

**Catford Wanderers Sports Club
Annual General Meeting: October 2023**

Annual Report from the Chairman 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.

1. Volunteers

Significant thanks are due to those of our members who have freely given over their time and expertise to help the Club over the past 12 months - in many different ways. We could not operate successfully without this volunteer contribution.

2. The Directors.

The Board of Directors for the year 2022/23 comprised of: -

**Eamon Martin - Chairman.
Val Elkins - Bar and Social Manager.
Viet Truong - Treasurer.
Margaret Smith - Secretary.
Jason Walker – Cricket Section
Patsy Waithe - Badminton Section.
Will McLaughlin - Football Section.
Colin Gentile - Tennis Section.**

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

The Board has met on 6 occasions since the last AGM.

3. Managing the Club Finances.

In a challenging year for all, our Treasurer Viet and his finance team, paid close attention to costs – making sure we did not over stretch ourselves; and ensuring that we achieved best value for money across the Club's operations. We asked Sections to put together budgets as part of an overall Club budget – and we regularly reviewed these over the year. In a year where other community organisations have really struggled, this focus helped to ensure that we have stayed on track to break even for the year.

During the year, we were threatened with a bill of £14,000 for Gas usage. This would have been a significant unforeseen cost to the Club. Margaret fought a superb rear-guard action - drawing on our records of payments and interactions with EDF. This has resulted in a credit note of 15K - which means we are £860 in credit! A really excellent result.

On the face of it this is all good news, but if you look at the trend over the last few years, CWSC spends roughly £110k on core operating costs. To fund this, it brings in income of just over £110k (from membership subscriptions/rental arrangements/match fees/bar/hire of facilities). While this means we are viable – it means things are really tight.

Recognising that we haven't had resource to invest into significant developments and improvements for the Club – or significant reserves, should something unforeseen or serious happen we developed and approved a Business Plan for the Club with a focus on raising income.

4. **Business Plan**

The Business Plan sets out what we want to do; when this might be done - and how we might raise income to pay for it. We now have a set of actions under the following headings for the next 3 years:-

- **Secure additional levels of annual income – to be used 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 the Clubhouse and Estate.**

We have made good progress against our Plan – raising additional income to complete the actions set out for this year.

The intention is to review the plan each year to see that it is relevant, update it where needed; and ensure we are doing what we should be doing. Any Club member who wishes to see a copy of our plan can get this from Eamon (email: cwsc.chair@catfordwanderers.club)

5. **Improving the Estate and Clubhouse**

Working with relevant sections, we have seen some pleasing improvements in CWSC playing and social facilities this year

Clubhouse/Bar:-

- **New patio paving, picket fencing, furniture and signage:** With grant funding obtained by the Cricket Section, a project to improve the patio area has been completed.
- **Hanging baskets and flowers** Tennis Section efforts to maintain flowers in pots and hanging baskets around the Clubhouse has been appreciated by all.
- **Changing Rooms:** The men's changing rooms have been repainted and refurbished.
- **Bar:** New/replacement glass washing and ice machines; together with a full refurbishment of the pool table.

Estate/Playing facilities:-

- **Cricket practice nets:** With a significant amount of fundraising and a grant obtained by the Cricket Section, a set of high-quality practice nets have been installed.
- **Bushes/hedges:** Bushes/hedging between grass courts and new Cricket nets removed - with roots dug out.
- **Fence/netting cover:** New green cover placed over fencing between tennis grass courts and cricket netting.

- **Perimeter netting (1)** : With the bulk of grant funding obtained by the Football Section - new perimeter netting (upper level) has been installed.
- **Perimeter netting (2)** An additional set of perimeter netting (lower level) installed to cover a gap
- **New goalposts for football.**
- **Pitch maintenance:** With the bulk of grant funding obtained by the Football Section for a 5-year period, we have been able to fund some of the costs to maintain and improve our pitches.

- **'Homebase' Tree roots issue:** We kept on top of a long running saga with Homebase. We ensured action to fell and treat a Poplar tree whose roots were damaging our hardcourt and making the court unplayable. We obtained compensation for work on the roots and for the inconvenience and effort expended in dealing with the issue. Unfortunately, new lumps emerged on the court mid year - as deep lying remaining roots forced their way upwards. Working with the Tennis section, we treated the courts and arranged for Homebase to treat the tree stump again. We are hopeful that the issue has been resolved. The hard court has now been repainted – and is looking good.

- We have agreed to fund a project to raise additional netting - offering greater protection to the tennis hard courts. Subject to finding a contractor to do the work, this should happen over the winter period.

6. Weekly Calendar of activities

We continue to produce a weekly calendar of activities taking place at the Club. This is produced 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. Junior Sport

If the Club is to thrive and attract external income, we need to have junior sports taking place – showing that we are serving the needs of the Community. In the current climate, it would be hard to interest grant providers in any project without junior programmes/coaching taking place. The picture is currently a good one.

Catford Wanderers Junior Football Academy

We have renewed the partnership we have with CFA London to provide junior coaching for another year. 3 x Junior teams now play matches at the Club. This arrangement brings in good income for us

New Tennis coaching: South East London Tennis

We have new coaching arrangements in place for tennis – bringing in South East London Tennis to provide coaching opportunities for members and for juniors.

Cricket

The Cricket section continue to deliver All Stars and Dynamo programmes for juniors. On the back of their excellent new facilities, they are actively developing a Junior Section which they hope to grow further next year.

8. Club Social Events

We have had a great year for Club social activities. While a lot of people get involved in making these things happen – the ideas and drive to deliver some great events for the Club have come from Julie Taylor. Highlights have been the Club Sports day; “Catford’s Got No Talent” and various Quiz nights. The Club is very appreciative, and we have thanked her for a great contribution over the course of this year. Val can say more in her report

9. Homebase Overflow Car Park:

I reported on this issue last year – and the position remains largely unchanged. It is a complex issue. In the mid-1980s, Homebase needed additional car parking space for its new store. As a result, Homebase agreed with CWSC that it would build us a new Clubhouse and that it would 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 – as we might want to do. It is useful to us as the venue for the Boot fair though – as we get some rental income for this.

Last year, 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 is likely to change in 2025/26 when plans to turn the Homebase estate into a residential development begin to kick in. We will return to the Lease issue at that time. For the time being, we continue to monitor any developments.

Eamon Martin and Margaret Smith
October 2023