

Dear Lucy Frazer,

We want to save the FA Cup.

The FA Cup is the oldest football competition in the world and the decision to remove FA Cup replays from the first-round proper further undermines its prestige and does nothing to help protect our cherished football pyramid.

The Premier League's influence in this decision is yet another example of football's growing divide that has seen the gaps between and within divisions grow at all levels.

Participating clubs in the FA Cup were not consulted. Our clubs as well as the fans have been let down.

We are determined to see this decision reversed and fully support amending the Football Governance Bill to make sure such a move can never happen again without the backing of a majority of eligible clubs.

FA Cup replays create lasting memories for generations of football fans – and it is those memories that are priceless.

Go to any club and there will be photos on the walls of great Cup memories, while their fans will be able to recall those magical FA Cup nights.

We all remember ties like Cambridge United v Manchester United (2015), Hereford United v Newcastle United (1972), Leeds United v Wimbledon (1975), Arsenal v Leyton Orient (2011), and Watford v Tranmere (2020).

This whole flawed process has devalued the most prized domestic cup competition in the world.

It is not just about finances, it is about the power dynamics within football. That needs to be overhauled.

Concerns about a packed calendar also do not stand up.

In the last 10 years, there have been fewer than 10 occasions when a club playing in European football has been taken to an FA Cup replay.

Meanwhile, a Premier League club that qualifies for the Champions League - and there will be only four of them in the 2024/25 season - will play a minimum of **50 matches**. That includes 38 league games, at least one in the FA Cup, one in the EFL Cup, and 10 Champions League group-stage fixtures.

However, League One and League Two clubs - and there are 48 of them - will play a minimum of **51 matches** (46 in the league, a minimum of one FA Cup and one EFL Cup tie, and three EFL trophy group games). That's **11 more** than Premier League clubs that don't qualify for Europe.

In the National League the situation is also packed with a minimum of **48 matches** for their 72 clubs (46 in the League, and a minimum of one each in the FA Cup and the FA Trophy).

This decision needs to be overturned.

This decision has become totemic for how the game is being run. Decisions are being made behind closed doors. There is a lack of transparency, a lack of consistency, and a lack of fairness.

We, the undersigned, call for an immediate reinstatement of FA Cup replays and are encouraging all supporters to lobby their MPs to back the Fair Game amendment.

Neil Hart, Chief Executive, Bolton Wanderers
Nick Hawker, Chair, Exeter City
Mark Devlin, Chief Executive, Leyton Orient
Tom Gorringe, Chief Executive, Bristol Rovers
Neil Peters, Head of Business Operations, Wycombe Wanderers
Nigel Clibbens, Chief Executive, Carlisle United
Clive Nates, Chair, Lincoln City
Mick Buckley, Chair, AFC Wimbledon
Andy Holt, Owner, Accrington Stanley
Gareth Evans, Secretary, Newport County AFC
Anthony Hall, Chief Executive, Swindon Town
Mark Palios, Co-owner, Tranmere Rovers
Jason Stockwood, Co-owner, Grimsby Town
Martin Copus, Director, Sutton United
Bill Waterson, Co-Chairman, Altrincham FC
Neil Pinkerton, Chair, Gateshead FC
Damian Irvine, Chief Executive, Ebbsfleet United
Simon Gauge, Chair, Rochdale AFC
Matt and Julie-Anne Uggla, Co-owners, York City FC
Marc White, Owner, Dorking Wanderers
Geoff Thompson, Chair, South Shields FC
Mike Vickers, Director, Chester FC
David Johnston, Chief Executive, Darlington FC
Stephen Cleeve, Co-owner, King's Lynn Town FC
Stuart Robins, Director, Yeovil Town FC
Lee Harding, Chair, Braintree Town FC
Nick Blofeld, Chair, Bath City FC
Simon Gardener, Chair, Farnborough FC
Oliver Ash, Co-owner, Maidstone United
David Netherstreet, Club President, Tonbridge Angels FC
David Boggins, Chair, Hemel Hempstead Town FC
Jack Miller, Chair, Basingstoke Town
Karl Lindsay, Chair, Taunton Town
Paul Leary, Chair, Marine FC
Jim Ayres, Business Manager, Salisbury FC
Phil Young, Chair, Bury FC