

**Catford Wanderers Sports Club  
Annual General Meeting: 13 November 2022**

**Annual Report from the Chair and Secretary, CWSC Board**

This is a summary report of the activities of the CWSC Board over the past 12 months. It does not provide detail of the activities of each of our Sections - who may provide their own reports/updates of their work.

Significant thanks are due to lots of our members who 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 2021/22 comprised of: -**

**Eamon Martin - Chair.**

**Val Elkins - Bar and Social Manager.**

**Pete Romagnoli - Treasurer.** (Resigning November 2022)

**Margaret Smith - Secretary.**

**Debby Dixon - Cricket Section** (Resigned May 2022). **Replaced by Jason Walker.**

**Patsy Waithe - Badminton Section.**

**Will McLaughlin - Football Section.**

**Kate Williams - Tennis Section.** (Resigning December 2022). **To be replaced by Colin Gentile**

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

We would like to formally thank Debby, Kate and Pete for their significant contributions to the work of the Board, their Sections and the Club in general.

**2. Budgets and Club Finances.**

In a challenging year for all, we paid close attention to costs – to make sure we are not over stretching ourselves; and that we are getting best value for money. At the AGM last year, the need for regular (on going) reviews of expenditure and income levels was flagged up. This year, we asked Sections to put together budgets as part of an overall Club budget – and we reviewed these. We completed a reforecast exercise part way through the year.

This was very helpful - and we are on track to break even over the year.

On the face of it this is good news, but if you look at the trend over the last few years, CWSC tends to spend roughly 100k on maintaining the Club. To fund this, it brings in income of just over 100k (from subscriptions/rental arrangements/match fees/bar/hires). While this means we are viable – it means things are really tight. We don't have resources to invest into significant developments and improvements for the Club – or significant reserves, should something unforeseen or serious happen. We want to do something about that via a Business/Development plan

### **3. Business/Development Plan for the Club**

During the year, we agreed to put together a business development plan for the Club. We put together a draft and established a working group - inviting all sections to key into this. The group had a really good first meeting and will meet again in November/December. It was agreed that we should work up the Plan in order to present it for approval in January 2023.

The plan is coming together. It will see a number of specific of goals/actions with timescales - under the following headings

- **How to secure additional levels of annual income - and ring fence this for Club improvements.**
- **Ensure we have people in place to manage our development and organisation.**
- **Improve our communications, management and marketing - with better use of Web and IT.**
- **Support individual sports section's aspirations.**
- **Improve our playing facilities, Clubhouse environment and estate.**

Taking this forward will be a major action for the Board and the Club over the next 5 years.

### **4. Homebase tree damage to tarmac tennis courts:**

We have had a major issue in dealing with a large tree on Homebase's land. The roots of this tree were breaking up the tarmac tennis courts – to the point where it threatens our ability to use the courts safely; and host competitive matches etc. Without these courts, the viability of the whole Club is threatened - as Tennis is by far our largest Section.

Our pressing of Homebase and Lewisham over 14 months resulted in the recent felling of the tree. I understand there will be replacement planting. While this constitutes some progress for us, we continue to chase Homebase and their insurers to: -

- Agree to cover the cost of remedial works to our courts (**£8.5k**) - so we can set about restoring them to the appropriate standard. Our members have put up with this for 14 months now.
- Agree an amount to compensate us in relation to the 'risk' of further deterioration - given that no confirmation/certification has been provided by you/Homebase for the work undertaken on the tree.
- Agree an outcome to the rest of our claim (legal costs/negative impact on our business/expenditure on reports etc.) (**£6.5k**)

Hopefully negotiations on these issues will be closed out over the next few weeks.

## **5. Homebase Overflow Car park:**

This is a complex issue. In the mid-1980s, Homebase needed additional car parking space. As a result, Homebase agreed with CWSC that it would build us a new Clubhouse and have use of an 'overflow car park' - constructed on Catford Wanderers land - on weekends and bank holidays. We received an annual income for the use of the car park – income which came to an end in 2014. What was once a good deal and useful arrangement for both CWSC and Homebase - seems less so now. Homebase doesn't use the car park; and our limited use of it could be different. The space appears to be drifting into dereliction.

As things stand, the provisions of the Lease governing this arrangement means that CWSC cannot change current use or develop this space. It is useful to us as the venue for the Boot fair though – as we get some rental income for this.

We contacted Homebase's property team to see if they might give up the Lease – as it appears to serve no useful purpose to them. However, they wish to retain it – presumably in the hope that it might be of some use in future - or have some future sale value.

Our own research suggests that the position might change in 2025/26. We will return to it at that time. In the meantime, we should take care not to get drawn into issues with this land. I don't think it will bring any benefit. It feels better to wait and see.

## **6. The Estate and outfield:**

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

It has been a challenging year for the outfield – especially with the drought and hosepipe ban over the summer. This negatively impacted on the quality of playing surfaces – for cricket, the grass tennis courts; and the condition of our football pitches for the start of the 22/23 season.

We recently met with Groundsman Ian Jordan - setting in place new arrangements for the contract to maintain our outfield/playing surfaces. We want to ensure that we get full value for the money we spend on the outfield; and ensure that agreed works take place on time to our specification. We will refresh and set up a small grounds committee to oversee the works taking place on the grounds.

Really excellent news is that Will McLaughlin, our Football Section lead, has been successful in obtaining grant(s) and funding through which we can make the following improvements

- A grant for **38k** - providing £6, 400 per year for pitch maintenance over a 6-year period.
- A grant of **12k** for new perimeter netting – based on an outlay of 4k from ourselves. Works will start on this in November/December 2022.

- A grant of **£500** which will go toward repainting and refurbishment of our changing rooms. This will be scheduled in for the end of football/start of cricket season 2023.
- A grant for **£1500** for new goalposts – subject to an outlay of £500.

Other actions on the estate over the year included the following:

- A stretch of perimeter netting set in place (behind the old Cricket practice nets) and the fixing up of gaps in the perimeter netting where we could.
- New Clubhouse patio doors and windows.
- Putting right a water leak and a gas leak – which stopped the supply to the Club. Commissioning reports/reviews covering fire safety arrangements; and a survey of the Club's electrics.

We continued to produce a weekly calendar of activities taking place at the Club. This is now maintained by Margaret – and shared 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 a (difficult) job for us

#### **7. Maintenance (Clubhouse and immediate surrounds):**

Despite the very best efforts, we still need to improve upon maintenance - as the needs in this area are growing beyond what can be expected of a very few (valued) volunteers. Amongst our needs here are ....

- Patio/paths/external social areas cleaning/maintenance - sweeping, tidying and weeding.
- Rubbish collections after events/matches.
- Essential minor repairs undertaken as they arise (internal and external).
- Periodic cleaning up of perimeter; and other rubbish on site.

#### **8. Rentals (Phoenix and Cash for Clothes):**

We recently opened negotiations with Phoenix over the 5-year lease through which we to host their grounds team - offering space and car parking, together with access to utilities and facilities. This Lease comes to an end in March 2023. We have agreed a substantial improvement for CWSC in the terms of this Lease - reflecting current usage; prices and market value for such an arrangement.

We renewed the Cash for Clothes rental for another 3 years - asking that they tidy up the exterior of the cabin. This has been done.

#### **9. Local Residents: Blacklands Road Gate; and Access Road:**

Margaret successfully resolved a number of issues on our land at the top of the grass tennis courts. We are responsible for keeping this space clear and maintaining a right of way for some residents. Without consulting us, the Blacklands Road gate was moved down the pathway by a couple of the residents - with a new gate installed (eventually). There had been a build-up of rubbish which included a derelict car. One resident set up a chicken coop.

#### **10. Junior and Youth Skills programmes for Football**

We reviewed the first year of our Junior Football Academy with our partners FCA London. We agreed that we should enter into a second year offering junior/youth football on Saturday mornings; competitive team matches on Sundays; and regular half term camps. The partnership brings significant numbers of youngsters to Catford Wanderers and an income of £2500 in year. We expect the same level of activity and income for year 2.

#### **11. Visit by Lewisham Sport and Recreation Team:**

Out of the efforts to sort out the damage to the Tennis courts, we made contact with Lewisham's Sport and Recreation Team. The Director and his team came to visit us – to see the Club; hear something of our work in the community; and see at first hand some of the challenges we face. It was a good meeting and they were very helpful to us with the Tree issue.

#### **12. Bar and Social:**

Val will report in more detail to the Membership.

- **Volunteers for the bar:** The expansion of the team of volunteers helping with the bar has been a success. Thanks to all who have come forward and, of course, to the original team of volunteers who freely give over their time to help out.
- **BT Sports installation:** We were offered a favourable deal for us to screen a number of Premier League and Champions League matches via BT. However – this did not drive up takings in the bar - so we decided to cancel the contract.
- **New cash register/till:** We were pleased to purchase a new cash register/till for the bar. This was programmed by Janice; and is now fully in use by the team.

**Eamon Martin and Margaret Smith**  
**November 2022**