

**Arsenal Disabled Supporters Association**

**Access and Inclusion Strategy Meeting**

held on Thursday 18th January 2019 – Skype Meeting at 7.30pm

Present: Anne Hyde (AH)

Tom Head (TH)

James Warren (JW)

Allan Mabbert (AM)

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|  | Item |  | Who to Action |
| 1 | **Apologies for Absence** | Nicole Evans-Dear (NE-D), Redmond Kaye (RK), Anthony Joy (AJ) and Ozi Kemal (OK |  |
| 2 | **Introduction** | AH explained that we will be working with Arsenal FC Disability Liaison Team, Level Playing Field and Mark Brindle (Arsenal Supporters Clubs) to produce a three-year strategy on improving access to information, inclusion and the match day experience for all disabled supporters whether it is home or away. A meeting has been arranged for the 1st February at Arsenal FC to discuss the way forward and the purpose of this meeting was to produce a list of suggestions that can be included in the strategy. |  |
| 3 | **Access to Information** | A discussion took place about the new Disabled Supporters Page on the Arsenal FC website. The main page had now separate pages which now means that supporters can find some information easier. However, the following comments were made:   * It is not clear that you have to click on the image to right of ‘Join the Arsenal Purple Membership’ to find out more information on becoming a purple member. * There is no information on any of the pages about becoming a Platinum or Gold Season Ticket Holder or a Purple Junior Gunner Member. * It would be better to have a page for ‘Membership’ which would includes information on how to become a Platinum and Gold Season Ticket Holder and on the Purple / Purple Junior Gunner memberships. * All the pages need to be readable with software for the Visually Impaired. AM has asked someone to check this and will report back to either AJ or AH. * Is there a reason for the banners that keep popping up as they do not seem to appear on other pages on the Arsenal website? There are two, one at the top of each pages and one at the bottom. Can these be removed? * The access statement is a word document and should be a .pdf * The Blind and Partially Sighted Supporter Services page has a link to Audio matchday programmes but the last one was the 11th November 2018. Have they stopped doing this and if so why? * There is no mention that headsets can be obtained – Season Ticket Holders and on a one off situation. * Blue Badge Parking Page – There is only one sentence and it would be better to have information on who can apply for blue badge parking e.g. must have a ticket / free etc. This could come under the Match Day /Event Day Services. Information could be included on parking outside of the ground too. * Match Day /Event Day Services Page – there is no mention about the Sensory Room (this is on a separate tab), Changing Places, Dog toilets, headsets etc. * Access Statement Page – The banner should be removed between the top line and the paragraph below as well as the one at the bottom of the page. The Access Statement is currently a word document and should be a pdf. * The Arsenal Sensory Room should just be about that room and not about audio information or the changing places toilet facilities. * There is no mention about the Away Ticket Scheme * There is no mention how you can get on the Season Ticket Waiting List * The website should have information on the number of wheelchair / Ambulant Disabled / VI and HI spaces both at the Emirates and the Premiership Clubs * Information on Ticket Exchange to be included / Donate to the Arsenal Charity? * It was suggested that the Arsenal IT Department are represented at the meeting on the 1st February. AH to email Alun Francis. Alternatively, a focus group could meet with Alun and the IT department to discuss possible improvements. * Links to Level Playing Field on the website which has information on each football club. * A page showing the DLT Team – with photos / bio / job role similar to The Arsenal Board page * ADSA link – We understand that this is being added. Is this the case? * Home Ticket Information – Could this page mirror the able bodied for ease with tabs and buttons? Would this be accessible then for visually impaired with software? | AM  AH |
|  | **Ticketing** | * What is the reason for the disabled tickets not being sent out as the same time as the able bodied? Disabled Supporters should be able to apply at the same time as able bodied i.e. Gold first, then Purple/Silver/Red. * Because the disabled hear later than the able bodied for away matches when phoning for a coach space, they are often told that there are no spaces. * Make booking the coach for away matches easier – one call. * Is the Away Scheme official? How can disabled supporters apply? The Away Scheme should match the able bodied where possible. * Do the DLT always take the full quota of tickets for away games. If not, what is the reason? If it because they go on how many tickets were sold the previous season, then they should consider when the match was. For example, if there was a match at Brighton on a weekday, there are likely to be less supporters apply for tickets than if the match was at the weekend. DLT should take full quota in the first instance. * Home matches - The printed tickets do not always show the right entrance for the disabled. Can this be looked at? * Disabled Season Ticket holders who put their tickets up for the Ticket Exchange do not know whether they are sold or not. Therefore, they are unable to check whether they have been refunded correctly or not. |  |
|  | **Access to Services** | * Lower counters on the upper tier. * Information on the website about headsets – how you can book them / how they are delivered and collected. We understand that some season ticket holders are provided a set for the whole season. Is this correct and if so, then this could be included on the website. * Plastic straws available behind the counter for those who need them instead of paper * Sugar / Milk behind the counter for the visually impaired. * Flexible seating on the upper tier * Arsenal Tour information and facilities available for Visually impaired / Hearing Impaired on the website. Discount for disabled available. * Museum Tours – same as above * Supporters find when calling DLT, they do not always get an answer straight away. Can all the staff be trained up to deal with all types of queries? |  |
|  | **Match Day Experience** | * In most cases the stewards are very helpful. However, some are not always considerate and can stand in the way. Is training given? * Lifts – many people use the lifts that don’t need to. Can more lifts be put in to ease the congestion? Is there any plans for extra lifts? * Still concerns over what would happen in an emergency and how long it would take to get those supporters who cannot use the lift for the Upper Tier, Club Level and Box Level to Podium Level. AM (Visually Impaired) said that he normally walks up and down the stairs but in an emergency, he would want to take the lift. * Screen in Stadium – still nothing for Hearing Impaired. Can there be text for some of the pre-match / half time interviews etc.? * The speakers are poor in the stadium and quite often it is not possible to hear what is being said. Are there any plans for improvement? * Are all the hand dryers being replaced? Some have been but not all. * Is it possible to have hot water in the Cloakrooms? Some do but some don’t. * Is the club looking at Accessible Seating? * Can people who have either put their ticket on the ticket exchange or have donated to charity be told that their ticket has been used. * Can ADSA help with advertising that there are spare tickets available to their members? * Can the Stadium Management consider having seating areas around the stadium for those who have difficulty walking up and down the stairs or cannot stand during matches? * Safe Standing – If Arsenal go with safe standing how will this affect the site lines? * For Away games, the DLT to know where the tickets are in the stadium i.e. corner / near the goal / platform for each of the Premiership clubs. * The Disability Lounge is uninspiring. It needs some creative thinking. Can this lounge be in the stadium rather than in the Museum? It is only open before the match and there is no food available. Members are grateful for the tea/coffee and biscuits. * Plans for the TV screens on the Lower Tier. We understand these are being installed at the end of the 2018/19 season. Is this correct? * Information on the Disability Page on the Match Day Tour * There is currently an issue with one wheelchair supporter who is finding that people are standing up during matches and blocking their view on Club Level. JW and NE-D had not had issues with this. |  |
|  | **Other** | * AM felt that the culture at Arsenal needed to change. Are things being launched without DLT knowing / being consulted? * Are the high risers on Club Level the right height and if not, what plans are in place to get these corrected? * Will views be affected for those wheelchair supporters on podium level when the extra rows have been put in at club level? * Some of the wheelchair areas could have flexible seating so that if they are not sold then they could go to ambulant / VI or HI supporters. * JW suggested that we had a copy of DLTs strategy – AH to email Alun Francis to see if we can have a copy. * We understand that the DLT only have a budget of £10,000 per annum and ADSA is interested in whether they have access to other budgets for specific projects. * JW asked how Level Playing Field are being involved with the strategy. AH said that both AJ and herself had met with Level Playing Field before Christmas and they are looking to help DSAs develop and to improve the match day experience. * A signer will be required for the 1st Feb and ADSA will offer to fund ½ of the cost. AH said that she would provide sandwiches and cakes if need be. AH to speak with Alun Francis. * AJ has suggested that a consultation takes place with ADSA members once the draft strategy has been produced. * ADSA / DLT to have pages more frequently in the Match Day Programme. How does ADSA go about this and is there a cost? | AH |
|  | **What Arsenal has done well** | * Introducing applying for season tickets on line for disabled supporters * Having a Changing Places facility on Club Level – not many clubs have one * A sensory room – not many premiership clubs have one * Increase the number of wheelchair spaces * Increase the number of disabled season ticket holders * Dedicated blue badge parking in the stadium * Arrange for some supporters to meet the coach prior to a home game * Arrange for some supporters to visit the Training Ground at London Colney * Assist supporters who have temporary injuries * The Disability Christmas Social is always enjoyed by all * Dedicated lifts for the disabled * Platforms on the Upper Tier were raised when The Emirates was first built. * Worked with ADSA to ensure that we had the correct number of tickets for the FA Cup matches at Wembley * Headphones are issued out before the game and collected after * Season ticket holders can have their own set of headphones for the season * Assisted ADSA in setting up their Association (Alun Francis and Mark Brindle) * Worked with ADSA on several areas to assist disabled supporters with their issues. * Arranged for The Hub to be used for ADSAs AGM for free * Spare tickets are advertised on Twitter * Supplied prizes for ADSAs raffle (Mark Brindle) * New website for the Disabled Supporters * Arsenal in the Community – lots of opportunities for the disabled. ADSA to look to link with them in the future? * The DLT are actively seen in the Disability Lounge before games and around the stadium. |  |
| 12 | **Date of Next Meeting** | Friday, 1st February in the Disability Lounge, Arsenal FC from 11am – 3pm |  |

Meeting closed at 9.40pm.