

**Minutes of the Arsenal Disabled Supporters Association AGM**

held on Sunday 21st May 2017 at The Arsenal Hub at 12.30pm

Present: Anne Hyde AH

Nicole Evans (NE) via Skype

Allan Mabert AM

Anthony Joy (AJ)

Robert Greig (RG)

James Warren (JW)

Steven Powell (Member)

Bernadette Conway (Member)

Alun Francis (Disability Liaison Officer)

Mark Brindle (Supporters, Clubs Liaison Officer)

Tom Head (Member)

Kevin Haddon (Member)

Thomas Grover (Member)

Barbara Grover (Member)

Judith Purdue (Member)

Steven Gamble (Member)

Tim Hyde (Member)

Shaun Bashham (Member)

Plus two Carers/Helpers

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|  | Item |  | Who to Action |
| 1 | **Welcome and Introduction** | AJ welcomed everyone to the The Arsenal Hub and introduced the Interim Committee. |  |
| 2 | **Apologies for Absence** | Redmond Kaye  Ozi Kemal  Christopher Clelland |  |
|  | **Approval of minutes of meeting** | As this was the first AGM there were no minutes to approve. |  |
|  | **Matters arising from previous meeting** | No previous minutes |  |
| 3 | **Chair’s Report** | AJ explained how the Arsenal Disabled Supporters’ Association was reformed. Mark Brindle had asked AJ in August 2016 to look at reforming the association and it was relaunched in December 2016. AJ thanked Alun Francis for his support and the social events the Disabled Liaison Team (DLT) have run. ADSA will also be looking to run some independent social events each year.  AJ went on to explain that there has been an increase in Media coverage over the past few months as many clubs were falling short of disabled spaces within the stadiums. In 2015 all Premiership Clubs agreed to meet the Access to Stadium Guideline numbers by Summer 2017. Interim reports have highlighted that some clubs will fail to meet this target.  Arsenal FC is good and we have 250 wheelchair spaces but the club needs a further 10. The club are proposing to install these on an additional platform at the Clock End and these will be in place by the start of the 2017/2018 season. AJ thanked Alun Francis and Arsenal FC for meeting us in this objective.  Arsenal FC was the first club to have a Changing Places and it has allowed a supporter from Southampton FC to attend an away game. This is situated on Club Level (Block 48) and is available to anyone within the stadium by contacting a steward.  In November last year, it was agreed that a percentage of away fans must be at pitch side. It is not clear what impact this will have on accessible seating.  Since the launch of ADSA we have communicated with our members via email, sending newsletters and updates. We are proud to say that we now have our newsletter signed for our hearing impaired supporters and this is posted both on our website and YouTube.  Sunderland was the first club to have a Sensory Room and Arsenal are looking to have one in the near future.  We asked the club if our disabled members could use Club Level after the matches but this was declined.  Over the last three weeks, we have worked with the Club and DLT to ensure that we have a fair number of tickets for the FA Cup Final and we managed to secure a further 52 tickets for our Ambulant / Hearing and Visually Impaired Purple Members provided they met the criteria.  RG asked what would happen about clubs who come up from the Championship Division who do not meet the required number of accessible seats and AJ explained that they have one year’s grace.  AJ said that for the coming year we will not have a membership fee for ADSA but this will be reviewed each year at the AGM. Other clubs do charge and they do also have merchandise for sale which we will look into. | ADSA |
| 4 | **Secretary’s Report** | AH explained that she was the Disabled Supporters’ Representative that sits on the Fans Forum which meets three times a year and AH has attended all of these meetings. It is an opportunity for disabled supporters to raise issues.  Membership has increased from 128 when we took over to 188 which is encouraging.  ADSA became an Associate Member of Level Playing Field and we will look to become a Full Member in January 2018. AH thanked Kieran Reynolds at Level Playing Field for his support in reforming ADSA including writing the constitution.  Level Playing Field is looking to host a London Forum and Arsenal have been approached. It will be an opportunity for the Club to showcase their facilities and it will be an opportunity for Clubs and Disabled Supporters’ Associations to share their ideas and experiences and to network. AH hopes that Arsenal will agree to host this event later in the year.  ADSA is now a member of the Official Arsenal Supporters’ Clubs Scheme which gives our members benefits. All members have been registered with Arsenal but members still need to register individually to allow them access to the benefits.  We have our own website and there is a link on the Arsenal Supporters Club page and on the Disabled Information page on the Arsenal website. ADSA now has 153 followers on Twitter and a Facebook page which has given us an opportunity to spread the word about us.  AH thanked OK for setting up the website, JW for writing the newsletters, NE for helping with setting up the Bank Account and AJ for guiding us. RK and AM had given us invaluable knowledge on being a hearing and visually impaired supporter at the Emirates and ADSA will be looking to work with Club to improve facilities. RG will be assisting us in applying for Charitable Status in the future. AH also was extremely grateful to Christopher Clelland (a member of ADSA) who volunteered to sign our Newsletters and these can be found on our website.  AH also thanked Mark Brindle (Supporters Club Liaison Officer) for his support in setting up ADSA and assisting us in becoming a recognised Supporter’s Club. Alun Francis has assisted us too over the past few months advising us and we are extremely grateful for his help.  AH finished by saying that ADSA wants to work closely with the Club and the DLT so that they can offer clarity and fairness to all disabled supporters whether they are members of ADSA or not. Since reforming, emails have been received outlining concerns and we will be looking to meet with them in the near future.  ADSA has moved a long way in such a short space of time but with an active committee, Alun Francis and Mark Brindle we would like to make ADSA one of the best Disabled Supporters’ Associations, if not the best. |  |
| 5 | **Treasurer’s Report** | We are in the process of setting up the Bank Account and once this is done, funds of approximately £740 will be transferred from the previous association.  Accounts have not been received from the previous association but we will be producing a set of accounts yearly and these will be available to all members and the club before the AGM each year.  The Bank set up will be three committee members will be signatures (NE, AJ and AH) and for all cheques issued two signatures will be required.  AJ said that at the moment all the members of the Interim Committee have not claimed any expenses.  Stephen Powell said that there is no reason why reasonable expenses could not be claimed.  AJ said that one expense we would be looking to pay for is a signer for the hearing impaired when necessary. |  |
| 6 | **Communication** | JW said that the newsletters have gone out to all members, and they are posted on the website. The Spring newsletter has been signed for the hearing impaired and the latest newsletter is currently being videoed by Christopher Clelland. JW would like to make changes to the format which he is looking into to make it more appealing.  The website is kept up to date and some of the website will be re-worded and ADSA will be looking at a unique URL.  JW felt that we need to grow our social media and encouraged everyone to use Twitter.  Our first Photographic Competition will allow our members to upload them using hashtag (#).  JW thanked Christopher Clelland for the work he has done, but more is needed both on our website and Arsenals.  An article for the Match Day Programme has been sent to the Club and this will be in the programme next season.  AJ asked the floor if they could give some thought as to how they would like us to communicate with them and let us know.  Steven Powell thanked all the Interim Committee for their work over the past few months. | JW |
| 7 | **Election of the Committee** | AH said that all the Interim Committee were happy to stand and had been nominated and seconded. A nomination from Tom Head as the Ambulant Disabled Representative had been received and as Tom was at the meeting, he was introduced.  AJ explained that the Chair would only stand for 2 years but could then be a committee member and/or take up the position of Chair after a 2 year absence. The floor agreed the nominations. No objections.  AH pointed out that this had not been included in the Constitution and would need to be added. | AH |
| 8 | **Approval of the Constitution** | Copies were available for all members and it is available on the website.  Steven Powell suggested that 2 (2.6) was amended to ‘To establish links with other Associations for the benefit of disabled football supporters’. This was agreed.  Steven Powell suggested that under 11 (11.1) that it was amended to include a ballot as well as an EGM. This was agreed.  AH will add under 4 (4.12) that a Chair is only in this position for 2 years.  Steven Powell proposed and Kevin Haddon seconded for all to stand. | AH  AH  AH |
| 9 | **Proposed Priorities** | The following was agreed by the floor that ADSA would work with the DLT and the Club to:   1. Review the Gold – Season Ticket Renewal Process 2. Review the Application process for Semi-Final and Final Tickets for Cup Games and other matches. This includes sending in applications, priority windows, choice of seating and accepting the full allocation of accessible seating for ambulant disabled supporters. 3. Lifts at the Emirates 4. Access to Information   Our members will be updated on our progress over the coming months.  AJ explained that the ADSA Committee has thought long and hard about our priorities but have decided that we cannot get involved with individual cases. However, we can look at whether they have been fair and if it affects more than one person.  AJ had sent a letter to Alun Francis on the 19th May outlining these priorities and that we have requested a meeting with the club.  Tom Head asked whether the ticket resale schemes were available to disabled members too. Tom suggested that the club should ensure any changes to the ticket resale scheme include disabled tickets and querying the visibility of disabled tickets and the Purple Scheme on the Arsenal website. AJ said that tickets can be donated to a charity (Teens Unite) if you cannot attend a match or there is the Ticket Return Scheme. |  |
| 10 | **Questions from the Floor** | Steven Powell asked if we could look at other clubs making sure that there is accessible information available on the website. Steven had found that going to an away match there were no accessible buses available.  Tom asked if ADSA could work with AST as their surveys have a wide reach and could be a good tool for gathering information about disabled fans. AJ said that he would write to AST to see how ADSA could become involved. | ADSA  AJ |
| 11 | **AOB** | Kevin Haddon (Platinum Member) asked if there is any possibility of getting access to the car park earlier for matches. He travels a long distance and it is difficult to gauge the time it will take. AJ said that ADSA will speak with the Stadium to see if earlier access can be arranged for disabled supporters.  Judith Purdue (Purple) asked if the tickets they receive could have the correct entrance for wheelchair users. AH said that this had been raised before and ADSA will work with the DLT and Ticketing to see if this can be corrected.  Judith’s daughter said that although it did not affect them, it may affect a younger disabled supporter where on the lower tier the seats for the carer/helper are behind the wheelchair user. AJ explained that when the stadium was built, this was acceptable but for all new stadiums the seats must be side by side. By changing it now, it will reduce seating capacity and reduce income.  Steven Powell said that in America he had visited a stadium where there were removable seats and this could be a solution for a wheelchair user with two carers.  AJ said that he had been part of a video for training stewards with AM.  Radio 5 Live had approached AJ for any examples of disability abuse from other fans. If anyone has experienced this please could they contact ADSA. AM explained that hate crime was the same penalty as disability abuse and that 1 in 3 people are abused.  AJ wished NE all the best in her forthcoming marriage. | ADSA  ADSA |

Meeting closed at 1.50pm.