



**A  
PLACE  
TO PLAY  
SPORT  
FOREVER**



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# CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MESSAGE



Football at Peter May Sports Centre

Welcome to our Annual Review describing how we delivered our charitable objectives in a year when the Foundation reached its 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Staying faithful to our original protection pledge has not been too difficult as the existential threat to London's stock of playing fields has never gone away and in fact has probably increased in the last year. The Government's intention to reduce Sport England's statutory consultee role relating to planning applications on playing fields is an alarm call for all of us. That is why we stood shoulder to shoulder with Sport England whilst the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) conducted its consultation exercise. Whatever decision is made by the MHCLG, we envisage that the Foundation's protection role will become even more critical.

Over the years we have always been grateful for the expertise, professionalism and loyalty of our staff and in 2025 we celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Jo McKenzie the Foundation's superb Projects and Office Manager. Since her appointment in August 2000, Jo has played a pivotal role in delivering nine innovative projects, all aimed at addressing inequalities and creating more active communities. Without her understated excellence, especially in the field of monitoring and evaluation, none of these projects would have been possible. So, Jo congratulations on reaching this marvellous milestone and here's to many more years with the Foundation!

It is not very often that organisations like ours have a "fairy godmother" moment but that's what it felt like at the end of June when we were approached by Ignition Management to be the chosen charity for rock legends Oasis during their seven concerts at Wembley Stadium. Collaborating with Ignition Management on a 7 Shows, 7 Fields media campaign meant that our Instagram posts had over six million views and we were able to raise much needed funds from an Oasis ticket prize draw and a one of its kind Live Auction Prize for our Gala Dinner.

The thirteenth Gala Dinner since returning to The Savoy in 2011, was another success highlighted by the presence of our Patron HRH The Duke of Gloucester and the brilliant impressionist and comedian Rory Bremner who had the audience in stitches. Unfortunately, the LPFF Quiz scheduled for May had to be cancelled due to poor table sales. This setback highlighted the fragility in the current climate of event fundraising. That is why in our new Three-Year Plan there is a focus on creating new streams of earned income.

Towards the end of the year everyone connected with the Foundation was devastated by the passing of our much loved and respected Trustee Anthony Ratcliffe who had served the charity with such distinction since 2009. Anthony was everything you could wish for in a Trustee – wise, kind, totally committed and full of ideas on how the charity could flourish in a challenging environment.

Losing Anthony with such brutal suddenness makes us appreciate how fortunate we are to have such wonderful staff, Trustees and volunteers. We would like to use this occasion to publicly thank them for their outstanding expertise, dedication and commitment over the past year. Their contribution has been invaluable and will never be forgotten.

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 encouraging more people to play sport and be physically active on accessible, affordable and attractive playing fields. These fields are much more than just open space - they are places where lives can be 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 community groups. Underpinned by sports development principles, our goal is to create a sporting habit for life. Modernising, managing and maintaining these playing fields is costly, with only 43p recouped from hiring charges for every pound invested in pitch upkeep. We rely on generous support from donors, grants and fundraising income from a range of events to deliver our charitable objectives. 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 a means of creating happier, healthier and safer communities.

### OUR PROJECTS

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



Cricket at Peter May Sports Centre

### PLAYING FIELD PROTECTION

We are the first port of call from community groups worried about the loss of a local field. Our mantra is “no net loss” of pitches, and for that reason we oppose the Government's intention to reduce Sport England's statutory consultee's role and are prepared to step up to prevent the potential loss of these vital spaces. Our Playing Fields Charter for London is a call to action for all London boroughs and since 2000 we have saved over 20 sites from being lost for current and future generations.



Football at Peter May Sports Centre

# 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 own 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 capital.



# OASIS LIVE '25:

A summer that shone a light on London’s grassroots heroes



Summer 2025 will be remembered as one of the most remarkable moments in LPFF’s recent history – a season when the worlds of sport, music and community came together in spectacular fashion. As Oasis Live ’25 took over Wembley Stadium for seven sold-out nights, LPFF was proud to be chosen by Ignition Management as their charity partner for an unforgettable campaign: **7 Shows, 7 Fields.**

The collaboration gave the Foundation the opportunity to thank and recognise those wonderful schools, clubs, teams, volunteers and community groups whose passion keeps grassroots sport alive across London.

Each night highlighted a different LPFF site and the community project it supports. From the Girls’ Football Hub at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre, Coping Through Football at Fairlop Oak Playing Field, the Playing Fields Champions in Redbridge, the grassroots rugby community at West London RUFC

to the dedicated teachers of the Waltham Forest School Sports Network, the campaign showcased the breadth of activity taking place on our grounds.

It also allowed us to shine a light on our grounds staff for keeping pitches in top condition all year round. Thanks to Oasis, thousands of fans heard their stories for the first time.

The highlight of the campaign was a celebration of LPFF’s volunteers. Clubs at LPFF grounds were invited to nominate their unsung champions, recognising the individuals who go above and beyond to support players, families and communities. From these heartfelt submissions, two names were selected to attend Oasis’s sold out closing show as a reward for the enormous contribution they make.

### OASIS SUPPORT

Oasis’s beneficence did not stop with the 7 Shows, 7 Fields campaign. Throughout the summer, they helped the Foundation to raise vital funds by enabling a special prize draw for VIP concert tickets, donating a unique live auction prize for our Gala Dinner and releasing a bespoke Oasis x Lovers FC football shirt which sold out within minutes.

We are extremely grateful to Oasis and Ignition Management for their generosity, enthusiasm and belief in our mission. Their support has over the summer made a lasting difference to our work with those schools, clubs and communities whom we serve.

# VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR SPOTLIGHT

### TONI COAKLEY – Fisher Youth FC

Toni is the engine behind Fisher Youth FC. Officially the Club Secretary, she works far beyond her title, coordinating registrations for over 120 children, running the Under 6 soccer school, organising fixtures for 11 teams and managing pitch bookings and administration. Toni is also a vital link to the Selkent League, supporting League Secretary Sally Dolan and the wider grassroots football family.

Even more impressively, she does all this despite her own children no longer playing at the club. Toni has become the friendly, trusted face parents turn to for guidance, reassurance and support.

Her work ensures every child at Fisher can enjoy football in a safe, well run and welcoming environment. Her recognition as Volunteer of the Year is richly

*“Simply put, without Toni’s dedication, we wouldn’t have a club.”*

Tommy, Chairman of Fisher Youth FC



Ayaz Karim

### AYAZ KARIM – Neo Cricket Club

Ayaz has devoted more than 15 years to expanding access to cricket across East London. As Chairman of Neo Cricket Club, an ECB Level 2 coach and qualified umpire, he has helped grow the club from a single team into a thriving community of 11 teams.

His work with Chance to Shine, Capital Kids Cricket and local development programmes has created opportunities for hundreds of children from underrepresented backgrounds. Ayaz also fulfils leadership roles across local cricket leagues, helping shape fair, inclusive and supportive pathways for young players.

His commitment to community cohesion, youth development and grassroots cricket makes him an inspirational and worthy recipient of the award.

*“Volunteering has been at the heart of my life – it’s about giving back and creating opportunities.”*

Ayaz Karim



# DEFENDING LONDON'S PLAYING FIELDS: LPFF'S CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT SPORT ENGLAND'S STATUTORY ROLE

In 2025, London Playing Fields Foundation led one of its most important campaigns in recent years: opposing the Government's proposal to remove Sport England as a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing fields.

If implemented, this change could seriously weaken the checks and balances that currently protect vital places for community sport. Without these safeguards, the risk of losing pitches across London, and across the country, could rise dramatically, threatening the future of grassroots pitch sports.

### WHY LPFF OPPOSED THE PROPOSAL

LPFF strongly opposed the Government's proposal because removing or diluting Sport England's statutory role would expose playing fields to the irreversible losses suffered between 1979-1996 when 10,000 playing fields were lost to development. In their current role Sport England's

involvement is a proven safeguard. Between 2023 and 2024 Sport England's interventions helped save 1,038 playing fields from inappropriate development, with 94% of all concluded planning applications resulting in improved or safeguarded facilities.

Government claims that Sport England slows down or blocks development are not supported by the data. Sport England does not object in 70% of planning applications, and in two thirds of the cases where it initially raises concerns, objections are later withdrawn because better outcomes are negotiated. Moreover, it responds within 21 days in 98% of case, well within the required timeframe.

LPFF also challenged the idea that playing fields should be sacrificed to meet housing targets, highlighting the fact that there are sufficient brownfield sites across the country to build 1.4 million new homes, many with existing planning permission. The health, wellbeing and community value of playing fields is well evidenced, and once lost, they are lost forever.



Peter May Sports Centre

### HOW LPFF RESPONDED

LPFF mounted a coordinated, multi layered response to protect Sport England's statutory role. Key elements included:

- **Early awareness raising** through LPFF blog posts, leading to media attention including a TalkSport interview (30<sup>th</sup> March 2025) and a Guardian article (29<sup>th</sup> April 2025).
- **Launching the “Save Our Playing Fields” campaign**, featuring a dedicated webpage, digital strategy, guidance documents and a pre filled email template, resulting in around 60 consultation responses from clubs and partners.
- **Targeted media outreach**, including a social media deadline countdown and national press coverage, such as two articles in The i.
- **Parliamentary engagement**, with LPFF President Baroness Hoey submitting two House of Lords questions directly challenging the Government on the potential impact.
- **Delivering the “Save London's Playing Fields” advocacy week**, with daily themed content and endorsements from influential supporters including Hope Powell, Martin Bayfield, Christine Ohuruogu, Emma Hayes, Henry Winter and Bobby Seagull.

### THE IMPACT

This broad, sustained campaign raised awareness, mobilised London's sporting community and ensured that The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was presented with strong evidence of why Sport England's statutory role must remain in place. LPFF equipped stakeholders with clear, accessible guidance, empowering them to engage confidently and cogently in the formal consultation process. Media coverage, political advocacy and coordinated digital campaigning all reinforced a single message: playing fields are a vital part of the country's sporting infrastructure and we lose them at our peril.

### OUR COMMITMENT

LPFF remains steadfast in its mission to protect London's playing fields. As the Government considers its next steps, we will continue working with schools, clubs, partners and supporters to ensure that current and future generations have a place to play sport forever. Whatever decision is made by The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Foundation will be relentless in its drive to protect, promote and provide playing fields in London.



# 25 YEARS OF LMPF GREENWICH

The 2024-25 football season marked the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Foundation saving the Royal Naval College Sports Ground in Shooters Hill Road in Greenwich from commercial development in June 1999.

Up until that point this nine-acre site had been lying vacant and derelict with the grass at waist height. Thanks to a timely intervention by Sport England and the London Marathon Charitable Trust (LMCT), who provided the money, the freehold was purchased on behalf of LPFF. The ground was renamed London Marathon Playing Field Greenwich, the first of three endangered playing fields that LPFF would rescue in the next eight years.

With the mandatory introduction of mini-soccer for Under 10's due from September 1999, the Foundation set about establishing the country's first dedicated mini-soccer centre with ten small-sided pitches. Within three months the ground hosted its first mini-soccer festival for 1,500 boys and girls under the watchful eye of London Marathon Charitable Trust Chairman Sir James Swaffield. Four years later, following capital grants from the Football Foundation and LMCT, a new pavilion boasting a well-appointed teaching space designed with the training of new coaches and team managers in mind, was built.

Thanks to a partnership with the Bexley and District Junior Football League and from 2004 the SelKent League, London Marathon Playing Field Greenwich has played a huge role in introducing tens of thousands of youngsters to the beautiful game. We also provided a home for over 20 years for the marvellous South London Special League as well as a coach education venue for generations of coaches and team managers. The classroom also hosted a myriad of FA coaching courses and the SelKent League's own bespoke Team Managers course designed by LPFF.

The ground has also been a launchpad for two LPFF ground-breaking initiatives. First the girls mini-soccer project (2002-2007) and then a scheme for developing a women's coaching pathway known as Female Coach Development (2008-2011).

None of this would have been possible without the contribution of one of the country's true grassroots heroes who has been here from the beginning – Sally Dolan.

Nothing good in sport happens by accident and when you look back at the stunning success of this ground and the SelKent League it could not have been achieved without her vision, drive, integrity and compassion.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was celebrated on the Under 10's Cup Finals Day on 10th May 2025 attended by LPFF Projects Manager Jo McKenzie who said:

*“The ground comes alive on cup finals day, and it was a pleasure to see so many young players having so much fun and creating life-long memories.”*



“THE GROUND COMES ALIVE ON CUP FINALS DAY, AND IT WAS A PLEASURE TO SEE SO MANY YOUNG PLAYERS HAVING SO MUCH FUN AND CREATING LIFE-LONG MEMORIES.

Jo McKenzie – LPFF Projects Manager



# WELCOMING OUR NEW VICE PRESIDENTS:

Bobby Seagull MBE and  
Christine Ohuruogu MBE

In 2025 London Playing Fields Foundation proudly welcomed two exceptional figures as Vice Presidents: broadcaster and educator Bobby Seagull and Olympic and World 400m Champion Christine Ohuruogu MBE. Their achievements, passion for community engagement and appreciation of London’s playing fields make them powerful advocates in our drive to protect, promote and provide playing fields across the capital.



Bobby Seagull MBE



Christine Ohuruogu MBE

### BOBBY SEAGULL MBE

Broadcaster, author, mathematics teacher and huge West Ham fan, Bobby Seagull brings his passion for education, numeracy and community sport to his role as Vice President. Well -known for his BBC and Channel 4 programmes, the Maths Appeal podcast and his advocacy for National Numeracy, Bobby champions learning and opportunity for young people. A committed supporter of LPFF, most recently as keynote speaker at our 2024 Gala Dinner, he appreciates how well managed playing fields can build more confident and connected communities.

*“Growing up in London, my local playing fields were where my friendships flourished and confidence grew... I can’t wait to support LPFF’s fantastic work,”* he said.

CEO Alex Welsh added:  
*“Bobby’s energy and positivity make him a fantastic addition to our Vice Presidents.”*

The addition of Bobby Seagull and Christine Ohuruogu strengthens LPFF’s voice at a critical time for London’s playing fields. Their influence, commitment and personal connection to the capital’s playing fields helped to amplify our work throughout 2025 and beyond. We are delighted to welcome both as Vice Presidents and look forward to the impact they will make in championing access to sport and physical activity for all.

### CHRISTINE OHURUOGU MBE

Olympic gold medallist and double World 400m Champion Christine Ohuruogu began her athletics journey on the playing fields of Newham, making her appointment as Vice President especially meaningful. One of Britain’s most decorated athletes, Christine is also an author, dual London university graduate and founder of the running club Mind Your Strides. A long-standing LPFF supporter, she received the Made in London Award in 2017 for her contribution to sport.

*“Playing fields brought joy to my childhood and remain vital to my wellbeing today,”* Christine said.

Alex Welsh noted:  
*“Christine inspires young athletes everywhere, and we’re honoured to have her supporting our mission.”*

# IN MEMORY OF TRUSTEE ANTHONY RATCLIFFE

7<sup>th</sup> April 1947 – 29<sup>th</sup> October 2025



Anthony Ratcliffe, LPFF Trustee

In October 2025 we were deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Anthony Ratcliffe, a much-loved and highly respected Trustee who served the Foundation with distinction from 2009.

Anthony, who joined the Foundation in 2009, was everything you could wish for in a Trustee, wise, kind, totally committed and full of ideas on how the charity could flourish in a challenging environment. A member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the Property Sub-Group and the Gala Dinner Committee, Anthony didn’t do things by halves and was a real inspiration to his fellow Trustees and staff.

Having founded his own property investment company in Mayfair in 1970, Anthony had vast knowledge and experience and was the first port of call whenever the Foundation needed business or building advice on any of its grounds. Throughout his time as a Trustee his insight and big picture vision meant that the charity invariably made the correct decision. He was always supportive of staff and on those occasions when his guidance was sought, his response was never less than prompt and invariably bang on the money.

Anthony was also a networker par excellence. Indeed, it was his introduction to Nigel Goodman in 2010 that led to Nigel’s emergence as Chairman of the Gala Dinner Committee. Under the latter’s dynamic leadership, the Dinner went on to transform the Foundation’s fortunes by raising over £2million at a time when the sources of external funding were becoming scarcer.

On a personal level, Anthony was great company, humble, engaging, empathetic and infectious upbeat. As one of the senior statesmen on the Trustee board he always went out of his way to integrate newcomers, a quality which endeared him to everyone. He will be sorely missed.

*“Anthony’s contribution to the Foundation and its work was immeasurable. Putting his finely honed business acumen and his impeccable networking at our disposal he took the charity on to another level, for which we will always be grateful.”*

LPFF CEO Alex Welsh



# AROUND LPFF GROUNDS: A YEAR OF EXCEPTIONAL COMMUNITY SPORT



## Cricket Highlights

- 97% weekend occupancy across all grounds (up from 96% in 2024)
- 737 total matches played
- 582 adult games
- 155 youth club/school games
- 26 adult clubs using LPFF pitches during the 20-week season
- 138 junior league fixtures (U11, U13, U15) delivered midweek across nine pitches at Fairlop Oak Playing Field, LMPF Redbridge and Peter May Sports Centre



## Football Impact

- 12% increase in Grass pitch usage – from 62% to 74%
- 1,848 adult 11v11 matches played – an average of 66 games every weekend
- 1,631 small-sided matches (5v5, 7v7, 9v9) at LMPF Greenwich – averaging 58 games per weekend for 628 teams

Our two Artificial Turf Pitches prioritised adult football on Saturday afternoons to protect the 11v11 game



65% of all pitch usage is by youth teams or schools – reinforcing LPFF’s mission to give young Londoners access to safe, high-quality places to play.



## Schools & Youth Football

LPFF remains one of London’s most important supporters of schools football, hosting:

- 224 school matches at Douglas Eyre and Peter May Sports Centres
- 23 Hackney District fixtures at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre
- 8 Inner London County matches at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre
- 49 Havering & Newham District fixtures at Fairlop Oak Playing Field
- 18 Essex County fixtures at LMPF Redbridge
- 4 girls’ football festivals at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre
- 11 coach education courses at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre (Uefa C, Uefa B, FA Goalkeeping, Refereeing)



## Beyond Football & Cricket: A Home for Many Sports

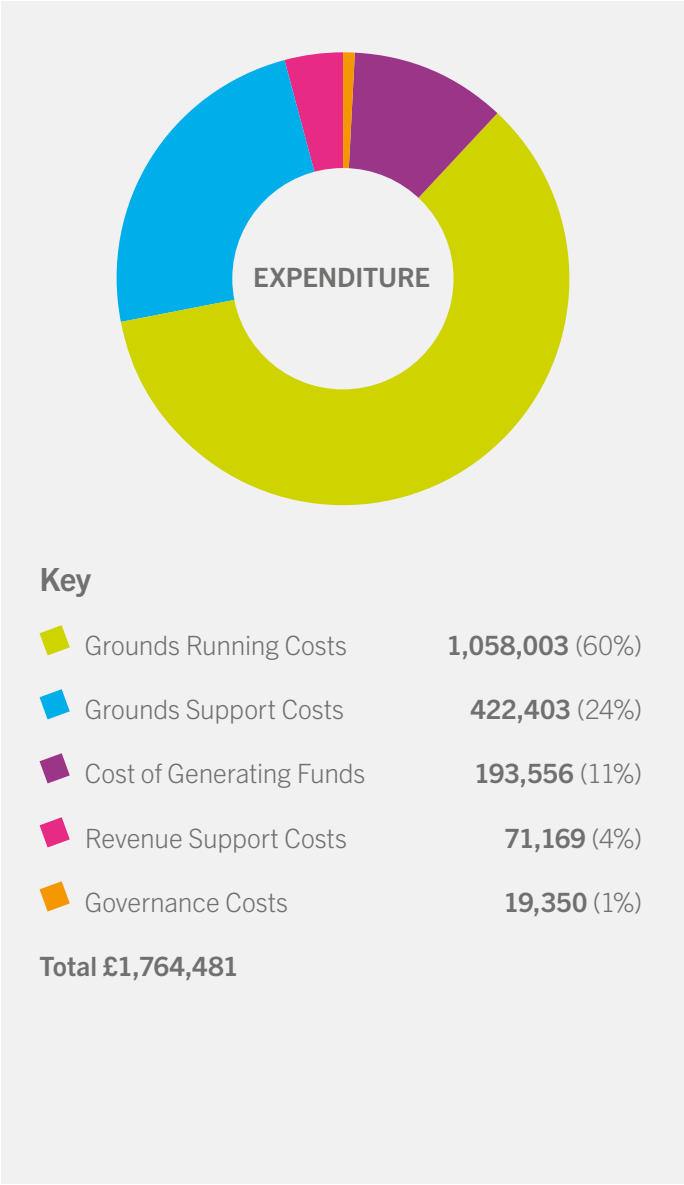
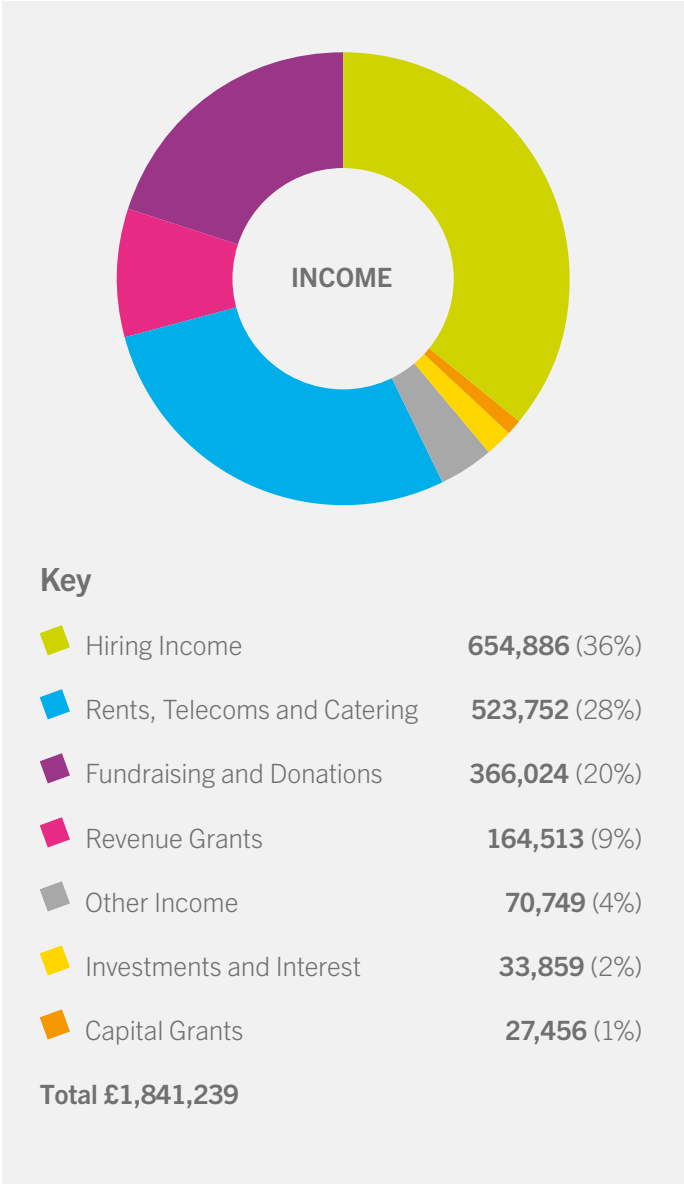
LPFF grounds supported a wide range of community sports and events:

- 12 rugby union matches (West London RUFC at LMPF Greenford)
- 14 softball fixtures at Boston Manor Playing Field
- 90 London Softball League games at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre
- 20 Gaelic football training sessions (St Joseph’s GAA at Boston Manor Playing Field)
- 10 school sports days across three sites at Peter May Sports Centre
- 1 Quidditch tournament at Peter May Sports Centre!





# INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2025



# THANK YOU FUNDERS AND DONORS

**DONORS**

- Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation
- The Cadogan Charity
- The Langton Trust
- LB Waltham Forest
- The Football Foundation
- London Marathon Foundation
- Sport England

Thank you to all companies and individuals who donated to our 7 Shows, 7Fields campaign 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  
Christine Ohuruogu MBE  
Hope Powell CBE  
Bobby Seagull MBE  
Micky Stewart OBE  
Bob Wilson OBE

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Lucy McCrickard  
Anthony Ratcliffe  
George Ryan  
Andy Sutch  
Andy Webb

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
Alex Welsh

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025. These figures do not include depreciation or investment gains or losses. Capital grants were used to purchase fixed assets which are included on the balance sheet and not as expenditure in the SOFA. For a full set of Audited Accounts for 2025 please contact Head Office.



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