M I N U T E S

Meeting of the Disabled Supporters Association

2nd October 2024 at 4.30pm

Zoom

In attendance:
Bryan Martin (Chair of Seagulls Disabled Supporters Association); Gillian Martin (Fan Advisory Board Liaison); Niraj Haria (Disabled Supporters' Liaison); Eric Williams (Special Advisor); John Jory (Travel & Membership Coordinator); Mark Butler (Social Media Coordinator); Nicola Gibson (Secretary)

Absent:
None

Agenda Items
Welcome & apologies for absence Nicola opened the meeting at 4.35pm & welcomed everyone
Approval of previous minutes dated 21st June 2024 Minutes were circulated prior to the meeting & approved by the committee.
Follow up Items Bryan gave highlights of recent DSA activity including: ● The Flag is now in the North East corner & looking good ● Gill, Niraj & Bryan had attended the Disabled Fans Forum on 13th August & reported it had been very successful. There were 47 attendees. ● Bryan had met with Tony over the summer to examine the Constitution. This will need to be reviewed. ● The DSA are now in a position to commit funds to get the website up and running ● The DSA Whatsapp group is up and running too ● The membership database development is proceeding very well thanks to John's efforts ● Mark to give an update on the Fanzone at the next meeting of this group **Actions** Mark to check everyone accessing the Whatsapp group
Chair's Report September This was circulated to all prior to meeting & Bryan invited questions from the committee with reference to this.

Website/Membership Software - Niraj commented on the layout of the website & suggested that having a strong company to help develop it would be good. He asked how MemberMojo would integrate with the website & how much it would cost.

Sponsorship & Funding - Bryan suggested that it would be beneficial to have some more volunteers to join him on a funding sub committee to help formalise the objectives of the DSA to take to potential funders & sponsors. The DSA would need a very good story to tell people on why they should sponsor us. Niraj suggested that Shana had had experience in securing funds as well as being a good presenter. Eric explained he had also had experience of trying to raise funds & organising fundraising events but that since his accident he was now more limited. He would however be happy to recount his own personal story for a fundraising purpose. Mark offered to help with messaging being in a sales role. Gill suggested Guy Butters might like to also sit on a funding committee. Whilst Guy is actively involved in many activities, Bryan would extend the invitation to him only once the sub committee has established a well-rehearsed message. Niraj added that the DSA might be able to hold onto Guy's fundraising coattails. Gill would also be able to offer her time & experience in finance.

Actions

- Bryan to invite committee members to a small sub committee to establish objectives & collate personal stories

Treasurer's Report

Gill gave highlights of the DSA finance to date including:

- £144 spent on email registration leaving a balance of £606.66
- Gill & Bryan run their own small limited company & would be happy to donate £200 from that
- They were also helping direct a play which had given them permission to do a raffle for the DSA.

Gill invited questions

John said he would let his NW Sussex Seagull members aware of the raffle

Actions

Gill to post info about the DSA raffle

Special Advisor Report

Eric presented his report on disability access to the committee following a visit to the stadium. His observations include the following:

- Parking had not been a problem as he had secured parking for the season close to the ground
- Accessing the entrance to the stadium - Eric had decided to give the lifts a miss but had accessed the ground floor entrance with the help of 2 friends. He had joined the outer concourse by the club shop. That had proven to be problematic for the first match because he had had to give his phone to the carer.. He had found that stewards on that day had not been particularly helpful. He then accessed the lift and seating area which he found to be very good. He had investigated both WCs on the section which were both wheelchair friendly, although one relied on radar key access. He had been very impressed with these facilities. Niraj added that Eric was describing a changing facility.
- Regarding his ability to enjoy the game, Eric reported that at the first match, he hadn't been able to

clap or stand up & had found that a different experience. Exiting the stadium had not been difficult. He had one assistant accompanying him & another to meet him upon leaving the building.

His conclusion was that the 4 visits had all been very positive. Stewarding after the Manchester game had improved considerably. Bryan observed that generally stewarding from September onwards was better. Eric also mentioned that he had been issued with Smart Card passes. Bryan added that it was commendable that there was no fee for these.

Membership Database Update

John reported that the database was up & running. There were to date however only 2 members on it.

He explained how to join as a member. Once the DSA has it's own website, a link to the MemberMojo will be added.

John explained that the database would remain free of charge until it exceeds 50 members.

Gill asked if the people who signed up through the Gmail account would be able to upload their details to MemberMojo. About 80 people have signed up. There was a risk we might lose some members if they are expected to create a new link.

Actions
Send list to John who will add members to the database.

Fan Zone Update

Bryan invited Mark to recount his experience of attending a planning meeting for the Fanzone. Whilst Sarah had been unable to attend Mark did spend some time with the designer. Due to various challenges building of the Fanzone was running late but would hopefully be ready for March 2025. Mark reported that the design is very good, accessible & wheelchair friendly. The ambition of the Fanzone is to generate some revenue & halt a build up of traffic at the stadium. Some of the features include:

- a very digital environment with a DJ corner
- Furniture would not be attached to the floor
- Both the food & drink areas have dropped areas for wheelchair users
- Lifts to the 2nd floor at both sides
- Steps to the 2nd floor
- 2nd floor to be designated a VIP area

Mark asked the committee if it prefers radar locks on the disabled toilet facilities. The club he reported prefer them. Niraj & Eric suggested radar keys as a preference. If the club prefer them then Gill suggested it was better to have them. Mark said it would be advisable to remind members to take their own radar key with them to games.

Niraj asked if the Fanzone would have seating. Mark said the choice of furniture had not yet been finalised. It would be important to ensure the needs of disabled supporters are reflected.

Mark asked if he could share his experience of that last game he had attended at the Amex. It had proved difficult to order food & drink in the East Upper & he had raised this with the club which issued an apology & an assurance that this would not happen again. There should be a consistent seat service from subcontractors, Sodexo, for disabled supporters.

Approval to proceed with Website Bryan stated how familiar many of the committee are with the NW Sussex Seagulls website. He suggested the DSA use the same company that they employed to set up a DSA platform.   This would cost around £650 to £750 pounds to get up & running & for the first year of hosting. He would ask Mark to look at it from a technical perspective & advise us. He asked for the approval of the committee who agreed for him to proceed with the purchase. **Actions** Conduct usability test once the test website is available.
Appointment of additional Special Advisor - Shana Niraj explained how he had met Shana & gave a summary of her experience & skillset. Shana is a Season ticket holder & does a lot of writing for the MS society for whom she had been a spokesperson. She had established some important contacts through her PR role & was very aware of other disabilities too. He maintained that Shana would make a good addition to the sub committee from her contacts & knowledge base perspective. Her disability however means she might not be able to attend all meetings. He suggested inviting her to the next meeting & for the committee to take a vote at that. Bryan invited questions. Gill suggested that with Shana's experience of fundraising that she might also like to sit on the finance sub-committee. **Actions** Niraj to arrange meeting with Bryan & Shana
AOB Bryan reported that the visit on 3rd October to the Amex had been cancelled but would hopefully be rearranged. **Actions** Bryan will write to everyone to establish alternative dates. Eric will try and join too The meeting closed at 5.21pm
Dates of next meeting: Wednesday 6th Nov at 4.30pm

Accompanying papers & links: Minutes of 21st June 2024; Chair's Monthly Report; Treasurer's Report; Final Talk - Intro to Shana Pezaro;

Minutes submitted by - Nicola Gibson

Minutes approved by -