



Date:04/03/2026

Time: 6:30pm

Attendees: OUFC staff: AT, TP, Level Playing Field: LB, TVP: AL, Supporters JB (FAB), JP, AKm KJ, CT, GH, PS (FAB)

Apologies: AK (OUFC), BW (Supporter)

1. Purpose of the Meeting

The meeting was held to explore forming a **formal, independent Disabled Supporters Association (DSA)** for Oxford United.

Key aims:

- Give disabled supporters a structured, recognised voice.
- Create a formal channel to raise issues with the club.
- Influence matchday operations and future stadium planning.
- Ensure representation for all types of disabilities.

2. Background & Context

2.1 Club Engagement Structure: JB outlined how the DSA could work with the FAB and Club within the Fan Engagement structure:

- The club now uses a **Fan Advisory Board (FAB)** as its primary engagement mechanism.
- A DSA, once formed, could secure a dedicated seat on the FAB.
- FAB meets quarterly, with working groups (e.g., EDI, matchday experience) meeting between cycles.
- DSA would sit independently but work in partnership with the FAB and supporter liaison roles.

2.2 Rationale for Creating a DSA: LB led discussion on why a DSA is important and how Level Playing Field can help with setting this up.

- Disabled supporters currently raise issues individually, which reduces impact.



- A DSA provides collective representation, evidence, and structured communication.
 - National awareness around ableism, hidden disabilities, sensory needs, and inclusive access continues to grow.
 - The new stadium project requires comprehensive accessibility input early in the design process.
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3. Why a DSA Is Needed

3.1 Accessibility Challenges Identified

- Difficulties accessing seats or navigating the stadium due to lift reliability, narrow routes, or poor crowd flow.
- Ineffective recognition of hidden disabilities.
- Limited sensory support for neurodivergent supporters.
- Lack of BSL interpretation at certain events.
- No audio-descriptive commentary service currently in place.
- Weather and health-related barriers for those with mobility or pain-related conditions.
- Inadequate accessible travel options and cost-prohibitive transport.

3.2 Importance of a Unified Voice

- A collective structure allows supporters to present data-backed requests.
- A recognised DSA enables issues to be escalated formally.
- A DSA strengthens collaboration with club departments such as safety, operations, and community outreach.

3.3 Inclusion & Culture

- Fans reported concerns about ableist behaviour or insensitive language at matches.
- Creating an inclusive environment is crucial to ensuring all supporters feel welcome.



- Supporters emphasised the power of football in providing community and equality.
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4. LB outlined a number of ways in which a DSA could be set up. He emphasised the need to involve as wide a group of fans as possible and that this group should establish the best structure for our fans. Some key points were:

4.1 Independence & Membership

- Must be fully independent of the club but acknowledged and supported by it.
- Should represent a broad spectrum of disabilities:
 - Visible disabilities
 - Hidden disabilities
 - Neurodivergence
 - Mental health conditions
 - Sensory needs
 - Carers, PAs, and families
- Importance placed on welcoming diverse lived experiences.

4.2 DSA Structure Structure -

At this stage the supporter working group should engage widely with other affected supporters to establish the way forward. This would then lead to agreeing an appropriate constitution and committee structure.

The committee should look to include fans of the women's team and carers/PAs as well as disabled fans of the mens team.

- Training and resources are available through external bodies to help with:
 - Establishing Constitution
 - Running meetings
 - Minute-taking
 - Structuring communication



- ACTION: JB to ensure links to LPF documents are circulated
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5. Engagement & Recruitment

5.1 Reaching Disabled Supporters

A number of suggestions were made, including Pre-match drop-in sessions in the Exhibition Bar.

- Coffee-morning style sessions held at the stadium.
- Communication via:
 - Matchday programme
 - Social media
 - FAB channels
 - Stadium signage
 - QR codes in accessible areas (toilets, sensory room, wheelchair bays)
- Outreach via:
 - Community programmes
 - Local disability organisations
 - Dementia support networks
 - SEN networks
 - Youth football pathways

ACTION: KJ and GH to set up DSA communications channels. JB to contact club regarding drop in sessions. JB to use FAB programme section to summarise the meeting.

5.2 Building Awareness

- Launch a dedicated email address (e.g., OUFC DSA). ACTION KJ GH
- Establish a WhatsApp group for early coordination. ACTION KJ
- Use social media and fan networks to promote involvement.
- Leverage strong content creators within the fanbase to broaden reach. GH



6. Key Accessibility Themes Raised

6.1 Stadium Access

- Reliability of lifts.
- Congested/obstructed walkways (including foliage encroachment).
- Limited accessible seating routes.
- Need for better pre-match steward awareness.

6.2 Sensory & Neurodivergent Support

- Sensory room improvements welcomed but long-term ambition to expand or relocate however recognised that stadium relocation will affect this
- Considerations for new stadium design (glass-fronted, accessible sensory space).
- Better signage and staff training on autism and sensory needs.

6.3 Matchday Services

- LB shared some good practice used effectively elsewhere e.g.
 - Audio descriptive commentary
 - BSL interpretation at key communication moments
 - Clearer accessibility signage
- Catering challenges for supporters with limited motor skills.

6.4 Transport & Parking

- Accessible coach travel currently not viable due to cost.
- Parking access at home and in the proposed new stadium remains a major concern.
- Potential partnerships with accessible transport providers discussed.

7. Strategic Implications



7.1 Influence on Stadium Development

- The new stadium project presents a crucial opportunity to embed inclusive design.
- A DSA would expect to be involved in ongoing discussions regarding
 - Seating layouts
 - Access routes
 - Parking schemes
 - Neurodivergent and sensory provision
 - Welfare spaces
- Early consultation reduces cost and avoids future accessibility failings.

7.2 Formal Integration Via FAB

- The DSA may seek a permanent seat on the Fan Advisory Board.
 - This ensures direct influence on the club's strategic decisions.
 - The FAB framework provides established access to senior OUFC leadership.
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8. Agreed Next Steps

1. **Hold a follow-up meeting** with a wider invite list.
2. **Set up a dedicated email address** for the DSA.
3. **Create a WhatsApp group** for initial organising.
4. **Plan an in-person drop-in session** at a future home fixture (Exhibition Bar suggested).
5. **Develop a communications strategy** for online and matchday engagement.
6. **Gather supporter input** using surveys and feedback forms.
7. **Identify volunteers** interested in committee positions.
8. **Begin drafting a constitution** using provided templates.
9. **Useful Web Links (as requested)**



Oxford United – Fan Advisory Board

[Fan Advisory Board | Oxford United Football Club](#)

Conducting a DSA Meeting

[LPF How to conduct a Disabled Supporters Association meeting.pdf - Google Drive](#)

Level Playing Field – Jack’s Story (Ableism & Matchday Equality)

<https://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/news-item/for-90-minutes-everyones-equal-hear-from-jack-on-world-cerebral-palsy-day/>

Introducing PC Alex Locke

[Video | Facebook](#)