

Bushy Park Sports Club Chairman's report for AGM 9th Sept 2024

1. Introduction

- **Overview of the Charity:**

The Bushy Park Sports Club charity is set up for public benefit with a mission to advance amateur sport and promote community participation in healthy recreation, primarily but not exclusively by the provision of facilities, including land, buildings and equipment and the organisation of sporting and recreational activities within the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.

"Sport" means sports or games which promote health by involving physical or mental skill or exertion.

- **Chair's Personal Message:**

I have recently joined the club as a trustee and as chairman of the trustees and it is clear that the charity and club has fulfilled its aims and mission, as outlined above, over the previous period. However, it has without doubt been a challenging time for the club, in particular from a financial perspective which we will discuss further under the financial review. In summary the club made a substantial loss for the period up until the end of Feb 24 primarily due to the youth football (YF) section losing money, rising costs and lower overall membership. The trustees have undertaken a number of actions, including the difficult decision to remove the chair and vice chair from their positions on the YF committee. It is hoped that the changes made by the new YF committee now in place, will mean a return to profitability and the ability to start repaying the debt owed to the parent club. A number of other actions are currently in progress or will be initiated over the coming months and we will discuss these shortly.

Despite these issues there have been a number of successes, such as new external hires, partnerships, planning permission for new cricket nets, the removal of old dangerous bowls green buildings and of course a huge amount of recreational sport being played at the club. We have a very diverse user base and the club is a wonderful facility which we need to maximise to its potential. Myself, and the board of trustees, will look to ensure that we do this over the coming months

2. Governance & Leadership

- **Board of Trustees Overview:**

The board of trustees currently comprises 9 trustees with myself as Chairman and Brian Smith as Honorary Treasurer. Richie Roberts stood down as chair early this year and has been made an Honorary Life Member. Our thanks to Richard for all his work during his tenure.

At the December 2023 AGM the trustee board consisted of:
Richard Roberts - Chair - left December 2023 after the AGM
Brian Smith - Treasurer

Maria Green
Mike Ruddick
Naz Walji - joined October 2023
Sue Lloyd - left November 2023
Ruth Ursell - left November 2023
Louise Wright - left May 2023
Michael Bailey - left Aug 2023

Current Trustee Board since the AGM on 11th December 2023

Mark Avery - Chair - joined May 2024
Brian Smith - Treasurer
Maria Green
Mike Ruddick
Naz Walji
Roger Clarke - joined December 2023
James Macleod - joined December 2023
Geraint Thomas- joined March 2024
Maggie Andi - joined March 2024

An organisation chart for the board is attached as an appendix to this report.

- **Subcommittees and Working Groups:** There are no current sub committees or working groups. However, going forward we plan to reinstate the grounds committee, form a new Finance committee to ensure closer control of finances and there will be a need to put together a fundraising committee to raise money for the proposed new cricket nets

3. Key Achievements

- **Sports Programs Overview:**

The club offers a very wide range of inclusive and diverse sports sections and programs with girl's participation continuing to expand. Youth Football now have over 400 boys and girls winning several cups and leagues. Senior football and Vets football field also field several sides each week. Tennis has more than 100 adult members and around 100 junior members. The over 40s seniors team won the 2023/24 winter league and gained a promotion. Cricket has both a men's section fielding 3 teams, whilst Bushy Park Girls has around 120 women and girls playing cricket. Merton Boys field 2 teams at the club. Additionally the Stragglers running club use the club as their base with around 200 junior and adult members . There are also a multitude of fitness classes on offer as well as individual and group fitness classes from Zen Training. Our table tennis section is growing, offering both social and league play.

The club is also used for external hires, sports days, summer camps and schools

- **Partnerships & Collaborations:**

The club has signed Cricket Partnerships with TCC; Merton Boys and Teddington Town CC. Middlesex County Cricket Club (girls age group games), once again hosted four finals for the MJCA. We hosted the Richmond Borough Schools football tournaments: 40 primary schools with a tournament for the boys and girls working with the local authority and Brentford Community Foundation. Fitness section - Alien Mode martial arts, now offering 2 seated classes for the elderly in our community. We have a new Kids Club partnership Bushy Park Activity Camp, providing much needed childcare and camp provision for primary aged local children; this is also proving to be a good source of income for the club. Additionally, we have a number of tennis camps in partnership with England Sports Group running through the year. We also have a new local business breakfast network group Tudor BNI that uses the facility on a Tuesday morning. Stragglers & Zen relationships continue to go from strength to strength as well as our continued relationship with Newland House School

4. Financial Overview

As already mentioned, the previous financial year has been challenging for the club. You should all have details of the accounts and expenditure that whilst not fully signed off, are effectively complete. We considered delaying the AGM until these accounts were finalised but felt it was important that members had full transparency of the accounts as soon as possible. The delays to finalising the accounts were largely due to late submissions from sections and we hope to eliminate this problem going forward by moving accounts for all sections to use the accounting software Xero. I will ask Brian if he can now go through the accounts with you now and we can answer any questions you might have

5. Challenges & Opportunities

- **Challenges Faced:** Because of the financial issues, it is clear that we need improved financial and governance control. This work has already started and we will continue to implement this to ensure the charity is sustainable and compliant going forward
- **Opportunities for Growth:** We will continue to look for opportunities for growth but these need to be financially beneficial and/or meet charitable aims. This is something the trustees will be looking at more closely over the coming year

6. Future Outlook

- **Strategic Goals:**

The main goal initially will be to embed improved financial and governance control mentioned above. We are also currently undertaking a full review of our safeguarding and GDPR policies and will adjust them and the Blue book accordingly.

The trustees have, in addition, committed to looking at the way the section agreements are worded and how section and membership fees are calculated. We will review the possibility of moving the sections to CASCs (Community Amateur Sports Clubs) or MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) as we already have done with a couple of our

partners. We believe this will considerably reduce admin and also give improved financial stability.

In order to start development of the new cricket nets we will need to start implementing fundraising opportunities and this will be a key goal for the coming months.

The development of a 5 year plan for the club is also something I would like to start work on. As I mentioned before, the club has huge potential and we need to ensure we utilise that potential in the best possible way while still adhering to our charitable aims.

- **Commitment to Inclusion & Diversity:**

We will continue to follow the charity's ongoing commitment to making sports accessible to all, regardless of age, background, or ability.

7. Conclusion

- **Thank You:**

I would like to thank all the trustees at the club for their continued work which is on a voluntary basis. Also, a big thank you to the clubhouse and ground staff for doing a great job in maintaining the grounds and ensuring the club and clubhouse runs smoothly. Finally, thanks to Guy and team for the excellent catering provided though the year.

- **Final Thoughts:**

As I have already said it has been a challenging year, but even in the short time that I have been chair I have seen a commitment and improvements to getting the club back on track. I am excited about the future and the opportunities we have to make the club even better than it is today.