



Level Playing Field

Annual Report

2020

Contents

President's foreword	3
Chair's report	4
About Level Playing Field	5
Weeks of Action 2020 - Covid-19 hit	8
Fan engagement	9
The Level Playing Field podcast	
Membership steering group	10
Match of the Day... before!	
Talking Sport	11
Weekly quizzes	
Covid-19	12
Football fights back	
Ambassador support	13
Webinars and club support	14
Level Playing Field guidance	15
Surveys	16
Impact of Covid-19 on disabled sports fans	
Streaming surveys	
Other	
A Year in review	17
Level Playing Field staff	19
Level Playing Field Board of Trustees	20
A word from the CEO	21

President's foreword

David Bernstein CBE

As President, I am pleased to welcome you to the latest Level Playing Field Annual Report.

Since our last report, we have all had to suffer the effects of a global pandemic. This has meant the charity has had to adapt its work to support disabled fans whilst still delivering against its charitable objective in innovative ways.

The staff at Level Playing Field have gone above and beyond throughout this difficult period to ensure disabled sports fans feel supported and their views and experiences are a prominent factor in plans moving forward as football clubs and sport, in general, prepares to welcome back spectators.

The Weeks of Action 2020 campaign was the charities biggest to date, despite having to postpone the final week due to the pandemic.

Several successful initiatives were introduced by staff to help supporters battle isolation during the initial lockdown. After months of planning the charity launched an official podcast, the only podcast of its kind that focuses solely on disabled sports fans. This will be an important platform enabling Level Playing Field the opportunity to grow as a charity and raise the national profile of the organisation as it tackles crucial topics in disability sport.

Again, I am very grateful to the Board of Trustees, the Ambassadors and my fellow Honorary Officers in doing what they do to ensure that Level Playing Field delivers on its charitable objectives. Level Playing Field is fortunate to have a passionate and determined team of staff who always go the extra mile to achieve our objectives.

I look forward to the year ahead and to yet more progress.

With best wishes,

David Bernstein CBE



Chair's report

Tony Taylor



Disabled sports fans are at the heart of what Level Playing Field exists for, and this has never been as evident as it has been throughout 2020, when we were hit with a global pandemic, restricting fans from attending stadia and live events. On behalf of the Board of Trustees at Level Playing Field, it gives me great pleasure to formally welcome you to our latest Annual report.

I would like to thank our President, David Bernstein CBE along with our Vice Presidents Lord Faulkner of Worcester, Lord Rosser of Ickenham and David Davies OBE, for their work during a difficult year amid the coronavirus pandemic. We have found their wise counsel, guidance and continued support to be of great support as we have navigated through the challenges presented by Covid 19. I would also like to express my thanks to our Ambassadors who do so much to represent the values and objectives of Level Playing Field – a world in which all disabled fans are able to freely access and enjoy live sporting events.

The potential impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on a charity such as ours could be devastating and I want to place on record my thanks to the staff team at Level Playing Field who have gone above and beyond anything we could have asked of them. They have been innovative in developing new ways of engaging with fans, clubs and governing bodies – and receptive to new ways of working – and we benefit greatly from having a staff team which works tirelessly to improve access and inclusion for disabled sports fans.

Throughout the year, they have been firmly committed to ensuring fans are made to feel as close to sport as possible, in a world where meeting friends, watching from the 'terraces', and supporting a team in the flesh was simply not an option. The team created several initiatives throughout the year to generate a social atmosphere and combat loneliness. Working closely with governing bodies, clubs, disabled supporters' associations and fans themselves to ensure there is a holistic approach to tackling these obstacles and making progress.

I want to place on record my thanks to fellow Trustees, who work in an entirely voluntary capacity but always go above and beyond the call of duty. This year, more than ever, we have depended on their input and unwavering support. They play a significant role in ensuring that the charity is governed effectively and that our charitable objectives are achieved. Our sights are now firmly set on the 2020/21 season and beyond. We remain determined to work collaboratively to continue the improvements in accessibility and inclusion for sports fans, on the return of live sport.

I look forward to updating you in our next annual report regarding our progress.

About Level Playing Field

Level Playing Field is a registered charity in England and Wales, which acts as a campaigning and advisory organisation to its membership and other parties across all sports. We have a team of dedicated staff with specialist knowledge, skills and experience around issues concerning access and inclusion.

Level Playing Field embraces 'the social model of disability' and promotes the removal of barriers that might prevent a disabled spectator from attending or enjoying a live sports event. We want to ensure that disabled people enjoy an equality of experience as they attend live sport. Level Playing Field is driven to address the current inequality of experience for disabled fans attending live sport. Whether it's lack of choice, availability of tickets or a second-rate experience we use a proactive and constructive approach to tackle these and other issues.

Our Vision



A world in which all disabled fans can freely access and enjoy live sporting events.



Our Mission

Level Playing Field promotes a positive, inclusive experience for disabled sports fans

We believe that attending and engaging with live sporting events has a positive impact on wellbeing. We work at every level to ensure that disabled fans can freely access and enjoy live sport.



Our Aims

- Providing support and advocacy for disabled sports fans.
- Offering advice, access audits and training to sports clubs and governing bodies.
- Working with architects and design teams to ensure an inclusive and accessible physical environment at live sporting events.
- Building relationships and partnerships with sports clubs, DSAs, fans and sector organisations.
- Campaigning to keep the disability agenda top of mind for the government.

Level Playing Field delivers its work through its four Key Pillars:



For the Clubs

For the Fans

Knowledge Centre

Campaigns

Putting it simply, Level Playing Field campaigns and works towards improving the matchday experience for disabled fans by driving an equal matchday experience.

Why we do what we do

It is estimated that 50% of disabled people don't take part in recreational or physical activity.

The barriers to why a disabled fan chooses not to attend live sport can be addressed through training, raising awareness, and updating facilities and services. Last year Level Playing Field received hundreds of enquiries and complaints and we aim to address these common recurring issues.

Level Playing Field are guided by the following principles:

- Anti-discrimination – so that disabled people do not face discrimination arising from poor or misinformed practice.
- **Equality of opportunity or making things fairer – for disabled people in every aspect of their contact with sports clubs and venues.**
- Increasing the independence and choices that disabled people have.
- **Individual requirements / diversity – recognising that a disabled person is an individual who, like all others, has his or her own requirements, abilities, human rights and responsibilities.**
- Integration/inclusion – such that services are made accessible to disabled people and offer choice.
- **Involvement in decision-making – so that disabled people, and/or their advocates, are consulted before decisions that affect them are made.**
- The social model of disability explains that it is social and physical ‘barriers’ that cause ‘disability’ not impairments.

Level Playing Field is working to remove the barriers that currently exclude disabled people. These barriers can be prejudice and stereotypes, the way things are organised and run, and little to no access to information, buildings and transport.



Weeks of Action 2020

Covid-19 hit

The suspension of live sport occurred on the final weekend of the 2020 Level Playing Field Weeks of Action campaign. This resulted in a number of planned matchday activities being cancelled across the football pyramid. The senior leadership team at Level Playing Field acted quickly to suspend the campaign ahead of official government guidance. Despite the suspension of activities during the final weekend, Level Playing Field recorded its most successful campaign to date, as it enjoyed involvement from governing bodies, clubs, disabled supporters associations and fans.

The 2020 Weeks of Action made a significant contribution towards inclusion, engagement and awareness. Videos were produced through our partnership with the English Football League which show-cased the matchday experience of fans across football.



Fan engagement

Following the restriction and the impact of the pandemic, Level Playing Field adapted its work (in line with its charitable objectives), to support its beneficiaries.

Several projects were adapted to meet the new challenge, for example regional forums which were being hosted virtually. New projects and activities were also created to support the well-being of fans. These projects include:

The Level Playing Field podcast

Membership Steering Group

Match of the Day... Before!

Talking Sport

Weekly quiz

The Level Playing Field Podcast

A Podcast For All

After thorough research, preparation and planning, in November 2020 Level Playing Field was excited to announce the launch of an official podcast. The podcast is released on a monthly basis and uses the tagline: 'A Podcast For All'. Each episode has a theme, some published episodes have included disability abuse, disability language, Covid-19 passports and certificates, along with a number of important and interesting topics.

The one-of-a-kind podcast created by our fans liaison officer is the only podcast available that focuses solely on disabled sports fans. After nine episodes, the podcast continues to be a great success with a growing audience, as fans and clubs continue to buy into the project and enjoy the content on offer.

The podcast provides a range of guests each episode, including staff from various sports clubs, fans, Level Playing Field ambassadors and others from partner organisations and charities.

Membership Steering Group

Level Playing Field membership

A membership steering group was conducted to enhance the experience of Level Playing Field members ahead of the 2020/21 season. The group was made up of new and existing members, who contributed feedback to the membership team, suggesting ideas and changes, what works well about the membership programme and what could be improved. The information gathered led in part to record-breaking membership numbers and increased quality and quantity of content, with future meetings scheduled.



Match of the Day... Before!

One of the most important parts of live sport is the social aspect and experiences football, rugby, cricket and many other sports offer to supporters. During the Covid-19 pandemic, that resulted in fans being unable to join family, friends and colleagues to enjoy live sports events, Level Playing Field decided to try and re-create this atmosphere with a new initiative, 'Match of the Day... Before!'.

The name, which is based on the Saturday night football show 'Match of the Day', wasn't the only aspect from BBC's show that inspired Level Playing Field's 'Match of the Day... Before!' The idea of the project was to host a live video chat every Monday, where fans could join from all different clubs and sports to discuss all the latest action from the previous weekend's fixtures and events.

This allowed supporters to re-connect with fellow fans and enjoy heated discussion and debate, usually on their own team's performance!

Talking Sport

Level Playing Field launched the Talking Sport initiative during the original Covid-19 lockdown in an attempt to combat loneliness during a period of isolation for so many regular match-going sports fans.

The initiative was launched on the back of the Office For National Statistics report, disabled people have stated that loneliness had affected their well-being during the COVID pandemic.

Level Playing Field's fans liaison officer led on the project, inviting Level Playing Field members, fans and disabled supporters association's to join in a private video chat to talk all things sport!

Weekly Quiz

To generate some competition and positivity during March's lockdown, we began a weekly quiz that took place every Monday across Level Playing Field's social media platforms.

Level Playing Field acted as quiz host, compiling a list of questions to challenge some eager fans with in a quiz made up of three rounds. The rounds were general knowledge, specialist subject and a picture round,

An average of 15 people joined the quiz weekly, with others joining live or catching-up later on across social media.



Covid-19

Right from the initial stages of the pandemic, Level Playing Field took an approach based on being a part of the solution, being proactive, responsive and responsible in its relationship with governing bodies, clubs and other stakeholders to offer meaningful guidance to assist disabled fans. A programme of work was delivered in order to support club staff, with the focus on disabled fan engagement and the plans for an (inclusive and accessible) re-opening of stadia. This was delivered through a range of channels, including webinars, Level Playing Field Guidance and FAQ documents, 1 to 1 club telephone/online calls, and other standard means of communication.



Football fights back

Level Playing Field produced a short video to highlight the good work football clubs were doing behind the scenes during the suspension of live sport. Football clubs, players and athletes across the country had voluntarily put in the work to make sure those vulnerable are as comfortable as possible during challenging times. There was so much good work being done by clubs, that we wanted to highlight some of it in a short video - only a small snapshot of what clubs and community trusts are involved in.

Ambassador support

Stephen Miller's message



“ —

Decorated Paralympic athlete Stephen Miller offered words of advice and encouragement at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic during the testing times for sport and it's fans:

"What a time to be alive, eh?

This is undoubtedly the most unprecedented and challenging situation most of us will ever have experienced. Sure, there have been outbreaks and pandemics in the past but not one that has shut down the entire world the way that COVID-19 has.

The world can seem scary and stressful right now, worrying about our own health and safety as well as that of others, but the best way to help is to follow Government advice by staying at home as much as possible, avoiding social interaction and washing your hands.

We are very much social creatures and love to be outdoors so it's very alien to have to stay in and avoid people, but we just have to do what we humans do best – adapt to these new conditions and be resilient. If we can do that, I'm sure we'll come through this stronger and wiser, with a greater sense of togetherness and empathy, and perhaps the world might even be a better place for it.

With all live sport and entertainment events postponed or cancelled, shops and parks closed, the outside world feels a bit like a zombie movie right now. It's easy to let fears and anxieties take over but it's important to stay active and healthy both physically and mentally over the next few weeks or months.

It was recently announced that the Tokyo Paralympics has been postponed until next year, I was planning to try and qualify for what would be my 7th games this year and had been training and preparing all winter. Indeed, a Paralympics is something you prepare for over many years, so to have that target taken away and moved is a strange feeling, although the decision was totally correct and necessary in the circumstances. Just like people who have lost business and work, it leaves a massive void in my life – being told to stay at home and not go to work is probably most people's idea of heaven, but filling time without purpose is harder than it sounds and after a few days when the novelty has worn off it may start taking it's toll physically and mentally.

When this is all over, we don't want another crisis with everybody being depressed and unwell, so here are some tips that I am employing to maintain good physical and mental health during this crisis: Stay connected, exercise, eat well, sleep, journaling, focus on what you can control, and stay positive."

— ”

Webinars and club support

Level Playing Field have worked with clubs and governing bodies throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to offer support and guidance concerning disabled sports fans.

SGSA webinars - reopening stadia

Level Playing Field worked with the Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA) to put on a webinar for both clubs and fans on the re-opening of stadia guidance: SG02 - Planning for Social Distancing. The webinar took place on the 18 August 2021 with the potential that stadiums would have a partial re-opening in October. We had SGSA Inspector Rick Riding who provided an update on the guide with key information along with taking part in a Q&A with Level Playing Field and finally taking questions from fans and clubs. The session was recorded and made available to all clubs across the football pyramid and across other sports where the SG02 guidance would be applicable. There were 99 webinar participants with 27 clubs being represented.

Club drop-in sessions

Level Playing Field hosted several drop in sessions for club staff to receive further information around how to engage with fans during the pandemic, how best to support fans on their return to stadiums, and what accessible considerations they need to factor in. At the time of these sessions there was tiered system with only some clubs having fixtures all be it with a reduced capacity. Level Playing Field hosted a Q&A with clubs who had hosted a game to share challenges and what went well.



Club and governing body guidance

Following the very successful survey and other fan engagement (1 to 1 talks, fan forums and group discussions) Level Playing Field produced several Covid-19 guides:

- Covid-19 guide for clubs – focusing on several key areas (fan wellbeing, communication, operational challenges, alternatives to attending and ticketing). The guide also included case studies and good practices that clubs were doing.
- Covid-19 Club disabled fans FAQ guide and solutions - A detailed guide was created that outlined frequently asked and potential questions ahead of stadiums re-opening. The guide also provided sensible solutions to ensure clubs had sufficient support to provide an accessible re-opening.
- Disabled Fan Engagement - This guide outlined a step-by-step process for clubs to engage with disabled fans ahead of stadiums re-opening. There is anticipated anxiety and a lot of changes due to Covid-19 measures and to alleviate this having a structured and regular communication process is essential.



Level Playing Field guidance

In addition to the Covid-19 guidance already mentioned, Level Playing Field updated previous guidance documents on disability identifiers (such as sunflower lanyards), virtual navigation tools (which help supporters to navigate stadiums virtually), our 'Proof Of Disability' guidance and also the 'Introduction to disability' guide that accompanies our training.

We also created an 'About Level Playing Field' guide, which outlines our work and services, and have begun work on a 'Terminology Guide' to help educate clubs and fans about appropriate and inappropriate language relating to disability.

Surveys

Impact of Covid-19 on disabled sports fans

Level Playing Field released a first-of-its-kind survey with the aim of ascertaining the impact of the pandemic on fans so that the charity could formulate data-driven guidance and support. The survey also aimed to help the organisation understand how disabled supporters feel about live sport moving forward when fans are able to return to stadia. The survey was open for five weeks and saw close to 600 respondents from fans across the football pyramid. The survey showcased the thoughts and expectations of match-going fans as sport began to reconvene behind closed doors.

Some of the key findings found that:

43% said the suspension of live sport had a significant impact on their mental health

79% of supporters were in the government's 'high risk' category, but **81%** of fans intend to renew their season ticket

12% of respondents state that they'd been put off attending live sport ever again

Streaming survey

13 November - 18 December 2020

We wanted to hear from disabled supporters about their experience of watching live sport on these streaming services, in particular, whether the services are accessible for their particular disability. When so many other facilities, events and venues had been put on hold, the option to watch live sport on TV had an increased significance. Therefore it's essential that TV streaming services met the requirements of all viewers, particularly disabled fans. The results of the survey are being used to advise and support clubs, leagues and streaming service providers where possible.

A year in review

January

National Forum film

Stadium MK would be the destination in November 2019 Level Playing Field would invite clubs, DSAs, fans, partner organisations and its members to meet to discuss access, best practices, and share the great ideas we all have to provide a better match day experience for disabled sports fans.

Working alongside Stanley Road Film and Media Limited, LPF produced a 'National Forum Film' that captured a significant day in Level Playing Field history.

March

EFL filming

Level Playing Field staff travelled to Old Trafford neighbours 'Hotel Football' in Manchester to conduct a handful of short films to release during March in the build-up to the Weeks of Action campaign.

Pub quiz

March marked the beginning of Covid-19, and more importantly, the weekly Level Playing Field pub quiz!

May

Covid-19 fan survey

The survey was the first of its kind to measure the current impact of Covid-19 on disabled sports fans in England and Wales and to also look forward at particular challenges. Fast-forward to June, we published the results of the survey which saw close to 600 responses from disabled fans.

February

Weeks of Action 2020

Despite the disruption caused by the sudden suspension of live sport, Weeks of Action 2020 still went above and beyond previous years as Level Playing Field recorded record numbers in its 16th season celebrating the campaign.

102 clubs, 38 disabled supporters association's, 42 other organisations and 13 leagues took part in total.

April

Football Fights Back

During the suspension of sport, we noticed plenty of clubs working hard in and around their respective communities, especially with disabled supporters. Most clubs were communicating with fans by reaching out on the phone, some clubs had club legends getting involved! There was a lot of good going on up and down the country, so LPF decided to do some research and create a video, on how football fought back.

July

Membership Steering Group

Level Playing Field decided to put together a 'Membership Steering Group' made up of current LPF members and DSA members, to help develop the three membership types we offer. We recruited eight members and had a successful first meeting at the beginning of the last season.

Talking Sport

We decided to introduce a new initiative to encourage social interaction, combating loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic. We invited fans to get in touch with us for a session of sport discussion. The feedback we've received has proved to us just how important it is to reach out to fans in these periods of isolation.

September

Virtual forums

During September, Level Playing Field arranged several DSA and Fan forums to discuss the return of disabled supporters to stadiums, and what part Disabled Supporters Associations (DSA) can play in the process.

November

The Level Playing Podcast

In what has probably been Level Playing Field's biggest introduction of 2020, the long-awaited Level Playing Field podcast launched.

TV streaming survey

This survey focussed on TV Streaming Services, or any other platform fans have used during the time sport has been played behind closed doors. We wanted to know if these streaming services are accessible to everyone.

August

Stephen Miller MBE becomes Ambassador

Level Playing Field were delighted to announce the signing of Stephen Miller MBE as the latest to join what is growing to be a fantastic list of ambassadors. Stephen was a founding member of the Newcastle United Disabled Supporters Association, an association that is now in its 22nd year of continuous service to represent the views that improve the matchday experience of disabled supporters visiting St James Park. It is this passion the key reason for Stephen wanting to work with Level Playing Field as an ambassador in supporting the charity in its work and vision: A world in which all disabled fans can freely access and enjoy live sporting events.

October

Match of the Day... Before!

Continuing our work around Covid-19 and keeping fans engaged during this difficult time, we decided it was time for another Level Playing Field initiative; Match of the Day... Before!

Staff



Owain Davies

Chief Executive



Ruth Hopkins

General Manager & Head of Access
and Development



Liam Bird

Fan's Liaison Officer



Nicky Baker

Access and Development Officer



Ben Southby

Media and Communications
Officer



Daniel Townley

Development Officer

Board of Trustees



Tony Taylor

Chair



Steve Evans

Secretary



Jo McNicol

Trustee



Rex Burton

Trustee



Jo Deagle

Trustee



Jamie Beddard

Trustee

A message from our Chief Executive

Owain Davies

The past 12 months have been highly challenging for everyone. The impact of Covid-19 has ravaged our day to day lives, restricted our community activity, taken away watching live sport and far worse. However, we have seen clubs, disabled supporters associations and fans come together and fill voids where they can and keep people connected and offer support.

January, like most years, is a busy period for Level Playing Field with preparation for our Weeks of Action campaign taking centre stage. This year's target was to build on last year's achievements, which was a great challenge, with the 2019 campaign being the most successful to date. I'm pleased to report that this was the case, and we exceeded all our measures from previous campaigns despite the suspension of live sport (due to Covid-19) taking place on the final weekend of the campaign (13th of March).

When the pandemic hit, Level Playing Field acted quickly, and as a charity, we adapted our work to address the current situation. Our mantra 'to support clubs and governing bodies' was to be a part of the solution and be decisive and quick. Our focus for fans was to be there and to keep people connected.

We are still in the middle of a tough time, and we must stick together and support where we can. We featured a news story in July from our ambassador Steven Miller (six-time Paralympic medalist), and his words of advice ring true now "we will get through this".

Finally, I would like to thank our funders, the Premier League Fans Fund and the EFL, who have been incredibly supportive during this period and allowed us to be responsive to the situation. Disabled Supporters Associations and fans for supporting our work and also supporting fellow fans. Lastly, the clubs who have often filled some of the gaps that this pandemic has taken from us.





For Disabled Sports Fans

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Company Number: 11109719
Charity Number: 1177415

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD
DIRECTORS' REPORT AND
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2020

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

INDEX

	PAGES
CHARITY REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS	1
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (INCL DIRECTORS' REPORT)	2 – 4
INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT	5
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	6
COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	7
BALANCE SHEET	8
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	9 – 16

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

CHARITY REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

CHARITY NUMBER: 1177415

COMPANY NUMBER: 11109719

TRUSTEES/DIRECTORS: A Taylor (Chair)
S Evans
J McNicol
R Burton
J Deagle
J Beddard

COMPANY SECRETARY: S Evans

REGISTERED OFFICE: Greville House
10 Jury Street
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Warwickshire
CV34 4EW

PRINCIPAL ADDRESS: The Junction
Station Road
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WD17 1ET

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Mark Harwood FCA FMAAT
Michael Harwood & Co
Greville House
10 Jury Street
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Warwickshire
CV34 4EW

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (INCL DIRECTORS' REPORT)

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2020. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Level Playing Field, a charitable company limited by guarantee (Company no. 11109719 & Charity no. 1177415), was incorporated on the 13th December 2017 and is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association. The directors of the charitable company (who are its trustees for the purposes of charity law) have no interest in the company's assets or surplus and receive no remuneration.

The Trustees meet at least once a quarter and are actively involved in the strategic direction of the charity. Level Playing Field uses both in-house and external sources for appointing trustees in order to operate in line with best practice. Level Playing Field is an inclusive employer and recruiter. The Charity actively promotes the positive impact of having a diverse workforce and trustee board. This commitment allows Level Playing Field to represent the community it serves. Level Playing Field has signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme.

A business continuation policy is in place which clearly reviews risks and provides a plan to react to changing circumstances should they occur. The plan covers financial, operational and strategic areas and is supported by a detailed risk assessment.

The charity works on a collaborative basis with other charities, including Centre for Access to Football in Europe (CAFE), but has no formal agreements or links in situ.

OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Level Playing Field believes that disability is a social issue and that an individual only becomes disabled as a result of the social, attitudinal and environmental barriers that the individual faces (this is known as the social model of disability).

The charity is focussed on removing these barriers in all sports. Level Playing Field and its members are committed to achieving an environment where:

- all fans can enjoy an equal experience at live sports events
- all stadia and sports venues are fully accessible and inclusive
- all customer and/or fan services are equal and inclusive
- disabled people are seen as customers with a commercial value

We are guided by the following principles:

- Anti-discrimination – so that disabled people do not face discrimination arising from poor or misinformed practice
- Equality of opportunity and fairness – for disabled people in every aspect of their contact with sports clubs and venues
- Increasing the independence and choices offered to disabled people
- Individual requirements – recognising that a disabled person is an individual who, in a diverse society, has his or her own needs, abilities, human rights and responsibilities
- Integration/inclusion – such that services are made accessible to disabled people and offer choice

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

DIRECTORS' REPORT (Continued)

- Involvement in decision-making – so that disabled people, and/or their advocates, are consulted before decisions which affect them are made
- Acknowledgment of the social model of disability which explains that it is social and physical barriers that cause 'disability' not impairments.

Level Playing Field is working to remove the barriers that currently exclude disabled people. These barriers include:

- Prejudice and stereotypes
- The way things are organised and run
- Lack of/inadequate access to information, buildings and transport

The directors have had due regard to the guidance published by The Charity Commissioners on public benefit in managing the activities of the charity.

The main activities of the charity during the year are as follows (a more detailed summary of the charity's activities can be found in the Annual Report):

Fan Engagement

Following the restriction and the impact of the pandemic Level Playing Field adapted its work (in line with its charitable objectives) to support their beneficiaries. Several projects were adapted to meet the new challenge, such as Regional Forums being hosted virtually. New projects and activities were also created to support the well-being of fans, such as:

- **Online Weekly Quizzes**, embracing questions on sport and accessibility
- **Talking Sport**, offering 1 to 1 telephone calls with disabled fans who were isolated and lonely
- **Match of the Day Before**, group virtual coffee mornings
- **Level Playing Field Podcast**, available through all the main streaming channels

The feedback received from stakeholders to these activities and their impact has been positive and it is likely that these will continue when the pandemic is no longer a threat and restrictions ease.

Covid-19

Right from the initial stages of the pandemic, Level Playing Field took an approach based on being a part of the solution, being proactive, responsive and responsible in its relationship with governing bodies, clubs and other stakeholders to offer meaningful guidance to assist disabled fans. A programme of work was delivered in order to support club staff, with the focus on disabled fan engagement and the plans for an (inclusive and accessible) re-opening of stadia. This was delivered through a range of channels, including webinars, Level Playing Field Guidance and FAQ documents, 1 to 1 club telephone/online calls, and other standard means of communication.

Surveys

In May/June 2020, Level Playing Field conducted a Covid-19 Fan Survey, with the aim of ascertaining the impact of the pandemic on fans so that the charity could formulate data driven guidance and support. 570 fans took part in the survey, at the time the most extensive survey in Level Playing Field's history, with 43% of respondents to the survey highlighting that the suspension of live sport had significantly impacted their mental health.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD**DIRECTORS' REPORT (Continued)*****Weeks of Action***

The suspension of live sport occurred on the final weekend of the 2020 Level Playing Field Weeks of Action campaign. This resulted in a number of planned matchday activities being cancelled across the football pyramid. The senior leadership team at Level Playing Field acted quickly to suspend the campaign ahead of official government guidance. Despite the suspension of activities during the final weekend, Level Playing Field recorded its most successful campaign to date, as it enjoyed involvement from governing bodies, clubs, disabled supporters' associations and fans. The 2020 Weeks of Action made a significant contribution towards inclusion, engagement and awareness. Videos were produced through our partnership with the English Football League which show-cased the matchday experience of fans across football.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The financial position of the charity at 31st December 2020, as more fully detailed in the accounts, can be summarised as follows:

	2020	2019
	£	£
Net income/(expenditure)	(4,890)	182,351
Unrestricted Revenue Funds available for the general purposes of the charity	177,461	182,351
Restricted Revenue Funds	-	-
Total Funds	177,461	182,351

This was the second period of activity as a company following the transfer of the assets, liabilities and activities from the unincorporated charity named The National Association of Disabled Supporters (charity number 1079740) on the 1st September 2018. The comparative figures in these financial statements are for the 16-month period from this date to the 31st December 2019.

RESERVES POLICY

The reserves policy is to maintain a level of unrestricted reserves which covers 6-12 months of operating costs.

The report of the directors has been prepared having taken advantage of the small companies' exemption in the Companies Act 2006.

On behalf of the board

A Taylor
Chair
Date:

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31st December 2020 which are set out on pages 6 to 16.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Mark Harwood FCA FMAAT
Michael Harwood & Co
Chartered Accountants
Greville House
10 Jury Street
Warwick
CV34 4EW

Date:

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)
For the year ended 31st December 2020

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2020 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations & grants	2	11,454	289,439	300,893
Charitable activities	3	34,297	-	34,297
Investments		-	-	-
Total income		45,751	289,439	335,190
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds		221	90	311
Charitable activities	4	34,985	291,481	326,466
Other	5	722	12,581	13,303
Total expenditure		35,928	304,152	340,080
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		9,823	(14,713)	(4,890)
Transfers between funds		(14,713)	14,713	-
Net movement in funds for the year		(4,890)	-	(4,890)
Fund balances brought forward		182,351	-	182,351
Fund balances at 31st December 2020	13	177,461	-	177,461

The notes on pages 9 to 16 form an integral part of the accounts.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)
For the 16 months to 31st December 2019

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	01.09.18 to 31.12.19 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations & legacies	2	2,356	416,884	419,240
Charitable activities	3	256,177	-	256,177
Investments		12	-	12
Total income		258,545	416,884	675,429
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds		198	36	234
Charitable activities	4	54,997	426,616	481,613
Other	5	653	10,578	11,231
Total expenditure		55,848	437,230	493,078
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		202,697	(20,346)	182,351
Transfers between funds		(20,346)	20,346	-
Net movement in funds for the year		182,351	-	182,351
Fund balances brought forward		-	-	-
Fund balances at 31st December 2019	13	182,351	-	182,351

The notes on pages 9 to 16 form an integral part of the accounts.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

(Company no. 11109719)

BALANCE SHEET**As at 31st December 2020**

	Note	2020 £	2019 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	8	3,516	2,219
Current assets			
Debtors	9	7,939	9,442
Cash at bank and in hand		205,434	231,562
Total current assets		<u>213,373</u>	<u>241,004</u>
Current liabilities			
Creditors	10	(39,428)	(60,872)
Net current assets		<u>173,945</u>	<u>180,132</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>177,461</u>	<u>182,351</u>
Funds of the Charity:			
Restricted funds		-	-
Unrestricted funds		177,461	182,351
Total charity funds	13	<u>177,461</u>	<u>182,351</u>

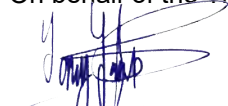
Directors' statements:

- The company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies;
- No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006;
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 11th August 2021

On behalf of the Trustees



A Taylor
Chair

The notes on pages 9 to 16 form an integral part of the accounts.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****For the year ended 31st December 2020**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**(a) Basis of Accounting**

Level Playing Field is a company limited by guarantee in England & Wales. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 1 and the nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are given in the Annual Report.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are presented in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

(b) Income

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

For donations to be recognised the charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

Investment income is earned through holding assets for investment purposes such as cash and is comprised of bank interest.

(c) Government Grants

Government grants are recognised at the fair value of the asset received or receivable when there is reasonable assurance that the grant conditions will be met and the grants will be received.

A grant that specifies performance conditions is recognised in income when the performance conditions are met. Where a grant does not specify performance conditions it is recognised in income when the proceeds are received or receivable. A grant received before the recognition criteria are satisfied is recognised as a liability.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

For the year ended 31st December 2020

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(d) **Expenditure**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

- Costs of raising funds includes the monthly charges of donation collection organisations.
- Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into the categories above and includes governance costs.

(e) **Fixed Assets**

Items of equipment costing over £200 are capitalised and are stated at cost (or deemed cost) or valuation less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Cost includes costs directly attributable to making the asset capable of operating as intended.

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value, of each asset on a systematic basis over its expected useful life as follows:

- Computer Equipment 3 years straight line

(f) **Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year**

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

(g) **Funds**

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds subject to specific restricted conditions imposed by donors. The purposes and use of restricted funds are set out in note 12 to the financial statements.

(h) **Taxation**

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

For the year ended 31st December 2020

2. DONATIONS AND GRANTS

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2020 £	16 months to 31.12.19 £
Donations				
Small donations individually < £100	330	-	330	653
Football Conference	-	-	-	1,000
Manchester United Disabled Supporters Association	500	-	500	500
Wolverhampton Wanderers FC	-	-	-	217
National Association of Disabled Supporters	624	-	624	-
Total donations	1,454	-	1,454	2,370
Grants				
Premier League Fans Fund	-	289,439	289,439	416,870
Watford Borough Council (Coronavirus Small Business Grant Fund)	10,000	-	10,000	-
Total grants	10,000	289,439	299,439	416,870
Total donations and legacies	11,454	289,439	300,893	419,240

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2020 £	16 months to 31.12.19 £
Income from Audits	4,625	-	4,625	36,325
Training Income	7,100	-	7,100	4,450
Other Income	22,572	-	22,572	23,343
Funds transferred from The National Association of Disabled Supporters	-	-	-	192,059
Total income from charitable activities	34,297	-	34,297	256,177

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

For the year ended 31st December 2020

4. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2020 £	16 months to 31.12.19 £
Direct spending				
Expenses recharged	(2,093)	631	(1,462)	1,696
Weeks of Action & Campaigning	479	9,050	9,529	27,986
Regional DSA Forums	-	-	-	4,898
Event Costs	30	569	599	3,481
Total direct spending	(1,584)	10,250	8,666	38,061
Support costs				
Staff costs (see Note 6)	33,131	220,762	253,893	301,963
Travel and subsistence	577	7,741	8,318	40,858
Telephone costs	98	970	1,068	1,367
Premises	2,096	39,842	41,938	58,555
Publicity	44	835	879	3,939
Administration & office supplies	331	5,737	6,068	16,368
Professional fees & insurance	105	2,000	2,105	2,641
Website & email hosting	108	2,052	2,160	17,016
Training	6	109	115	845
Postage	73	1,183	1,256	-
Total support costs	36,569	281,231	317,800	443,552
Total expenditure on charitable activities	34,985	291,481	326,466	481,613

5. OTHER COSTS

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2020 £	16 months to 31.12.19 £
Bank charges	22	146	168	223
Governance travel costs	106	1,202	1,308	3,181
Other legal and professional	478	9,032	9,510	6,705
Depreciation	116	2,197	2,313	1,110
Sundry expenses	-	4	4	12
Total other costs	722	12,581	13,303	11,231

Independent examiner's remuneration

Included in the above figures are independent examination fees of £3,000 (2019 - £3,000) and payroll services of £576 (2019 - £1,308).

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 31st December 2020
6. STAFF COSTS

	2020 £	16 months to 31.12.19 £
Gross wages	228,700	271,814
Social security costs	20,169	22,399
Pension costs	5,024	5,500
Other costs	-	2,250
Total salaries, wages and related costs	253,893	301,963

Average number of employees	6	6
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The number of employees who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs of more than £60,000 is as follows:

£60,001 - £70,000	1	1
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7. TRUSTEE REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

No Trustee or connected person received any remuneration or expenses either directly or indirectly.

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer Equipment £	Total £
COST		
At 1 st January 2019	3,329	3,329
Additions	3,610	3,610
Disposals	-	-
At 31 st December 2020	6,939	6,939
DEPRECIATION		
At 1 st January 2019	1,110	1,110
Charge for the year	2,313	2,313
Eliminated on disposal	-	-
At 31 st December 2020	3,423	3,423
NET BOOK VALUE		
At 31 st December 2020	3,516	3,516
At 31 st December 2019	2,219	2,219

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 31st December 2020
9. DEBTORS

	2020	2019
	£	£
Trade debtors	4,623	5,255
Prepayments	3,174	3,038
Other debtors	142	1,149
	7,939	9,442

10. CREDITORS:
AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2020	2019
	£	£
Trade creditors	203	2,629
Accruals	8,789	3,069
Social security & other taxes	6,874	6,121
Other creditors	-	17
Deferred income	23,562	49,036
	39,428	60,872

11. DEFERRED INCOME

	2020	2019
	£	£
Balance brought forward	49,036	-
Amounts released to income	(49,036)	-
Additions during the year	23,562	49,036
	23,562	49,036

Deferred income comprises grant income received in the year which relates to the year ended 31st December 2021.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

For the year ended 31st December 2020

11. MOVEMENT ON FUNDS

	Balance at 01.01.2019 £	Income in year £	Expenditure in year £	Transfers £	Balance at 31.12.2020 £
Unrestricted & designated funds					
Unrestricted revenue funds	182,351	45,751	(35,928)	(14,713)	177,461
Total unrestricted funds	182,351	45,751	(35,928)	(14,713)	177,461
Restricted funds					
Fans' Fund	-	289,439	(304,152)	14,713	-
Total restricted funds	-	289,439	(304,152)	14,713	-
Total charity funds	182,351	335,190	(340,080)	-	177,461

12. RESTRICTED FUNDS

The purposes for which the restricted funds are held by the charity are:

- Fans' Fund Grant funding from the Premier League Fans' Fund to be used for the following outcomes:
- Outcome 1 - To Improve engagement between fans and fan groups and the key operational staff who deliver supporter liaison, disability access and any related facilities and services.
 - Outcome 2 - To make fans voice more representative, through the promotion and development of effective membership organisation.
 - Outcome 3 - To improve the matchday and non-matchday experience for all fans by making football more diverse and inclusive.
 - Outcome 4 - To fund use of not-for-profit skilled or professional services that create and support innovative fan engagement projects.
 - Outcome 5 - To improve the away fan experience.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 31st December 2020

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Fixed Assets £	Current Assets £	Current Liabilities £	Total £
At 31st December 2020				
Restricted funds	3,340	35,250	(38,590)	-
Unrestricted funds	176	178,123	(838)	177,461
	3,516	213,373	(39,428)	177,461
At 31st December 2019				
Restricted funds	2,108	49,425	(51,533)	-
Unrestricted funds	111	191,579	(9,339)	182,351
	2,219	241,004	(60,872)	182,351

14. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year the company made no transactions with related parties.