



Summary of 2nd South Coast Regional Forum

1pm-4pm 15th September 2016

Stadium Suite, Checktrade Stadium, Crawley Town FC

The second South Coast Regional forum was held at Checktrade stadium Crawley, on Thursday 15th September 2016.

This forum was hosted by Crawley Town FC, Crawley Town Disabled Supporters Association and supported by Level Playing Field.

Objectives of the Forum: The forum provides the opportunity for fans, clubs, Disabled Supporters Associations (DSAs) and other relevant stakeholders to network, share their experiences and share best practise.

Attendees

Barb Robinson, Chris Cheshire, Michael Wheeler and Susan Wheeler: Crawley Town DSA

Kieran Reynolds and Ruth Hopkins: Level Playing Field

Amy Fazackerley: Crawley Town Community Foundation

Paul Lucas, Angie Lucas, Mark Harpur and Will Beaney: Southampton DSA:

Sam Piggott and Steve Webb: Portsmouth DSA

Allison McNeil and Colin Farmery: Portsmouth FC

Pam Wilkins: Pompey Supporters Trust

Alice Jeans: AFC Bournemouth

Elliot Batchelor: Brighton and Hove Albion FC

Apologies were received from Reading FC and Southampton FC.

Summary

Kieran Reynolds and Barb Robinson welcomed attendees who then had an opportunity to introduce themselves.

The first presentation was given by Level Playing Field (LPF) General Manager, **Ruth Hopkins** who explained her role and gave an overview of LPF's history, objectives and current projects. She then handed over to **Kieran** who gave an overview of the Working Together project and the benefits of establishing a Regional Forum. Kieran also highlighted recent achievements including the reestablishment of a Disabled Supporters Association (DSA) at Watford, new DSAs at Gillingham and Crystal Palace and a new regional forum in Wales.

Chris Cheshire then presented on behalf of Crawley Town DSA. She spoke about the development of the DSA before talking about some of their recent projects including an Audio Descriptive Commentary service (ADC) which has a number of regular users and is also available for away fans. Chris spoke about the difficulty of accessing information as a disabled away supporter and the DSA has produced an Access Video for disabled fans to help them plan their visit. This was shown on the television screen. A guide with live links to transport information and timetables has also been published on the Club's website.

Amy Fazackerley gave a presentation about Crawley Capers which provides young people on the autism spectrum an opportunity to participate in football activity at Checkatrade Stadium. Alongside football, children participate in arts and crafts activities. The two-hour session encourages participation from children with Autism and family members to help develop social skills and positive play within a family group. Emphasis is placed on fostering independence and self-determination. CTCF is now planning to launch a new project for people with mental ill health.

After a short break, **Sam Piggott** provided an update from Portsmouth DSA and spoke about access improvements at Portsmouth FC since the last forum. She also spoke about an inclusion day she had organised where attendees could try powerchair football, walking football, boccia and see the premiere of Portsmouth's new virtual tour. Bi-Weekly social meetings continue to be organized for members and these take place at the club.

Paul Lucas, then presented an update from Southampton DSA and spoke about their history and recent projects. The club are introducing a new changing places facility (More details on www.changing-places.org). The annual DSA open day was a great success and Attendees had the opportunity to have their photograph taken with the FA Cup and meet former Southampton Players. £2,000 worth of prizes were donated by various organisations for a prize draw to raise funds for the DSA.

8: Open Table discussion

Sam asked if clubs are expected to provide accessible travel on their own supporters coaches for away matches. This prompted a lively discussion from the group. Ruth said that LPF are not legal experts but have been advised that where a club is

providing Away travel, they should ensure it is available and accessible to disabled people.

Kieran highlighted the importance of the forum becoming self-sustainable and suggested that an organising committee should be established to take over the running of future forums. He proposed that the three DSAs in attendance organise the next forum and reassured delegates that LPF will continue to attend and support future events in an advisory role.

Barb then thanked everyone for their contributions and invited the group to a short tour of the Checktrade stadium.

Meeting closed at 4pm. Attendees were offered a stadium tour.

Next forum to take place in Autumn 2017, date and venue TBC.