



# A PLACE TO PLAY SPORT FOREVER





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# CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MESSAGE



Welcome to our Annual Review covering what has been another eventful year that has once again tested the resilience and resourcefulness of the charity.

Bouncing back after the pandemic was always going to be a challenge but we could not have anticipated the thunderbolts that came our way in 2022. In February Storm Eunice ripped the roof off the pavilion at London Marathon Playing Field Redbridge and the accompanying heavy rain caused significant damage to the interior. Fortunately, we were able to react quickly and decisively, with a new roof being installed within weeks. However, repairs to the internal structures took several months to complete and it wasn't until the following football season that the pavilion was officially re-opened.

Storms of a non-meteorological nature hit us later in the year in the form of rampant inflation compounded by a huge hike in energy costs. As an organisation that prides itself on providing accessible and affordable facilities for sport, it placed us in a difficult position. Faced with a minimum 10% increase on essential operational items such as seed and diesel and a projected 400% uplift in gas and electricity charges, we were forced to raise our pitch hiring charges in line with inflation. Fortunately, it did not have a dramatic immediate impact on our cricket, football and rugby utilisation levels but if the cost of living crisis does not abate, we might see a drop off in the following season as the squeeze on disposable income continues.

The prevailing economic climate forced us to reprioritise the key objectives in our Three Year Plan so that the focus was on financial sustainability. However, we were able to deliver part of our Legacy Fund Plan (set up in 2021 to future proof our facilities) to replace the boilers at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre. This major capital undertaking, which entailed drawing £450,000 from our reserves, was delivered on budget and in time for the start of the 2022-2023 football season. The eighty new showers that were part of the works were jointly funded by the generous legacies left by our much loved and respected former Trustees Evan Stone QC and Jack Miller.

Faced with the prospect of unprecedented increases in our operational costs, we were more reliant than ever on our two big fundraising events, the LPFF Quiz at The Oval and the Gala Dinner at The Savoy. Both attracted large attendances and we were thankful that the amount raised at the Gala Dinner was our third best since 2011. However, it did draw into focus the need to organise additional events in future years.

The Foundation has an impressive track record of addressing inequalities in sport and the success of the Lionesses in the European Championships in the summer presented us with the opportunity of creating a lasting legacy by encouraging more girls to play and stay in the game.

However, this would not happen by accident. If we were to maximise the interest and excitement generated by the tournament, we had to put a coherent plan in place that engendered a love for the game in school and continued that commitment through the club network. The key ingredient to this aspiration becoming a reality is the provision of female friendly facilities and an approach that recognises and overcomes historic barriers to participation.

As we draw the curtain down on our 132<sup>nd</sup> year, we would like to publicly acknowledge and thank our wonderful staff, Trustees and volunteers for their outstanding expertise, dedication and commitment over the past challenging year. Your contribution is greatly valued.

Thank you.



*W. Cadogan*

**HON WILLIAM CADOGAN**  
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. We provide affordable, accessible and attractive playing fields that are more than just green spaces. They are places where lives can be improved physically, mentally and socially.

## OUR PLAYING FIELDS

During the two protracted lockdown periods in 2020 and 2021 we never lost sight of our mission of providing a place to play sport forever but bouncing back after the pandemic was never going to be straightforward. However, the strengthening of our relationships with our clubs forged during the two previous years seemed to pay off. Weekend football utilisation showed a 6% increase from 67% in 2019 to 73% in 2021-22 whereas improvement for cricket for the same period was even more marked moving from 87% in 2019 to 98% in 2022.

Schools football also came back strongly. As a result of our commitment “to go the extra mile” to stage school matches, finals and festivals at a “very fair price”, a total of 208 school matches were played at our four north east London grounds.

These included:

- 40 Hackney primary district schools matches at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre
- 55 Waltham Forest Secondary Schools League fixtures at Peter May Sports Centre
- Five Girls’ leagues for Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 on the 3G pitches at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre and Peter May Sports Centre

- 76 Redbridge, Havering and Newham district schools matches at Fairlop Oak Playing Field
- 19 Essex County Schools fixtures at LMPF Redbridge

Having an approach where our pitch programming policy is underpinned by sports development principles rather than on “a first come first served basis”, has proved to be very effective particularly in the post pandemic period. Helping our schools and clubs to grow and sustain participation is in everyone’s interest so we were very pleased to play a key role in supporting this.

One of our most dramatic interventions was in reviving the London Legal League which had discontinued when the pandemic lockdowns ravaged team sport in 2020 and 2021. Rather than allow this 11v11 adult midweek league founded in 1965 to disappear forever, we collaborated with the Amateur Football Alliance and the individual clubs to resurrect the competition. The Foundation’s Booking Officer Henry DiStasio now administers the league which has a much brighter and sustainable future.



The pandemic also taught us just how valuable our fields could be to people who do not play organised sport and would appreciate having a local space that was safe, accessible and affordable where they could exercise at a time of their choosing. They recognised how being active could have lasting benefits on their physical and mental health. That is why in our latest Three Year Plan (2022-2025) we have added a commitment to creating more active communities to our mission of providing a place to play sport forever.

## OUR PITCH PROTECTION

The Foundation is the first port of call when people are concerned about the loss of a playing field. Once a playing field is lost, it is lost forever so when it comes to protection our mantra is “no net loss of pitches” and if they are lost to development they should be replaced.



Peter May Sports Centre

We know that the public health and social value of playing fields to local communities is huge and that is why we are committed to opposing the current and future loss of playing fields in London.

We have therefore continued to fulfil our strategic role as the leading body throughout Greater London in the protection of playing fields and their promotion as a means of creating healthier, more active local communities. Our ‘Fields at Risk Register’ provides an early warning system for fields under imminent threat of sale or development and over the last two decades has helped save over twenty grounds.

In order to focus minds, we 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 improving and enriching the lives of Londoners.

# WHY WE DO IT

We have long understood that the benefits of sport extend well beyond the pitch. It is not just the physical and well-being improvements that we have witnessed, but also its capacity for bringing communities together and raising the aspirations particularly of young people.

However, none of this happens by accident and it requires a combination of leadership, innovative thinking and partnership working to bring it to fruition.

We also know that we can manage playing fields to address inequalities, especially for those groups and individuals who are economically and socially disadvantaged.

Recent research provides a compelling case for the protection and provision of green space in the capital:

- London’s public green space has a gross asset value more than **£91 billion**, providing services valued at **£5 billion** per year
- For each **£1** spent by local authorities and their partners on public green space, Londoners enjoy at least **£27** in value
- Londoners avoid **£950 million** per year in health costs due to public green space
- The value of recreational activities is estimated to be **£926 million** per year
- For the average household in London, the monetary value of being near a green space is over **£900** per year

In addition to the provision of facilities, there are barriers and inequalities around access and participation at existing facilities. At present, 38% of adults in London do not meet the Chief Medical Officer physical activity guidelines. There are also significant inequalities within London. The city has the second and third most inactive local authorities in the UK, but it also has the second and third least inactive local authorities.

Active people are 14% more likely to report good health than the inactive. Inactivity places people at higher risk of chronic disease, premature death and lower quality of life. Additionally, in terms of mental health, physical activity reduces the likelihood of people being affected by certain conditions. In the case of depression, it reduces this likelihood by around 30%.

Without a pitch to play there can be no sport. Accessing the opportunity to play sport in London is different to any other part of the country so we need to safeguard the long-term future of playing fields as places where participation in grassroots sport is widened, increased and sustained. London is home to 16% of the UK population, however Londoners have half the number of leisure facilities per 100,000 people, compared to elsewhere in the UK and only 8% of the nation’s playing fields.



# OUR PROJECTS

Similar to many charities, the Foundation does have a focus on addressing inequalities which it delivers via its various projects.

As one of our long term aims is to create more active communities we recognise that we must respond innovatively to reach those individuals who for a number of reasons are excluded from mainstream sporting provision.

For many the biggest barriers to participation are cost and accessibility combined with low levels of confidence felt by the intended participants and that is why our current three projects **Green Hearts**, **Coping Through Football** and **Saturday Morning Soccer** work so well.

But don't take our word for it, read what some of the beneficiaries have said.

## COPING THROUGH FOOTBALL

Coping Through Football is an innovative project that uses sport to facilitate the recovery of adults and young people experiencing mental health problems with the intention of helping them to live more independently. It utilises football and the environment around it to engage with individuals who, due to lived experience, are often reluctant or hesitant to accept mental health services.

Many participants report experiencing barriers to accessing services, and of the two hundred or so participants who attend over the course of the year we know that for many the project is the only consistent mental health support they may receive.

### JS'S STORY:

'I was depressed. The antidepressants were not doing much. They never made me feel any better. I was referred to Coping Through Football and when they said football my eyes opened wide!

Doing the technical training was a challenge. I've never done that type of training before. In my country we just played a match. But at Coping Through Football I learnt more skills and it got me in shape.

I have some health conditions (cardiovascular issues, neurological issues) so for the medical doctors they were really impressed. It was important for them to see me doing something as part of my recovery. You know to take part in the football it requires a lot of motivation, a lot of effort and the doctors could see the effort I made.

On the football pitch I'm getting to know my body, improving my balance and coordination. Coping Through Football is like a doctor's appointment, you don't want to miss it. Coping Through Football has brought a spark to my life, given me something to put in the diary. At the end of the week, I would look back and say the week was fulfilled: "I went to football, mission accomplished".'



## SATURDAY MORNING SOCCER

Saturday Morning Soccer is a project designed to increase activity levels in 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 our 3G pitch at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre have proved extremely popular.

### A PARENT'S STORY:

"My daughter started playing football at Saturday Morning Soccer and she is now trying to get into the West Ham development squad. She also trained to be a referee and is now refereeing Under 12 games on Saturday for the Hackney League and Echo league. She just finished 12 hours Duke of Edinburgh award volunteering for a football day camp over Easter. We went to see Brazil v England Women at Wembley and she pointed at the pitch and said whether it's as a footballer or a referee, I'll be on that pitch one day. I believe her too. And she said it is all thanks to Saturday Morning Soccer at Douglas Eyre!"



Green Hearts

## GREEN HEARTS

Green Hearts is a project which provides flexible access to informal walking, jogging and running around our grounds so that local residents who might not be regular sports players or members of a gym, have somewhere safe and welcoming to exercise on a regular basis. As research indicates there are huge benefits to be gained in terms of improvements in physical and mental health from being active out in the fresh air. During the winter months we responded to Green Hearts members wishes and set up a midweek Yoga session to complement the outdoor exercise.

### LOUISE'S STORY

"The yoga sessions reminded me that what I love about the Green Hearts initiative is that it is not just about increasing activity and fitness but it also has built community and social networks and that is invaluable. I also think that because the cost of the class is relatively low and so local it is accessible for a wider audience.

I think anything like this that gets different parts of the community mixing along the better so thank you!"



Coping Through Football



# BUILDING ON THE LIONESSES' SUCCESS TO CREATE A LEGACY PLAN FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

Following the excitement and interest generated by the success of the Lionesses in Euro 2022, it was imperative that the opportunity to widen and increase grassroots participation was not lost.

With this in mind, the Foundation convened a group of key stakeholders in north-east London (where we have four grounds), to create a coordinated and sustainable framework for girls' and women's football that introduces the game in schools and then links it to continued participation via the club network.

At the heart of this Legacy Plan is the provision of female friendly facilities and the building of a coaching workforce that ensures that new players have the best possible experience to keep them in the game. So far it seems to be working with Leyton Orient Women returning to Douglas Eyre for their training base after a long absence and over 1000 girls participating this season in a range of school festivals and competitions hosted at Douglas Eyre and Peter May Sports Centres.

This huge increase in girls playing the game is largely due to the efforts of Shona Gordon the School Games Organiser for Waltham Forest. We asked her about how she used the Euros 2022 to galvanise schoolgirl participation in the borough.

**First of all, many congratulations for encouraging so many girls to play the game. How much was the Lionesses' success a factor in attracting more girls to the game?**

It has been a big contributing factor, along with the continued publicity of the WSL games on TV.

The biggest reaction in terms of numbers has been with the Year 5/6 Girls activities but the take up in other age groups has been equally impressive.

- **KS1 festival**— 16 schools / 204 pupils
- **Year 3/4 festival**— 22 schools / 253 pupils
- **Year 3/4 comp**— 20 schools / 232 pupils
- **Year 5/6 comp**— 26 schools / 318 pupils
- **Year 7 league**— 11 schools / 120 pupils
- **Year 8 league**— 13 schools / 130 pupils
- **Year 9 league**— 12 schools / 120 pupils
- **Year 10/11 league**— 10 schools / 140 pupils

**What were the key factors behind your success?**

The publicity and promotion via the Barclays Girls Football Schools Partnership was the catalyst but it was our knowledge and understanding of local schools and the positive relationships we have with them combined with easy and affordable access to the two LPFF facilities in the borough, that really made the difference.

**What do we need to do to sustain the interest?**

We need to keep offering varied opportunities such as festivals, competitions, courses in coaching and refereeing. Club engagement with the schools' activities is also vital as it will provide a smooth link into continued participation.

**How important was it to have female friendly venues such as Douglas Eyre Sports Centre and Peter May Sports Centre?**

This has been crucial to the success of the programme. It is also very important that when booking pitches, there are not boys' matches running at the same time as this can easily demotivate the girls.





# SALLY DOLAN : 20 YEARS WITH LPFF

During the year our Development Officer at LMPF Greenwich Sally Dolan reached a remarkable double milestone – one was twenty years working on behalf of LPFF and the other was twenty years as Founder and Secretary of the Selkent League, the largest youth football league in the South of England.



Since 2003 Sally has coordinated two ground- breaking projects (Girls’ Mini-Soccer and Female Coach Development) and has been responsible for building a one thousand team league from scratch. In the last year 600 youth football teams played 1,500 small-sided matches in the Selkent League at LMPF Greenwich which is a truly phenomenal achievement. As Sally is a true grassroots champion with vast accumulated knowledge and experience, it was good to catch up with her and hear her reflections on the past two decades.

**How has having a dedicated multi-pitch mini-soccer centre helped the league?**

It has allowed us to bring clubs together and mix in a way that would not have happened had they all stayed at their own venues. LMPF Greenwich has also been a godsend for those less well-off clubs that were unable to find or afford their own facilities. The management arrangement with LPFF has enabled innovation to happen particularly around the development of the 9v9 format some time before it was formerly introduced by The FA. The specially designed classroom in the pavilion has provided a training base for the volunteer workforce with a range of courses for assistant referees, mini-soccer referees and for team managers.

**What have been the key factors in the growth of the league?**

The way that the league has stayed faithful to its mission of providing child friendly football is a big attraction to new clubs. Our league, which caters from Under 7 up to Under 21’s, is not a dictatorship and we always try to put the players and the needs of its clubs first. The mid- season re-seeding of the various divisions means that the vast majority of our teams still have something to play for towards the end of the season. We also do not shy away from the more contentious issues such as poor matchday conduct from some team officials and parents.

**Why do you think the Five Year Girls Mini-soccer project (2003-2008) that you coordinated worked so well initially?**

The project was well considered, planned and joined up, and providing a female friendly environment was the perfect way of introducing girls to the game. In a short space of time it played a key role in establishing 29 girls’ teams in the league. Unfortunately, The FA’s insistence on reducing the three year age band to two made it very difficult to field teams and effectively destroyed what we had built up. Ironically, a few years later The FA realised the errors of its ways and reinstated the three year age band.

**Why do you think Female Coach Development was successful?**

The project was successful in recognising and overcoming the barriers experienced by women who wanted to become qualified coaches. However, most of the women whom the project qualified went on to work in the elite end of the game rather than in grassroots.

**What are your three proudest achievements on the ground?**

- Organising the schools’ festivals with Inner London Schools FA
- Growing the game at 5v5, 7v7 and 9v9 so that on busy Sundays over 1000 children are playing on the ground
- The way in which the ground has given us the freedom to be innovative such as in piloting the 9v9 game and in providing a training hub for the volunteer workforce where over 2,000 managers have attended the bespoke Selkent In-service Managers course (written and designed by LPFF).

**What lessons have you learnt?**

- Give youth football the respect it deserves and listen before acting. Look to replicate the good practice that exists out there and take the necessary steps to ensure that it becomes the norm rather than the exception.
- Do not be too prescriptive and insist on a one size fits all approach as it inhibits innovation.





# LPFF IN 2022

## IN 2022 OUR GROUNDS WERE HOME TO:

- 681

Football teams
- 65

Cricket teams
- 25

Softball teams
- 11

School sports days
- 1

Rugby club
- 1

Ultimate frisbee team
- 1

Gaelic football team
- 1

Weekly Parkrun



Softball at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre

Our grounds also provided space for:

368

**Green Hearts** members to walk safely around Douglas Eyre Sports Centre.

190

adults and **89** young people to attend **Coping Through Football** sessions, totalling **279** sessions.

## ACTIVITY ON OUR FIELDS:



Rugby at LMPF Greenford

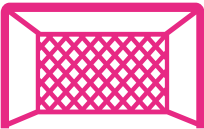
677

cricket matches were played on LPFF pitches, an average of **34 games** each weekend.



2,379

football matches were played on our grounds, an average of **85 matches** per week.



600

youth football teams played **1,500 small-sided matches** in the Selkent League at LMPF Greenwich during the football season.



67%

of all football played on **LPFF grounds** caters for schools, youth and junior development.



An average of

1,788

people per week use our **Artificial Turf Pitches** for training and matches during the football season.



92

youth cricket matches took place at **Fairlop Oak Playing Field** in the Essex Met Colts' competition.





# GOODBYE TO CHRISTINE DOUBLE AND PAUL BAKER



**CHRISTINE DOUBLE**

The Foundation said goodbye to Trustee Christine Double who stood down in June after 17 year’s distinguished service.

Having joined the charity in 2005 as the only female Trustee on the board at that time, Christine was a trailblazer who was very instrumental in the recruitment of other similarly highly influential women at the top of their game and the historic gender imbalance was soon addressed.

During her time, she ensured that the Foundation stayed faithful to its founding objectives especially in the way that we use sport and physical activity to enrich the lives of disadvantaged individuals and groups.



**PAUL BAKER**

The Foundation also bade farewell to its long serving Operations Director Paul Baker who retired in April.

A trained architect and former National Facilities Manager for the English Table Tennis Association, Paul was appointed in 2008. He quickly became a pivotal figure in helping the charity to modernise our facilities with the refurbishment of the pavilions at LMPF Greenford and Douglas Eyre Sports Centre and the installation of two new 3G pitches with innovative markings.

During the pandemic he played a key role in ensuring that all of our football and cricket facilities complied with Government guidance on Covid-19 protocols. There is little doubt that Paul can look back with justifiable pride on how he made our buildings more accessible, safer and sustainable.

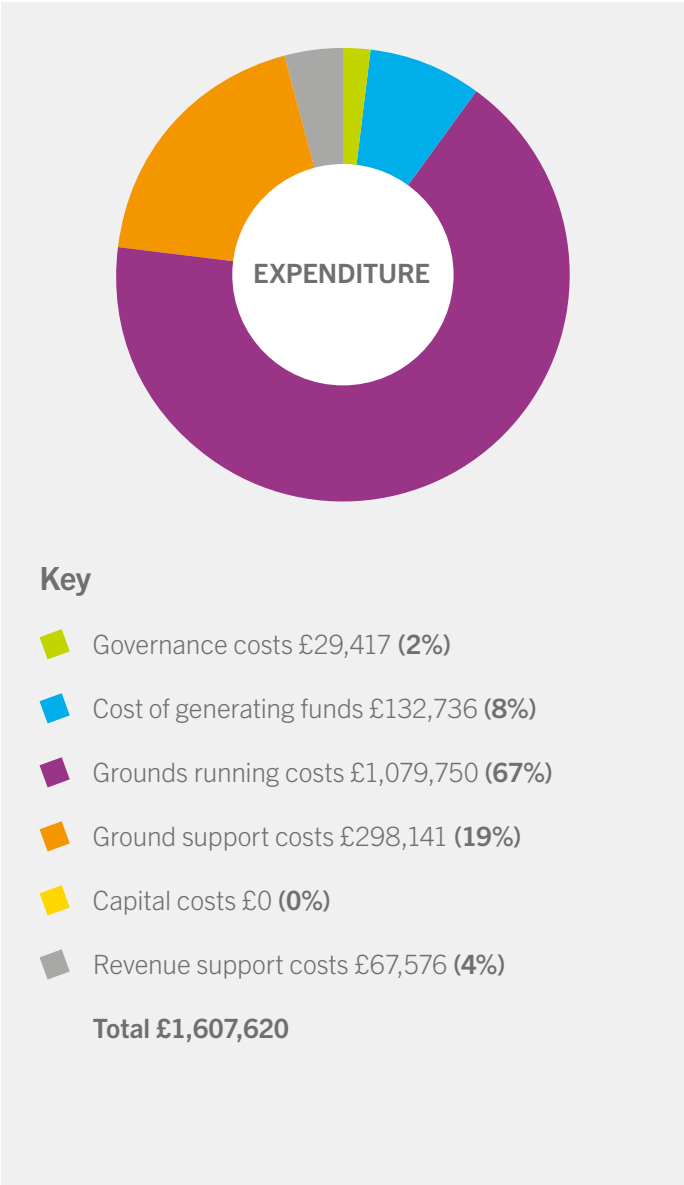
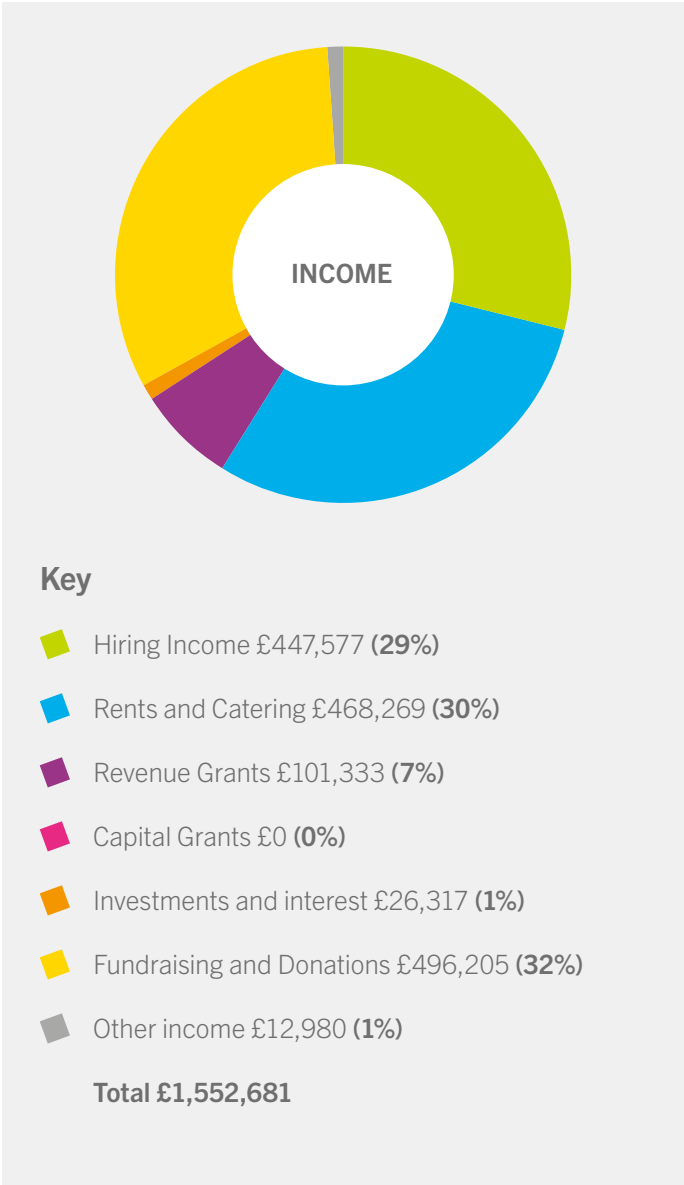
Paul has been replaced by Charlie Dehaan who takes on the role of Operations Manager.



Peter May Sports Centre



# INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2022



# THANK YOU FUNDERS AND DONORS

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- The Rockley Charity
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- Evan Stone QC

Thank you to all companies and individuals who donate to our Quiz and Gala Dinner events.

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