

Hello everyone. Well, it's safe to say it has been a mixed start to the season. Successful at the Emirates, less so away from home: While we've had some good results, the performances haven't been perhaps as we would have all liked. Still we are one game away from the League Cup Semi Finals, and have qualified for the last 32 of the Europa League. The 2nd tier European competition is not where we may like to be, but it presents a welcome change to the monotony of playing either Barcelona and Bayern each year. From mid-November we enter a really busy period for games; so, let's get behind the boys. Off the pitch there is plenty to update you all on, so here goes.

ADSA Committee

### **Level Playing Field – Response to Premier League Accessible Stadia Guidelines Report**

In September 2015, Premier League Clubs pledged to meet accessible stadia guidelines by August 2017. Unfortunately, four clubs have failed to meet this self-imposed deadline: Chelsea, Watford, Everton & Crystal Palace. In his response, Tony Taylor of [Level Playing Field](#) said:

*“LPF has worked for almost twenty years to ensure disabled football fans have a fully inclusive match day experience. That has to include the removal of physical and procedural barriers, along with the provision of appropriate facilities and services for all disabled people. We were delighted when the Premier League Clubs made a commitment to meet their pledge two years ago. We saw this as an opportunity for the clubs to set the benchmark for all sports stadia and to demonstrate what can be achieved.”*

*“We are therefore disappointed that a number of clubs have failed to meet the requirements of that self-imposed pledge and have let their disabled fans down. We are seeking urgent assurance regarding what happens next and how much longer the existing Premier League clubs will be given to meet their obligations. LPF welcomes the Premier League Board's decision that newly promoted clubs will be required to meet the terms of the 2015 Shareholders' resolution, and disabled supporters must know ultimately what sanctions will be put in place for those clubs who persistently fail to meet their obligations.”*

*“It's not all bad news and LPF is keen to recognise the improvements that have been made. There are now more wheelchair user spaces at Premier League football clubs than ever before, more easy access and amenity seats have been identified, more Changing Places facilities provided, more Sensory Rooms and more Audio Descriptive Commentary (ADC) provision. Every Premier League football club now has a Disability Access Officer (DAO) who liaises directly with disabled fans.”*

*“West Bromwich Albion FC, for example, is a club that has made incredible changes for disabled fans since the pledge was announced. The club operates from an older stadium, but has still managed to meet the Accessible Stadia numbers for wheelchair users (Home and Away), installed easy access and amenity seats, provided additional accessible toilets, a state of the art Changing Places facility, a Sensory Room, accessible refreshment areas and new signage. This just goes to show what can be done and they should be congratulated. The club is now working closely with its Foundation to reach out to the community so that disabled people know there are more spaces and seats available for them at The Hawthorns and that they will be made welcome”.*

The full Premier League Report can be found here:

[Premier League Accessible Stadia Guidelines Report](#)

Each club also provided their own information and pledges which can be found here:

[Premier League Club Reports - The Pledge 2017](#)

There's been some great coverage in the media of this over the past couple of weeks and here are a few links.

[BBC Sport - Including video article with ADSA chair, Anthony Joy](#)

[The Guardian - Wheelchair access at Premier League grounds](#)

### **Level Playing Fields – London Forum (8 November 2017)**

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, Arsenal Football Club are hosting the “London Forum” for the LPF on 8 November and they are providing this free of charge. This is a great sign of the club's commitment to wheelchair and accessible seating for all. Representatives from London Clubs will attend, and it will be a great opportunity for fans, clubs, Disabled Supporters' Associations and other relevant stakeholders to network, share their experiences and share best practice. They will be able to tour the Emirates Stadium and see its facilities, while ADSA Secretary, Anne Hyde will deliver a presentation on the day.

### **Premier League Advisory Group**

The Premier League are setting up an advisory group of DSA Chairs to offer practical and common-sense guidance to clubs, and providing suggestions and opinion on a range of issues. Our ADSA Chair, Anthony Joy will represent our views on this, and we will use future editions of this newsletter to report back and canvass views when we need to. We are viewing this as a positive step, but remain open minded as to the advisory groups purpose and reach.

### **Disability Liaison Team – closer working**

At the start of the season, ADSA chair Anthony Joy had a meeting with Arsenal Disability Liaison Officer, Alun Francis. We feel we have a really positive relationship with the DLT, and while we may not agree on all matters, our conversations have always been constructive. At our AGM we set out our priorities, one of which was to improve not just physical access, but online access to information. It's great that this summer saw season ticket renewals possible online, for the first time.

ADSA still has some concerns over the transparency of the Arsenal FC website and our Chairman and Secretary have been working hard to try and make sure disabled supporters are given a more straightforward and intuitive route to access information about the club, or match tickets. We have voiced that any improvements need to be conscious of all our supporters, and have asked the club to consider simplifying its online content and look to include signed videos where possible. This is clearly not an easy fix but we continue to work with the club to improve the website before the end of the season.

Judging by the fact we haven't had many complaints, the lift situation at the Emirates may have been less of an issue this season. Not to be complacent, we appealed to the DLT to expand its match-day staff to provide a greater presence at the two priority lifts 30 minutes before kick-off. We are happy to say this has been adopted.

### **Emirates Stadium – Evacuation Procedures**

The tragic events of the summer at Grenfell Tower in West London, was a stark reminder of the need for effective evacuation procedures. ADSA has voiced concern to Arsenal that we have little confidence that our members have been given sufficient information to safely exit the stadium should

they have cause to. Would you know what to do? How many wheelchairs can a refuge take? How are spoken announcements communicated to our Deaf supporters? We feel more information is required, and if necessary testing of evacuation procedures should be exercised at the stadium. ADSA will be writing to the stadium management on this.

### **#Greet The Players**

We had an amazing response for the chance to “Greet the Players” before the home against Swansea on 28 October. An incredible 41 requested to take part; Arsenal gave ADSA 3 spaces (DSA Member and enabler) to attend the meet and greet, as did members of other supporters’ clubs. The lucky winners out of a hat were Joyce Taylor, Graham Stripe and Andrew Coker. We hope they had a fantastic time!



Also on 30 October, the DLT organised the latest trip to the Training Ground for a lucky few. ADSA Committee Member, Ozi even got to meet Super Jack and Webz. We hope there will be future opportunities like this for our members.

### **Sensory Room – Doors Open**

Once again, Arsenal FC has been leading the way in providing facilities for its disabled fans and those with very specialist needs. In early October, the club opened the doors to its ‘Sensory Room’ which will give fans with profound special needs, the opportunity to visit the Emirates Stadium on match days. The new room is credit to the Shippey Campaign, created by the parents of three children with autism. ADSA offers both our thanks and congratulations to the club. It should also be noted that the club can provide an audio guide for every home match programme and Arsenal were the first club to install a guide dog toilet facility. The “Changing Places” toilet also provides a hoist and changing table for severely disabled fans.

More information can be found here: [Arsenal Sensory Room](#)

### **ADSA - Finances**

Our treasurer, Nicole Evans has been working tirelessly to sort out the current ADSA finances. After various delays and errors on the bank’s part, we are delighted to say that the monies from the last incarnation of the ADSA have now been officially transferred to the newly reformed ADSA. The committee now has access to a new bank account with ADSA funds held safely within it. We still have yet to detail how any ADSA money might be spent but we have a few ideas and we will of course keep you all fully informed.

### **Away Days – Over Land & Sea**

Have you attended any of our away games this season? Please consider leaving a review on the [Level Playing Field](#) website so that other fans around the country can be kept up-to-date. If you’ve got pictures of you enjoying following the Arsenal over land & sea then please feel free to share these with us.

The Europa League has thrown up some interesting places to visit. Our Chair, Anthony Joy travelled to both Belarus and Belgrade to see our victories against BATE Borisov and Red Star. Again, you can leave feedback comments on the LPF sister organisation [Centre for Access to Football](#) in Europe. See below for some pictures.

*BATE Borisov (Borisov Arena), Belarus, 28<sup>th</sup> September*



*Red Star Belgrade (Rajko Mitic Stadium), Belgrade, 19<sup>th</sup> September*

### **Matchday Photos**

A stunning recent away victory at Everton has improved our stuttering away form while victories at home and in the Europa League have been impressive. Some photo highlights below.



If you are attending any of our upcoming away games have a great day out. Check out the links to the relevant club page for some additional information that may be useful.

[Burnley](#) [Southampton](#) [West Ham](#) [West Bromwich Albion](#)

### **And Finally.....**

Keep an eye on your inbox and our twitter account in the next few weeks. We are working on something to give one of you a chance to win something very special.

You can find us on twitter @ArsenalDSA