



**A  
PLACE  
TO PLAY  
SPORT  
FOREVER**



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# CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MESSAGE



Welcome to another Annual Review describing how we delivered our charitable objectives against the backdrop of a cost of living crisis and inflation running at over 10%.

As an organisation that prides itself on providing accessible and affordable facilities to ensure that everyone regardless of their background or socio-economic status can play the sport they love, it was a challenging year given that our operational costs were rocketing and we did not want to pass on all of the increased expenditure to our customers.

Nevertheless, we prevailed and the levels of utilisation from our schools, colleges and clubs remained encouragingly high as evidenced by our partnership with the Essex Metropolitan Cricket Board which saw over 150 games of midweek youth cricket played at our north-east London grounds and in the thousand girls who took part in football tournaments, leagues and festivals at Douglas Eyre and Peter May Sports Centres.

With the need to focus on financial sustainability, the Foundation made the decision to increase the number of fundraising events. So, in September we organised our first ever Golf Day at Royal Mid Surrey Golf Course. With the course bathed in brilliant sunshine, all those attending had a wonderful day and our intention is to use the experience gained at Royal Mid Surrey to organise a bigger event in 2024 and for it to become a regular feature in our annual fundraising calendar.

The Golf Day had been preceded in May by our most successful Quiz to-date with the various fundraising activities on the night generating £10,000 more than the previous year.

The Quiz followed the pattern of our tenth Gala Dinner which was our third best in terms of funds raised and where Roy Hodgson was a very popular winner of the Made in London Award. The success of these events highlights how fortunate we are to have such superb organising committees led by dynamic and dedicated LPFF supporters who work so hard to sell tables and acquire auction prizes.

It was also a year in which we continued our drive to future proof our grounds with the installation of a new boiler at LMPF Greenford. Thanks to a generous grant from London Marathon Foundation of £45,000, the works were completed in time for the start of the 2023-24 football season. We also repaired and insulated the pavilion roof with the proceeds from the sale of three signed FIFA footballs which were donated to us by a 2022 Gala Dinner guest. We now look forward to significantly reducing our energy costs at this iconic 85 year old pavilion.

However, the year was not without profound sadness when in June we suffered a shattering blow with the passing of our much loved former Chairman Lord Cadogan. The value of the contribution he made to the Foundation over his tenure between 2001 – 2019 cannot be over-estimated.

The pain we felt in losing such a huge figure in the charity's history was compounded by the death three days later of our long-standing and ebullient Vice President John Hollins. Tributes to both men appear elsewhere in this review.

Organisations are often judged on how they handle and recover from adversity without compromising their principles and, as we draw the curtain down on our 133<sup>rd</sup> year, we would like to think that time and again we have demonstrated what makes us indispensable whilst at the same time remaining relevant to those groups and individuals we were set up to serve all those years ago.

However, none of this could be achieved without our wonderful staff, Trustees and volunteers and we would like to publicly thank them now for their outstanding expertise, dedication and commitment over the past year. Your contribution is greatly valued.

**Thank you.**



*W. J.*

**HON WILLIAM CADOGAN**  
Chairman



*Alex Welsh*

**ALEX WELSH**  
Chief Executive



# WHAT WE DO

Our vision is to create a happier, healthier, and more cohesive London by promoting sport and physical activity on affordable, accessible, and attractive playing fields. These spaces go beyond green landscapes - they are places where lives are transformed physically, mentally, and socially.

## OUR PLAYING FIELDS

Our seven grounds across five London boroughs serve over 210,000 individuals annually, supporting their fitness and sporting journeys. We provide high-quality, affordable sports pitches for schools, clubs, and communities, where their usage is underpinned by sports development principles that guide young athletes from school to club activities.

Modernising, managing and maintaining these playing fields is costly, with only 33p recouped for every pound invested in pitch upkeep. We rely on generous support from donors, grants and partnerships to ensure accessibility for all. Against a wider backdrop of increasing pressure on councils to build more homes and reduce their operational spending, we demonstrate the value of well-managed playing fields as essential community assets.

## OUR PROJECTS

We are committed to addressing inequalities in accessing physical activity and sporting opportunities and to engaging with London’s disadvantaged and inactive groups via innovative projects like Coping Through Football and Green Hearts.



## PLAYING FIELD PROTECTION

Our mantra on safeguarding London’s stock of playing fields, is “no net loss” of pitches — and if lost to development, they must be replaced. We oppose the loss of these vital spaces, based on their health and social value. Through our Fields at Risk Register and Playing Fields Charter for London, we have saved many sites from being lost for current and future generations and have emerged as the leading charity for the protection and promotion of playing fields in the capital.



# WHY WE DO IT

We recognise that the benefits of sport extend well beyond the pitch to have a lasting impact on physical and mental health, community cohesion and the aspirations of young people.

By ensuring that our facilities are accessible and affordable we have been able to engage with socially and economically disadvantaged groups.

Recent research underscores the immense value of green spaces, contributing over £91 billion in asset value and £5 billion annually in services to Londoners.

Furthermore, active lifestyles significantly improve health outcomes and mental well-being, reducing the burden of chronic diseases and enhancing quality of life.

In London, access to sports facilities remains a challenge, with only 8% of the nation’s playing fields located within the confines of the M25 corridor.

As we have demonstrated on our sites, their long-term viability depends on being optimally used so that they contribute to widening, increasing and sustaining participation in sport and physical activity across the city.



# FOCUS ON A PITCH

In 2012 we installed a new 3G pitch at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre, one of the most strategically important pitches in North East London, and 11 years on we look at its impact on the community.

The wider benefits of this pitch go far beyond sport itself. A 12-month research study, “**Fields of Dreams,**” revealed that activities at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre generated a staggering £4.8 million saving to the public purse, primarily through reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour and improved health outcomes.

**In 2023 the pitch:**

- Provided a base for **Coping Through Football**, a project that does so much to help people with serious mental health issues to get their lives back on track.
- Hosted **Saturday Morning Soccer**, a project that provides inclusive football sessions for children who have never been selected for their school or club teams.
- Was used for **Inner London Schools football tournaments** across the year.
- Was the home to three large youth football clubs (**Coppermill Swifts, LOASS** and **London Forest Youth**) who serve the community so well.
- Was **London FA’s** main base for referee education.
- Was home to **Leyton Orient Women** and **Old Parmiterians FC** who have 13 adult teams
- Provided the venue for a range of **schoolgirl festivals, tournaments and leagues** that led to over 1,000 girls playing football over the last year.
- Was the home training venue for **Clapham Ultimate**, the most decorated Ultimate Frisbee team in European history.
- Was the home venue for **Tottenham Hotspur Premier League Kicks**, a programme that does so much to keep young people off the streets and engaged in purposeful activities.

**TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR PREMIER LEAGUE KICKS PROGRAMME**

Omari Chambers-Alert has been leading the Tottenham Hotspur Premier League Kicks Programme at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre for over fifteen years and he told us why our facility is so important to the scheme.

Omari explained that the programme’s mission is to leverage the power of football as a means of breaking down barriers between young people and the police.

It provides free football opportunities for children and young adults up to the age of 18. The programme is inclusive, catering to individuals of all abilities, whether they are playing just for the joy of the game or nurturing dreams of becoming professional players. Omari believes that football can unite the community, fostering positive interactions, promoting physical activity and nurturing talent. He urges young people in the area to join them in this exciting journey where the love of the sport knows no boundaries, and everyone is welcome.

When asked what the young people they cater for would be doing without the Kicks Programme, Omari makes no bold statements and instead offers a non-committal “*not sure but every Friday night we have 60+ young people playing football*”.

One thing he is sure of is that the availability and affordability of a high-quality pitch at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre for the young people to play on has been a significant factor in attracting them. Given that he aims to provide quality facilities, positive role models who understand the perspective of the young people, and the ability to create a fun and enjoyable space, Douglas Eyre is ideal.

For many young people attending the PL Kicks sessions the experience can be transformative. Omari recalls that one of his most satisfying memories was of a boy coming to PL Kicks for the first time and then finding his feet quickly before transitioning from a volunteer role to paid work with the programme and then finally to running his own sports coaching company in East London.

And none of this would have happened without a pitch to play on.



Tottenham Hotspur Premier League Kicks Programme



Clapham Ultimate Frisbee Team

**CLAPHAM ULTIMATE**

Another success story from Douglas Eyre Sports Centre is Clapham Ultimate, a Frisbee team who became European Champions. With the club about to relocate to another venue, we caught up with club secretary Alexis to find out how the right facilities can support a club’s dreams.

**How important was having a training base like DESC to the progress of the club?**

It was critical to long-term stability of the team, as it let us train in all conditions and maintain a consistency in training throughout the year.

**What features made DESC the ideal choice as a training base?**

Good quality full size 3G with floodlights, changing rooms for the team and proximity to public transport.

**What sort of training do elite frisbee players need to reach the top?**

Elite frisbee training is a mixture of physical intensity and skills development. We have long-term practice cycles to enable the club to develop its play-style on offence and defence. A key to being able to perform at the top level is the replication of different match scenarios with additional stressors at practice. Finally aerobic fitness training outside of team practice is crucial for individual performance.

**How many home grown players did you develop over your time at DESC?**

Throughout its ten years at Douglas Eyre, Clapham Ultimate took on approximately 50 new players, many of whom still play for the club, with three of them making up the current captaincy group. Douglas Eyre was the site of many early season trial sessions in which talented players from across London would take part in drills and training scrimmages to see if they could earn a spot on the squad.

**Of all your trophy successes which one gave you the most satisfaction?**

For four years the club was focused on the 2022 Club World Championships in Cincinnati, Ohio. Despite a Covid-induced hiatus, we managed to consistently train throughout the run-up to the event. Seventy-two of those training sessions were held at Douglas Eyre on Wednesday nights. The collective effort put into that championship cycle earned the club its first World Championship medal, coming third place and winning bronze. During its time at Douglas Eyre, the club also won ten National and seven European Championship gold medals.

**What are your lasting memories of training at DESC?**

Some of the club’s most intense and productive sessions were held at the ground, the 2010s wouldn’t have been such a winning decade for the club without our weeknight sessions.



# COPING THROUGH FOOTBALL

**Coping Through Football is a groundbreaking multi-agency project involving London Playing Fields Foundation, Leyton Orient Trust and North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), that provides six sessions per week for 50 weeks of the year at Fairlop Oak Playing Field and Douglas Eyre Sports Centre.**

The project uses football and the environment around it to engage with individuals who 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.

Over the last sixteen years two main impacts of the project have emerged. Firstly, the project has improved the lives of some of our most vulnerable individuals and frequently those at most risk. We have achieved this by supporting participants to actively adopt more positive coping strategies and to make improved lifestyle choices and by working with agencies to establish suicide prevention initiatives.

Secondly, given that roughly a third of adult attendees since 2007 have a diagnosis of schizophrenia and with the project assisting in the recovery of individuals discharged from acute services to stay well living in the community, we calculate that there is a significant cost benefit to NELFT services as the financial impact of acute care is high.

The project, which is underpinned by robust clinical governance and an agreed set of key performance indicators, also captures some wonderfully moving stories. We recently spoke to a mother of one of our youngest participants about the impact Coping Through Football has had on her son's life.



**I FEEL THEY WERE ABLE TO AID MY CHILD AT A TIME WHEN WE ALL FELT LIKE WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY FIGHT LEFT.**

Raequan's mother



Raequan — one of CTF's youngest participants

## RAEQUAN'S STORY

**Raequan was referred to Coping Through Football aged nine by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services as I had informed them he had no social inclusion with children his age and his mental health was severely deteriorating after he had been permanently excluded from the Pupil Referral Unit.**

He had been attending the PRU since the age of five and this was his third permanent exclusion. He could not cope in a mainstream setting and struggled with unexpected changes to his routine.

He had lost his trust in people of authority after a school accident aged five led to a severe break to his arm which required surgery. He had three failed attempts of reintegration back into three mainstream schools without any Special Educational Needs support and he quickly became isolated from society.

Coping Through Football was a catalyst of the beginning for him. Over time he built trust, understanding and solidified friendships with peers of all ages within the Coping Through Football community. He attends every week and you can see how much he has blossomed into the lovely, funny, kind and caring young child we all know and love today.

In March 2022 Raequan was accepted by a specialist school out of borough where he continues to make us as a family proud every day. He attends Powerleague each week with his school and is a solid part of the school football team and actually plays with the older children aged between 14-16 years old.

His teachers are extremely proud of him and concur that he is a leader within his environment who also recognises when to help others. He has gone on to win awards for fantastic behaviour, came home with several medals at sports day and is his school's People Ambassador.

I am thankful to Coping Through Football as I feel they were able to aid my child at a time when we all felt like we didn't have any fight left. My son eats, breathes and sleeps football and Coping Through Football has assisted him in making the right choices and improved his own mental health. My son felt discarded from society when he first joined Coping Through Football, however the project gave him a safe space to enjoy what he loves and for that I will forever be grateful.



# AROUND OUR GROUNDS IN 2023

## THE MILLER STONE ROOM

On a warm summer evening in May guests attended the formal unveiling of the Miller Stone Room at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre. The Foundation has named the pavilion’s classroom in memory of two former Trustees Jack Miller and Evan Stone QC who served the charity with such distinction over the past two decades.

It was a special evening, one which Jack and Evan would have loved, especially as the ground was full of activity with youth football on the 3G pitch, a school cricket match finishing on the playing fields, and the London Legal League hosting an end-of-season 8v8 tournament.

Alison Miller, Jack’s widow, said a few words at the short ceremony before guests were given a tour of the pavilion to view the new showers and LED lighting which had been installed thanks to generous legacies from Jack and Evan, ensuring that Douglas Eyre Sports Centre continues to provide for the local community for generations to come.



The Miller Stone Room



Water damage caused by the roof leaks

## LMPF GREENFORD NEW BOILERS AND ROOF REPAIRS

In line with the future proofing objective of the Three-Year Plan, the Foundation was able to replace the aged boiler and undertake repairs and insulation works to the roof. Funding for the boiler replacement came in the shape of a £45,000 grant from the London Marathon Foundation whilst the costs of roof works were covered by the sale of three signed footballs kindly donated by one of the Foundation’s supporters Martin Hughes.

## CRICKET AT FAIRLOP OAK AND LONDON MARATHON PLAYING FIELD REDBRIDGE

The summer of 2023 gave us a sensational Ashes watching England’s best players compete on iconic grounds such as Lord’s and The Oval, but they would have all started their association with cricket playing on a local field close to where they grew up.

The Foundation is proud to play an active part in this process and over the summer provided nine pitches at Peter May Sports Centre, Fairlop Oak and LMPF Redbridge for the Essex Metropolitan Cricket Board’s programme of midweek youth competitions for Under 11, 13 and 15 club sides. In the end, the Foundation hosted a staggering 154 midweek games and the big question is, how many of these players will go on to represent England in the next two decades?

We recently received the following message from Sue Blogg of the Essex Metropolitan Cricket Board regarding the Jeff Rodrigues Trophy Tournament for the under 13 category.

*‘Despite the best efforts of the British weather, the Jeff Rodrigues Trophy matches were completed with parents, umpires and players wrapped up in parkas and fleece blankets!’*

*The competition was dominated by Frenford B who went through all 10 matches unbeaten! Many congratulations to this young side and their manager who worked hard to maintain this impressive run of results. The runner-up spot kept everyone guessing until the last ball was bowled: several clubs were vying for second place which was finally claimed by Aztecs.*

*Again, congratulations to this club which only established their youth section in the last few years and proved that hard work and commitment really does pay off!*

*Many thanks to all the clubs, managers, parents and players who contributed to making the tournament so enjoyable. Lastly, Met Essex would like to thank the London Playing Fields Foundation for their continued support of our cricket events and for providing 5 pitches each week, enabling us to stage this very popular competition in such an engaging ‘festival’ style. Every year it demonstrates the breadth and depth of cricket in our area and helps to develop a strong sense of collective community among our clubs.’*



Cricket at Fairlop Oak



# LPFF IN 2023

## IN 2023 OUR GROUNDS WERE HOME TO:

- 640

Football teams
- 70

Cricket teams
- 25

Softball teams
- 14

School sports days
- 1

Rugby club
- 1

Gaelic football team
- 1

Weekly Parkrun



640 football teams play on our fields

Our grounds also provided space for:

368

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

161

adults and 61 young people to attend 291 Coping Through Football sessions

## ACTIVITY ON OUR FIELDS:



Softball at Douglas Eyre

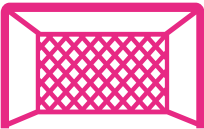
677

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



2,240

football matches were played on our grounds, an average of 118 matches per week.



564

youth football teams played 1,622 small-sided matches in the Selkent League at LMPF Greenwich during the football season.



62%

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



90

youth Gaelic Football players attend Boston Manor Playing Field each week.



154

Metropolitan Essex youth cricket matches took place across our North East London grounds.





# TRIBUTE TO LORD CADOGAN

(24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 1937 – 11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2023)



All those connected to London Playing Fields Foundation were desperately sad to hear of the passing of former Chairman Lord Cadogan on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2023 following a cardiac arrest aged 86. His contribution to the charity during his eighteen-year tenure as Chairman was incalculable.

Lord Cadogan joined the Foundation in 2001 and within a few months he was conducting a turf cutting ceremony at London Marathon Playing Fields Greenwich with one of our Vice Presidents Bob Wilson. The new accessible pavilion helped to safeguard the long-term future of this vulnerable ground and to transform it into the country’s first dedicated mini-soccer centre with a focus on girls’ development. Given that his first love was football, having been a distinguished centre back in his younger days, it was appropriate that this was one of his first official duties.

Via his exemplary leadership, the Foundation enjoyed the most successful and least turbulent period in its entire 133-year history and the charity greatly benefitted from his vast business, property and sporting expertise and experience.

Having his steady and wise hand at the helm made all the difference. From those openings of the new pavilions at Fairlop Oak Playing Field and London Marathon Playing Field Greenwich in the early 2000’s to the acquisition of London Marathon Playing Field Greenford in 2007 and the installation of the new 3G pitches at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre and Peter May Sports Centre in the following decade, his tenure presided over a period of significant modernisation of facilities.

Ground-breaking projects such as the All Nations Football Programme, Active Angels, Female Coach Development, Green Hearts and Coping Through Football demonstrated the huge social and health benefits of sport and have helped to cement the Foundation’s reputation as a forward thinking, innovative and compassionate organisation. The dozens of threatened playing fields that have been saved through our Fields at Risk Register have also added to our strategic value.



Lord Cadogan was simply a one-off, greatly loved and respected by his fellow Trustees and executive staff for his kindness, modesty and humility. His passion for sport and his understanding of how it could improve the lives of so many combined with his tremendous business acumen, drive and big picture vision made him the perfect Chairman.

Alex Welsh LPFF CEO

# TRIBUTE TO JOHN HOLLINS

(19<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 1946 – 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2023)



Coming just three days after the sad death of former LPFF Chairman Lord Cadogan, the passing of Vice President John Hollins was almost too painful to bear. Ironically both men were neighbours and had known each other since the early 1960’s in the days when John was establishing himself as one of Chelsea FC’s favourite sons and Lord Cadogan was a club director.

John had a stellar career making 592 appearances for Chelsea which included winning the League Cup, The FA Cup and the Cup Winners’ Cup.

He went on to play 151 matches for Queens Park Rangers and a further 127 games for Arsenal. In the Queen’s Birthday Honours list of 1982 John received an MBE for services to football.

From Chelsea captain John graduated to the manager’s role and for the next decade he enjoyed further managerial spells at Swansea City, Rochdale, Raith, Stockport, Crawley and Weymouth.



John was such a big supporter of the Society’s events and a great advocate for the Charity.

Alex Welsh LPFF CEO

## THANK YOU TO OUR TRUSTEES

### Dennis Hone

Trustees and staff alike were saddened when, due to personal reasons, Dennis decided to stand down as a Trustee with effect from December 2023. Having been CEO of the Olympic Delivery Authority and the London Legacy Development Agency, Dennis’s recruitment (via Sally Hopper’s introduction) as Honorary Treasurer in 2014 was a huge coup for the charity given his vast knowledge and experience.

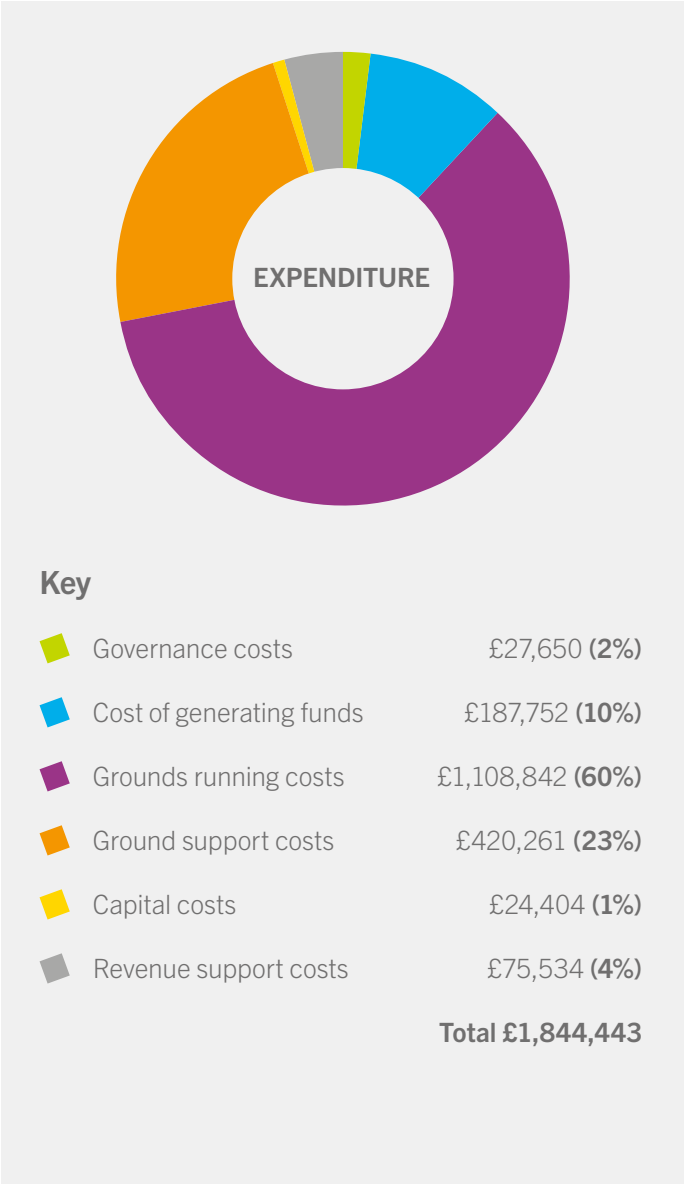
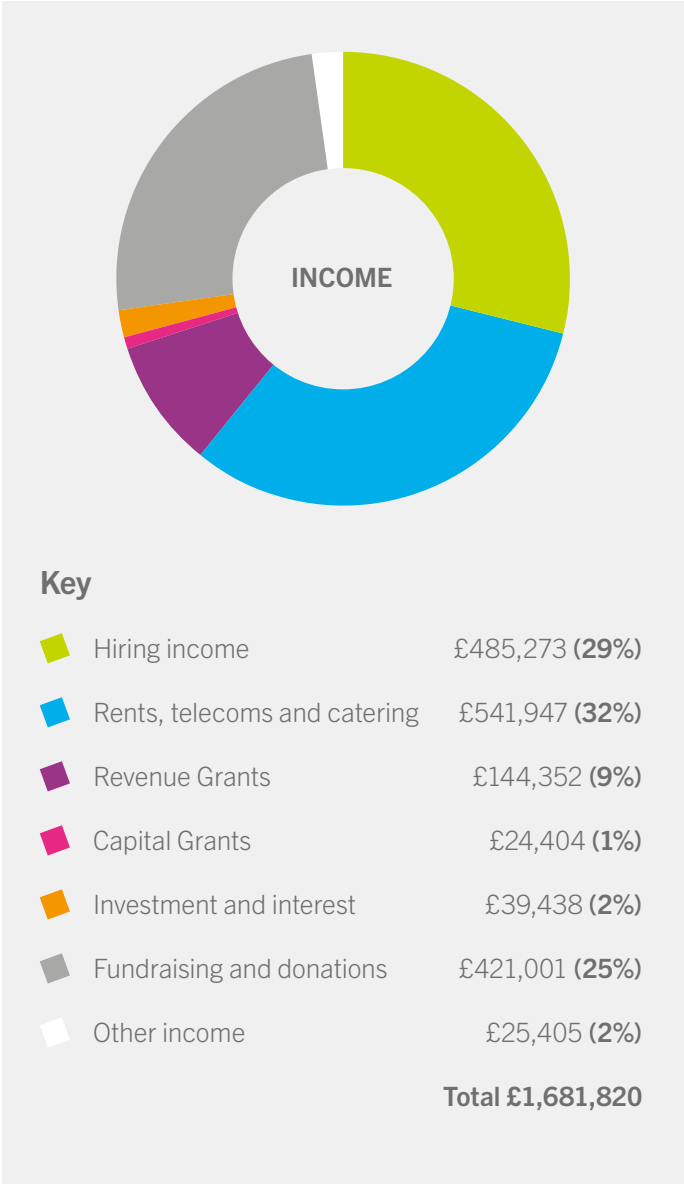
Having his steady and reassuring hand at the helm over the past nine years has been invaluable especially in 2020 when the pandemic hit causing unprecedented uncertainty. Dennis fitted perfectly into the existing culture of the LPFF Council. Unfailingly helpful, professional, collaborative and forward thinking, he chaired the F&GP Committee with sound judgment and a light touch.

### Cara Turtington

Introduced by former Trustee Gilbert Holbourn, Cara joined the Council in 2013. A partner at Shaffery Champness with vast knowledge and expertise in charity finance, Cara played an invaluable role in helping to keep the Foundation stable especially over the course of the pandemic. As a key member of the F&GP Committee, the Foundation was able to draw upon her wise counsel on countless occasions and especially at audit time! She leaves huge boots to fill.



# INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2023



# THANK YOU FUNDERS AND DONORS

- DONORS**

  - Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation
  - The Cadogan Charity
  - The Langton Trust
  - LB Waltham Forest

Thank you to all companies and individuals who donate to our Quiz and Gala Dinner events.
- VICE PRESIDENTS**

Maggie Alphonsi MBE  
Martin Bayfield  
The Lord Coe CH KBE  
Emma Hayes OBE  
Mike Gatting OBE  
Peter Nathan OBE DL  
Hope Powell CBE  
Micky Stewart OBE  
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**HONORARY PATRON**  
The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor of the City of London

**PRESIDENT**  
Baroness Hoey of Lylehill and Rathlin
- CHAIRMAN**  
The Hon William Cadogan

**HON TREASURER**  
Dennis Hone CBE (retired Dec 2023)

**TRUSTEES**  
Colin Ainger  
Jamie Dalrymple  
Sally Hopper  
Henrietta Martin-Fisher  
Lucy McCrickard  
Anthony Ratcliffe  
George Ryan (appointed June 2023)  
Cara Turlington (retired June 2023)  
Andy Sutch  
Andy Webb

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
Alex Welsh

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.  
These figures do not include depreciation or investment gains or losses. For a full set of Audited Accounts for 2023 please contact Head Office.



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