



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 November 2019

Sharing experiences to improve disabled
 access and services for disabled fans

South West Disabled Fans' Experience Forum

Invisible Disabilities

There are over 60 invisible disabilities. How many do you know?

<https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/invisible/>



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 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>

Plymouth Argyle DSA

Online tickets for Disabled is now a reality.

PADSA has been lobbying the club for some months to get this system in place. Nikki Francis has been working hard on our behalf, so a big thank you to her. A big thanks to all the people who contacted the club pushing for this. We have been making huge strides in away games, the latest being Swindon this Saturday and Exeter at the end of October and with the new grandstand due to open soon, things are looking good for our match day experience.

On 08 October, the following announcement was made on the PAFC Website.

Quote

AFTER receiving feedback from the Green Army, we have made an upgrade to the options for ambulant disabled supporters accompanied by a personal assistant when purchasing online tickets for away fixtures.

This enhancement will, for the first time, allow ambulant disabled supporters to buy the full range of away tickets online as a package deal, with a personal assistant included in the transaction.

These will mirror the usual concessions offered by host clubs.

So, for example, when we visit Forest Green Rovers next month, we will be able to offer an additional four concessionary options:

- Ambulant Adult & Assistant
- Ambulant Over 65 & Assistant
- Ambulant Under 21 & Assistant
- Ambulant Under 16 & Assistant



The new concessions apply to supporters purchasing tickets for the New Lawn through our dedicated ticketing website.

Each ticket purchase will be checked to ensure that it has been made by a supporter who qualifies for a personal assistant ticket. Unquote

N.B. Susan Clark of the AFT Board (Plymouth) wrote to the PAFC CEO Andrew Parkinson and Simon Hallet on this subject and said, ““Complaining does work at times””.

Yeovil Town DSA

BRAIN TEASERS

1. When can you add two to eleven and get one as the answer?
2. Which is faster, Hot or Cold?
3. What can you hold without ever touching or using your hands?
4. Can you guess the next three letters in the following series and why?
C..Y..G..T..N..T..L..I..T..F..
5. First I threw away the outside and cooked the inside, then I ate the outside and threw away the inside, what did I eat?
6. The number 8,549,176,320 is a unique number. Can you tell what is so special about it?
7. A man from Yeovil married twenty different women from Yeovil, yet he was not arrested for breaking the law. The most surprising fact is that he never divorced and none of these women died. How was that possible?
8. When you have me, you immediately feel like sharing me. But, if you do share me, you don't have me. Why?
9. What makes more as you take them?
10. From the beginning of eternity to the end of time and space I am in every place. What am I?
11. What have the following words in common? Assess, Voodoo, Banana, Grammar, Potato, Dresser, Revive, Uneven.
12. Arnold Schwarzenegger has a long one. Michael J Fox has a short one. Madonna doesn't use hers. Barack Obama always uses his. The Pope never uses his. What is it?
13. A man wanted to work but he could not log on to his computer terminal. He tried twice but his password didn't work. He suddenly remembered that the passwords are reset every month. He called his boss and said "My password is out of date". His boss said "Yes, that's right. The password is different. Listen carefully and you can figure out the new one. The new one has the same amount of letters as your old password, but only four of the letters are the same". The man said "Thanks boss". With that he could correctly log into his computer terminal. Can you tell me his old and new passwords?

The Answers are at the end of the Newsletter

Put your hand up if you cheat!!



DSA Regional Forums

22 Sep 19



DSA Regional Forums (as at 22 Sep 2019)

From little acorns in 2010, when Nick Saunders & David Munn thought up and introduced the idea of Regional Forums, with the first SWDFEF Forum in 2011, to 7 additional Regional Forums now in 2019.

The above map shows the current DSA Regional Forums. Just a few more areas still to go?

Well done Kieran Reynolds & Liam Bird of LPF for progressing the idea nationally.

Monday 04 November 2019



Level Playing Field (LPF) Reminder

Unlike our regional forums, we invite all members of the sporting community to attend and be part of a day of activity, discussion and action.

The forum will provide an opportunity for disabled fans, Disabled Supporters Associations (DSAs) and other interested parties to discuss all aspects of access and inclusion.

This National Forum is an opportunity to see what's going on across the country and to build a network and share best practice.

All 140 places have now been taken. However, if you are interested in going, even at this late stage, contact liam@levelplayingfield.org.uk as there may have been some last minute cancellations.



Yeovil Town DSA

Welcome to our new committee member Graham Andrews who has a close connection with the football club and will be a valued member.





DISABLED SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION

RELAUNCHING 19TH SEPTEMBER (7PM)
CARDIFF CITY STADIUM

JOIN...

SEAN MORRISON
KEVIN BLACKWELL
DR LEN NOKES

FOR AN EXCLUSIVE & INTIMATE
INFO & Q&A SESSION

All disabled supporters,
personal assistants, families
and friends are welcome to
attend free of charge at
CCS' *Juno Moneta* lounge
(level 4).

BE HEARD.
HAVE A VOICE.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



TO ATTEND CONTACT...

Paul Corkrey
Ppaul69@aol.com or 07903 619654

Kieran Jones
kjcomputers@ntlworld.com or 07528 064365

Cardiff City DSA (continued)

Be heard. Have a voice.

On September 19th the Cardiff City Disabled Supporters Association was relaunched with a special event, a Q & A with the club Captain Sean Morrison, Assistant Manager Kevin Blackwell and the club Dr Len Noakes. We had approximately 40 people attend, and everything went very well. The club provided signed merchandise for a free raffle.

We have a free membership scheme and are in the process of recruiting new members.

The DSA and the club are regularly meeting and looking at ways to improve facilities at Cardiff City Stadium.

Our aim and vision for the DSA is: -

1. To enable disabled people of differing abilities to follow Cardiff City home and away.
2. To achieve equal accessibility for all to Cardiff City Stadium.
3. To increase disability awareness throughout the club and improve the lives of disabled people using the special influence of football within Wales.

Kieran Jones, Secretary, CCDSA

From my perspective as the SLO & DAO it is important that the DSA are back, and recognised as a supporter group. They're an important group for me to meet with regularly to discuss the experience our supporters have at Cardiff City Stadium and at our away games.

Adam Gilliatt, SLO Cardiff City FC, FSACymru

SWDFEF Forum on 15 October 2020

We are delighted to announce that the 10th Anniversary Forum will be held at The Liberty Stadium of Swansea City F.C. On 15 October 2020.



Yeovil Town DSA



Yeovil Town Football Club & The Disabled Supporters Association



Lanyards



Pin Badges



Awareness Ribbon



We have now chosen to join and support a number of National Hidden Disability charities in promoting the highly recognisable sunflower Lanyards, Pin Badges & Awareness ribbon scheme.

What does this mean?

These products help staff of all organisations involved in this scheme to discreetly identify and be available to assist customers and supporters with hidden disabilities, who are wearing these items.

R N I B

See differently



**National
Autistic
Society**



**Alzheimer's
Society**
United
Against
Dementia

**Contact Sharon Swain on 07790 375250
For further information or to request any items**

If you wish to join this scheme, contact them on:

<https://www.lanyards.co.uk/hidden-disability-lanyards/>

Swansea City DSA

Further to our article in the August issue, we now announce that our Sensory Room is now fully operational.



On Tuesday 01 October, Swansea City celebrated the launch of the club's new Sensory Room.

Following a number of successful Autism-friendly events and initiatives, as well as trials at the recent games against Atalanta and Reading, we are delighted to introduce the room as part of our matchday facilities.

Featuring a hurricane tube, fibre-optics and a music player, the sensory room allows supporters who may find the matchday environment uncomfortable to come and enjoy the game at their own pace.

Supporters view the match from inside the sensory room while also being able to sit in the stand, safe in the knowledge that they are able to return to the room should they become overwhelmed.

Our journey to introducing a sensory room began in February 2017 in partnership with our Disabled Supporters Association (DSA).

Since then, the club has engaged with a number of organisations to introduce ASD-friendly facilities including the club shop's quiet hour, between 09:00 - 10:00 on the 1st Saturday each month. During this time, TV's will be turned off, no music will be played, background noise will be reduced, and the shop's lighting will be dimmed.

Swansea City DSA (continued)

In April 2019 - through investment from the Premier League, the BT Disability Fund and The Shippey Campaign - funding was secured to support the installation of a sensory room.

The DSA, who have kindly donated additional equipment to the room, were present on the night of the launch, along with members of the National Autistic Society and students from Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School.

Mark Phillips, the club's Disability Access Officer, said: "We're really pleased that this facility will open the doors to so many other supporters in the community". "It's something we've been working on for a number of years with the DSA, and the launch gives us the opportunity to celebrate the journey". "It was important for us to have this facility for supporters. Swansea City has always been a family club and the community is such a big part of it". "I always feel that we should be setting the benchmark in terms of how society should look at things like inclusion and diversity".

DSA secretary Cath Dyer, whose daughter Claire is autistic, added: "We're really pleased that this has come to fruition". "It's beneficial for all involved and shows that the club is looking after people with any form of disability". "If it can help people and families who couldn't normally come to a football match then that's great. "It was fabulous for my daughter (during the Atalanta game)". "For friendly games in the past, we've had to sit quite far away from everybody and that was a struggle". "But now, we can bring her, and she can enjoy the match as much as she can cope with it".





Yeovil Town DSA
Soccer Sight commentary at Huish Park

As stated in our August newsletter, owing to resignations, changes and developments outside our control, we regretted that our 'Soccer Sight' match day commentary for the Blind and visually impaired supporter had to be terminated. So, rather than let our fans down that relied on our radio commentary, we invested in six DAB radios so those that needed a headset, could listen to the match radio commentary following the BBC Somerset Radio Broadcast.

Waterproof Ponchos

As part of our programme to upgrade some of our equipment that we supply to fans, we have purchased a new set of 10 waterproof ponchos for use by wheelchair fans visiting Huish Park. Each one has our DSA logo embroidered on them. With being sat right at the front in our wheelchair bays, you can get quite wet and cold.

Tuesday night, 08 October against Woking, was the first time they were used.



As you can see, Dave, Simon and Mike were only too happy to be photo'd wearing one.

Exeter City DSA

Committee for 2019/20 season:

Last season's committee members gave a very warm welcome to our new committee members' Will Allan; Mary Fredlund; Janice Williams and her assistance dog Wendie & Allen Williams. All thanked them for coming forward to join our associations committee and are very much looking forward to working with each other on behalf of our members; those with disabilities and Exeter City Football Club.

Chairman - Nick Saunders.

Vice-Chair - David Jones.

Secretary - Sue Harwood.

Treasurer - Trevor Harwood.

Membership Secretary - David Jones.

Fundraising - All committee members.

Press Officer - Will Allan.

Website & Social Media Editor - Nick Saunders.

Football Club Representative - Nick Saunders: ECFC Disability Liaison Officer & Will Allan: Exeter City Community Trust's Disability Officer.

Other committee members - Mary Fredlund; Jeanne Jones; Janice & Allen Williams.

At the committee meeting held on 27th August, sadly Martin Robertson handed in a letter of resignation citing Personal Reasons for resigning. We all thank Martin for all his hard work and time given to our DSA over the years and wish him all the best for the future.

Stadium Tour:

All committee members, old and new were taken on a Stadium tour of the new and improved accessible facilities now on offer at the football club by Justin Quick and everyone thanked Justin for all his help and understanding and taking on board what the DSA was hoping for when redevelopments were taking place to improve and further the football clubs accessible facilities and working with our DSA. Justin also thanked our association for our understanding and great advice given and thanked us for equipping out the Changing Places Room and other projects we continue to undertake.

Bucket Collection:

The football club kindly gave our DSA the opportunity to have a bucket collection on Saturday 14th September vs. Leyton Orient. We raised a total of £63.22 which may seem disappointing but this will help us greatly on future projects (our latest project will be announced very shortly). We thank all collectors for their time and to supporters for their very kind generosity as they do every season.

Exeter City DSA (continued)

Autism Packs:

Exeter City launch Autism packs sponsored by Exeter City Disabled Supporters Association and Junior Grecians. The Packs aim to make matchdays a inclusive to all.

To further the football club's commitment to making matchdays inclusive to all, Exeter City have created Autism packs. The club has teamed up with the Junior Grecians and the Exeter City Disabled Supporters Association, who have kindly sponsored the packs.

Oldham Athletic and Plymouth Argyle have introduced similar packs in the last couple of seasons and as there are more people with disabilities wanting to watch live local football, it's a no brainer as a fans owned club to introduce our own Autism packs here at St James Park.

The packs are for supporters who have Autism or a condition on the Autism Spectrum and aim to help make their matchday experience more enjoyable and comfortable. The items will come complete with an Exeter City draw string bag and includes the following:

- Autism Awareness ID Card with lanyard, which can be shown to matchday staff and stewards for when asking for assistance when visiting St James Park.
- An easy to follow stadium guide.
- Noise-cancelling Ear Defenders (if required).
- Fidget spinner.



Nick Saunders, Exeter City's Disability Liaison Officer and DSA Chairman said: "For the past 16 years our football club have made massive strides in many areas to ensure that the club is accessible to all and with the fantastic help and support from the Disabled Supporters Association over the years in many, many ways. "We are ecstatic to be able to offer these packs to supporters with Autism and to help make St James Park a safe environment and make coming to matchdays an enjoyable experience."

Clive Harrison, ECFC director and Supporters Trust Trustee added: "As a parent of a child on the Autism Spectrum who has faced the challenges of visiting a busy football stadium, I appreciate the efforts of the Disabled Supporters Association in providing these Autism Packs". "As a director, trustee and a volunteer with the Junior Grecians, Exeter City's Junior supporters club, I am extremely proud of what the Club and the Disabled

Exeter City DSA (Continued)

Supporters Association have achieved in making the stadium not only accessible but also comfortable for all its visitors". "Exeter City is consistently striving to be a safe, welcoming and inclusive family club, these packs are a demonstration of that. The Junior Grecians are very pleased to be part sponsoring the packs and know they will be a valuable aid to their users."

The Autism packs are available to those aged 7 to 14 years old and will need to be pre-ordered prior to matchday as proof of disability is asked for (only once) and we ask that this is supplied in person by a parent or guardian as the young person's name and parents or guardians contact number will be added to the Autism Awareness ID Card to help Exeter City with safeguarding as the young person's own wellbeing and safety is paramount.

The only proof required is a personal letter from a consultant; similar or Doctors (GPs letter) confirming diagnoses, this is to ensure that packs go to those who the packs are designed for and due to the limited number of packs available, packs will be issued on a first come, first served basis.

This can be done by visiting the club shop/reception prior to matchday, as stated above.

Exeter City would like to remind supporters that not all enquiries will result in receiving a pack.

For enquiries on availability or for further information, please email: reception@ecfc.co.uk or disability@exetercityfc.co.uk

Torquay United F.C.

At the recent SWDFEF at Exeter City on Thursday 17 October, Sam Balsdon, a regular attendee from Torquay United Supporters Club, was accompanied by Dominic Mee (Media/Supporter Liaison Co-Ordinator), who said that, "It was the first, albeit important step in building up greater understanding of some of the issues experienced by Disabled supporters". "It is a huge boost to have the support from both Level Playing Field, and SWDFEF to call upon if required". Sam and Dominic are currently in the process of setting up a Disabled Supporters Association at Torquay United. All of us at LPF & SWDFEF wish them well in their efforts.

Swansea City DSA



DSA Social Evening on Sept 30th

The DSA held their first social event of the season, and are again grateful to the club for providing the refreshments for these events. Our guests included – Steve Cooper at the beginning, Trevor Birch, Alan Tate, Lee Trundle, Freddie Woodman and Tom Carroll. Eirian Wyn was our MC for the evening, Over 104 of our members attended the event, and we would like to thank the club for all their support. The evening was a great success, and full of hope and positivity. Our members appreciate the support we show them, and always comment that we are a “big happy family.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

The DSA held a coffee morning on Friday 27th September, and would like to thank the Liberty for providing the refreshments and the room. The event was well attended, and a total of £200 was raised and has been sent to Macmillan. Thank you to all.



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Are in attendance at each home match at the Liberty, and we will be advertising this further to ensure all our members are aware of this facility.

Agenda for the SWDFEF which was held at Exeter City on 17 October 2019



sharing experiences to improve disabled access and services for disabled fans



SOUTH WEST DISABLED FANS' EXPERIENCE FORUM ON 17TH OCTOBER 2019 AT 13:00 HRS

AGENDA

- **Welcome to delegates and Opening Overview** (Nick Saunders)
- **Self-Introduction of Delegates**
- **Talk from Interim Chief Operating Officer** (Justin Quick)
- **Talk from Level Playing Field - Fans Liaison Officer** (Liam Bird)
- **Talk from Disabled Supporters Association** (Nick Saunders)

Note: Showing video 'Disability and Football at ECFC' (20 mins long). ECFC Museum produced this great video about what disability means to all at Exeter City FC and the DSA.

- **Break** (15/20 Minutes)
- **Talk from Exeter City Community Trust on Disability Football** (Will Allan)
- **Talk from Supporters Trust Club Directors** (Clive Harrison & Elaine Davis)
- **General Discussion** (30 minutes)
- **AOB** (2 minutes)
- **Next meeting; Thank you for coming and Safe Journey Home**
- **Meeting closed**
- **End of Forum by approx. 15.00 HRS**
- **Stadium Tour of Accessible Facilities for Interested Delegates** (Justin Quick)

SWDFEF Exeter Forum Overview Report on 17 October 2019



The first ever forum took place at Exeter City Football Club back in November, 2011 and marked the first one of its kind in any region of the UK to be held and now the forum has come back home for the 9th forum which was held on 17th October 2019. The forum was sponsored by Exeter City Football Club and the Exeter City Disabled Supporters Association.

The idea for the South West regional forums came from Nick Saunders, Chairman of the Exeter City Disabled Supporters Association & ECFC Disability Liaison Officer and to help Nick, David Munn from Yeovil Town DSA was asked by him to work on the idea of these forums and now there are a great deal of regional forums being held around the UK, all based on our very own South West forums. They're being setup and run by Level Playing Field who will be hosting the first National regional forum at Stadium MK, home of the MK Don's in November 2019.

For this year's forum, invitations were open to disabled supporter associations, disability liaison/access officers, supporter liaison officers, stadium managers, health & safety officers, disability 'community trust' officers and anyone who deals with disability at their club in the southwest region.

57 delegates were invited from 10 clubs, which ended up with 25 delegates attending from 6 football league and national league clubs and a representative from Level Playing Field. Delegates came from Cardiff City,

SWDFEF Exeter Forum Overview Report (continued)

Exeter City, Plymouth Argyle, Swansea City, Torquay United and Yeovil Town. Apologies came from Newport County.

The forum was opened by David Munn (co-founder & co-chair) who welcomed all delegates on behalf of Exeter City FC and their Disabled Supporters Association.

The Forum was then handed over to Nick Saunders (co-founder & co-chair) and Exeter City FC DLO and DSA Chairman, for an Overview of the afternoon's agenda and what the forums are all about and what clubs and supporters alike can gain by working together. This then went onto Self-Introduction of Delegates.

First presentation of the afternoon was from Exeter City FC - Interim Chief Operating Officer, Justin Quick who talked about the latest club's redevelopment of the St James' Road and Well Street stands at Exeter City and the benefits of working closely with your club's Disabled Supporters Association, if clubs have one. Justin started with a brief run down on the different stages of the redevelopments that took place and stated it was 'at no cost to the football club' and the reasons behind this. Working with the club's Disability Liaison Officer and in turn the club's DSA committee and their working group, this enabled the football club to understand the needs of those with disabilities in more detail and what facilities were needed or wished for, to ensure the club was as accessible as possible, on top of the facilities the club already had and with the DSA aware of the financial restraints on the club. New things added to the club's accessible facilities were: extra wheelchair spaces for home and away fans, better leg room, lowered serving counters, better stand access plus the addition of extra accessible toilets and a Changing Places Room with the DSA paying for equipment in the form of a privacy screen; portable hoist and changing table. Justin stated work continues to be done to ensure all areas are accessible across the club.

Next up was Level Playing Fields - Fans Liaison Officer, Liam Bird who did a presentation about himself 'his words, not ours'. Liam gave a low down on his background and how he gained experience by working within the disability sport sector, working with Comic Relief on their Sport Relief and experience of working in sport broadcasting having worked with BBC 5 Live and Absolute Radio's Rock n' Roll Football Show. As part of Liam's main area of work, he closely works with Disabled Supporters Associations and Fans to gauge their experience and how this can be improved whilst also championing clubs when it's (access and inclusion) done well. Liam also organised the setup and running of regional forms based on our very own

SWDFEF Exeter Forum Overview Report (continued)

South West Disabled Fans Experience Forums and Liam will be hosting the first National regional forum at Stadium MK next month. Liam informed delegates in attendance that fans with disabilities can contact him with any issues they may have in supporting their clubs, home or away as without this he can't do his job, he needs fans input as this is what he and Level Playing Field are there for.

After Liam, up next was Exeter City FC - Disability Liaison Officer & DSA Chairman, Nick Saunders. Nick showed a film called 'Disability and Football' which was produced as part of the ECFC Museum project. The ECFC Museum is an initiative led by the ECFC History Group and Grecian Archive team, and is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the University of Exeter. The film, used interviews and archival material to take a closer look at how the Club works with people of all abilities, both on and off the pitch. The film featured the Exeter City Community Trust, and features many of those people who work with Exeter City to make a difference, including Will Allan (ECFC community Trust DIO), Nick Saunders (ECDSA Chairman/ECFC DLO), Jeanne Jones (ECDSA committee member and volunteer), Greg Hill (ECDSA member/ECFC programme seller) and Paul Farley (the then, ECFC Director and Senior safeguarding manager & equality and inclusion lead). The film can be found on YouTube by searching 'Disability and Football'.

The Forum paused for a short break and all delegates enjoyed fantastic sandwiches, tea & coffee that was kindly provided by Exeter City FC.

The Forum continued and restarted with the Exeter City Community Trust - Disability Officer, Will Allan. He talked about what Disability Football sessions are provided by the community trust. These include Down's Syndrome, powerchair and how club staff took part in a session with funny results, Deaf and Ability Counts football. Will is also a committee member of the clubs DSA.

Up next was from the Exeter City Supporters Trust Club Directors - Clive Harrison & Elaine Davis. Up first was Clive with a brief talk on how he became a Grecian and club director and what it means being part of a fans owned football club and his work with the Junior Grecians and also the great work the DSA does at the club, plus how his son has Autism and the routine of a match day. Clive also mentioned about the launch of the club's Autism packs which includes: Autism Awareness ID Card with Lanyard, which can be shown to matchday staff and stewards for when asking for assistance when visiting St James Park, an easy to follow stadium guide, Noise-cancelling Ear Defenders (if required) and Fidget spinner. The packs

SWDFEF Exeter Forum Overview Report (continued)

are sponsored by the Disabled Supporters Association and Junior Grecians. Then Elaine spoke about the great work that is going on at the club on many fronts including equality and inclusion plus again the great work and support from the clubs DSA and praised the fantastic work of Nick Saunders who's been a great asset to the football club and DSA. Elaine said "he deserves the praise".

The forum went on to general discussions and many topics were talked about plus the date of the next forum, as announced (10th forum to be held at Swansea City on 15th October, 2020).

The meeting closed with thanks to delegates from David Munn and a massive thank you from Nick Saunders for the fantastic attendance for the Exeter forum and wished everyone a safe journey home and hope to see everyone again next year at Swansea City. Delegates finished with a massive applause. After the forum, some delegates stayed behind and had a tour of the stadium's accessible facilities, with delegates impressed with what's been done.

We at the SWDFEF would like to thank all delegates for another great Forum and to Exeter City FC for being a fantastic host and providing refreshments. Nick thanked Liam from Level Playing Field for his presentation.

We know that clubs involved with South West forums are very proud of the forums, as we are and how the forums are a great way for clubs to learn from each other, share ideas and showcase their accessible facilities and promote what their clubs are doing to make match days an enjoyable experience for all. This is being achieved by everyone working together and rivalries not standing in the way, as attendees have been able to see this for themselves over the past 9 forums and the fantastic work clubs continue to do.

On a personal note I would like to thank David Munn for his great support and help in starting up these forums with me back in 2011 and to all attendees for making the forums the success they are today. A big thank you to every club who has held a forum so far and for their hospitality. I hope everyone agrees that Exeter City has done great things to improve their accessible facilities for those with disabilities over the years and without the club's support, my job as the clubs DLO, in many forms would have been much harder, so thank you.

Nick Saunders, ECDSA Chairman and ECFC Disability Liaison Officer.

Swansea City DSA at the SWDFEF held at Exeter City on 17 October 2019



Swansea City DSA Secretary Cath Dyer and Treasurer Malcolm Fearn attended the SWDFEF, South West Disabled Fans' Experience Forum in Exeter on 17 October. The main aim of these forums is for clubs to share best practise, exchange views and policies concerning their own club and association.

Lovely to catch up with the founders of the SWDFEF, Nick and David, and meet others from Torquay, Plymouth, Yeovil, Exeter itself and Cardiff. In attendance were DLO's, DAO's, SLO's, Supporters Trust reps and Community Trust reps as well as Stadium Managers and others. Liam Bird, Fans Liaison Officer from Level Playing Fields was also there. Very interesting day, and we have plenty of thoughts, ideas and photos.

A tour of the ground at the end, where we saw their fantastic changing places facility, and their museum. A very friendly and helpful club.

Level Playing Field (LPF)



GLAMORGAN

WELSH FORUM
-
SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday 4th December
Glamorgan Cricket Club
Cardiff



Time
Arrival at 12pm (12.30pm start) till 5pm

If you are interested in attending, please
email: liam@levelplayingfield.org.uk

Forum Firsts – The North East

In the first of two 'Forum Firsts' articles. We are at Newcastle United's St James Park for the first-ever North East Forum.

You only get one 1st in life, your first kiss, your first all mates holiday... best not to talk about that one, and the first time your football club gave you hope that this season would be your year, but it ended in predictable failure.

Well, this year Level Playing Field had two firsts... The North East and East Midlands fans forums.

Apart from the A1, there are a couple of things that link these two regions together.

Brian Clough: The goalscoring prowess brought success to Sunderland and Middlesbrough until his retirement, from where he became the managerial mastermind at Hartlepool, Derby and Nottingham Forest.

Level Playing Field (LPF) (continued)

Fans: Between them, they have some of the most passionate fans in the UK who have witnessed European Championship winning teams to seeing their side lift the League Championship above their heads.

Every supporter should have the opportunity to witness these magic moments, and that's why on August 22nd at St James' Park in Newcastle and September 3rd at Pirelli Stadium in Burton – over 60 people attended from Disabled Supporters Association (DSAs), charity partners, sporting clubs from football and rugby coming together to talk, listen and engage with the one goal in mind, how can we improve the matchday experience for our fellow disabled supporters.

East Midlands forum review follows this report. Below is the review of the North East Forum that took place on August 22nd at St James Park

North East Forum

“We, at Newcastle United, were delighted to host the North East Forum for Level Playing Field recently. Events such as these are a fantastic opportunity for clubs and other stakeholders to share best practice and build relationships which will only result in football becoming more inclusive and accessible.” – Lucy Oliver, Head of Inclusion at Newcastle United Football Club.

Sitting on the hill, overlooking the city St James' Park is a cathedral that invites those present to worship the 11 men on the field wearing the famous black and white. The city famously has some of the most dedicated and passionate supporter bases in the land. So, it made sense that the first-ever Level Playing Field North East forum would be held in this city.

With Club and DSA representation from Newcastle United, Newcastle Falcons, Carlisle and Middlesbrough, as well as some friends from north of the border, Glasgow Rangers, Hearts and Hibs.

“It was a pleasure to attend the recent Level Playing Fields North East Forum in my role as the Heart of Midlothian F.C. Disability Access Officer . My colleagues from Hibernian F.C. and Rangers F.C. also attended the event held at Newcastle United's stadium. Excellent presentations and speakers made for an interesting day plus lots of information to take back to Scotland!” – Keith Ferguson, Disability Access Officer at Heart of Midlothian Football Club

The day was filled with presentations from NUDSA chairperson Joe Ayton who spoke about the work the NUDSA have done over the past 20 years and the plans for the coming years.

Level Playing Field (LPF) (continued)

Head of Inclusion at Newcastle United, Lucy Oliver who discussed accessibility at St James Park, and what's being planned in the future.

We had guest speakers from Tony Jameson-Allen the co-founder of the charity Sporting Memories as well as the triple gold Paralympic home hero Stephen Miller who spoke about his love for Newcastle United and sport and his continuing journey for medals at Tokyo 2020.

“The first Level Playing Field North East Forum was a great success, and we are delighted that NUFC agreed to host it at St. James’ Park. We enjoyed contributing to the day and meeting other disabled supporters’ associations, sharing experiences, ideas and knowledge. We look forward to next year’s forum and are confident it will grow to prove valuable going forward “– Stephen Miller MBE, NUDSA Secretary and triple gold medal-winning Paralympian.

As well as the above, the day was filled with interactive group activities that brought about group discussions on subject matters like parking, ticketing and invisible disability to just name a few, with the forum under the guidance of Liam Bird, (Level Playing Field Fans Liaison Officer) he wrapped up the day inviting all the peoples in attendance to reach out and engaged with their fellow disabled supporters as well as Level Playing Field so we can all continue to build on the great work being done in the North East.

“This was the first forum in this sport-loving region, and it won’t be the last. I’m already looking forward to next year’s North East Forums, and I invite all sport lovers to attend and be part of the discussion on how we can continue to move forward and bring about all our goal, access for all.”
– Liam Bird, Fans Liaison Officer

Forum Firsts - The East Midlands

In the second of our 'Forum Firsts' articles. We are at Burton Albion's Pirelli Stadium for the first-ever East Midlands Forum.

“The forum really opened our eyes to what else we could potentially do to improve the experience of those with disabilities and we were delighted to present as well as host the event” – Matt Hancock, Head of Community, Burton Albion Community Trust

Liam was back in his home region, and the people in attendance didn't let him forget it.

Being a Forest supporter himself, he was in a room with several on-field

Level Playing Field (LPF) (continued)

rivals on the pitch, but with all the ‘banter’ aside. All the clubs and DSAs in attendance (Burton Albion, Derby County, Notts County, Leicester City, Lincoln City, Chesterfield, Port Vale, MK Dons and Nottingham Forest) were there to discuss match day experiences and how we can make them better for disabled supporters.

Liam started the day by reiterating the fact that these forums are for the fans and that Level Playing Field and himself can only support disabled sport loving fans by engaging with one another. He invited people to fill out the ‘My Matchday experience’ survey that will support LPF and other governing bodies to bring about improvements that will lead to a better match-day experience for all supporters.

Just like Newcastle, there were presentations, tasks, discussions and guest speakers to create a day of engaging and informative content.

Presentations from Matt Hancock (Head of Community at Burton Albion Community Trust) and with the absence of a DSA at Burton Albion Sandra Fixter the chair of Leicester City DSA gave the people in attendance a talk on the positive and working relationships between her club and the DSA and the work that they have been doing to raise the profile of invisible disabilities.

“I enjoyed the forum, it was extremely valuable to meet with our local teams and share best practice. Rivalries were put aside in the mutual desire to improve the experience of disabled supporters.” – Sandra Fixter – Chair of Leicester City Disability Support Association

The guest speaker of the day came in the form of ‘Steven Jamieson’ from Alan March Sport who told us about the importance of Audio Descriptive Commentary (ADC) for blind and partially sighted match day supporters.

“For me the meeting was an opportunity to network with other clubs, to see what works well and what didn’t work so well. It is an opportunity to discuss issues that in isolation may seem like mountains but when discussed with others who have experienced the same issues or are experiencing the same issues, you realise that they are not really as big an issue as you think.” – Gary Dempsey Chair of Derby County Disabled Supporters Club

Just like Newcastle, Liam lead the day’s activities and invited members to engage with all in attendance on subject matters that were raised including stewarding and club/DSA relationships.

Level Playing Field (LPF) (continued)

“This was the first forum in the East Midlands region, and it won’t be the last. I’m already looking forward to next year’s forum, and I invite all sport lovers to attend and be part of the discussion on how we can continue to move forward and bring about all our goal, access for all.” – Liam Bird, Fans Liaison Officer

If you are interested in knowing more about regional forums in your area, then please email liam@levelplayingfield.org.uk.

Next up... National Forum

In less than two weeks, Level Playing Field will host their first ever National Forum, to be held at Stadium MK on Monday 4th November.

There are unfortunately no spaces remaining to attend the forum, however, please feel free to join the reserve waiting list, in case anyone drops out. You can do this by getting in touch with Liam Bird at liam@levelplayingfield.org.uk

You can keep up to date with the day’s activities by keeping an eye on our website for news stories, and following our twitter account for live updates (@lpftweets).



Weeks of Action

Remember to SAVE THE DATE!

This season’s Weeks of Action will take place between February 29th to March 15th 2020.

Again, keep in close contact with our website and social media channels for more information around how your local club are getting involved!

Yeovil Town DSA

BRAIN TEASER ANSWERS

How many did you get right?

1. When you add two hours to eleven o'clock you get one o'clock.
2. Hot is faster as you can catch cold.
3. Your breath.
4. S, A and W – the first letter of every word in the sentence.
5. Corn on the cob.
6. This is the only number which includes all the digits arranged in alphabetical order.
7. He was a Vicar.
8. Because I am a Secret.
9. Footsteps.
10. The letter e.
11. Take the first letter of the word and move it to the rear of the word, you will get the same word when you read it backwards.
12. Surname.
13. The old one was: Out of date, the new one is: Different.





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