

**Catford Wanderers Sports Club
Annual General Meeting: 14 November 2021**

Joint Report from the Chair and Secretary, CWSC Board

Last year, we were unable to bring the membership together for an AGM - but we circulated a written review of the year. It is good, this year, to be able to meet in person.

This report covers the activities undertaken by the CWSC Board over the past 12 months. It does not cover the work undertaken by each of the Sections - who can provide their own reports/updates of their work.

Thanks are due to lots of members who, in many different ways, have freely given over their time and expertise to help the Club over the past 12 months.

1. The Directors.

The Board of Directors for the year 2020/21 comprised of: -

Eamon Martin - Chair.

Val Elkins - Bar and Social Manager.

Pete Romagnoli - Treasurer.

Margaret Smith - Secretary.

Debby Dixon - Cricket Section.

Maggie Innes - Badminton Section. (Resigned September 21)

Tony Martin - Football Section. (Resigned September 21)

Kate Williams - Tennis Section.

Dave Smythers - President, attended meetings of the Board by invitation.

The Board would like to formally thank both Maggie and Tony for their contributions as Board members - and for their help and support over the last year in tackling the challenges presented by Covid 19.

2. Meetings.

Under our rules, the Board is required to meet at least 6 times per year. We met on 11 occasions in the past 12 months (the majority of meetings held on-line) – again reflecting the impact on the Club of the Covid-19 virus.

3. Emerging from the Covid-19 Lockdown.

Last November (20) - It was disappointing to have close down again for a second Lockdown. Throughout the following 5/6 months, we were grateful to members for their understanding, co-operation and support; and for the hard work of Sections in designing and implementing risk assessments, systems and arrangements - which enabled us to continue as best we could and meet in safe ways. A number of individuals across the Club invested a great deal of time and expertise into making this happen.

Protecting the health and well-being of the membership remained the over-riding priority for the Board.

In April 21, we saw the start of a 'Return to Sport' following the path out of Lockdown. Opening up of our Club was generally welcomed – but managing this safely and within regulations presented CWSC (as a volunteer led organisation) with a number of challenges.

Not everything went as well as we would have hoped in restarting sports activities. We are wholly reliant on voluntary efforts to run all our events - which take place on a relatively small, tight urban site. There is no 'staff' presence to oversee events. In this scenario, the activities of each section can often 'rub up' against each other. Add into this mix - all the pressures and difficulties around the Pandemic - and it isn't really surprising that we encountered some challenges. However, taking the year as a whole, we did well to come through as we did.

To ensure the 'Return to Sport' was managed as well as it could be, the Board set in place plans/arrangements which featured: -

- **Agreed arrangements for an extension to the 2020/21 Football season:** *Football matches continued to be played over a 'Summer extension period' to the Season - a time when the outfield is normally given over to Cricket. This placed added demands on the Outfield. Particular thanks are due to the Cricket Section for helping to accommodate this arrangement*
- **Calendar of Events:** *A calendar of activities taking place at the Club over the summer season has been set up. This is now maintained by Margaret – and shared fortnightly to Section leads. This has been a real help us to ensure that we anticipate any clashes/overuse of the outfield/grounds; identify any potential safety issues; and keep alert to each other's needs in using the outfield. Through this, we can anticipate any demand for Bar/Catering and coordinate/assist the Grounds team in doing their (difficult) job for us.*
- **Management of Games/Event:** *Sections were asked to ensure that for each game/event, a senior member of the Section was designated as 'in charge' of the activity. This is something we are keen to continue as a normal part of our arrangements.*
- **Club Level Marshals for busy times on the outfield:** *A rota of 'Club Level' Marshals were organised - who were present at busy times (Saturdays/Sundays) over the summer. The marshals linked with Section 'leads' for games/events - helping to ensure that activities passed off safely, harmoniously and within guidance/regulation.*
- **Saturday morning Junior coaching (Cricket /Football/Tennis):** *Arrangements were set in place for the use of the outfield for Junior programmes*

4. **Bar and Social**

Val will report in more detail to the Membership. In the face of real restrictions on hospitality and catering operations, the Section worked hard to find ways to continue to offer a bar service and provide opportunities for members to meet and mix. First, we saw an outdoor bar operation; followed by a limited indoor service; before we could restore something like normal service.

- **Volunteers for the bar:** Everybody was pleased to see Val recover from a bout of ill health over the summer. We all recognised the need to seek volunteers to add strength to the existing team who can help Val by opening and running the bar. A request for additional help produced 7 new volunteers who joined the existing team

of 5. Thanks to all who have come forward and, of course, to the existing team of volunteers who freely give over their time to help behind the bar

- **BT Sports installation:** Val was offered a favourable deal for us to screen a number of Premier League and Champions League matches via BT. Andy S, Andy W; and Pete ensured that our wiring and internet connectivity is fit for purpose. We can now look to increase bar opening times to coincide with popular games; and promote even greater use of the bar for members.

5. The Estate and outfield

Significant thanks are owed to a small band of volunteers who help with upkeep and maintenance jobs throughout the year.

The Groundsman Ian Jordan and his team continue to provide an excellent service in looking after the playing surfaces. The care and attention they show is highly valued. The playing surfaces for Football, Tennis and Cricket have all been maintained to a high standard.

At the end of the Summer season, we set in place a 4-week rest period for the pitches - and paid for additional treatment and renovations. This appears to have worked well and prepared the pitches for the demands of the new 21/22 Season.

Other actions on the estate (either carried out or on going) include the following: -

- The tennis Section led on the removal of old floodlights around the Tennis courts.
- The metal frame for the old Cricket practice nets was dismantled and removed.
- Action with Homebase to address tree damage to tennis courts. Following the advice of LTA's legal helpline, we contacted Homebase's local management; their legal department; and then their insurers as to whether they agree to cover the costs of remedial and restoration works for our tennis court(s) - damage caused by the roots of a tree on the access road to Homebase. A surveyor from Homebase's Insurance company has inspected the damage and we await the report of this.

We have also signed off on new projects for the Autumn/Winter: -

- A new stretch of perimeter netting to be set in place (behind the old Cricket practice nets) and the fixing up of gaps in the perimeter netting where we can.
- New Clubhouse Patio doors and windows - facing on the Outfield will be installed.

6. New Cricket Training and playing facilities

We were delighted to approve a request from the Cricket section for a new mobile training net; and for a new artificial pitch. Both of these are now in place and are great assets for the Club. The funds for these came largely, but not exclusively, from grant funding acquired by the Section.

7. Junior and Youth Skills programmes for Football

In March, we established a Junior Football Academy - in partnership with SES UK – through which programmers of junior/youth football are delivered at CWSC. If successful, the partnership will see: -

- Increased income through subscriptions/ fees
- Increased revenue through bar/catering provision to the newcomers
- Increased presence of younger people in and around the Club - young people who will hopefully become members and players of Catford Wanderers as the Academy grows.

In May, we launched the partnership on Saturday mornings. So far, it has been great - with 40+ attending for skills coaching. Together with the very popular Junior programmers laid on by the Cricket section (approximately 50 youngsters attending Dynamos/All Stars sessions) and the ongoing junior tennis coaching – there was a really good ‘vibe’ down at the Club on Summer Saturday mornings. It is something we will look to replicate and develop further over the year ahead.

For this autumn/Winter, the Academy is basing their Saturday morning coaching sessions at the Kent County Cricket site. However, the first of their Junior teams will be playing matches at Catford Wanderers on a number of Sunday mornings.

8. Policies

Over the year, the Board established/updated the following policies for the Club: -

- **A CCTV Policy:** Reviewed and updated
- **Financial Regulations:** Established and approved
- **Equality, Diversity and inclusion Policy (ED+I):** Established and approved.

The ED+I Policy was produced by a cross section group of volunteers - who met on a number of occasions. The Policy recognises that CWSC must be a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for all.

At Catford Wanderers, we are proud of the diversity in our membership. We see this as a defining and significant strength of our Club. We will take opportunities to celebrate equality of opportunities and seek to strengthen diversity and inclusion wherever we can.

All sections are asked to have ED+I reps in place as part of their management/Committee set up. A model where the EDI rep also serves as the section’s Welfare Officer seems to work well.

As part of the policy, we will be asking the Membership to appoint a new Board Director – one who will hold the ‘brief’ to pay attention to ED+ I matters across the Club - and who will act as a Club level Welfare Officer.

9. Defibrillator/CPR Training:

A really useful drop-in training session on how to use the Defibrillator and carry out CPR - was held on Sunday 26th September. All sections were encouraged to send members along. Thanks to Jayne Qureshi for organising.

Eamon Martin and Margaret Smith
November 2021