



## **Walsall FC Disabled Supporter's Association**

### **Open General Meeting**

**Park Inn Hotel, Bescot Crescent, Walsall**

**5<sup>th</sup> February 2018 – 7:00pm**

### **Present**

Richard Sainsbury (Steering Group)  
Joanna Sainsbury (Steering Group)  
Ian Buckingham (Steering Group)  
Lesley Buckingham (Steering Group)  
Christopher Light (Steering Group)  
Steve Davies (Walsall Football Supporters Trust)  
Raymond Sim

### **Apologies**

Daz Anslow (Steering Group)  
Laura Greenhouse (WFC Disabled Supporter Liaison)  
Dave Gollins (WFC)

### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

The group were welcomed, introductions were made and apologies given.

### **2. Progress since Last Meeting**

A flyer had been produced (thanks to Dan, Chris and Ian for producing this), and Lesley, Ian and Richard had handed them out to people outside the ground before the Scunthorpe home game and at subsequent home games to supporters in the Community Stand.

A Facebook page has been setup (called [facebook.com/groups/walsallfcdsa](https://www.facebook.com/groups/walsallfcdsa)). Thanks to Joanna for completing that.

A website is being set up by Daz Anslow and a comprehensive report from him was read out to the meeting. Daz is hoping this will be finished soon. The group expressed their thanks to Daz for all he has done to set this up.

An email address has been set up to enable communication between the group and disabled supporters and carers. (The address is [walsallfcdsa@gmail.com](mailto:walsallfcdsa@gmail.com)). Thanks to Joanna for doing this.

A WhatsApp group had also been setup for the Steering Group. Again thank you to Joanna for organising that.

Daz had produced a logo for the DSA and Walsall FC had agreed it was ok for us to use. This logo is now being used. Thank you to Daz for doing this.

Richard had spoken to Laura about involving local schools and clubs and she suggested contacting Adam Davy, the Walsall FC Community Manager. This was a longer term aim when we can be sure the disabled facilities are more user friendly.

### **3. Ways forward**

A long-term objective would be to involve outside organisations, though as previously stated this would be better when we had improved disabled facilities. Hopefully then we can use Chris's school connections.

There is a problem with fans who wish to get out of the ground quickly standing in front of disabled supporters. Dave Gollins has tried to do this but the gate between the Tile Choice stand and the Community stand is being opened by other stewards which is leading to this problem. We will ask the club to address this. Perhaps printing a "no standing area" might help.

Kieron from Level Playing Fields suggested a Twitter account might be a good way of communicating with fans. Joanna agreed to set up an account.

It has been suggested that writing up personal accounts of our experiences at away grounds could provide a useful tool for disabled supporters who are thinking about going to away games. Something we all could do.

It was also suggested that a database of Disability Liaison contacts for others club be compiled so that supporters wishing to travel can contact the clubs to discuss any concerns. Lesley and Ian have kindly agreed to do this.

It was suggested that "Saddlers play" could be utilised to provide an Audio Descriptive service for Blind or Partially sighted supporters.

Level Playing Fields have an Area DSA meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February however after discussions with Laura it was agreed that it would be better to wait for the next meeting before attending as hopefully our group will more established.

It was suggested that the club be approached to see if they are willing to offer reduced price tickets as a promotion to attract more disabled supporters.

Investigate whether the club would be willing to provide stewards with water-proofs to offer to disabled supporters who would be unable to move out of the rain. (Northampton FC did this when we played at Sixfields)

An issue over Carer ticket discounts has been highlighted as this discount does not appear to count for tickets purchased on a match day. Laura will be asked to discuss with the Ticket Office.

It was suggested that disabled supporters buying tickets for away matches be provided with information about the Disability Liaison contact at that club, (phone no., email etc.) so they can discuss any concerns they may have.

It was suggested that it should be arranged for away games that at least one coach could drop off and pick up outside the ground. A notice advising which coach could be posted at the ticket office to help disabled supporters when purchasing tickets.

There is a poster frame on the main door by the Disabled Toilets in the Community stand which is currently not used. It was suggested we could use this as a DSA information point. We could also explore the possibility of other sites in the other stands too.

It was pointed out that there is no ticket kiosk which is low enough for easy use for wheel chair users. This is also the case with the till area in the club shop. The issue will be raised with Laura.

A long-term ambition of the group would be to organise a specialist accessible coach to take parties of supporters to away games. Richard will speak to Walsall Community Transport to see if this is something they could help with. Also it would be nice to be able to hold social events (for example an end of season evening or Christmas party) when the DSA has more members.

There was a general concern that some stewards simply do not understand disability issues. Members of the Steering Group are happy to be involved in Steward Training if this would be of use to the club.

**These notes will be circulated to Attendees, Daz Anslow, Dan Malin, Dave Gollins, Laura Greenhouse**