



# CHELMSFORD HOCKEY CLUB

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021

This time last year I was reflecting upon a tempestuous year and looking forward to the resumption of “normal” hockey activities. Little did I know that twelve months later we would have experienced such a disrupted season and still be operating under COVID-19 restrictions. There are signs of a gradual return to normal, but we shall be feeling the effects of this global pandemic for some significant time.

The playing season was clearly something of a write-off, but those games that were played helped shape the positions of our teams in the new EHL league structure. England Hockey have been working on a new administrative and playing structure for our game for some time and, despite the impact of COVID-19, the EH AGM voted by a landslide to proceed with the restructuring plans for the 2021/22 season. This restructuring is well documented on the EH and East websites but, in broad terms, it involves expanding the number of administrative regions from five to eight, streamlining the administration by largely removing the County organisations from the structure, with the notable exception of junior development, and creating a true league competition pyramid structure from the bottom to the top.

What it means for Chelmsford HC is that our women's teams no longer compete in the Essex League, and most of our teams' league matches fall under the jurisdiction of the new East League. The exceptions are the Women's 1<sup>st</sup> XI, who will compete in one of four EHL Conference divisions, and our two men's Veterans teams who will continue to participate in the London League competition. Although the East League is a regional league, travel should be less onerous because the area covered is much smaller than the previous administration, with most of the clubs inside the M25 area, Lincolnshire and all clubs in Kent moving to new regions. At the lower league levels (South-east division) the participating clubs are almost exclusively located in Essex. For next season our teams will compete in the following divisions:

Team	Men	Women
1 <sup>st</sup> XI	East League Premier Division	EHL East Conference Division
2 <sup>nd</sup> XI	East League Division 1 South	East League Division 1 South
3 <sup>rd</sup> XI	East League Division 2 South-east	East League Division 2 South-east
4 <sup>th</sup> XI	East League Division 4 South-east	East League Division 3 South-east
5 <sup>th</sup> XI	East League Division 5 South-east	East League Division 4 South-east
6 <sup>th</sup> XI	East League Division 5 South-east	East League Division 4 South-east
7 <sup>th</sup> XI	East League Division 6 South-east	East League Division 6 South-east
8 <sup>th</sup> XI	n/a	East League Division 6 South-east

Since the end of the last lockdown in March, we have been able to resume training and “local” hockey matches. This has allowed us to extend the Junior training sessions to the end of the school summer term, run Hockey Heroes sessions, commence summer leagues and other ad hoc activities such as the tremendously successful mixed tournament so ably organised by Sam Prebble.

With very little hockey activity, and no social activity, both the Sports Club and CHC have taken the opportunity to work on facilities projects. The clubhouse toilets have been completely renovated and the clubhouse itself has been replastered and decorated. The hope is that this will make it a more attractive venue for socialising and more welcoming for visitors.

As far as the hockey facilities go, Tom Pegrum has thrown himself enthusiastically into a number of projects of various sizes. Many of you will have seen the smart new scoreboard in operation during the recent mixed tournament and also noticed the mess on the tarmac! The two stands have been centralised to provide better match viewing, and the tea hut, which was in a rotten state, is being enlarged and rebuilt. Inside, the changing and meeting facilities have been replastered and are currently being redecorated for the start of the season.

There will be a few role changes this season but not as many as usual. With an abbreviated season behind us, it appears that an unexpected, but most welcome effect of COVID-19, is that many volunteers feel they haven't had a fair crack of the whip yet and are looking to stand for reelection. Whether you are standing down, continuing for another season or taking on a new role, thank you to all our volunteers and well done for contributing to the running of our club.

You can see the details for yourself on the list of officers presented to the AGM so I shan't mention everybody. However, I shall single out two. Karen Gibson has been our Treasurer for the past four years and has decided to step down this year due to work commitments. As well as being an influential member of the Management Committee Karen has managed our club finances with great dedication and also dragged us into the twenty-first century with the introduction of mobile card readers for the collection of match fees. David Ireland will also be stepping down as Chair of our Junior Committee for similar reasons to Karen. David has been in the role for two years but previously served as Junior Secretary. During David's tenure we have seen Junior membership figures soar. Both Karen and David will be missed on the committee, but we welcome their proposed replacements, Adam “Emu” Hunter and Sally Dalton, who will both be familiar to most of you.

Although most of our positions should be filled at the AGM, there are still some vacancies. The most pressing of these are probably the Club Umpire Secretary and Umpires Liaison Officer roles. If you think you could help with these, any other vacant positions or any ad hoc tasks that arise, please contact one of the Management Committee. We would be particularly pleased to hear from any female members to ensure appropriate representation for all members. Our current committee is male dominated for no other reason than they are the ones who have volunteered!

Finally, my personal thanks to all the Management Committee members and to the Chelmer Park ground staff - Martin, Shane and Alan - who, as well as discharging their statutory duties, are always willing to help. We do appreciate your efforts.