

Organization Name

Date of Meeting: 15th August 2023

Attendees

Gill Martin – FAB Member (Prepared Minutes)

Millie Crowhurst – BHAFC

Katie Haines - BHAFC

Location: Dick's Bar - AMEX Stadium

The meeting started at 5.30pm. Millie Crowhurst welcomed all attendees. She introduced Katie Haines the new Disability Liaison Officer and Gill Martin, the FAB Chair. The meeting was also signed for deaf supporters.

The following items were discussed:

1. Travelling away to Europa league games was a big subject of conversation. Millie explained that there was much uncertainty until the actual location of the away games was decided. A recce of each away ground would be completed by BHAFC staff with attention paid to facilities for disabled fans. Items raised included whether carer's tickets would be linked to passport numbers, whether an aircraft may be chartered once locations known and general facilities for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled supporters. A guide for fans would be made available.
2. The Europa home games were also discussed, and Millie confirmed that the 3-match ticket would automatically include a carer's ticket.
3. The issue of being able to select a seat in the front rows of UK away games was raised. There was a report that Spurs do not let ambulant disabled fans choose seats in the front rows. This made it very difficult for fans who cannot stand and find themselves behind fans who stand throughout the game. Fans also reported that stewards at some away grounds do not sit down which obscures the view for disabled fans. Millie agreed to check this and report back.
4. It was asked if there were specific areas for taxis to drop off and pick up wheelchair users. Millie explained that this was Car Park 5 at the University of Sussex. It was reported that there had been long queues there for the recent game. There was a general lack of knowledge from the drivers about where to pick up and drop off passengers. (Luckily a 1901 bus picked up several supporters who would otherwise have missed the start to the game.)
5. It was reported that it is difficult for both wheelchair users and ambulant disabled fans to make their way through the crowded coach park. Millie reported that more "Here to Help" stewards would be trained to give assistance.

6. Lift access up to the coach park after a game remains difficult due to the number of away fans crowded into that area.
7. There was a complaint that disabled parking bays seem to be immediately booked once the booking window opens. Millie reported that seasonal parking tickets were being added back into the general pool as they were released back to the club. It was hoped that this would release more spaces. A ticket exchange for the parking places has also been introduced.
8. Difficulties of exchanging a carer's ticket were raised.
9. Bus companies do not always let fans onto buses early even if it is an early kick off time. Disabled fans need more time to travel to the stadium. Millie agreed to discuss this issue with Brighton and Hove buses.
10. The provision of lowered counters for wheelchair users to order and be served food was discussed. Certain food kiosks were not always open making it difficult for disabled fans in certain areas of the ground to access food. Additional fold-up seating on the concourse would also be valuable for fans unable to stand for long.
11. Training of stewards and catering staff regarding the hidden wristband scheme and radar keys was discussed. Bottle tops should be left on if fans with a wristband requested this. Stewards should open first aid rooms, changing places space and other facilities if requested.
12. The provision of water for assistance dogs was raised. Millie requested that fans bringing assistance dogs notify the club so that the best place be found for both the supporters and the dog's comfort during the match.
13. Millie was asked how many fans were registered with some disability (wheelchair users, hidden disability wristband and other). She replied that there were 1,500 such fans registered with the club although they may not all be actively attending games.
14. Gill gave an update on the work being done by the FAB to set up a Disabled Supporter's Association. She asked for people to raise their hands if they would join such a group and there were many hands raised. She told fans that they would receive an email from the club once the FAB were able to formally launch a Disabled Supporter's Association.

The meeting finished at 6.30pm. Millie agreed to provide a summary of the issues raised and feedback to everyone attending.