



**OUR
BIGGEST
ONE YET!**



FSOA newsletter

A growing community

What a month it's been for the FSOA community. Our Autumn Conference proved to be the biggest and best yet - two days that perfectly captured the strength in depth across our membership and partners.

From powerful discussions to shared learning and new innovations, the event highlighted just how far we've come together as a professional community - and how much more we can achieve by continuing to support one another.

You'll also find updates on our latest developments, partnership news, and a look ahead to what's next for the FSOA. As always, thank you for your continued support, collaboration, and commitment to making our industry safer and stronger.



Coming up

- THANKS TO ALL MEMBERS
- CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE
- WORKING WITH OTHER SPORTS
- AWARD WINNERS

Dallmeier renews FSOA sponsorship

We're delighted to announce that Dallmeier has renewed its Gold-Plus Membership and Sponsorship with the FSOA for another term - continuing a partnership that has been one of the most successful collaborations in our history.

Over the past 12 years, our initiative with Dallmeier electronic has delivered real impact - helping clubs across the football pyramid access funding and expertise to enhance their CCTV infrastructure and safety operations.

Peter Houghton, FSOA Director of Operations, said: "Dallmeier continues to be our longest-serving Corporate Partner and it's been fantastic to see how their exceptional products are helping our safety officer colleagues keep people safe in football grounds and the crowded spaces around them.

"Their Panomera CCTV systems are now in almost all Premier League grounds, several EFL stadia, and even some of our national venues. Alongside this, Domera technology is now being adopted by a growing number of EFL and Enterprise National League clubs."

Steve Hodges, Director of Operations at Dallmeier, added: "We're proud to continue supporting the FSOA and truly feel part of the FSOA family. Thank you for all your support over the years - it's very much appreciated."

We're proud to continue working together to make our grounds and communities safer.

A massive thanks to you all!

Our 2025 Autumn Conference & Exhibition was an incredible success. The highlights of it were that everything was a highlight and the levels of positive feedback from both club and corporate embers has been off the scale.

The quality and content of our presenters was exceptional and very much in the mantra of an event "for safety officers by safety officers".

Equally, the content of the social and networking side of the event was top drawer and great fun. It is a privilege to have our long-standing partner host, Andy Ashworth designing and delivering a consistent top level of entertainment for those in attendance.

Our partner venue, Staverton Park Hotel & Golf were a dream to deal with and played their part and beyond in the presentation of the event. When designing your Conference & Exhibition, it is important to deliver up-to-the-minute sessions that deal with the things our clubs face, backed up by the products and services our sponsors and exhibitors supply that safety officers and their clubs need to help keep their crowded spaces safe, and I believe the balance we have is second to none and the inclusion of our corporate partners in the membership and the event at large, helps to ensure that the community spirit I have worked hard to develop, prevails.

When you see the comments around social media, in e-mails to Pat & I and in the telephone conversations we've had, one thing is for sure....we had a terrific Conference & Exhibition.

We are seeing attendees at our events grow well, with volumes now reaching record levels. In Autumn 2024 we had only 116 in attendance which gave the Management Board the feeling that the Autumn event should either be re-designed or dropped.

Spring 2025 saw this increase to 137 and Autumn 2025 to 165, with the hotel pretty much bursting at the seams and Pat & I having to turn down late bookings, even day delegates. We were still receiving potential bookings driving to Daventry on Monday afternoon and some attendees had to book accommodation elsewhere as Staverton ran out of rooms.



Special thanks, once again to Suprema and DCRS whose sponsorship enabled us to offer heavily subsidised places for clubs in the Enterprise National League and below, plus of course our 20 exhibitors and sponsors. The events cannot be the successes they are without you. We will be looking for you expressions of intent to exhibit with us at our next event shortly.

So, all in all, an excellent event of learning from our fellow safety officers' experiences, with valuable input from our regulators and conspirators in sharing best practice in keeping stadia and other crowded spaces safe. We go again on the 24/25 March 2026 at a venue yet to be decided. The message is to book early. We may have to place a cap on reservations.

Peter

A view from the chair

At this year's Confex, Chairman Paul Lewis shared a powerful message about the challenges and opportunities facing Safety Officers today - from pay and workload pressures to the power of data, collaboration and AI innovation.

Vacancies and Pressures in the Role

In recent months, the industry has seen an unprecedented number of vacancies - not only for Safety Officers but also for their deputies. While some departures are due to retirement, Paul posed an important question: is there something else at play?

"The expectations placed on Safety Officers have never been higher - but does the salary truly reflect the level of responsibility?"

For some clubs, the working hours - particularly during peak periods - go far beyond what would normally be considered reasonable. The ever-growing calendar of events, both during and outside the football season, has turned the role into a year-round commitment.

Add to that the rise in women's teams now playing at main grounds, and many safety teams are finding themselves on duty almost every weekend from August to May.

A Need for Realistic Resourcing

Paul also raised another vital question: are there enough people within safety teams to meet the growing expectations? When clubs are hosting fixtures and events back-to-back, the workload becomes relentless. It's not just an operational challenge - it's a wellbeing issue too.

"It's always better to have documentary evidence than none at all - or just hearsay."

While this issue can't be solved directly by the FSOA, Paul suggested that SAGs and the SGSA might help by raising awareness with clubs where appropriate. Independent acknowledgment of these challenges could have a sobering effect, especially if backed by data and shared evidence.



Data, Learning and the Power of Community

Paul also celebrated the collaborative spirit of the FSOA community - especially through the MatchBox Match Reporting System, developed by Aposto, which continues to grow in both usage and impact.

"We're about to surpass 11,000 detailed match reports - proof of the power of shared learning across our community."

Last season alone, almost all Premier League & EFL Clubs and a growing number National League Clubs actively used the system.

These reports aren't just numbers - they're actionable insights that help clubs make smarter decisions. Several members have already reduced policing and stewarding costs thanks to information shared by their peers.

And now, the FSOA moves another step forward.

With AI-powered dashboards launching this month, members will have instant access to live analysis and visual insights on trends, incidents and matchday operations. Paul encouraged everyone to speak to Aposto for a demonstration.

A Closing Thought

The challenges facing Safety Officers are real - long hours, high expectations, and increasing complexity - but so too is the strength of our community. As the FSOA moves confidently into a new era of data-driven insight and professional growth, one thing is clear: our members remain at the heart of everything we do.

Photo Gallery - Autumn Confex



Sharing insight across other sports

At the FSOA, we firmly believe that collaboration makes every stadium safer.

Our #StrongerTogether ethos is about working side by side with our colleagues across all sports - sharing insight, expertise, and best practice.

In just over a week, we'll be proud to support our friends at the RLGSOA Rugby League Ground Safety Officers Association for their Training Day & Conference - and we'd like to extend an open invitation to our FSOA members to join us for what promises to be an outstanding event.

🔍 Key topics include:

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) – Figen Murray OBE Murray
Guidance on the new legislation and its impact on matchday operations.

Legal Requirements for Safety at Sports Grounds – Michael Needham, NGTC Ltd - Exploring current legislation and best practice.

Risk Assessments & Data Sharing – Phillip J Black CMIOSH, MIIRSM, DipNCRQ, MIFSM - How consistent, data-driven approaches can improve safety outcomes.

Fire Risk Assessments in Sports Grounds – Paul Brunt. MIFSM

Ensuring venues are properly protected and compliant.



🎓 Attendees will receive a CPD certificate, demonstrating commitment to ongoing professional development.

💡 Supported by over a dozen corporate sponsors showcasing innovative safety solutions.

🆓 FREE of charge for all member clubs and officials.

📅 Wednesday 5 November 2025

📍 DCBL Stadium, Lowerhouse Lane, Widnes, WA8 7DZ

🕒 Registration from 09:00 (start 09:30) | 🕒 Close 15:30

✉ To register: email rlgsoa@gmail.com

Let's continue to raise the bar together - learning, collaborating, and building safer stadiums across all sports.



**Security Guarding
Leadership Group**

Last week, we were delighted to attend the UKCMA Members Meeting - one of the key highlights was the introduction of the S12 Security Guarding Leadership Group - a new initiative formed to raise industry standards, shape sector policy, accelerate the implementation of key legislation, and ensure that a diverse range of voices are heard as future decisions are made.

The FSOA fully supports the S12 and looks forward to working closely with its members and partners as we continue to champion safety, collaboration, and professionalism across all levels of sport and event management.

Regional meetings

In December we've got two regional meetings organised.

**Our Midlands Regional Meeting is at Port Vale Football Club on December 2nd.
And we're back in Essex for our South East Regional Meeting at Southend United on December 16th for our get together.**

As usual, there will be another interesting agenda and some of our Corporate Partners will be showcasing their products for attendees.

Major award for community use of stadium facilities

York Stadium Management Company (York SMC) has been named winners of the 'Community Impact Turnaround of the Year Award 2025', recognising a remarkable transformation in operations, financial performance and community impact at the LNER Community Stadium over the past four years.

The prestigious national award, presented at the Institute for Turnaround (IFT) Annual Awards Ceremony in London last week, celebrates organisations that demonstrate exceptional leadership, resilience and innovation in the face of significant challenges.

Transforming Operations and Rebuilding Reputation

Since 2021, York Stadium Management Company has faced numerous operational and reputational challenges. In 2023 the company was able to implement a clear strategic reset, building on robust financial management and strengthening partnerships. It redefined its operational model and has positioned the LNER Community Stadium as a sustainable, community-focused venue operator with growing national recognition.

Today, the stadium stands as a proven host of high-profile events – including the recent Women's Rugby World Cup 2025, which welcomed more than 37,000 visitors to York and generated substantial social and economic benefits for the wider community.

A Testament to Competence, Not Capital
Martin Jesper, Executive Director, praised the collective stadium stakeholder effort behind the company's transformation: "This national recognition is the result of clear thinking, stakeholder collaboration and a disciplined focus on operational delivery by the team of experts behind the scenes.



"Successful turnarounds are never achieved by chance. They come from making tough decisions, professional expertise and a deep-rooted understanding of how to build a viable and sustainable future, rather than speculative investment.

"This award is testament to our many colleagues and partners who have shared our vision and supported our journey."

Reinvesting in York's Future

As a not-for-profit enterprise, all revenue generated by York Stadium Management Company is 100% re-invested into the stadium's infrastructure and facilities, driving continual improvement rather than depleting financial reserves by redistributing funds to private enterprises or individuals.

The reinvestment model has underpinned both the financial stability and the creation of long-term community value, ensuring that the LNER Community Stadium continues to serve as a flagship venue for York and a model for sustainable public-private partnerships that other sports clubs and local authorities are keen to follow.

