



West Ham United Disabled Supporters' Board meeting

Date: Wednesday 16 January 2019

Time: 6pm – 8pm

Location: Stadium Store Coffee Shop, London Stadium

Key personnel

West Ham United and London Stadium

- Karren Brady, Vice-Chairman
- Philippa Cartwright, Projects and Stadium Director
- Ben Illingworth, Head of Matchday Operations
- Simon Kutner, Head of Communications
- Jake Heath, Supporter Services Manager
- Julie Pidgeon, Disability Access Officer
- James Datson, Matchday commentator for blind and partially sighted supporters
- Graham Harris, Deputy Safety Officer, London Stadium 185
- Andy Sheldon, Dedicated Football Officer, Metropolitan Police

Disabled Supporters' Board members

- Cathy Bayford
- Trevor Bright
- Sanjay Chadha
- Neal Crowley
- Bradley Donovan
- Helena Foreman
- Jeremy Gibson
- David Griffith
- Tracy Higgins
- Steve Lowe
- David Puckett
- Kevin Wotton

Apologies

- Tara Warren, Executive Director
- Nicola Keye, Head of Ticketing

- Joe Lyons, CEO, West Ham United Foundation
- Austin Hughes, Community Manager, West Ham United Foundation
- Gill Fowler, DSB member
- Richard Pullen, DSB member
- Joe Seigel, DSB member
- Pauline Tanner, DSB member
- Robbie Cahill, DSB member

Agenda

1. Welcome, introductions and purpose of meeting
2. Updates on actions
3. DSB – Terms of Reference, MOU and Equality Statement
4. PLDAG Away Supporters' Questionnaire – Cathy Bayford and Trevor Bright
5. DSB members - Topics for discussion
6. AOB
7. Access for All UK – Steve Lowe
8. Meeting closed

1. Welcome, introductions and purpose of meeting

Karren Brady (KB) opened by welcoming everyone to the second meeting of the Disabled Supporters' Board. KB stated that the DSB is a great opportunity for the Club and DSB members to showcase the work that we all do to drive values of access, equality, diversity and inclusion, all of which are the focal point for the creation of the DSB and everything it stands for.

Jake Heath (JH) introduced himself and then ran through the agenda of the meeting, including welcoming two new members in Sanjay Chadha (SH) and Kevin Wotton (KW). Sanjay and Kevin were independently selected by Co-Chairpersons of the DSB, Cathy Bayford (CB) and Trevor Bright (TB).

JH summarised the agenda saying that the meeting was an opportunity to raise new topics for discussion, talk about the future structure of the DSB, and provide CB, TB and Steve Lowe (SL) the platform to share and discuss their agenda items with the Club and DSB members.

JH then took the meeting through the objectives of the meeting:

- Provide an update on actions since the last meeting
- Consult with you on new proposals
- Raise new topics for discussion
- Listen to the views of DSB members
- Interview and create new public profiles for DSB members

- Agree a way forward through actions

2. Updates on actions

JH then provided an update on the 17 actions issued in the July 2018 meeting, of which all have been progressed.

- Conduct an audit of RADAR keys across SLO and DSA staff

An audit for RADAR keys has been completed of both SLO and DSA teams and RADAR keys have also been placed at Supporter Information points inside the stadium at Block 110 (West), 141 (East) and 153 (North).

An additional 50 RADAR keys were purchased for the SLO team and 60 for the DSA team after our most recent DSB meeting in July 2018.

- Website accessibility – DSB subgroup

Jake and the Digital Media team visited David Griffith at his house in the summer to further understand David's user experience on WHUFC.com as a blind supporter accessing our channels at home and have since met again in December to produce a table of actions. The Club has committed to sharing any updates to WHUFC.com with David who will test, review and provide feedback on his experience.

- Provide update on access to Lift 11 in the North West corner of the Stadium

Lift 11 is now freely accessible again following the reopening of the barrier in the North West corner of the concourse. There is no longer a requirement to use the lifts in the Club London areas.

- Produce DSB fan experience and disability awareness video

DSB members met with Mark Noble, Pablo Zabaleta and Pedro Obiang, to share their experiences on matchday and to explain how fellow supporters can do their bit to help prevent issues and create a positive matchday for them.

The video was released in October 2018 across Club channels and shown at the meeting to a round of applause for all involved.

- Nominate a DSB member to the Equality Advisory Group

Neal Crowley (NC) DSB member, joined the West Ham United Foundation last season and has been heavily involved in work in the local community. JH stated that Neal has been invited to assist the Club's Equality Advisory Group for the rest of the season in preparation for our Premier League Equality Standard assessment in January 2020. The Club is delighted that Neal

has accepted. Neal is scheduled to meet Sarah Lancaster, Equality and Inclusion Officer, over the course of the next few weeks.

- Circulate AccessAble and Hammers Help links to DSB members

JH circulated links to Disabled GO (now AccessAble) after the last meeting in July 2018. JH mentioned that should DSB members have any further feedback they can contact Jake or Julie directly.

David Griffith tested the accessibility of Hammers Help for blind supporters and praised the new Help Centre in his online blog.

- Further explore potential for Shuttle Bus Stop at Bridge 3

The Safety and Operations team have reviewed the feasibility of a new Shuttle Bus stop on Bridge 3.

It is thought that introducing a new stop at Bridge 3 will have an impact on speed of overall service due to the additional stop off and the time it takes supporters to board and alight the Shuttle Bus. We do not want to rush people who may require our support in boarding/alighting the buses.

In the winter and in instances of inclement weather, Bridge 3 has no shelter, no toilet facilities and nowhere to purchase refreshments. The service is successful from this location during the athletics as egress is staggered across a longer period of time in comparison to football matches where all supporters leave on mass, and also due to the good weather we experience in the summer when the athletics takes place.

- Shuttle bus permits, including T and Cs sent in advance of the first game

JP distributed permits and Terms and Conditions ahead of the first home match v AFC Bournemouth.

- Introduce new DSB leaflet with updated information for accessibility supporters

A second edition of the DSB leaflet was created and placed at Supporter Information tents at the Brighton game and handed out by the SLO team. They were available on the shuttle buses at the Arsenal game with an accompanying travel leaflet asking for feedback from supporters on their experience using public transport on matchday.

- Check in and further brief all Access Lane stewards at search points on matchday

The SLOs have been taking photos of the access lanes on the bridges at each home match and feeding this back to Graham Harris (GH). We've had positive feedback so far this season but welcome feedback from DSB members. If there are any issues, supporters are advised to let

the Supporter Services team know the Bridge used and the time of arrival at the search checkpoint. The SLO team will continue to monitor.

- Feedback to DSB and Club on Premier League Disability Advisory Group meeting

JH mentioned that CB and TB were due to update on the away supporter questionnaire from the Premier League Disability Advisory Group as part of the meeting's agenda.

- Further explore delivery to seat service

The Head of Concessions at Delaware North is visiting Anfield on January 19th to experience their accessibility catering service. Delaware North are due to attend the Official Supporters' Board (OSB) meeting on February 6th and the Club will seek an update on their visit to Anfield and feed back to Cathy and Trevor at the OSB meeting.

- Email all shuttle bus and Car Park 1A users to offer one additional turnstile

The option for supporters who use the accessible shuttle bus service and Car Park 1A to add an additional turnstile for access to the stadium at a closer location is still available, however, due to the number of supporters involved the Club has taken the decision not to send a mass email communication for safety reasons. This facility should be reserved for those who need it most.

- Arrange meeting with TfL to raise DSB feedback on access at Stratford Station

A member of TfL has been invited by the Club to the next DSB meeting on 10th April. This will enable the DSB to collate more information from supporters on their experience using public transport on matchday to feed back to TfL at the next DSB meeting.

Cathy and Trevor canvassed the DSB for their experiences following our last meeting in July and have since asked the Club to create a supplementary leaflet to request that feedback be directed to the DSB. This was available at the Arsenal match and will be distributed at each match moving forward. Cathy has received two pieces of feedback within 24 hours of the Arsenal game.

JG said a lot of people use public transport and they get told there is no ramp on arrival at Stratford Station. HF said that is why she uses a car. JG said other friends are impressed with the DSB forum and that West Ham are breaking new ground. KB said this is a credit to CB and TB. JG's personal assistant stated that the Romford MP has raised issue with the works at Stratford. KB said West Ham would speak to TfL to understand why there is no ramp on arrival. James Datson said that some blind supporters use public transport and will mention on his commentary service that the DSB are trying to collate feedback on travel.

Ben Illingworth (BA) stated that the Stratford Station Manager would be surprised to hear the concerns and BI will contact TfL directly about this issue. KB said we need a guarantee the ramps will be available every matchday and that people are told they will be there. Tracy Higgins (TH) said that communication needs to be of paramount importance if the ramp is to

be organised. JG said the problem only arises on matchdays. JG said the ground's facilities are excellent but the problem is getting here. JG congratulates the Club on the facilities available in the ground. The lift is always working. NC said the club could consider having a SLO trained up to do the ramp. KB agreed with the suggestion and compliments NC's idea. NC said that while the issue rarely happens, when it does it is late at night.

JH suggested that the club could meet with DSB members using trains at Stratford ahead of the Liverpool home match to see how they are getting on in terms of access. Bradley Donovan (DB) questioned if the Liverpool game will move if the FA Cup goes to a replay and BI confirmed the Liverpool match would move to the Sunday in these circumstances.

Sanjay Chadha (SC) raised the point that not every person uses public transport or the shuttle bus. He said he was dropped at the Aquatics Centre before making his own way to London Stadium. KB said SC could use the drop-off facility that the Club provides, which JH and Graham Harris agree with. GH said the name can be left with teams under West Ham control to ensure the easiest possible access. This is advertised on Hammers Help and in the West Ham United Access Statement. CB said this could be publicised in the DSB newsletter. KB wants to find the easiest option for every supporter and said every solution will be considered when problems are raised.

- Collate thoughts and experiences on transport from all DSB Members

In progress – see action “Arrange meeting with TFL to raise DSB feedback on access at Stratford Station”.

- Arrange meeting with DSB to progress Trip Advisor style webpage

It is thought that, should supporters want to provide an honest opinion on their experience when visiting away grounds, it is best to provide feedback through the away supporter survey provided on the PLDAG website. If feedback goes directly to the Premier League forum it is far more likely to result in positive change. We will place a link to the PLDAG survey on Hammers Help and also handle any queries, concerns or complaints from supporters directly with the host club.

- Circulate membership criteria to DSB for feedback

JP has shared this with CB and TB. JP confirmed that Club policy is still being reviewed internally and we will have more feedback to provide at our DSB meeting in April. The policy and process will be changing slightly but we're still in the planning stages. This is an ongoing action.

JH asked for any comments before handing over to CB and TB to discuss the PLDAG Away Supporter Survey.

3. DSB – Terms of Reference, MOU and Equality Statement

JH then took the meeting through the proposal to draft Terms of Reference, Memorandum of Understanding and an Equality Statement, in accordance with the structure and constitution associated with the Official Supporters' Board.

JH explained that, during the close season, we began an extensive period of consultation with the aim of reconstituting and expanding our supporter consultation process. This involved the Club and the newly formed Official Supporters' Board working together to create a new structure and processes outlined within a Terms of Reference document. The OSB, DSB and JSB all come under the supporter consultation umbrella and it is therefore important that the same processes apply across the board.

4. Premier League Disability Advisory Group – Away Supporter Survey Cathy Bayford and Trevor Bright

CB said she has been researching and found it interesting to understand the relationship between other Premier League clubs and their disabled supporter's associations. CB feels that the relationship West Ham have is unique. Other supporters for other clubs have to pay a membership to belong to the association. TB said that the fee does include other activities and that every club is different. Some associations were having trouble because of this. KB acknowledged this and stated that she is really pleased and proud with how things are progressing with the DSB.

A copy of the away supporter survey was handed out to all DSB members at the meeting for review. CB went on to say that the away supporter survey has been designed to help supporters understand what to expect when travelling to an away ground. CB said the hope is to collate information on away games, and asked other DSB members to provide feedback. David Griffith (DG) said the online survey is completely accessible for blind supporters and commends the PLDAG for the user experience. CB suggested DSB members log on to the website and check out other things they are doing.

KB asked JP how many visiting supporters with disabilities attend matches at London Stadium. JP said that attendance can vary but certainly reaches 70 accessibility supporters per match. JP will look to obtain an average figure as action point for the next meeting and noted that West Ham always sell out their accessibility tickets for away matches.

While on the subject of visiting supporters, JP said the feedback from Birmingham City supporters was great, which CB echoes. NC asked if the club provides accessible transport to away matches. JP said we still do – accessible coaches are provided. NC is thinking about going to more away matches.

5. DSB members – Topics for discussion

KB then moved on to the topics for discussion submitted by DSB members.

- Accessible Shuttle Bus service

CB said there has been an issue reported with away supporters using the shuttle bus service from Stratford Station. JP confirmed that away supporters can use the shuttle bus service from Stratford Station and we're advised of the numbers expected by the visiting club's Disability Access Officer (DAO). Ben Illingworth (BI) confirmed that the number of away supporters using the shuttle bus at Stratford Station is relatively low as there is a dedicated visiting supporters shuttle bus at the coach park. The Club advises the visiting club's DAO to use this shuttle stop meaning most, if not all, away supporters use the pickup point at the coach park. All shuttle stops are sufficiently staffed by two teams from the Club and Foundation who help to manage the queues and ensure there are no confrontations between both sets of fans.

DG asked if there is a way to provide an update to supporters who use the shuttle service, if there are road closures that will disrupt their journey to and from the stadium. DG said there were issues on Saturday (v Arsenal January 12 2019). KB said the club were not aware of any issues with Saturday's shuttle bus. GH said that road closures are a part of our traffic and safety management plan and returning vehicles from Stratford should be monitored.

BI said there were no scheduled road closures pre-match and GH will contact Newham to discover the issue. DG said that there were both WHU and Arsenal supporters on the coach and he was told there was a road closure which affected access to the game. There was a suggestion it may have been along Carpenters Road. AS asked for clarification of which part of Carpenters Road was effected. GH advises that he believes this to be part of the Stratford Waterfront redevelopment, which will run until 2021.

KB asked if CB is okay with away supporters using the shuttle bus, which is agreed is okay.

BI said the issue with a specific bus from Stratford Station is that we don't want our supporters to experience delays or issues getting to the stadium as a result of any additional away supporter buses, beyond what we provide to away supporters via the coach park.

- Digital matchday programme

NC asked if it's possible to download the matchday programme. JH confirmed that there is a digital copy of the programme that supporters can subscribe to or purchase on a match-by-match basis. Supporters can download the programme via the Apple Store as well as on Android and the Pocketmags app on the Kindle Fire.

- Lift access post-match – Steward taking up space in the lift

Jeremy Gibson (JG) said West Ham fans, on the whole, are considerate, but has some issues with people ignoring instructions that lifts are for accessible use. GH said he has instructed staff about the use of lifts and ensuring priority is given to accessibility supporters. He will look into further actions to ensure this isn't being ignored. Bradley Donovan (BD) said the steward has a chair in the lift and suggested, by removing the chair, another wheelchair user could use the space. GH advises that the lift stewards have to perform this role as a safety requirement on matchday for up to eight hours and we have tried to rotate this position. KB

asked if removing the seat during peak periods might help, to which DSB members agree. GH said he will look into this as an action. Tracy Higgins (TH) said she can understand the issues with practicality of the stewards being positioned in the lifts and suggested training for the stewards.

KB asked the DSB members to take note if stewards are sitting on chairs during peak periods and send their bib/jacket number to JH.

- Car Park 1A – Allocation of wider parking bays

CB raised a query about the allocation of wider parking spaces in Car Park 1A. The wider spaces are required for supporters who need to exit their vehicles and transfer to their wheelchairs. JP stated that wider spaces should be allocated on arrival to those who require one and this is the instruction given to the DSA and steward on the gate. JH confirmed that we will monitor this at the next three home fixtures. We will ensure that the correct message is being provided to all users and supporters who require a wide bay will be allocated one. JG said he's not had an issue finding a parking space on matchday.

NC said there is a bit of a free-for-all at the end of the games and suggested a one-way system in car park 1A. GH and BI acknowledged that this will be looked into. BI said it isn't a case of needing a one-way system. It's about everyone being considerate of each other when leaving the car park, and suggested we marshal the car park after the game. It was noted that the car park emptied very quickly after the last two matches.

- Disabled Supporters Forum

CB raised whether there was an opportunity to reinstate the Disabled Supporters Forum, a Q&A style event that was held at the Boleyn Ground to enable supporters with disabilities to meet the players and coaching staff. JH suggested that any event would need to be inclusive and everyone should have the opportunity to apply as the forum or questions aren't disability focused. The creation of the DSB ensures that supporters with disabilities have a unique forum to raise their experiences and consult with the Club on the things that matter the most to accessibility supporters.

- Accessibility of catering kiosks/condiments

TB asked about accessibility at internal catering kiosks. KB asked if one in four not enough? CB asked if they are signposted, which GH said they aren't. JH suggested we advertised lowered counters on Hammers Help and CB suggested also placing in DSB newsletter. HF said the condiments units are high and she can't reach. JH said it will be raised with catering partner Delaware North to find a solution.

- Shelving outside of accessibility toilets

TB asked if shelving can be installed outside of accessible toilets. TB said he had purchased a drink and there was nowhere to put his drinks while he opened the door. He suggested a small shelf opposite the accessible toilets. GH said he will feed that back to the facilities team. KB said it requires planning permission but agreed with the convenience. TH raised the point

that, if there's a shelf, then there's a likelihood that supporters will congregate around it causing congestion and difficulty accessing the toilet.

- Club policy on special requests

CB asked how special requests are handled by the Club, particularly for those supporters who are terminally ill or have life-limiting illnesses. JP said it is something the club have always tried to help with, albeit it is not publicised. KB said it would be at JP's discretion on a case-by-case basis. JP said the club receive an extremely high number of requests and have a limited number of tickets per game. KB said the policy is the club has an allocation of tickets, which are distributed at JP's discretion. There is no documented policy but any special requests for limited life expectancy or end of life requests will always be our priority and this does mean that we aren't always able to offer tickets to matches or an experience for supporters who are not in this situation. All requests should be sent to the accessibility team.

- Audio commentary service

James Datson (JD) said the matchday commentary for blind and partially-sighted supporters is still provided, but said some of the equipment is showing some wear and tear. JD said that West Ham is unique as one of the leading clubs that provide the audio-descriptive commentary. JD said he would like to work with JH and JP to further enhance the service. JD said a conversation with DG took place prior to the meeting about having a network of people. JP confirmed 60 headsets are available, with Arsenal using six in the last game. DG said there isn't really a community of blind West Ham supporters and suggested an email list to help them get to know each other. JD said he and JH can look into it. DG gives credit to JP for her hard work. JG said fans feed back to him that the audio commentary is a very valuable service. JP confirmed that we will test and review the performance of all devices based on suggestions from JD.

- DSB feedback for Delaware North Catering

CB said that Delaware North will be attending the next OSB meeting on 6th February and welcomes suggestions and feedback from DSB members regarding catering. KB said the Club has a comparable club clause in the contract. KB said BI checks the pricing and menu at every away match he attends. BI said a certain lager might be some pennies cheaper at Arsenal, but that could be due to sponsorship.

CB raised the point that a pint of lager is priced at £5.15, and this has an impact on service with staff looking to find the odd change. BI said that this is part of Delaware North's pricing model and to bring any feed back to the OSB meeting.

- Disabled supporter's magazine/newsletter

CB asked whether it would be an option to produce a newsletter similar to Manchester City's DSA. JH confirmed that we can create a newsletter that can be mailed out to accessibility Season Ticket Holders and Claret members as part of our commitment to communicating the

work of the DSB. This can be an action to take forward for separate discussion and potentially included within Terms of Reference for DSB.

- Gathering feedback on travel experiences

JH confirmed that this is now progressing thanks to the supplementary leaflet that the Club are providing on matchday. We will continue to issue this at every home match between now and our next meeting in April.

- Bariatric wheelchair availability

JP confirmed the Club purchased a bariatric wheelchair in November 2018. Supporters requiring the use of our bariatric wheelchair should contact the accessibility team as soon as possible in advance of attendance. Requests are subject to availability.

6. Any other business

KB asked for any other business and hands over to SL to present this work with Access for All UK and how this could benefit the DSB and West Ham United. JH asked for questions for SL. CB offers any assistance via the DSB to SL should he need it. Kevin Wotton (KW) asked about Euan's Guide, a website where people with disabilities can view information on accessibility of venues from all over the world. KW asked if people can comment and add to the website. SL said they can and compares the facility to Trip Advisor.

JH asked if there's anything else to raise otherwise we will draw the meeting to a close. AS raised the subject to provision for supporters with non-visible disabilities and the discussion is raised about a sensory room.

- Update on sensory room

BI and JP update that the Club's application for a sensory room has been approved and we hope to have one in place by the start of the 2019/2020 season. BI visited Arsenal, Watford, Sunderland and Liverpool to have a look at the space and facilities they offer. BI and JP were impressed with what they saw and will be using their visits to other clubs as inspiration for the sensory room at London Stadium. JP said Disabled Supporter Assistants and Supporter Liaison Officers will be at hand to assist with enquiries and will also be provided with regular disability awareness training. CB asked about the space on non-match days. BI said fantastic response from LS185 and they have been behind the club all the way. BI said it will be a portable facility as it is likely we will be converting the use of television studio whenever possible.

NC said that Norwich and Wolves have youth activity rooms and wondered if West Ham could consider such an initiative for all young supporters. BI said it would be difficult to locate a dedicated space for this on every matchday as all rooms are being used, however, JH confirmed that the Club will put on family fun days and other dedicated events for young supporters throughout the season.

JH brings the meeting to a close.

Actions to take forward

Contact TfL to enquire about ramp access	BI
Review and shadow DSB member experience using trains into Stratford Station	JH
Creation of DSB newsletter	JH
PLDAG away supporter survey to be sent out with away match tickets	JP
Review lift steward role and whether a chair is required in peak periods	GH
Ensure wider parking spaces are being allocated correctly	JP
Review exit of vehicles post-match at Car Park 1A and implement process	BI/GH
Review possibility of shelving outside of accessible toilets	BI/GH
Review and update audio commentary devices	JP/JH