



BOLTON WANDERERS DISABLED SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



CHAIRMANS WELCOME

- Hi my name is Gerard chairman of the BWDSA and I would like to welcome you to the first BWDSA Newsletter.
- We have been working hard to improve the match day experience for all disabled supporters. We have achieved a significant amount over the last 12 months, some of these achievements I would like to share with you in this newsletter.
- Like most people we were affected by Covid resulting in a drop in membership, so we contacted the BWFCST for help, which was readily given. We became affiliated to the trust and with them have set up working groups including representatives from the Club, BWFCST and BWiTC to help us achieve our goals. As a result of these achievements we have seen our membership start to grow and are now setting out on increasing our membership further so we can have a stronger voice for all disabled supporters and their carers.
- We will be hosting an open meeting for all disabled supporters and carers on the **6th MARCH 2024** at 6.30pm in the Wellbeing Hub. Please come along and help make our voice stronger.

MESSAGE FROM PHIL MASON - Chief Operations Officer BWFC
Over the past twelve months the Club, the Disabled Supporters Association, Bolton Wanderers in the Community and the Bolton Wanderers Supporters Trust have been meeting regularly in partnership with each other to review the facilities and support given to our disabled supporters. As you will read throughout this newsletter, there have been great strides in offering a better supporter experience for those of different abilities. I am delighted that after many years of campaigning and planning we have the new facilities on offer that are outlined in this newsletter and most importantly a changing places facility that is available both on a match and non-match day.



Following an audit from Level Playing Fields we have been focusing on some key actions that have resulted in this work over the season, which is set to continue in preparation for the 2024/25 season.

I would like to thank all those who have dedicated their time and energy into working together in this way and showing a passion and commitment to making a tangible difference.

STADIUM ACCESSIBILITY GROUP (SAG)

Following a survey of disabled supporters undertaken by the BWFCST in October 2022 with agreement from the club, this identified the main areas to be addressed. The SAG group was formed in December 2022, consisting of Senior Club Officials (2), BWiTC (1), BWDSA (3) and the BWFCST (2) personnel. This group has been actively working together and here is an update on the tremendous progress that has been achieved to date. It should be noted that the commitment shown by the club has played a major role in this progress.

CHANGING PLACE TOILET (CPT)

This facility was introduced in November 2023 following many meetings between the SAG and Bolton Council. With the agreement and support of the club Robin Fletcher (BWFCST) managed and oversaw the planning and completion of this very worthy facility, which is also available out of match days to any disabled person who requires this facility and carer to use. The BWDSA gave great assistance in to what specialist equipment was required. The CPT is located across from the club shop.



ACCESSIBLE PASSPORT

This was introduced at the start of this season with thanks to the BWFCST who sponsored this. A small group of supporters from the BWDSA (4) and BWFCST (1) undertook the work to address that NOT ALL DISABILITIES ARE VISIBLE. This passport contains a section for the supporter to describe how a Steward could assist them if required which has taken away any misunderstanding between them. The club has included the passport use in their pre match briefings to Stewards. These passports are available from the ticket office if you require one at no cost.



WELLBEING HUB

This recently opened facility for all is available on Saturday match days from 12-2. It covers all aspects of what the BWiTC does in the community. Very soon the Hub (next to ticket office) will along with a Quiet Room in the stadium include some sensory equipment.



ACCESSIBLE TOILETS CONCOURSES

As part of the Level Playing Field Audit it was noted that there was some work required in these facilities, it is pleasing to say that work has started to upgrade these facilities and improve the safety aspects.

AUDIO DESCRIPTIVE COMMENTARY (ADC)

This recently added facility allows visually impaired / blind supporters to come along on match days and sit anywhere in the stadium with family / friends and listen to a specialist commentary of the game. Bring your own headsets, book a receiver through the ticket office 1 week before the game and pick up your receiver from there on match day, returning it to the ticket office after the game, there is no charge for using the receiver. Thank you to the BWDA for funding this.

JOINT MEMBERSHIP BWDSA / BWFCST

You now have the option of either being a single member of the BWDSA for £5 pa. Or take up the new joint membership as fully paid up members of both the BWDSA/ BWFCST for a fee of £10 pa. Details can be found on the BWFCST website or contact the BWDSA on bjhowell42@gotmail.com and they will help you.

BWDSA QUARTERLY MEETINGS WITH CLUB

These meetings have now re started after the enforced COVID break, which is allowing them to raise any issues with the club and work with them to achieve the desired objective that suits all. Please get involved with the BWDSA and help strengthen the voice of all disabled supporters and their carers.