providing essential equipment, kits and coaching staff, ensuring more young people with additional needs can access inclusive football opportunities.

Since its inception in 2021, over £100,000 has been raised.

To help connect Villa fans to the Foundation, we invited Villa fan Jude Aston to Bodymoor Heath to see the impact of the Foundation's Ability Counts programme first hand, during a 'Play on the Pitch' experience.

Punjabi Villans Support Foundation through Vaisakhi Event

As part of their Vaisakhi celebrations this year, Aston Villa fan group Punjabi Villans raised over £1,000 for the Aston Villa Foundation.

Prior to Villa's clash against Sunderland on Sunday, April 19th, the fan group celebrated with a Vaisakhi Mela at the Trinity Stage, with performances from the Wiggles, Gurcharan Mall, Steven Sahota and Ultimate Bhangra, and talks from former Aston Villa Player Tony Daley.

The money raised from the event supported the continued work of the Everybody's Game programme.

Aston Villa fan and Social Media Influencer Conor Carter completed a challenge inspired by 1874, the year Aston Villa was founded, walking 187.4 laps of the football pitch at Villa Park, with each lap representing a decade of Aston Villa's history.

Conor raised an amazing £2,000 through his efforts for the Foundation. We would like to extend a thank you to Conor and all Villans who helped fundraise for the Foundation this season.



ASPIRATIONS

In the heart of Villa Park there is a building designated by planning conditions for community usage, which has been sitting empty for two years. We would like to make our home.



Located on the old Aston Lower Grounds, there has been a building on the site since approximately 1884. The building became 'The Pavillion Electric Theatre' in 1911, with other known uses for the building acting as a social club, bingo hall, roller skating rink and a snooker club.

The neighbourhoods that surround Villa Park are amongst the most deprived in the country, facing significant health, social and economic inequalities.

The building will become a hub site for the Aston Villa Foundation's community outreach.

During the 2025/26 season, design work began on the new building. The plans allocate space for three bespoke classrooms that can accommodate groups of different sizes and teaching approaches. Creative studios will support learning in music, art and digital production, creating a new strand of provision for the Foundation. A fitness room with access to an external courtyard will promote health, wellbeing and physical activity.

A multi-use games area (MUGA) is also being developed outside the building located next to the new Warehouse space, open on non-match days offering multi-sport activities.

“Becoming the first patron of the Aston Villa Foundation’s Founders Club is something both myself and the business are incredibly proud of.

As a lifelong Villa fan and season ticket holder, I’ve always felt a strong connection to the club and its community. As a business, we’re passionate about giving back and supporting initiatives that create a lasting impact.

We’re delighted to play our part in supporting the Foundation’s future and helping it continue the fantastic work it does across the community.”

Steve Jones

Crown Highways Ltd Chairman



Connecting Communities Fund

Wembley Stadium Foundation's Communities Fund is supporting thousands of young people across Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester and Newcastle to get active and express themselves over the next two years.

Over the next two years, in the build-up to UEFA EURO 2028 UK & Ireland, experienced local and national partners will deliver programmes across London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle, reaching those facing the greatest barriers to taking part and helping to close the gap in access to football, music and other sports and creative activities. The fund will support more young people feel a sense of ownership and pride in their city, and build a legacy for sport, movement and performing arts.

With the Connecting Communities Fund investing £1 million over the next two years, the Aston Villa Foundation has been appointed as Birmingham's expert local partner to award community grants to grassroots projects. The Foundation understands local needs and will help ensure that funding and support reach the organisations best placed to create impact in their communities.

"Wembley has a unique place in our national sporting and cultural life, and through the Connecting Communities Fund we want to use that platform to open doors for young people who too often face barriers to taking part."

Paul Findlay, CEO, Wembley Stadium Foundation

WEMBLEY STADIUM FOUNDATION

Project 1874

Project 1874 is a new Aston Villa Foundation initiative designed to create pathways, stronger networks and different expectations in terms of addressing prevalent issues of low educational attainment, unemployment, and poor health in the Ladywood ward of Birmingham, supported by strategic collaboration with Birmingham City Council and Berkeley St Joseph. Ladywood is one of Birmingham's most populous with a distinctly young demographic: 46.5% of residents are aged 25–44, and over 20% are under 24. Despite this, support systems for young people are fragmented.

Over a 3-year period, the project will cover four main themes: Youth Engagement (Education, Safety & Cohesion), Health & Wellbeing, Employability & Skills and Wider Community Engagement, to combat persistent issues including youth crime and anti-social behaviour, physical and mental health inequalities and unemployment.

The project will be funded through the Premier League, the Professional Footballer's Association and Birmingham City Council.

Premier League Foundation · Professional Footballers' Association · Birmingham City Council





Premier League Fans Fund

Following a successful delivery of initiatives in 2024, we are once again delivering a fan-focused project with support from the Premier League Fans Fund. The Premier League Fans Fund provides grants to support football clubs at all levels of the game to strengthen connections between them, their fans, and local communities.

The fund supports a range of fan-focused and fan-led projects, helping to foster a sense of belonging through meaningful engagement. This includes schemes for under-represented groups, to further develop an inclusive and welcoming matchday experience for everyone.

Our Premier League Fans Fund project will be made up of three strands:

For the Women's Super League (WSL) strand, we will deliver a fan-focused, community-led programme that strengthens the connection between Aston Villa Football Club, its supporters, and local communities by placing female fans at the heart of meaningful engagement, responding directly to the growth of women's football, the recent success of the club's women's team, and the need to better engage underrepresented fan groups.

We will deliver targeted community activations, co-designed through consultation with female fans, local residents/partners, and Aston Villa Women FC, ensuring the project reflects local need and embeds fan voice and club involvement throughout.

Villa Voices is our new fan-led programme designed to strengthen the connection between Aston Villa Football Club, its supporters, and the wider local community. The project places meaningful fan engagement at its core, ensuring supporters are not only participants but active contributors in shaping activities that reflect their identity, needs, and aspirations.

Working with local stakeholders and the Fan Advisory Board, we will recruit 50 people per cohort, bringing fans and local residents together, creating stronger bonds with a series of workshops and strengthen community cohesion for the 'Aston Villa Community'.

Premier League
Fans Fund

FOUNDATION

avfc.co.uk/foundation