

FAN ADVISORY BOARD EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

MINUTES

Friday 3rd March 2023

Attendees

Gill Martin – FAB Member (Secretary / Prepared Agenda & Minutes)

Niraj Haria – FAB Member

Sarah Gould – BHAFC

Location: MS Teams

The meeting opened and SG apologized for cancelling the meeting scheduled for 26 January due to illness.

The agenda centered on following up on open items raised during the previous meeting and the FAB tour of the Amex. These are summarized in the table below with the following additional points and actions covered during the meeting:

1. SG explained that BHAFC has received a “centre of excellence” ranking from Level Playing Field for its E,D&I provision. It is one of just three football clubs with this status. GM explained that the FAB will continue to push for items, raised by fans, to ensure that the club is always ahead of its statutory duties and providing a facility where all fans feel comfortable.
2. SG reported on the current status of its Equality Survey. The Club has data collected from the recent survey and is waiting for the latest Census data to be publically available. This information will form an Equality Action Plan which will be shared with the FAB.
3. GM told SG how much she and NH had learned about E,D&I issues by attending the recent PLEDIS meeting and the Level Playing Field “Getting to the Match” meeting. She asked for continued FAB involvement in these meetings and initiatives. SG asked if the FAB could assist when Amanda Bennett, the PLEDIS assessor, visits the Amex Stadium to attend a match. Amanda would like to experience a “fan’s perspective” so GM suggested that she is seated in Upper East so that she and NH could jointly “host” her visit.

Open Items from previous meetings	Update
Meg Morris to report back on additional transport for wheelchair users	SG reported back that there were 3 coaches which provided a shuttle service

	<p>from Car Park 5 at the University to the Amex Stadium. There had been no complaints that this was insufficient. NH explained that his original query was concerning the Park and Ride buses. There is usually only one wheelchair space in the standard bus. This means that wheelchair users sometimes wait a considerable time for transport to the stadium.</p>
<p>Handrails in certain areas for fans with mobility issues. There are sections of the stadium with limited handrails or grab rails. This means that fans with mobility issues need to navigate their way using seat backs which is particularly difficult when seats are occupied. (Examples include N1A North West Corner and 1901 clubs in the West Stand).</p>	<p>SG explained that a full access audit is due in April. This was last carried out in 2017. SG felt that a number of points would be addressed after this audit including further provision of handrails. GM explained the FAB position was to encourage the club to do its utmost for fans with mobility issues and other hidden disabilities even if that is above the minimum statutory requirement.</p>
<p>Provision of rails in Upper East Wheelchair area</p>	<p>Rails to enable wheelchair users to pull themselves up a ramp to the main concourse will be installed during the summer.</p>
<p>Improving awareness for Text Abuse Helpline</p>	<p>The FAB have made social media posts and included information about the helpline in supporter newsletters. SG shared a new poster which will be on view throughout the stadium.</p>
<p>Rose Read to report back on promotion of ED&I activities</p>	<p>SG talked us through the information prepared with Rose Read (Head of People and E,D&I issues). It was based around a calendar of E,D&I events such as religious festivals and Awareness Days. The club would be holding events for International Women's Day and Ramadan.</p> <p>SG explained that the club was pursuing better methods of communication with deaf fans and how to support the Level Playing Field "Unite for Access" initiative. She also told us about the partnership with the Ledwood Centre in Brighton which is a base for members of the LGBGT communities.</p>
<p>Introduction of dedicated disability group representing the club(such as the one the Southampton FC have) https://saintsdsa.org.uk/about-us/</p>	<p>Time ran out for discussion on this item. The FAB will continue to investigate ways to establish a dedicated disability supporter group.</p>

Special Packs sent to disabled fans as part of ticket/season ticket renewal?	NH to liaise with the Club on information to be sent out for the new season.
Adrian Morris to report back on the feasibility of stewards wearing different coloured jackets to show they are trained to deal with specific issues for specific fan groups	Adrian is on board with this idea and has agreed to implement it. Specially trained stewards will be wearing different coloured jackets to make them easier to identify. They will deal with E,D&I issues and be trained in safeguarding issues.

The following new issues were also raised and addressed during the meeting:

Item	Response
Email received from fan regarding access issues to disabled toilets during recent home game against Liverpool	<p>SG reported back that no complaints had been made to Supporter Services. She reiterated that this is essential for issues to be logged and monitored. SG Response:</p> <p>“There is more than 1 toilet per area so I don’t understand how this person wasn’t able to access the toilet? They are all locked via radar key but each steward has a key and disabled supporters are in possession of their own keys. We keep them locked as if not locked able bodied fans have been known to use them which isn’t good. This is something that should have been raised by this person during the match at the time and could and would have been sorted by this person contacting a steward who in turn should have contacted the control room.”</p>
Email received from fan regarding Disabled Access to the train station after matches.	<p>SG reported back that no complaints had been made to Supporter Services. She reiterated that this is essential for issues to be logged and monitored. SG Response:</p> <p>“I will speak to Meg today (transport manager) and get her to remind the stewards to be more vigilant from Saturday onwards. I would also add this is the only complaint I am aware of so not sure if it was just a problem at one game?”</p>
NH asked again for improved signs and added stewarding of the lowered	SG confirmed that she had spoken to Sodexo about this issue.

counters serving food and drink for wheelchair users	
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Actions

- FAB to be given access to an Executive Summary and Action Points from the Full Access Audit being held in early April 2023. **Responsibility: SG/BHAFC**
- Meg Morris to consider provision of community bus for Park and Ride Wheelchair users when preparing the Transport Plan for next season. **Responsibility: SG/BHAFC**
- FAB members to report back to SG if they don't see the next Text Abuse Helpline poster during upcoming visits to the Amex. **Responsibility: FAB**
- Consideration to be given to a celebration for Diwali. **Responsibility: SG/BHAFC and NH/FAB**
- FAB to consider visiting Ledwood Centre to explain how the FAB works and hear feedback from fans who are worried about attending games at Crawley and the Amex. **Responsibility: FAB**
- NH to share information for disability packs and Club to work on providing information to disabled fans. **Responsibility: SG/BHAFC and NH/FAB (Closed)**
- Adrian Morris to report back on date for introducing stewards with different coloured jackets. **Responsibility: SG/BHAFC**
- GM to reply to fans' emails regarding E,D&I concerns stressing importance of raising with Supporter Services. **Responsibility: GM (Closed)**
- SG to update FAB re signage and stewarding of lowered counters. **Responsibility: SG/BHAFC**
- SG to update FAB re PLEDIS assessor visit. **Responsibility: SG/BHAFC**