



**A  
PLACE  
TO PLAY  
SPORT  
FOREVER**

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# CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the 2018 Annual Review which marks 128 years of working to improve the quality of life of Londoners through the protection, provision and promotion of playing fields. It provides us with an opportunity to take stock and assess our achievements over the last year and to share with you how we intend to improve our contribution to London life in the next twelve months.

Being in a position where you can see the almost instantaneous health and social benefits of sport and physical exercise is hugely rewarding and, as you would expect, we are passionate advocates of how playing fields can improve the quality of life of the communities they serve. Recent research indicates that London's public green space has a gross asset value of more than £91 billion, providing services valued at £5 billion per year. It is estimated that Londoners avoid £950 million per year in health costs due to the impact of living and working close to public green space.

In a similar vein the Coping Through Football Evaluation Report, launched at the House of Commons in September, also makes the "spend to save case" by highlighting how investing in innovative interventions on a playing field can ultimately reduce reliance on acute health care services. The success of our physical activity project Green Hearts which is targeted at mainly sedentary adults, shows how playing fields are not just the exclusive domain of organised sports teams and how creative use of them can prevent the onset of debilitating and life threatening illnesses.

Yet despite this overwhelming evidence, London's stock of playing fields have never been more vulnerable. Firstly, local authorities, who own 85% of the capital's stock of playing fields, have no statutory obligation to operate them. The cumulative effect of years of cutting budgets means that selling off fields for development can provide the triple benefit of producing a large cash receipt, creating space for new homes

whilst at the same time removing any maintenance obligations. So promoting the cost benefits of well managed playing fields is a major part of the protection argument and is something that underpins our Charter for Playing Fields in London – a twelve-point call to action for all those bodies responsible for their management and maintenance.

Leading by example is one of the most effective ways of inspiring and influencing others to follow, and at the Foundation the management and marketing of our pitches is driven by sports development principles. We want to widen, increase and sustain participation in sport and physical activity, especially for disadvantaged and sedentary people so we have to make sure that our facilities are accessible, attractive and above all affordable. Providing schools and clubs with the type of environment they need to grow and flourish does not come cheap and means that for every pound we invest in producing good quality pitches we only recoup 39p in hiring income. Furthermore, our projects such as Coping Through Football and Green Hearts, that demonstrate how a combination of innovation and collaborative working can have huge social value, are provided free at the point of entry and have to be funded from external sources.

Over the next year we will be seeking to consolidate our position as the leading body for the protection, provision and promotion of playing fields in London. In doing so we will be staying true to our founding principles of being the first port of call for individuals and

organisations seeking advice on the potential loss of a field. We also provide guidance in more positive circumstances, such as to clubs who are contemplating a long lease on a sports ground as part of an asset transfer arrangement and want to know about operational management.

People are always surprised by how much we manage to achieve in a challenging environment but, despite this outstanding track record of transforming lives through sport and physical activity, our profile in the eyes of the general public and potential donors is not as high as it should be. In the next year we will be taking steps to remedy this with a new social media strategy backed up by a revamped website that will make us more well-known and extend our reach.

Finally, we would like to place on record our continuing thanks to all of our supporters and to our 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. More than just green spaces, playing fields 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 stay fit and healthy. 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. Our programmes of use are underpinned by sports development principles where the objective is to support young people on their sporting journeys from school to club based activities.

However, operating these playing fields is an expensive business and for every £1 we invest in maintenance and management of a sports pitch we only recoup 39p in hiring income. We rely therefore 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 enormous pressure to build new homes and cut council expenditure, playing fields have never been under greater threat. We believe 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 home where they can play and practise the sport they love.

## OUR PROJECTS

For some people, through no fault of their own, leading an active lifestyle is difficult 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 Coping Through Football, Saturday Morning Soccer and Green Hearts.

## OUR PITCH PROTECTION

Once a playing field is lost, it is lost forever so when it comes to protection our mantra is **no net loss of pitches**. We believe that the social value of playing fields to local communities is huge and that is why we are committed to opposing current and future loss of playing fields in London. We are the first port of call for advice on protecting threatened playing fields and have produced a **Charter for Playing Fields in London** which is a call to action for the Greater London Authority, local authorities and sporting bodies to adopt a long term view of the contribution playing fields make to creating happier, healthier, more cohesive communities. We also maintain a Fields at Risk Register, an early warning system that lists sites in imminent danger of commercial or residential development and which, over the last ten years, has resulted in saving over 20 threatened sites for current and future generations of Londoners.



# 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 and become the green hearts of the communities they serve. Encouraging those who lead an inactive lifestyle to do more exercise is one of society's biggest challenges. Nationally 17% of deaths are caused by inactivity and it is estimated that physical inactivity costs the economy £7.4billion in premature deaths, healthcare and

sickness absence. By providing opportunities for people to be more active we can be part of a solution that, in tackling preventable illnesses through early intervention, saves the NHS millions of pounds.

Playing fields and the activities played on them have the capacity to bring communities together and to reduce social isolation. They can also increase aspirations and feelings of self-worth and in doing so help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. With knife crime tragically taking so many teenage lives, we want to use sport to get young

people off the streets and to provide an alternative lifestyle where they feel safer and more aspirational. Research from the Fields of Dreams report on Douglas Eyre Sports Centre has already shown how access to regular positive sporting experiences can be a force for good in the lives of these young people who might otherwise be tempted by the allure of the gang.





# AROUND OUR GROUNDS

Against the backcloth of rising childhood obesity and soaring knife crime, it is reassuring to reflect upon the volume and variety of activity that took place at our grounds during 2018.

## GREEN HEARTS

As an alternative to team sports, Green Hearts is a project that improves the lives of the local community by providing access to informal walking, jogging and running at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre. The project now has over 200 participants and, to maximise the long summer evenings, a number of events were held to encourage members to use the path.

- A mindfulness workshop focussed on being present in the moment by slowing down everyday activities and concluded with a walk around the field to take in the birdsong, breeze and smell of freshly cut grass
- “Let’s get Fizzical” events in June and July enabled us to meet participants and hear their views on how we can support them to stay fit and healthy
- Guided walks throughout the summer led by project coordinator John Harkin helped those who were nervous or new to exercise get involved



## SATURDAY MORNING SOCCER

Saturday Morning Soccer was designed to increase the activity levels of children who are not currently in teams and might otherwise have been sitting at home. It provides a fulfilling weekly football experience for primary school girls and boys who have historically not been involved in organised football. Staffed by FA qualified coaches from one of our partner clubs LOASS, these Saturday morning sessions on the 3G pitch at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre have proved extremely popular.



## JUNIOR CRICKET

At Fairlop Oak Playing Field and London Marathon Playing Field Redbridge, where we have five cricket pitches, Len Enoch of Wanstead and Snaresbrook CC runs an extensive summer programme of competitive cricket. A ten week Under 11 League involving ten clubs attracts over 100 boys and girls playing every Wednesday evening from May to July. The activity continues into the school summer holidays with Twenty20 festivals taking place across the age range.

During 2018 a new 8-a-side competition for Under 13's was introduced. Players bat in pairs and everyone bowls to ensure maximum participation. Played on Thursday evenings, the demand for places was very high, culminating in a Super 8's tournament and a family fun afternoon involving soft ball cricket for parents and younger children.



## LONDON COMMUNITIES LEAGUE

An 8v8 football tournament was organised at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre in January. The London Communities League project offers free competitive football for young men from deprived neighbourhoods and supports these fledgling “jumpers for goalposts” teams to become affiliated clubs. Individual players are also offered the chance to gain coaching qualifications through our Kick Start Coaching Careers programme.

## SOFTBALL

Whilst football, cricket and rugby are the main sports played on our grounds they are not the only ones. In addition to providing schools with tracks and diamonds for athletics and rounders, we also host one of Europe's leading Frisbee teams in Clapham Ultimate and in 2018 we were delighted when softball team London Meteors relocated to Douglas Eyre Sports Centre.





# A BIG YEAR FOR COPING THROUGH FOOTBALL

Every day in the UK 16 people will take their own lives, making suicide the commonest cause of death amongst 20-49 year old males. The need to do something about this horrifying statistic, by transforming community mental health services, was the main motivation behind the design of the Coping Through Football project. In collaboration with our partners from the NHS (NELFT) and Leyton Orient Trust, the project focuses on the recovery of young people and adults experiencing severe mental health conditions with the ambition of getting their lives back on track.

## 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF CTF

In April Coping Through Football celebrated its tenth anniversary at a special event hosted by The FA at Wembley Stadium. We were joined by NELFT, Leyton Orient Trust, service users and their families and football and mental health stakeholders from across the capital.

FA Chairman Greg Clarke and the London Director of Public Health England Professor Yvonne Doyle made keynote speeches congratulating all concerned for demonstrating how the benefits of football can extend well beyond the pitch and have a lasting impact on the health and well-being of one of society's most marginalised groups.

## COPING THROUGH FOOTBALL EVALUATION REPORT LAUNCH

Following a two year piece of research funded by the National Institute of Health Research and undertaken by University College London, the Evaluation Report was launched at the House of Commons in September 2018. The study makes Coping Through Football the most evaluated football and mental health intervention in the world. Written by Dr Oliver Mason (UCL) with contributions from the Centre for Mental Health, the report showcases the project's positive impact on physical health and well-being, the social and lifestyle improvements made by participants and the financial benefits to society.

The launch was hosted by LPFF President Kate Hoey MP who welcomed guests from London's professional football clubs, GLA, mental health trusts and clinical commissioning groups.

## PROMOTING THE PROJECT

During the summer Chief Executive Alex Welsh was invited to speak at two events to tell the Coping Through Football story. The first was the TEDxNHS event at the BFI IMAX. The presentation, under the theme of "infectious ideas", which argued that sport can be a magic pill that can transform lives and save the nation

millions of pounds, was watched by an audience of 500 NHS staff and live streamed to NHS employees.

The second was at the London Sport conference where sporting bodies from across London listened to how the sport and health sectors can collaborate to provide a service with a difference.

## ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Throughout the year service users enjoyed a number of events including:

- An 11v11 match played on the Leyton Orient pitch at the Breyer Group Stadium
- A 6-a-side tournament in celebration of World Mental Health Day. Medals were presented by Leyton Orient FC's Director of Football Martin Ling who also spoke movingly about his own mental health issues
- A Summer barbecue and Christmas lunch at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre. The two events provided an opportunity for service users, staff and project partners to enjoy good food and each other's company

# “THE MORE TIME I SPEND OUTSIDE, THE BETTER I FEEL

Luke, Coping Through Football user



## CASE STUDY – LUKE

On the pitch in the early spring sunshine at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre, Luke weaves through teammates and opponents, linking the play and looking every inch the fit and talented footballer. Luke is an intelligent and articulate young man with insights way above his years. Things did not look so bright 18 months ago. In the middle of a personal crisis, Luke had lost his sense of purpose.

In a very dark place, he was experiencing depression, chronic anxiety and debilitating agoraphobia. Having dropped out of school, Luke was on powerful medication and despite lots of one to one therapy his life was on hold. He had even lost his life-long passion for football.

Desperate for help, Luke, and his father John, stumbled upon Coping Through Football. Struggling to revive his passion, Luke found new friends and somewhere

where players are encouraged “to leave their problems on the side-lines” and engage in a way, and at an intensity, that best suits their individual needs. As John concludes, Coping Through Football is somewhere “you go along to play football but you almost accidentally join a community”; a place where it is not overtly about mental health but where support is just below the surface. This inclusive and warm environment coaxed Luke out of his shell and his love of the game was re-ignited.

Coping Through Football became Luke's bridge to recovery and the means through which milestones such as meeting new people and using public transport were achieved. A year on, as Luke's levels of confidence and concentration returned, he is now flat out, back at school doing A-Levels and contemplating a career in medicine. He even finds time to tutor English and be a Volunteer Befriender for Coping Through Football.

John says that Luke's progress has been amazing to see and they both shudder to think where he would be without the “soft re-integration” that Coping Through Football has provided. Luke “cannot overstate the impact it's had”. His medication has been reduced and he jokes about soon being able to cope without it.

Finally, being out there on the playing fields as part of the Coping Through Football family continues to be the perfect therapy, a balance between people and place; somewhere to take what you need, and be yourself in a natural environment that is both cathartic and comforting.

# PROMOTING & FUNDRAISING

We receive no direct financial support from local or central government and are therefore dependent on the generosity of supporters and organisations to deliver our mission of providing a place to play sport forever.

That is why we are delighted to have established two major fundraising events – the Quiz at The Oval in May and the Gala Dinner at The Savoy in November. Both evenings provide the opportunity to promote the value of our work and to inform the gathered guests how well managed playing fields can improve and in some extreme cases save lives.

The 2018 Gala Dinner featuring Teddy Sheringham as the Made in London Award winner, was our most successful to-date, almost doubling the previous best ever figure raised. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the Gala Dinner and the Quiz Committees for their tireless efforts on our behalf in ensuring that the events are sold out and that guests have a mouth-watering array of prizes to bid for in the Live and Silent auctions.

In addition to the two major events, we were also fortunate to have runners in the London Marathon and the British 10K race, all of whom pounded the streets of the capital to raise money for the charity.

## CHARITY PARTNERSHIPS

We were chosen as the Bostik League 2017/18 Charity Partner. The link between the league and LPFF is an obvious one given that so many of the former's London based players would have grown up on fields in the capital. Bucket collections were held at matches over the Easter weekend and we were also the recipients of the proceeds of a raffle held at the end of season Awards Dinner.

In August we were the nominated charity at the Leyton Orient vs Borehamwood match. We held a bucket collection and young people from our Saturday Morning Soccer project were invited to be flag bearers and take penalties on the pitch at half time.

## CHALLENGE EVENTS

Members of one of our partner clubs, West London Rugby FC, based at London Marathon Playing Field Greenford, ran the British 10K to raise funds for the Foundation. This was their third year participating in the race and we are extremely grateful to them for their support.

## INTERVIEW —

John Walsh ran the London Marathon for LPFF in 2018 and here he tells us about the day and why he wanted to raise money to protect playing fields.



John Walsh: London Marathon runner 2018

### What was your experience of running the London Marathon like?

London was my first marathon and if I had to use one word it would be 'brutal'. The hottest ever London Marathon seriously impacted on my and most people's races. I was also running with an Achilles tendon injury and then at mile 21 I realised a toenail was loose. Not good! Being a novice, I failed to take into account the conditions and from Tower Bridge onwards it was survival mode as I ran/walked the second half. I was over-optimistically training for 3h:30 but finished in 4h:16 – tough day! But overall, the weekend was great and an unforgettable experience.

### What was your most memorable part of the day?

There isn't one outstanding memory, but I'll never forget the heat, the crowds and the deafening noise they made at some points – the silence of Blackwall Tunnel was very welcome for a minute. Finally, the sheer relief of the finish line on The Mall as I waddled over it like a penguin. I wasn't tired but my legs were shot! I'll always remember meeting up with my partner when I dissolved into tears in her arms. A load of friends came to meet us at the pub afterwards which was great.

### What did running in the London Marathon mean to you?

A long-held dream fulfilled. I'm old enough to remember the first in 1981!

### Has it inspired you to run another marathon?

Definitely. The heat, my injury and inexperience led me to feel a bit robbed and I developed a strong sense of unfinished business with the marathon distance. I trained for this year's Manchester Marathon but unfortunately got injured again and had to withdraw. But I shall not be deterred! I am very determined to get a decent marathon under my belt. I'd also like to run London again at some stage.

### Why did you want to raise money for the LPFF?

LPFF was a perfect fit for me – I've been passionate about sports since I was a kid – I'd watch anything from crown green bowls to canoeing! Indeed, my own running story since the start of 2015 has inspired a few people at work to take it up. I was very proud to fundraise for LPFF and to represent the Foundation. In total, including Gift Aid, I raised £5,550.50 in donations – well over the original target of £1,000. Thank you again to everyone for their generosity!

### Why do you think it's important to protect green spaces?

The value of having space to play sports/games cannot be over-stated. I passionately believe in the power of sport/exercise to bring communities together, create better health outcomes and improve well-being, so the work of LPFF strikes a powerful chord for me.

### How did you use playing fields growing up?

With my friends, we'd play football, cricket, mess around on our bikes, British bulldog 1-2-3, hide and seek, climb the nearby trees etc. We were lucky at school to have our own playing fields where we'd play rugby, cricket and do athletics. Our workplace has access to cricket and football pitches and it makes a huge difference.

### What is your favourite sporting memory/experience?

Can't name just one, sorry!

Seeing five of the six Super Saturday Team GB gold medals at the London Olympics and experiencing the atmosphere of that Olympics in general – an amazing time!

Going to the Rio Olympics and seeing thirty-two events including the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

Liverpool winning their five European Cups, especially Istanbul – wish I'd been there!



# OUR CHARTER

We believe that the best form of protection is full use and once a playing field is lost, it is lost forever. Accessing the opportunity to play sport in London is difficult given the lack of playing fields and the unevenness in their distribution, so there needs to be a long-term view on how these places are protected and fully used.

In Sport England's playing fields policy, it states that playing fields are "one of the most important resources for sport in England but remain vulnerable to a range of development pressures".

Our Charter provides 12 indisputable calls to action that we hope key stakeholders will unite behind and implement to safeguard the future of London's playing fields so that future generations can enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of being active and playing sport.

By supporting our Charter you will be helping us in our mission to:-

- Encourage the GLA to update the 2006 Offside Report (a pan London playing fields audit)
- Ensure the creation of a single, London-centric website for playing fields information
- Sign up all 33 London Boroughs to adopt the LPFF Charter for Playing Fields in London
- Highlight the need for a pro-active Fields at Risk Register
- Advocate the need for all London Boroughs to have up-to-date playing fields strategies

**WE CAN'T DO THIS WORK WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT.**

Please sign up to our Charter and join our campaign to protect playing fields in London – [www.lpff.org.uk](http://www.lpff.org.uk).

## A CHARTER FOR PLAYING FIELDS IN LONDON

We believe that sport can transform lives and to achieve this we need to ensure that those places where it is played are protected and fully used.



### PROTECT

1. Use the planning system to protect against the loss of playing field sites at risk from development.
2. Establish a continuously updated Fields at Risk Register for London.
3. Encourage local authority planning departments to adopt housing policies that do not result in a net loss of sports pitches.
4. Advocate that each local authority has a robust and up to date assessment of the needs and opportunities for playing fields in their area as part of their local plan.
5. Work with Department for Education to ensure there is no reduction in school sports pitch provision in London.

### PROMOTE

6. Promote the wider health and social benefits of well managed playing fields.
7. Inspire an increase in participation in sport and physical activity through better utilisation of playing fields and artificial turf pitches.

### PROVIDE

8. Adopt a strategic pan London approach to sports pitch provision, recognising inequality of access between inner and outer London boroughs and the demand for facilities by users crossing borough boundaries.
9. Raise the awareness of funding opportunities relating to playing fields and their improvement.
10. Improve and sustain the quality of existing sports pitches for present and future generations of Londoners.
11. Create a single city-wide hub for playing fields information in London to improve the awareness of where sites are located, who uses them and how often.
12. Offer support to those seeking to invest in playing field improvements.

**A PLACE TO PLAY SPORT FOREVER**

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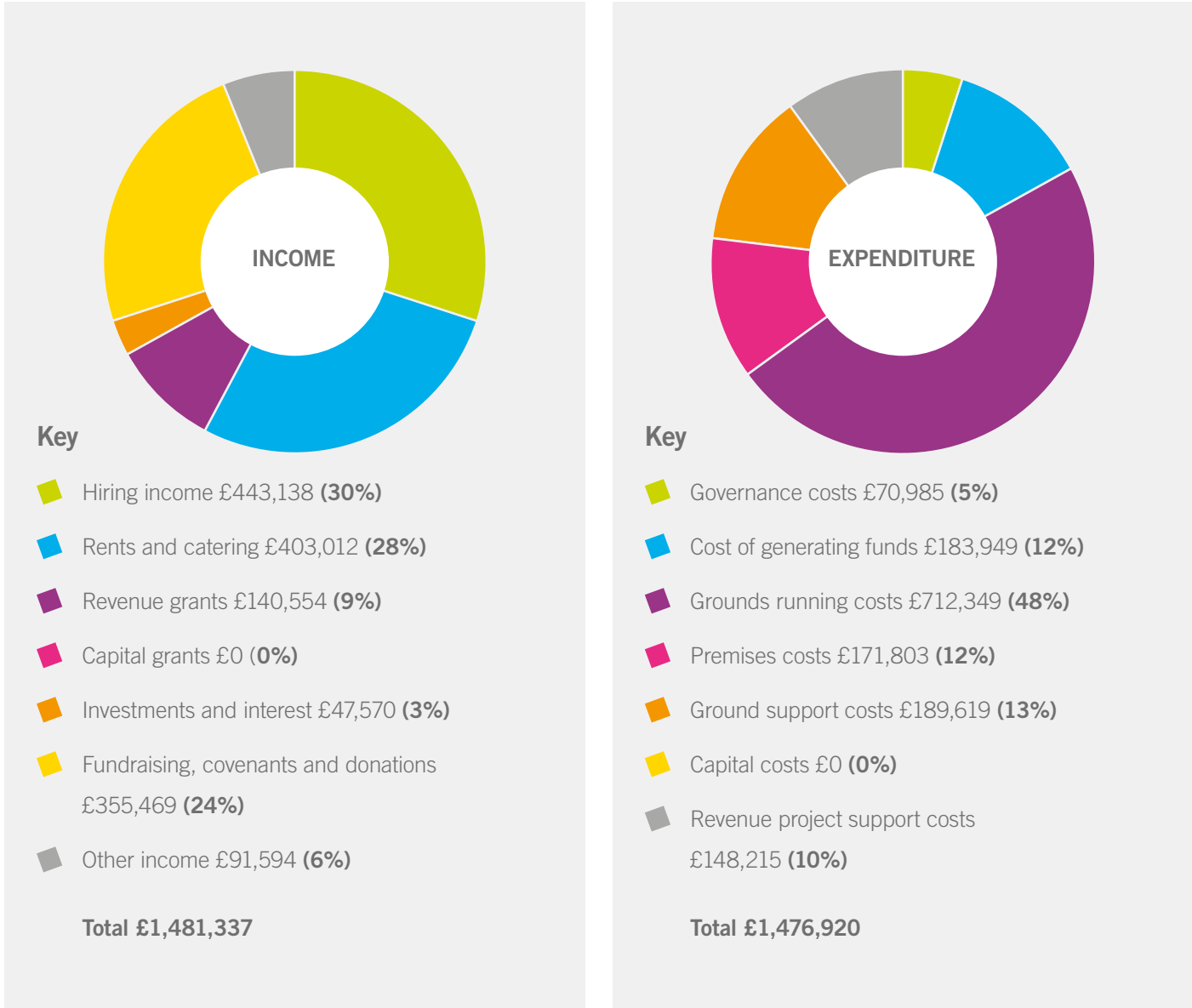
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# LPFF BY NUMBERS 2018



# INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2018



For the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018.  
These figures do not include depreciation or investment gains or losses. For a full set of Audited Accounts for 2018 please contact Head Office.



# IN LOVING MEMORY

It was with great sadness that during the year we had to announce the death of long serving Trustee Evan Stone QC who passed away peacefully at home on 4th March 2018.

Evan, whose most recent role was as Chair of the Remuneration Committee, brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to his LPFF role having enjoyed a distinguished career in law and public service.



Trustee Evan Stone QC

“Evan had all those qualities you look for in a Trustee – compassion, integrity, wisdom and a great enthusiasm for our cause. He always thought of others first and he was an inspiration to all those who knew him.”

**Alex Welsh**, Chief Executive





# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & DONORS

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- Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation
- The Cadogan Charity
- Ian Mactaggart Trust
- The Howard de Walden Estate
- St James Street Big Local
- Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers
- Golden Bottle Trust

And thank you to all those who gave generously to The Big Give, London Marathon, Virgin 10K and events through the year including the Quiz and Gala Dinner.

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