



# A PLACE TO PLAY SPORT FOREVER

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# CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the 2017 Annual Review which marks the 127<sup>th</sup> year since we were founded by a group of visionary Victorians who recognised that if we were to use sport and physical activity to create a healthier, happier London we needed to protect and improve those places where it took place.

What sets us apart from other playing fields organisations is that as well as being a champion for sports pitch protection, we also own and manage grounds. This brings challenges as well as opportunities. Having our own playing fields means that we can make a real contribution to the development of key pitch sports and ensure that there is a clear school to club pathway enabling an individual to start playing on our site as a young child and continuing into adulthood. It also gives us the opportunity of designing and delivering innovative projects aimed at improving the lives of some of society's most disadvantaged groups.

The main challenge is that operating community playing fields is a loss making business that cannot survive on pitch income alone. We are committed to providing pitches that are affordable which means that we only get a 39p return from hiring fees for every pound that we invest on their management and maintenance. Unlike local authorities that own 85% of playing field stock in London, our pitch hiring charges are not subsidised by Council Tax payers. Instead we have to find additional income from commercial rents and donations from individuals and corporate organisations to cover our core costs.

To compound matters, the amount of money derived from revenue grants (used principally to fund our projects) has plummeted in the last ten years. Back in 2009 36% of our total income came from revenue grants, mostly from statutory bodies. The corresponding figure is now 6% which has forced us

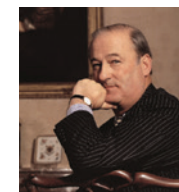
to focus on more traditional fundraising methods. Our annual Gala Dinner established in 2011 at The Savoy has become a key pillar in our fundraising effort and we are hoping that an annual Sports Quiz held at The Oval will introduce us to a whole new band of supporters. Staging the event at this iconic cricket venue will also highlight the golden thread that runs from grass roots through to elite sport.

Convincing potential funders and donors of the value of playing fields is not new and is one that we have faced since our formation in 1890. We know from the Fields of Dreams research conducted two years ago that the benefits of well managed playing fields can extend well beyond the sports played on their pitches and have a real impact on public health and community safety. The report found that the minimum annual savings made to the public purse of just one of our grounds in Walthamstow was £4.8million, mostly in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving health and well-being.

Undoubtedly access to local playing fields can make a key contribution to tackling childhood obesity and the onset of preventable illnesses. The success of the Coppermill project where children from Coppermill School ran for fifteen minutes each day around the field at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre shows what can be achieved via some creative thinking and partnership working. Indeed, if we want people of all ages to be more physically active we must ensure that those places where it takes place are accessible, affordable and welcoming.

With teenage knife crime at record levels we are convinced that our fields can be part of a solution that offers a constructive alternative to gang culture. By providing safe places to go where sport is the predominant activity, we believe that we can expose young people to more positive influences and help them to lead more socially responsible lives. Our mantra is teams not gangs and in the coming months we will be working with the Metropolitan Police, local authorities and community organisations to help create safer neighbourhoods.

Finally, we would like to place on record our thanks to our all of our supporters and dedicated team of staff and Trustees who do such a wonderful job in running and promoting the charity.



*Cadogan*  
**THE RT HON  
THE EARL CADOGAN  
KBE DL**  
Chairman



*Alex Welsh*  
**ALEX WELSH**  
Chief Executive



# WHAT WE DO

Our vision is to create a happier, healthier, more cohesive London by encouraging more people to play sport and be physically active on affordable, accessible and attractive playing fields across the capital. Playing fields are more than just green spaces, they are places where lives can be improved physically, mentally and socially.

## OUR PLAYING FIELDS

We own and manage seven grounds across five London boroughs which are used by over 200,000 people every year to play sport and be physically active. In order to widen, increase and sustain participation, we provide high quality playing pitches for schools, colleges, universities, clubs and community groups at affordable hiring costs.

However, operating these playing fields is expensive – for every £1 we invest in the maintenance and management of a sports pitch we only recoup 39p in hiring income. We therefore rely on a combination of grant aid, commercial partnerships and the generosity of our supporters to continue subsidising our playing fields so that they are accessible to all. In the current climate where local authorities are under pressure to build new homes and cut council expenditure, playing fields have never been under greater threat. We therefore believe that it is vitally important that we continue to demonstrate how well managed and maintained playing fields can help provide those teams and individuals who use them with a real sense of belonging.

## OUR PROJECTS

For some people through no fault of their own, staying fit and healthy is hard, physically, socially and economically. In line with our original charitable objectives we are committed to providing opportunities for some of London's most disadvantaged groups to play sport and be physically active. Through a mix of innovation and partnership working, we have developed and delivered a number of transformational projects designed to address inequalities. Current examples of these life-changing projects include Green Hearts, Coppermile and Coping Through Football. Now in its tenth year, our award-winning project Coping Through Football helps people with long-term mental health problems get their lives back on track.

## OUR PITCH PROTECTION

Once a playing field is lost, it is lost forever so our mantra is no net loss of pitches. We believe that playing fields are of high community value and we are determined to maintain our leading role in opposing the current and future loss of sports pitches in London. We are the first port of call for advice on protecting threatened playing fields and, in an attempt to guide key stakeholders, we have published A Playing Fields Charter for London. We are also the authors of a Fields at Risk Register which is an early warning system that lists sites in imminent danger of commercial or residential development. One such site was Oakfield Playing Field in LB Redbridge. Over the last three years the Foundation has led a Stakeholder Group that lent vital support to the Save Oakfield Society which successfully appealed against Redbridge Council's proposal to build 800 new homes on this strategically important playing field.



# WHY WE DO IT

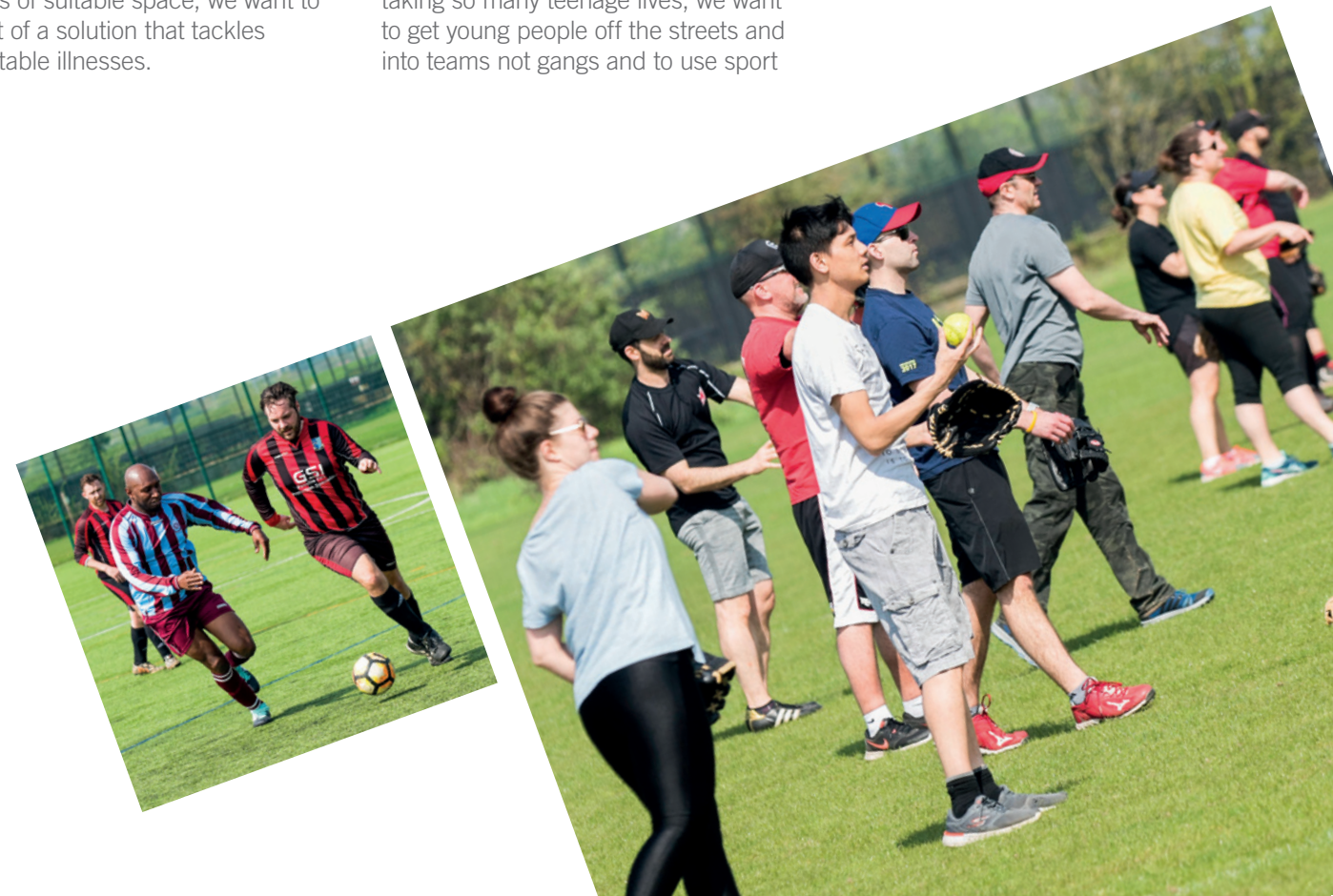
Physical inactivity will prematurely kill one in six of us and with a third of London's children being overweight or obese, it is vitally important that we provide places to play sport and inspire more people to exercise on a regular basis.

This means extending our reach beyond traditional team games to those who are not involved in organised sport, but, with the right encouragement, will walk, jog or run around our fields on an informal basis. In this way our fields will be more relevant to local residents who live alongside them and become the green hearts of the community they serve. Persuading people who lead inactive lifestyles to do more exercise is one of society's biggest challenges and, as an organisation that owns hundreds of acres of suitable space, we want to be part of a solution that tackles preventable illnesses.

Given that premature deaths, healthcare and sickness absence cost the nation £7.4billion per annum, the savings of early interventions could be enormous.

Playing fields and the activities played on them also have the capacity to contribute hugely to social issues through bringing communities together, reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and social isolation, increasing feelings of self-worth and creating a sense of identity. With knife crime tragically taking so many teenage lives, we want to get young people off the streets and into teams not gangs and to use sport

to engender responsible behaviour and to raise aspirations. The findings from the Fields of Dreams report on Douglas Eyre Sports Centre highlight how regular access to positive sporting experiences can be such a force for good in the lives of these vulnerable young people.







## GREEN HEARTS RUN FREE

The majority of people who use playing fields are involved in some type of organised sport whether through school or club networks. For many neighbours who live in the immediate vicinity, the field is not relevant to them because the sports on offer are not appropriate or attractive to them.

However, we believe that our grounds should be more inclusive and cater for a wider audience than just those who play organised sport. Our intention is to encourage more informal activity that provides the same type of health and social benefits that playing for a team every week does.

People using the path can walk, jog or run any distance they choose at a time to suit them during daylight hours. The ground is a safe and quiet place to enjoy some fresh air and exercise. For those who need a little encouragement or advice to get started we have weekly sessions led by an activator.

In 2017 we launched our Green Hearts project. Green Hearts is a mile-long path around the perimeter of the playing field at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre with posts at each quarter mile marker.

### Ivor

Ivor, has lived near to Douglas Eyre Sports Centre for 35 years. Although he played football when younger and was a keen walker, a health problem over a year ago left him with nerve problems and balance issues. As part of his rehabilitation he was advised to walk more.

Ivor was introduced to Green Hearts by a friend and neighbour and says it ticks a lot of boxes for him as it's local, it feels like a safe and secure space and even offers a spot of spontaneous bird watching!

Ivor regularly uses the path three or four times a week and Green Hearts has helped him make great progress over the last year. On his more active days he can cover 25,000 paces (well over 10 miles!) and his general fitness and stamina are now better than before his health problem.

As well as increasing his fitness Green Hearts has had a positive impact on his social life, he sees his neighbours more regularly and has met new friends through the project. With all these benefits Ivor says he's never been to a gym and never intends to!



“

I've never been to a gym and don't intend to!

Ivor, Green Hearts user

### Ronnie



Despite her house backing on to Douglas Eyre Sports Centre, Ronnie had never visited the ground or made use of its facilities, it just wasn't relevant to her. So when curiosity got the better of her after seeing some women walking round the ground every day she decided to drop in and had a friendly chat with the Head Groundsman Paul who told her all about Green Hearts.

Ronnie thinks it's great to have somewhere local to get active on her own terms and at her own pace. She can now walk from home to the top of Walthamstow market and back again

without a problem, something she wouldn't have been able to do before Green Hearts.

Despite the winter weather offering its challenges, Ronnie is looking forward to getting out on the path more in spring and summer. Walking fast is not the goal for Ronnie. She just enjoys putting on her headphones, listening to an audio book and feeling the grass under her feet. She is often surprised when she arrives back at the starting point so quickly, undertaking daily activity without even noticing it!

“

Green Hearts, it's a *win-win* situation

Ronnie, Green Hearts user





## THE PETER MAY SPORTS CENTRE DEVELOPING THE STARS OF THE FUTURE

Opened in 2000 by Sir John Major and the then Minister for Sport Kate Hoey MP, Peter May Sports Centre has been our flagship ground for 17 years. It has an indoor cricket hall, 3G artificial turf pitch, four cricket squares, eight football pitches and a health and fitness centre.

The ground provides pitches for clubs, schools, colleges, universities and is a venue for the Walthamstow Parkrun. It also provides a strategic London base for the Essex County Cricket Board to identify and develop talented young cricketers. One such youngster is local lad Dan Lawrence, the 2017 Cricket Writers' Club Young Cricketer of the Year.

On Friday evenings throughout the winter Dan was a regular player in the Metropolitan Essex Colts Indoor League at Peter May Sports Centre and during the summer he played for Chingford CC Third and Fourth XI's on the number one square. It was here that he displayed his talent and it was not long before Essex CCC noticed him and, along with several other gifted young players, Dan's skills were developed in the Centre's indoor nets.

Since those early times Dan has been regarded as one of the most promising young batsmen in the country. He came to prominence in April 2015 when at the age of 17 years 290 days he became the third youngest batsman to make a Championship century when he struck 161 for Essex against Surrey at The Oval.

Despite his meteoric rise, he has not forgotten where it all began and the fact that 70% of Essex's 2017 Division One Championship squad came through Peter May Sports Centre is not lost on Dan who said:

“

*That such a large percentage of our 2017 Championship winning squad came through Peter May Sports Centre is testament to the vision and energy of London Playing Fields Foundation and the memory of one of the all-time greats of the game, Peter May. In terms of reaching the top there is no substitute for practice and hard work, and the excellent facilities at Peter May Sports Centre provide any youngster who loves the game with the best chance of reaching their potential. For so many of us it provided the perfect stepping stone for where we are now.*

**Dan Lawrence**, the 2017 Cricket Writers' Club Young Cricketer of the Year.



## NO MORE RUBBISH EXCUSES

One of the challenges we and other playing fields providers face is site security and on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017 our worst fears came to fruition when Avenue Park was broken in to.

The intruders claimed squatters' rights and stayed for ten days, dumping hundreds of tonnes of domestic building waste, vandalising the pavilion and leaving damage estimated at more than £100,000. Despite reporting the break-in to the police and Ealing Council, we were unable to remove the intruders from the ground and had to watch helplessly as day after day more fly-tipping arrived.

Although we had insurance cover for fly-tipping, the amount dumped on our field went beyond any normal provision and the compensation was a fraction of the actual cost of clearing the site. We also had to ask the resident club, London Tigers to find an alternative home.

This issue highlights how vulnerable playing fields sites are to this type of criminal activity and where possible we have subsequently increased the security at our grounds. We have written to the Government to raise our concerns and have advocated for more stringent punishments for perpetrators and increased powers for private landowners.





# 2017 HIGHLIGHTS

## DEVELOPING BETTER ROLE MODELS

Early in the year the Foundation was approached by the SelKent League, the main user of the small sided pitches at LMPF Greenwich, to design a bespoke course that improved the effectiveness of team managers. The officers of the league, which is the largest in south-east England with over 13,000 players, were concerned about the poor behaviour that prevails on match days and wanted to provide a safer, more fulfilling experience for all its young players. The Foundation worked with League Secretary Sally Dolan to write a six hour course and train a team of tutors to deliver it. The course was subsequently delivered to 764 managers over nine months.



Team Managers, who are the life blood of the grassroots game, deserve all the support we can give them in becoming more effective in their various roles. This is our way of recognising their vital contribution to the game.

**Sally Dolan**, League Secretary

## COPING THROUGH FOOTBALL

In March Coping Through Football's Project Coordinator Sonia Smith won the Mind Wellbeing Award at the British Ethnic Diversity Sport Awards (BEDSA).

The awards were established by Sporting Equals to celebrate sporting excellence within BAME communities and the Mind Wellbeing Award recognises the contribution that either a project, programme or individual has made to improve people's mental wellbeing through sport or physical activity.

Sonia has worked on the project for five years and the positivity, compassion and total commitment that she brings to the role has greatly contributed to its success. With 60% of participants coming from BAME communities, Sonia is a superb role model and a real inspiration. She has shown great skills and empathy in assisting individuals to achieve their personal goals. She is hugely respected by the service users who recognise that Sonia will always go that extra mile for them.



Coping Through Football: Sonia collecting award

When asked about the award Sonia said *"I feel humbled to be acknowledged along with such exceptional people who have all made an impact on increasing sports participation with BAME communities and inspiring the next generation. I enjoyed meeting the other guests and nominees and receiving the award from my childhood hero Sir Lenny Henry was simply overwhelming. I feel blessed to have been given such an opportunity and am grateful to the wonderful team that make up Coping Through Football"*.

## SPORTS QUIZ AT THE KIA OVAL

2017 saw our first Sports Quiz fundraising event at The Kia Oval with seventeen teams battling it out to win the coveted trophy and life-size chocolate rugby balls!

The evening started with a sparkling drinks reception on the roof terrace which had fabulous views across the pitch and South London skyline. The weather was warm and sunny which put everyone in a great mood for the main event.

The host for the evening was Kyran Bracken (the ex-England and Saracens rugby player) who did a superb job entertaining the guests and overseeing the quiz whilst also reminding everyone about the work of the Foundation. Our President Kate Hoey also attended, despite being in the middle of election campaigning, and spoke passionately



Big Give: Gazmend Dauti



LPFF Sports Quiz

about the need to protect and provide playing fields for future generations

Guests were then treated to a three-course meal and following some tense quiz rounds the winners were announced and presented with their trophy by Emma Hayes, Chelsea Ladies Manager. We also had a live and silent auction and a lucky dip draw to win a signed Harry Kane boot. The evening raised a fantastic £6,000 which will go toward our protecting playing fields work.

## ANOTHER GREAT SAVE!

At the end of September we heard the great news that Redbridge Council's plans to build 800 new homes on Oakfield Playing Fields had been rejected by the Planning Inspector meaning that this strategically important sports ground could continue to provide high quality football and cricket pitches for years to come.

We were first made aware of this ground in 2014 when we were asked to recruit, coordinate and lead a Stakeholder Group of strategic sporting bodies including the FA, ECB, Sport England, London Sport, and CPRE to support the Save Oakfield Society (SOS) campaign. We also submitted evidence to Redbridge Council and the government's Planning Inspector stating our views on the proposed

development, which would see the loss of four cricket squares and twelve football pitches.

The Save Oakfield Society campaign was brilliantly organised with parliamentary petitions, political lobbying and huge media coverage and is a great example of how local communities can pull together to protect playing fields under threat!

## BIG GIVE KICK STARTS COACHING CAREERS


We took part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge for the first time in 2017 to raise funds for a new project called Kick Start Coaching Careers. The project will enable players from the London Communities League to enrol on coaching and refereeing courses to help them build their skills and confidence, with the goal of making a positive contribution to their local community.

The Foundation was successful in the first phase of securing match funding. The second phase was a week-long online giving challenge during which all donations would be doubled from the match funding pot. The challenge was promoted via a series of emails, social media and a video campaign which told the story of Gazmend Dauti, a former player in the London Communities League who is now a FE College lecturer and successful football coach.


Jennifer Slater, the Foundation's new Fundraising Manager who joined the charity in April, said "This was the LPFF's first digital fundraising appeal and was a resounding success. The match funding secured acted as a great incentive to encourage online donations and we hit our target of £5,000 a day early."

Grass roots sport relies on the dedication and skills of volunteers so this initiative has two main benefits. Firstly, it helps to nourish and sustain the game by qualifying the volunteer workforce and secondly, for the individual concerned the experience can be life changing in terms of embarking on a new career.

# LPFF BY NUMBERS 2017




162 adults and  
53 young people  
attended the Coping  
Through Football project



More than  
200,000  
Londoners use LPFF  
pitches each year



643 football  
teams regularly use  
our facilities




3,765 football  
matches were played on  
our grounds, an average of  
134 matches each week



54 youth football  
matches are played at  
LMPF Greenwich each  
weekend during the  
football season



65 cricket teams  
play on LPFF wickets



766 cricket  
matches were played  
on LPFF pitches with  
an average of 38 games  
each week

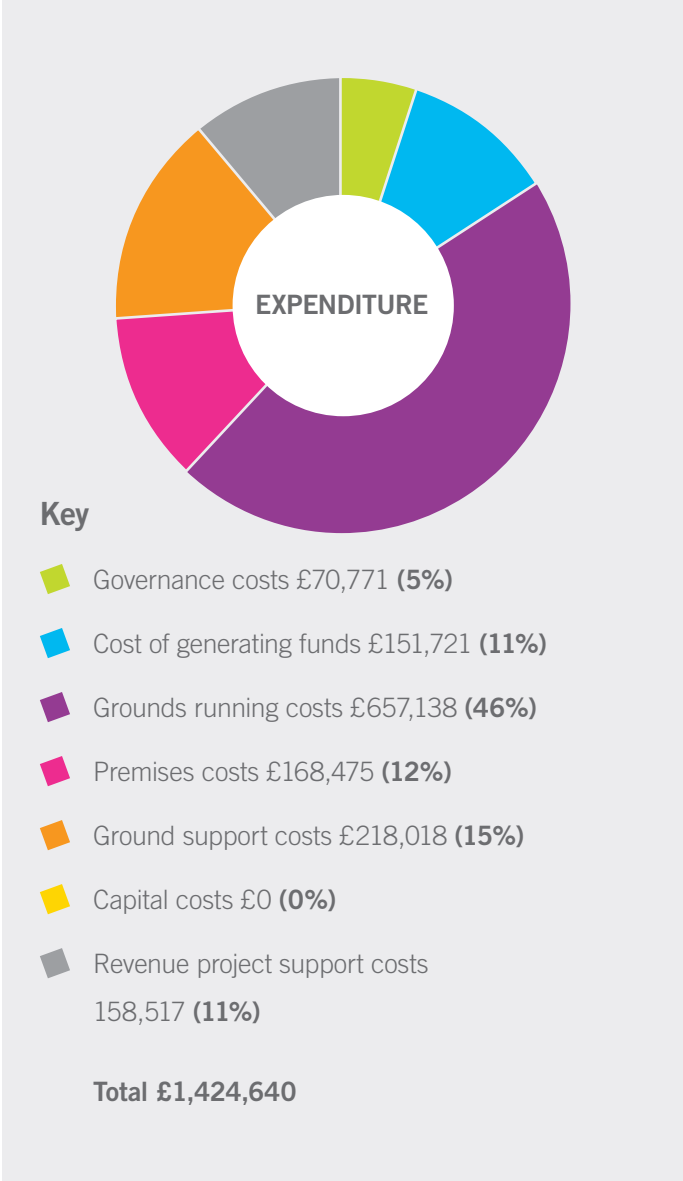
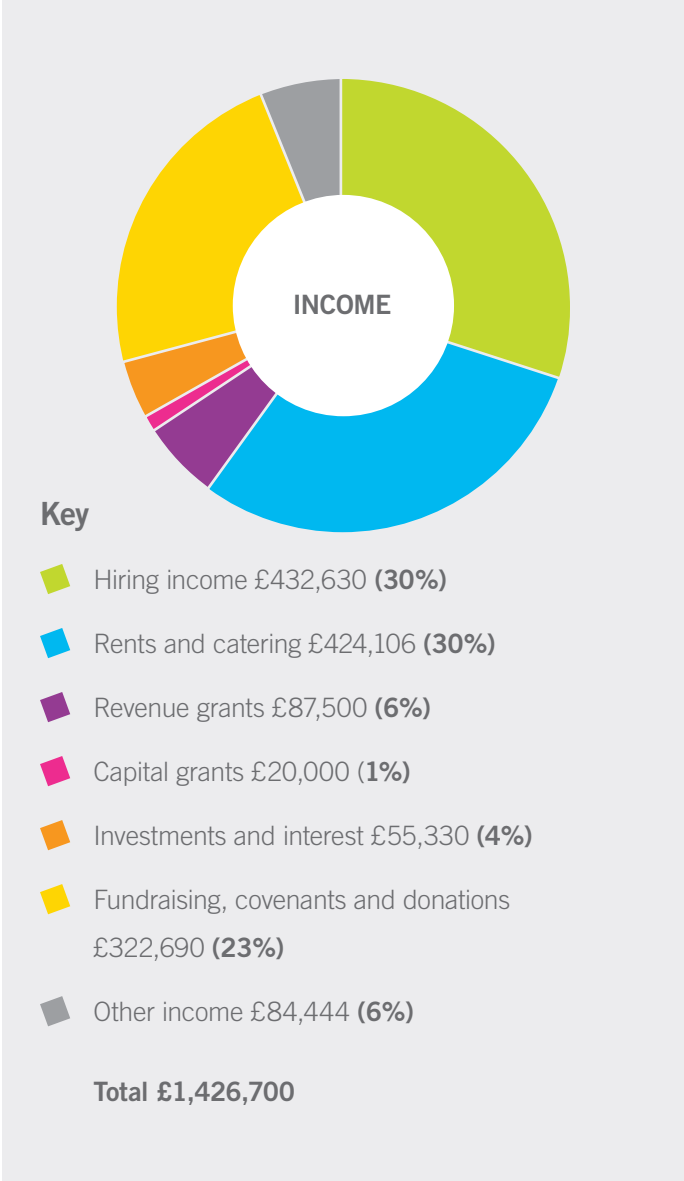


24 donors gave to  
our first ever digital appeal  
the Big Give raising  
£7,125



90 FA education  
courses were delivered  
on LPFF grounds

# INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2017



For the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017.  
These figures do not include depreciation or investment gains or losses. For a full set of Audited Accounts for 2017 please contact Head Office.  
Capital grants are related to the new security gates at London Marathon Playing Field Greenford.



# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & DONORS

## DONORS

- Charles S. French Charitable Trust
- Dame Anne Griffiths
- Golden Bottle Trust
- London Marathon Charitable Trust
- Sandra Charitable Trust
- St James Street Big Local
- The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation
- The Cadogan Charity
- The Childhood Trust
- The Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation
- The Howard de Walden Estate
- The Langton Trust
- Wembley National Stadium Trust

And thank you to all those who gave generously at events throughout the year including our Gala Dinner, Sports Quiz and the Virgin 10k Run.

## PATRON

HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO

## HONORARY PATRON

The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor of the City of London

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Kate Hoey MP

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