

# ***Level Playing Field***

***www.levelplayingfield.org.uk***



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2010/2011**

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Disabled fan at the match

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## President's Forward



It is a pleasure to introduce you to this year's annual report along with the Charity's new working name, Level Playing Field (LPF).

In becoming President in 2009, I was particularly struck by the dedication and high standards set by everyone involved. This on-going commitment has been impressive when balanced against the limited resources that have been available. I also underlined the need to secure robust funding to safeguard the future.

It is therefore wonderful to hear that LPF has been awarded significant funding through the Fans Fund. This will enable the organisation to further develop its important works and projects.

Of course, there is still much to do and I remain committed to working with Joyce and her team to help deal with these issues to improve the quality of facilities and services offered to disabled supporters in this country.

In closing, I wish to thank the Board of Trustees, my fellow Honorary Officers and the Ambassadors for their tremendous dedication and support.

I look forward to the year ahead and to more positive progress.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Bernstein". The signature is written in a cursive style.

David Bernstein, LPF President

## Chair's Report

It only seems a few months since our last AGM, yet here we are at the end of another busy season.



This year's AGM, which is our 13<sup>th</sup>, is being held at the Houses of Parliament at Westminster. It is a fitting venue and reflects our considerable progress and the warm friendship we share with the All Party Parliamentary Football Group, in particular their Chair, Alan Keen MP who is kindly hosting this year's event.

Last year, we spoke about our grave concerns for the financial stability of the Charity. So it is with real pleasure that we are able to share our recent good news in securing a significant grant from the new Fans Fund. This news is hot of the press but suffice to say, this could not have come at a better time with our influence, advocacy and awareness projects gaining real momentum. This new funding will enable us to employ several members of staff who will take up the day to day running of the charity. This will take some considerable pressure from the Board of Trustees and will enable us to focus much more on strategic matters. We need to take good care of the relationships and solid reputation that we have built over recent years whilst continuing to influence real and meaningful change. Our key aims remain very clear and they are to ensure that football and other sports can finally be accessed and enjoyed fairly and equally by all.

The Charity has grown considerably over recent seasons but our roots remain firmly grounded in campaigning for the rights of disabled sports fans. However our members now come from across the football and sports families including many clubs alongside our disabled fan base. That's an important aspect for us as we strive for equal access; we have to engage and work in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure effective and meaningful change. We also have to find new ways to keep our issues at the top of the agenda by continuing to raise awareness and sharing good practice to ensure real and lasting improvements. So it seemed an appropriate time to consider a new working or trading name for NADS. We spoke with a number of you about this idea and discussed the importance of a truly inclusive approach that embraces the social model of disability (you can read more about this in the annual report). That made the decision very easy in choosing the name, Level Playing Field. It's a name that is linked to us through the LPF weeks of action and one that most of you already know. For all intents and purposes, we are still registered with the Charity Commission as the National Association of Disabled Supporters but with a new working name – Level Playing Field (LPF). We are not alone in making such a move. Several disability organisations have taken a similar decision to ensure that they move with the times.

On a more worrying note, this season ends with many disabled people facing the threats of cuts in support and allowances. Alongside this, and despite robust legislation, we continue to face significant barriers and inequality in our daily lives. The media has reported a number of shocking cases of disability abuse (hate crimes) and we have heard of several incidents on the terraces across Europe. If you experience or witness any discriminatory abuse (whether verbal or physical) please do report it – we can help you to do this in complete confidence – just pick up the phone or email us. It is the only way that we will eradicate this hateful behaviour from our society.

So, it has probably never been more important to ensure equal access to football and other sports. Watching football, rugby and cricket in particular are an integral part of our culture and traditions – they are engrained in our psyche and they belong to all of us. There is no better way to spend an afternoon (or not, but that’s a different discussion) than by sharing a match day experience alongside your fellow fans and with family and friends. That has to be a fundamental human right and that means that clubs must provide equal and inclusive match day facilities and services for disabled fans.

There is a great deal of good work going on already and we applaud the clubs that continue to improve but let’s be honest about this, we still have so much to do. We have to do this together – all of us - as a team – we’re meant to be good at that!

With London 2012 fast approaching, we look forward to next season with real excitement and anticipation. Let’s hope that the Olympics and Paralympics live up to our expectations and set good practice standards both on and off the pitch towards an inclusive and fairer future for all.

In closing, I wish to thank my fellow Trustees, our Administrator and volunteers for their incredible support and dedication. Without them and their predecessors, we would not be where we are today. I would also like to pay a warm tribute to our President, David Bernstein who, in spite of a very busy schedule, continues to give his unwavering support to LPF and our works alongside his fellow Vice Presidents and ambassadors. Their commitment and friendship is unconditional and their advice, counsel and services are quite simply priceless. A huge thank you to each of you.

Wishing you a great summer and season ahead, with warm regards



Joyce Cook, LPF Chair

## About LPF/Level Playing Field

The new trading name for the National Association of Disabled Supporters is Level Playing Field (LPF). LPF, which was originally established in 1998, is the only national registered charity representing all disabled supporters for football and other sports.

Our objective is to promote an inclusive agenda, to raise awareness, and to enhance well-being through football and sport by ensuring an equality of spectator experience for all fans. LPF changed its name to Level Playing Field in March 2011 as it felt it better represented the Charity's aims to promote inclusion and the Social Model of Disability.

In essence, the concept of the social model is that disability is created by barriers in society. This model promotes the removal of the barriers (attitudinal, physical, sensory or intellectual) that disabled people experience in society, instead of trying to fix an individual's impairment or health condition. The social model is the preferred model for disabled people. It empowers disabled people and encourages society to be more inclusive.

To find out more about the Social Model of Disability please visit our website: <http://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/Social-Model-of-Disability.aspx>

It is considered good practice across the service industry, including sports governing and representative bodies, that there should be a user-led consultation or representative group such as LPF for each diversity and equality strand. It is a good practice solution that is well proven and LPF has significant expertise and a detailed understanding of equality and good access.

Most stakeholders understand that where complex discrimination (such as unequal access and disability abuse) still exists then it is imperative that a user-led representative body or organisation is in place to ensure on-going and meaningful consultation and direction. It is important to empower minority groups such as disabled fans and there is no better way than through an organisation such as LPF which is led by disabled fans for disabled fans. It is recognised as absolute good practice that disabled people should be able to speak for themselves as empowered user-led groups.

## **About disabled sports fans**

There are around **12.4 million disabled people in the UK with a spending power of £80 billion per annum**. Yet, 50% of all disabled people have never participated in leisure or sport activities. That is a shocking statistic.

LPF estimates that there are at least 30,000 active disabled fans who regularly attending a professional football match in the UK and it is unknown how many more follow the game from home as 'arm chair' fans. That is not enough when you consider how many people attend live football each season. For example, last season 13,403,792 attended Premier League matches.

The success of the LPF disabled branch of englandfans shows that this passion naturally extends to the national team with Wembley National Stadium standing as a beacon of good practice.

There is an increasing number of disabled people who actively chose to follow different live sports and we want to see that number grow. The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will encourage more disabled people to follow live sports as active spectators. LPF has also played an active role in the lead up to London 2012, advising both the Olympic Delivery Authority and LOCOG.

We firmly believe that there is a significant opportunity for clubs to recruit new customers or fans from amongst the disabled community along with their families and friends. Providing an inclusive stadium with equal facilities and services which enable disabled fans to sit together with their own fans, families and friends makes good business sense. LPF has many examples of achievable good design solutions for existing and new stadia and is working with the football and sporting family to promote further supporter/spectator inclusion.

### **Aims of LPF:**

- **To be a voice for all disabled supporters and spectators**
- **To campaign for equality of supporter experience**
- **To enrich the lives of disabled people through football and other sports**
- **To raise disability awareness**

## Key achievements for 2010-2011

- This season's LPF Level Playing Field (LPF) weeks of action were once again a great success with clubs and disabled supporters associations up and down the country raising disability and access awareness. This year's campaign focused on the spending power of disabled supporters and activities included disabled fans being club mascots for the day, programme articles, Ability Counts day and disability football events.
- The Pilot Football for Everyone Project, funded by the Big Lottery, which has been managed by Level Playing Field and assisted by the Wolverhampton Deansfield School has now come to an end. A launch event for the posters, involving many of the students that took part in the project from both Deansfield and the National Star College took place at Wolverhampton Wanderers FC in January 2011.
- LPF continued to support the Football League's Customer Services Seminar's and the Mystery Shopper for disabled fans project and provided assistance to their national training event for Football League Clubs at Derby County FC in October 2010.
- LPF contributed to The Premier League's Open for Business E-Book for Club Disabled Liaison Officers aimed at increasing disabled access at football stadia.
- LPF advised the Football Association on various matters including recommendations for the revised stewards training programme.
- LPF continues to sit on the Kick it Out Advisory Group and in March 2011 we supported Kick it Out's mentoring event.
- LPF membership continues to grow. Of particular note over the last 12 months is the increase in club members. At present, LPF has 49 professional club members.
- The Wigan 'Never Watch Alone' Initiative continues to go from strength to strength with the local charity Embrace still running the day to day management at a local level. This is a buddying project that brings together fans with learning difficulties and non-disabled fans on match days and encourages lasting friendships beyond match days and working alongside other fans groups.
- We continue to represent disabled spectators of all sports and sat on the London 2012 Olympic Delivery Authority Built Environment Access Panel which has recently come to an end. LPF is a user-led advisor to the London Organising Committee for

the Olympic Games, LOCOG, London 2012 and also sits on the Community Engagement Team. We also continue to give user advice to cricket and rugby.

- LPF continues to hold an important user-led consultative role in the design and build of new stadia and on-going stadia improvements with experience showing that this involvement has a real benefit. This requires a great deal of resource and probably accounts for the biggest share of our on-going works. In the last 12 months LPF has been advising on new stadia, stadia developments, improvements and advice at more than 30 clubs and venues.
- LPF continues to respond to day-to-day enquiries via our dedicated email, by post and to our helpline number. We have received hundreds of specific enquiries and requests for advice related to equality and inclusion and providing accessible services and facilities from club and disabled fans.
- The LPF Access Audit programme is growing with a number of clubs having commissioned audits in the last season. We have secured special rates with a team of professional consultants who specialise in sports stadia access with reference to the Accessible Stadia Guide, the Equality Act and good access in general. Each consultant is listed with the National Register of Access Auditors and Consultants (NRAC) as an accredited Access Auditor and Access Consultant. To find out more please contact LPF at [stadia@levelplayingfield.org.uk](mailto:stadia@levelplayingfield.org.uk)
- In March 2011 The National Association of Disabled Supporters changed its trading name to Level Playing Field. LPF feels that the new name better embraces the social model of disability.
- Also in March 2011, along with the name change Level Playing Field changed its website. We are in the process of populating the new website to ensure that it is user friendly and accessible to our members and stakeholders. The most popular area of our website is the club section which provides stadia access information along with fans comments and feedback. Fans (and clubs) can share their own real time experiences and issues. Please do add your own comments to this area.
- In October 2010, LPF and MK Dons hosted a Disability Awareness Day. The club invited along 30 students from a local 6<sup>th</sup> Form college. The event saw the students take part in three workshops. The workshops were run by the National Deaf Children's Society who put on a session around deaf awareness, Guide Dogs who brought along two Guide Dogs, canes and simulator specs to run their session and the third session was run by LPF and the Club which involved a stadium tour picking up on access points. The day ended with a Q&A session which involved LPF

Ambassador Danny Wallace, LPF Trustees Gary Deards and Leigh Hutchings and Karl White from MK Dons.

## Wolverhampton ‘Football for Everyone’ Project

Level Playing Field was recently involved in a project in Wolverhampton - the Football for Everyone project. We wanted to tell you a little bit more about this project and what better way to do it than in the words of the project manager herself - Miranda Walker - pictured left. For those of you that attended our AGM last year at Wembley you may recall Miranda's presentation with the School Children involved in the project.



‘I’m always pleased to turn the calendar to Spring, where there’s finally a sunny picture and the promise of warmer days. But this year, it marks the end of my current work for Level Playing Field (LPF). I’ve worked as the writer/researcher on their Football for Everyone project. I’ve loved every aspect of the work, and after having such a ball (excuse the pun!) I’ll certainly miss it.’

LPF worked in partnership with the Federation of Stadium Communities and Wolverhampton’s Deansfield Community School on the Football for Everyone project, which was funded by the Awards for All Big Lottery Fund.

Research shows that there are many well-being benefits to attending live football matches, and that doing so can simply be life changing for a disabled person. The principal aim of Football for Everyone was to explore this further by a) collecting the experiences (both positive and negative) of disabled fans already attending football, and b) connecting with newly disabled people to enable them to find out about both the benefits and practicalities of attending live games. A toolkit would then be produced to disseminate the findings and provide tips and guidance which would be helpful to both disabled fans and football clubs. This would include written case studies and a poster campaign which would highlight the importance of a level playing field for disabled fans. You can see these for yourself by visiting the LPF website at [www.levelplayingfield.org.uk](http://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk)

‘In a series of classroom based sessions, I began work with two large groups of pupils from Deansfield School (aged 13-15 years), fifteen of whom went on to become core members of my writing/research team. The majority said that they had never interacted with a disabled person, and confidence to do so was lacking. Raising disability awareness was my first priority.’

During the evaluation stage, it's emerged that a key impact of the project has been the resulting change in attitude towards disability among the mainstream pupils involved, incorporating a new recognition of the barriers to inclusion that exist in society. Summing up her involvement at a recent event which launched our toolkit, fourteen year old Kelly said, "I used to be nervous about being with disabled people in case I said or did something wrong, and I didn't know about barriers. But I feel fine about talking to people now, and I just want things to be right. I want to be part of making things fair."

The core team of pupils learnt about research methods then went out into the community to interview disabled people. We worked with two special educational settings, Penn Hall School (Wolverhampton) and the National Star College (Cheltenham). Interviews were also conducted at Wembley Stadium and Molineux Stadium (the home of Wolverhampton Wanderers), and the results were analysed and recorded in the form of case studies. National Star College students also went on to feature in our poster photo shoot.

Our toolkit included strong factual materials including postcards, but these didn't quite capture the love and passion for live football which was evident from our interviews. This was addressed with the writing of a short audio play "Mean to You by Miranda Walker" inspired by the stories we'd heard, in which a disabled fan transports the listener to a football stadium to experience the excitement of his first live game. We hope that this uplifting play - which also explores hidden disability - will help to encourage newly disabled supporters to attend their first match and to experience those well-being benefits.

Over 50 school pupils took part in the project, 102 disabled people were interviewed and/or surveyed, 100 people heard a presentation given by the young research team at an LPF event at Wembley Stadium, 75 people attended our launch at Molineux Stadium, the toolkit will be disseminated to reach as many people as possible, and, as this is a pilot project, we hope to follow up with a bigger, more ambitious Football for Everyone scheme - funding permitting.

Miranda decided to give the last word in the evaluation to fifteen year old researcher Asner, who said, "Some disabled fans have had bad experiences, but they are so passionate about the game that nothing stops them from going back. But I feel that it's important that disabled people and non-disabled people have the same equal chance to enjoy football. No one should ever miss out." Well said, Asner! Miranda Walker ([scriptsbymiranda@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:scriptsbymiranda@tiscali.co.uk)).

To access more information and download copies of the posters and all other materials produced as part of the project please visit our website:

<http://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/Wolverhampton-Football-for-Everyone-Project.aspx>

Mean to You - An Audio Play by Miranda Walker which was created as part of the project is now available on You Tube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FjdOMrledg>

To read a transcript of the play please visit our website using the above link.

## **Treasurer's Report**

### **Results for the Year**

LPF has continued to keep a tight rein on costs in light of its limited resources.



The Big Lottery Awards for All grant received for the Football for Everyone Pilot Project and part funding for the Administrator post from the Football Stadia Improvement Fund have enabled us to continue our works. These included the key achievements listed above and our continuing support and user-led advice to football, cricket and London 2012 as well as to disabled supporters generally.

The existing FSIF grant comes to an end in August 2011 but LPF has made a significant application to the Fans Fund to continue to take our works forward.

The Football Association provided us with £10,000 funding donations for June 2010-June 2011 and met our expenses for an electronic note taker to ensure that our meetings were fully accessible.

As well as these very welcome donations and awards we have received various donations from organizations and individuals that have enabled us to carry on with our important works and campaigns throughout the year.

Our limited resources are considerably over stretched and it is crucial that a secure funding source be identified to ensure that LPF can continue to lend its considerable support its members and the football family and to continue campaigning for equal access for all fans.

I would like to say a very special thank you to everyone who has helped us to raise money yet again in the last 12 months. Your generous support is vital to all we do and I am proud to include the LPF Roll of Honour 2010/11 (listing our kind benefactors) at the end of my report. Please do accept our apologies if your name does not appear, there are so many of you now doing your level best to support us - to each and every one of you a very huge thank you.

If there are any companies or organisations willing to support LPF with sponsorship, donations or in-kind resources please contact our Administrator, via our helpline 0845 230 6237 or by email at [info@levelplayingfield.org.uk](mailto:info@levelplayingfield.org.uk)

Finally I am pleased to submit a summary of our financial position in conclusion of this report with a full published copy of accounts (to accompany the annual report) from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010.

Janet Ireland, LPF Treasurer

LPF is regulated by the Charity Commission and is a member of the Fundraising Standards Board. We prepare audited accounts each year and have an Inland Revenue charity reference number.



## **LPF Roll of Honour – 2010/11**

**The following individuals and organisations have generously raised funds and made kind donations to LPF in 2010/11.**

Cheshire and Leicestershire Constabulary's, Tim Burrows, David Munn, Leigh Hutchings, David & Flora Nelson, Steve Wilkinson, Tony & Maureen Taylor, David & Hannah Taylor, Gary Deards, Colin Street, Jeanette Dodd, Alan Montgomery, Steven Powell, John Garbett, Peter Swanson, Judith Burke, William Dolman, Juice Learning, John & Julie & Simon Gawthorpe, John Liddle, Paul Jamieson, Sanjay Chadha, Neil Gliddon.

As in previous seasons, we received a generous donation of £1000 from the Football Conference.

**Special thanks for their generous in-kind donations also go to:**

**For loans of venues and hospitality for LPF meetings:**

Wembley National Stadium Ltd; Liverpool FC; Whizz Kids and Regus Chester.

**For legal advice** - IPS Law LLP, Tel: 0161 830 4710, [www.ipslaw.co.uk](http://www.ipslaw.co.uk)

**For media and PR** - Bird Consultancy, Tel: 0161 839 4846, [www.birdconsultancy.co.uk](http://www.birdconsultancy.co.uk)

**For accessible website design** - Pan European Consulting Limited, Tel: 0845 225 1232, <http://www.pecdesigns.co.uk>

**For annual accounts** - Katherine Woods, ACA, Kavanagh Woods Consulting Ltd, Ash Grove, Royles Head Lane, Huddersfield

**For data management system** – Customers Really Matter Limited, Tel: 0845 310 9973, <http://www.customersreallymatter.co.uk/>

**Thank you for your continued friendship and generous support.**

Please accept our apologies if your name does not appear; there are so many of you now doing your level best to support us - to each and every one of you a very huge thank you.

## Level Playing Field Team

<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b>		<b>Appointed (*re-appointed)</b>	<b>Re-Election date:</b>
<b>Management Trustees:</b>			
<b>Chair</b>	Joyce Cook	2010 AGM*	2013 AGM
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Gary Deards	2010 AGM*	2013 AGM
<b>Treasurer</b>	Janet Ireland	2008 AGM*	2011 AGM
<b>Secretary</b>	Jeanette Dodd	2009 AGM	Resigned 2011
<b>Trustees:</b>			
	Keith Graham	2010 AGM*	2011 AGM
	Jamie Polk	2010 AGM*	2011 AGM
	Leigh Hutchings	2010 AGM*	2011 AGM
	Sanjay Chadha	2010 AM	2011 AGM
	Tony Taylor	2010 AGM	2011 AGM
<b>STAFF</b>			
<b>Administrator</b>	Jackie Newing	Appointed July 2010	
<b>Volunteers</b>	Elaine Brown	(database, admin)	
	June Wrattan	(awards)	

<b>HONORARY OFFICERS</b>		
<b>Position</b>		<b>Experience</b>
<b>President:</b>	David Bernstein	The FA Chairman
<b>Vice Presidents:</b>		
Politics, football	Lord Rosser of Ickenham	VP, Ryman Isthmian League
	Lord Faulkner of Worcester	VP, Football Conference
Football, commercial	Andrew Shaw	Director, Football Conference
Football, media and PR, commercial	Chris Bird	Chairman, Bird Consultancy
Football, legal	Chris Farnell	IPS Law
Charities	Phil Friend, OBE	Chair RADAR
Stadia Access	Jim Froggatt	FLA inspector (retired)
<b>Ambassadors:</b>		
Football, ex-player	Danny Wallace Danny Mills	
England amputee team	Steve Johnson	
Patron	Trevor Brooking	