

**Arsenal Disabled Supporters Association**

**Disability Strategy Meeting**

held on Monday 4th March 2019 in the Disability Lounge

Present: Allan Francis (Disability Liaison Officer – Arsenal FC)

Mark Brindle (Supporters Liaison Officer – Arsenal FC)

Owain Davies (Chief Executive – Level Playing Field)

Anita Crowley (Contact Centre Senior Team Manager – Arsenal FC)

Anne Deegan (Box Office Manager – Arsenal FC)

Liam Bird (Fans Liaison Officer - Level Playing Field)

Anne Hyde (ADSA - Secretary)

Anthony Joy (ADSA - Chair)

James Warren (ADSA – Communications)

Redmond Kaye (ADSA – Hearing Impaired Representative)

Allan Mabert (ADSA – Visually Impaired Representative)

Julie / Tracey (BSL Interpreters)

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|  | Item |  | Who to Action |
| 1 | **Welcome** | Anthony welcomed everyone and explained that we are the first club to hold a Strategy Meeting. ADSA acknowledges all the work that has been completed so far to improve facilities and opportunities for supporters with disabilities. ADSA thanked the club for the willingness to receive input from the supporters and the inclusion of all groups. Level Playing Field are experts in the field and we welcome their input. |  |
| 2 | **Access Strategy** | Anthony explained that the purpose of this meeting was to produce an access strategy and to decide where there are gaps e.g. policies, finance, restraints etc. It was suggested that are benefits for introducing the strategy and that a 3 – 5 year plan should be put in place for supporters with disabilities. |  |
| 3 | **SWOT** | Two groups were formed to look at the strategy from a clubs perspective and the other from the fans perspective.   * Outdated policies and practices * Improved communication for away supporters / access to away information * Clear vision and targets needed * Increase in revenue may be required * Link with community partners * May be unrealistic targets * Struggle to buy in at senior level * Survey * Lack of information on screens for Hearing Impaired Supporters |  |
| 4 | **Moving Forward** | Step 1 – Consultation  Owain has a stock survey and will send to everyone. This may result in more supporters with disabilities wanting to attend games. Any questionnaire must be accessible for the visually impaired and hearing impaired. Interviews could be in a group or one to one.  Step 2 – Priorities  Anthony suggested that the initial focus is on Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired Supporters. Allan Mabert said that there were too many silences during the commentaries and that the colour of the shirts / referees names etc should be included in the commentaries. Anthony suggested that commentary should begin one hour before the game.  Ticketing – The Box Office to look at not requiring proof of disability for season ticket holders.  More transparency / information on the Arsenal website – Disabled Supporters page.  Step 3 – Action Plan – Alun Francis, Owain and Anthony to produce this. The aim is to produce a draft and ask for feedback from everyone.  Step 4 - Measure Success  The aim is to have a strategy in place by the beginning of the 2020/21 season and to build in times to review the strategy yearly. |  |
| 5 | **Any other comments** | Redmond said that the Hearing Impaired were not part of the Arsene Wenger farewell and the WW1 Celebrations. Mark said that split screens were possible. It was felt that this needs to part of the culture rather than having to ask.  Owain said that a check list is needed for hosting meeting / what you need in place for matchdays / non matchdays and events for supporters with disabilities.  Anthony said that Sign Video will be available for booking tickets.  Mark said that he was trained on BSL.  Anthony felt that better access was needed to information / services to access The Emirates.  Anita said that the Box Office Team were not able to answer questions for people with disabilities and that the Disability Liaison Team were the experts. The Box Office receive a phenomenal number of calls per day – 50-90 calls.  The question was raised as to why there was not a dedicated phone line for supporters with disabilities. The Box Office are looking to extend the number of staff and to train them to answer calls regarding disability. Training in future for new staff will also include disability. The most frequent question is on ticketing and these had to be answered by the Disability Liaison Team. Owain suggested that there was a guide available / information available on the Arsenal website.  Anne asked why the disabled season ticket holders had to produce proof of their disability each year when many had conditions that would not change. Anita said that this would save their team a great deal of time.  Owain said that it was important that stewards have the correct training as many have lack of knowledge and confidence.  Christopher Clelland (ADSA member) would like to see a Whats App group for the Hearing Impaired. |  |
| 6 | **Conclusion** | Liam thanked everyone for the invite and the signers for assisting. Owain said that this was the start of moving forward with ideas that can work. Mark felt the session was very informative. Anne (Box Office) felt that there were some quick wins to work on and that moving forward supporters will be able to select their seats from a plan. Anita said that they will ask fans what they want and get their views / ideas, and this will be the start of regular feedback. Allan Mabert felt there was fantastic energy within the group and that Arsenal was high on the table for facilities for people with disabilities. Allan Francis said that he was looking forward to the challenge and moving forward. |  |
| 7 | **Date of Next Meeting** | To be decided |  |