



T.E.A.M.  
 Together Everyone  
 Achieves More



Bristol City; Bristol Rovers;  
 Cardiff City; Cheltenham Town;  
 Exeter City; Forest Green Rovers;  
 Newport County; Plymouth Argyle;  
 Swansea City; Swindon Town;  
 Torquay United & Yeovil Town



# SWDFEF Newsletter

## May 2019

Sharing experiences to improve disabled  
 access and services for disabled fans

South West Disabled Fans' Experience Forum

# Newsletter Revised Format

I thought that I would give the Format of our Newsletter a 'Freshen Up', after running out of new stadium photos from our 12 member clubs.

## Note re Content

As the Major event this period was Level Playing Field's 'Weeks of Action', from 02 - 17 March, I have included reports concerning our teams.

## Swansea City DSA

The DSA held a social event in March as part of Level Playing Field's Weeks of Action and were joined by Liam Bird of LPF. Over 90 of our members had a fantastic evening, with a q and a with Lee Trundle, Leon Britton and Nathan Dyer. We had refreshments which were covered by our new sponsor, Budget Carpets. Our raffle is always a big hit with many of our members kindly bringing raffle prizes. We presented our annual "unsung hero award" to Denise Ruffell of the ticket office.



## Give us your questions

Plymouth Argyle DSA have suggested that, as an enhancement to our annual Forums, anyone who has a subject that they would welcome input and comments from other clubs, in between Forums, please email them to me at [d.g.munn@btinternet.com](mailto:d.g.munn@btinternet.com) and I will circulate them. Once ALL replies are received (no more than two weeks after I have raised the question), I will send all input and comments to every club. Thanks.

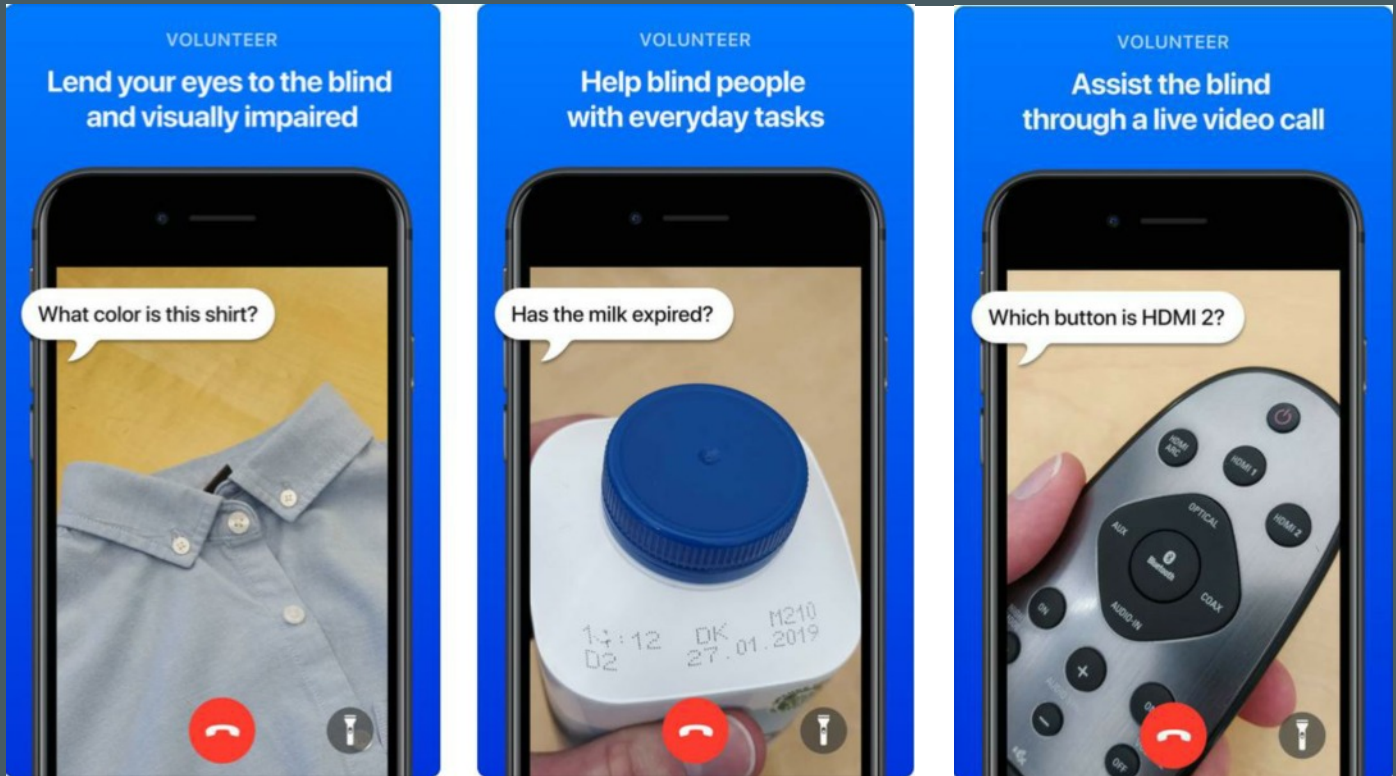
Or you can use facebook page : - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DFSAT>



## Be My Eyes



Lend your eyes to a blind person in need, through a live video connection. You can assist a blind or visually impaired user, through the 'Be My Eyes' app, at any time of the day, from anywhere in the world, in more than 180 languages. Why not give it a try and help the 118,390 blind or visually impaired users, by a small act of kindness with a global impact.



“I’m still trying to get used to this new world of actually literally having eyes on the back of my phone, but it is an enormous feeling of independence” - Marian (blind user from the United States).

“My first call literally changed my life. From that day forward, I could help someone from anywhere at any time, just as long as I had my phone with me” - Sarah (volunteer from the United Kingdom).

### Torquay United Supporters Club

Sam Balsdon, who represents them at our SWDFEF Forums, will run around the Plainmoor pitch 122 times (a marathon distance), on the 25th April, to raise more money for their disabled facilities. He is trying to get the away end done and then work on the toilets which are not up to scratch.

If you would like to donate to his cause, please use the link below: -

<https://www.gofundme.com/disabled-facilities-at-torquay-united>

The current amount raised as of today, 23 April, is £2,010 of a £2,500 target

## Yeovil Town's Disabled Supporters Association event supporting Level Playing Field "Weeks of Action" from 02 - 17 March 2019

As part of Level Playing Field's "Weeks of Action", on Saturday 02 March, at Yeovil v Morecambe game, 17-22 year-old students and teachers from Yeovil's Cambian Lufton College for students with learning disabilities, had a fantastic day with the club, the Community Sports Trust and the DSA. All departments, including the players, team management and match officials, got involved to ensure that the students had a memorable day. The students took part in number of activities: -



A stadium tour prior to the training session, which included a talk from Yeovil Team Manager Darren Way, a visit to the Home dressing room and Gym, plus visits to the shop and dugout.

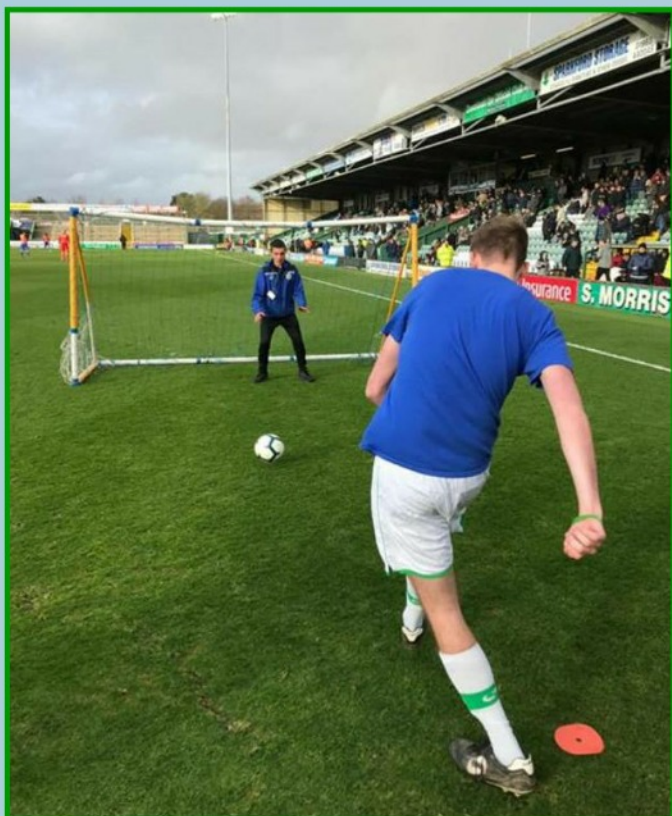




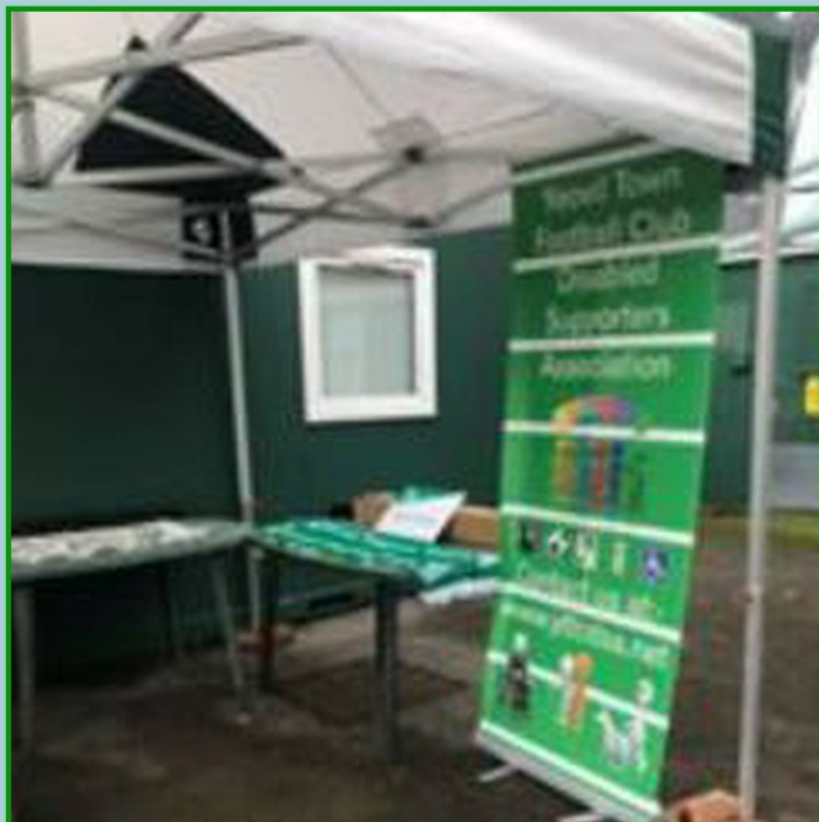
**Structured coaching session from our Community Sports Trust staff plus meeting some of the players and the Jolly Green Giant.**



**Took part in the coin toss at the start of the game. The referee, Antony Coggins was brilliant. He brought a special coin with an England badge on it, then gave it to the Lufton College student.**



**A penalty shoot-out during the half time interval, in front of the fans in the Screwfix & Thatchers Gold stands.**



**We also had a gazebo, by the ticket office, with information about our Disabled Supporters Association, with opportunities of having photos taken with some of the Yeovil Town players.**

## Swansea City DSA

### Cara Readle's Story for LPF 'Weeks of Action'



As part of the initiative Swansea City invited disabled supporters from schools, disability sports clubs and individuals to experience matchday on Saturday 02 March against Bolton, at the Liberty Stadium.

To raise awareness, members of the Jack Army shared their experiences and stories on what good accessibility, with a special feature in the Matchday Programme from Richard Haselgrove and Swans TV, with Cara's Matchday, as the team catch up with Swans Supporter Cara Readle.

[Click the link below for the video report:-](#)

<https://www.swanseacity.com/news/swans-kick-weeks-action-against-bolton>



Kevin Johns MBE (Club Chaplain/ Match day MC) and Mark Phillips (Safeguarding and Disability Access Officer)



## Exeter City DSA launch their Accessibility Booklet

Exeter City Football Club, the Disabled Supporters Association, the Supporters' Trust, One Game One Community Group and the CITY Community Trust fully supported Level Playing Field's 'Weeks of Action' campaign.

The DSA showed their support by launching the club's new Accessibility booklet that includes all the club's disability policies and the club's facilities/accessible information and was put together by Nick Saunders (ECFC DLO/DSA Chair) and Scott Palfrey (ECFC Marketing). The booklet was kindly paid for by the Disabled Supporters Association. Nick Saunders (DSA Chair) and David Jones (DSA Vice-chair) were joined by Nicky Baker from Level Playing Field at the Tranmere Rovers match on March 2 to undertake the launch.

Football, as the nation's favourite game has a key leadership role in promoting access, tackling discrimination and ensuring everyone has the opportunity and ability, to enjoy the game. It makes good sense to provide an inclusive environment with the clubs continued working partnership with the Disabled Supporters Association and the One game, one community group as they do great work in ensuring that supporters with disabilities can have an enjoyable match day experience and 'a voice to be heard' at the club.



## Yeovil Town DSA

Mike Rowsell (Committee member) made a TV appearance on the local news night channel on 12 April. Mike was interviewed on his thoughts before the big game, Yeovil v Crawley, the next day 13 April. Also Caretaker Manager Neale Marmon invited Mike to sit in the dugout with the players during the match. Everyone was asked to give Mike a big cheer to make his day extra special, with the hope that he could be our lucky omen, with Yeovil getting the 3 points that were desperately needed.



**COYG**



**COYG**



**Addendum: - Yeovil 0 Crawley 1 - Not a good day at the office!!!!**



## Yeovil Town DSA

On 25 February & 17 April, Bingo events were held in Misterton & Huish Park respectively. As usual, both events were well attended and the combined amount raised for the DSA funds was £1,200.00. Our grateful thanks go to Tracey Wilson and her staff for arranging these events. The DSA has been so fortunate since Tracey joined the committee, as she has raised hundreds of pounds for the DSA, which has enabled us to continue improving facilities at Huish Park.



**Level Playing Fields ‘Weeks of Action’ started on Saturday March 2nd, for a fortnight. This year the Club have teamed up with local mental health charity “My Discombobulated Brain”.**

**Newport County AFC is committed to improving the mental health of everyone employed at the club, our volunteers and our whole Community and we wish to highlight the positive impact that football can have on everyone.**

**As a club owned by the community it is imperative we support those people in our locality and help them attain better mental health.**

**Over the last few years we have had players who have spoken about their battles with mental health, we have lost supporters who have struggled with this issue and we all know a few people who have anxiety, depression or other forms of mental health issues.**

**These issues also come hand in hand with medical, neurological and mobility issues that some of our supporters have and for these reasons we are using these 15 days to create awareness and how Newport County could help make a difference.**

Club Chairman Gavin Foxall spoke to the Club Website shortly after the work with the Charity was finalised: *“The Club is delighted to welcome representatives from My Discombobulated Brain as part of Level Playing Fields Weeks of Action at our game with Cheltenham Town.*

*“Credit to Director Colin Faulkner who works closely with Level Playing Fields throughout the year on a range of issues reflecting the values of our supporter-owned football club.”*

Laura Dernie, Founder of Mental health Charity My Discombobulated Brain, said: *“We are delighted to be partnering with Newport County for Level Playing Fields Weeks of Action. Mental health can affect anyone from any walk of life and Suicide is the single biggest killer of men under 45 in the UK - 84 take their own lives every week.*

*Anything we can do to raise the profile of mental health issues and to get people talking is so important, and it is fantastic to have such a platform with which to do so.”*



The culmination of the Weeks of Action will be our fixture with Cheltenham Town on March 15th where there will be plenty happening to raise awareness with our partners My Discombobulated Brain. Page 2

### Exeter DSA (continued)

It has been exciting times for our football club as redevelopment of the two new stands have finished and are now fully open. Working with the DSA and with their great ideas we've improved further our facilities for those with disabilities which include more accessible wheelchair areas and spaces for home and away fans and a fully equipped changing places room.

We're still leading the way with our policy on Assistance Dogs, as a great deal of football clubs still don't have this sort of policy and we encourage all clubs to really consider having one as it helps greatly with staff training and understanding how many different types of assistance dogs there are.

## Yeovil Town DSA

### DSA Portacabin base Update

Owing to the takeover of ownership of the football club, it has been decided to put on hold the purchase of the portacabin, until such time as the takeover has been concluded and the new owner's plans & development strategy has been released.

## Swansea City DSA



As part of LPF Weeks' of Action, the Swans DSA contacted Chris Pearlman, COO at the club, re some of our disabled members having the opportunity of visiting Fairwood training ground. Chris kindly agreed to this, with the maximum number being 20.

This was offered to all our DSA members, and names were independently drawn out. A great day was had by all in glorious sunshine. We saw the players training, looked around the ground, spoke with the "kit" team who very kindly donated a shirt to everyone in the group. When the Swans had finished training, they came and had photos with all of us.

## Plymouth Argyle (PADSA)

This year saw us celebrating our tenth anniversary. We held a Disco and quiz which was very well attended the buffet went down well as well. Two first team players gave their time, including our sponsored player Oscar Thelkeld, they circulated the room giving autographs and selfies, so we were very happy. The new Grandstand is well advanced with the roof being put on over the last few weeks. The advertising for the corporate facilities looks amazing so we can't wait to get in there. Argyle have just released their prices for next season and I have to say they look pretty good.



On the pitch we remain only four points from relegation so the next few games are crucial and I'm sure we will all be stressed. Good luck to all the west county clubs in the run in.

## Swansea City DSA

The Swans DSA donated a wheelchair to the club during the Brentford match recently. This will be used to aid home and away supporters in the ground. Mark Phillips, club DAO, is pictured with us receiving the wheelchair.



## Plymouth Argyle (PADSA)

Two of our members together with a committee member attended the club's sponsors dinner in March and had a great time meeting the players and enjoying their company.

On the 24th Feb we enjoyed a three course lunch at the Duke of Cornwall hotel in Plymouth. The event was arranged for an Argyle legends team. The team that Tony Waiters brought promotion to Home Park in 1973/74. Players like Paul Mariner and Bill Rafferty attended as did the man himself Tony Waiters flown in with his family from Canada where he now lives. It was great to remember the old days and it made me realise how old we are. Tony is now in his eighties but was as sharp as ever telling stories from those glory days.

## Swansea City DSA

On Palm Sunday morning, the Swans DSA plus a couple of members, donated 50 eggs to the Swansea Sound (our local radio station) Easter Egg appeal. All the eggs received by Swansea Sound will be donated to local children's charities and care homes.



### Editor's comments

Thank you to everyone who contributed articles this season. The more articles, the easier it is to edit and compile the Newsletter. I hope that you have enjoyed reading it and learning of ways that other clubs are introducing procedures to make our disabled supporters feel important and valued, as that is our sole objective.

I wish all your clubs end the season on a high note. With only 2 games remaining, we could see Yeovil v Torquay next season in the National League, when 5 seasons ago they were 5 leagues apart!!  
Have a good summer and let's look forward to season 2019-2020.

## Hello from Liam Bird of Level Playing Field.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the clubs and DSA's in the region for all your support and work during Level Playing Fields Weeks Of Action (WOA) campaign. The 2019 campaign was a great success with a record 157 organisations taking part to champion greater access for fans. This was a 16% increase from 2018. We also saw a rise in DSA involvement, increasing by 16 % as well.

But we don't stop, plans for next year's Weeks Of Action have already started and we are looking at ways that we can build on what has been an extremely successful campaign. WOA Packs will be sent out at the start of the 2019/20 season to allow clubs, DSAs and fans to plan their events to maximise their impact for Weeks of Action 2020!

The provisional dates for WOA 2020 have been identified as:

29th February to Sunday 15th March. so, save the date!

One last thing: Level Playing Field now has an Instagram account!

Instagram is another way that Level Playing Field can interact and engage with disabled and non-disabled sporting community via social media. Our new Instagram page will give Level Playing Field the opportunity to visually showcase our work, whilst also raising awareness of Disabled Supporter Associations (DSA's) and community partners, continuing work to improve access and facilities to bring about a positive experience at any live sporting event. You can find the Level Playing Field Instagram account by search @LevelPlayingFieldUK on the Instagram webpage.

Best of luck to all the clubs in the region during the run-up to the end of the season and thank you once again for all your support during WOA.



Co-Founders: Nick Saunders (Exeter City) & David Munn (Yeovil Town )

SWDFEF, Coral Gables, 18 Lincoln Close, Feniton, Devon, EX14 3EQ

Tel: 01404 850962 Email: [d.g.munn@btinternet.com](mailto:d.g.munn@btinternet.com)

Editor: David Munn Mobile: 07891 986053