



CHELMSFORD HOCKEY CLUB

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023

Prone as I am to verbosity, I've decided to follow the example of Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway and make a conscious effort to be as concise as possible with this year's report. I bet that's two names you didn't expect to see in a report this year!

On the pitch

On the pitch, it was the Ladies' 6th XI who stole the show with such a display of dominance that they won their league while dropping just two points all season. Congratulations too to the Ladies' 5th XI, who gained promotion for the second consecutive season, and to the Men's 1st XI, whose second-place finish was both an improvement on last season and their highest league placing since dropping out of the EHL.

While most of our teams look likely to remain in their respective divisions for next season, subject to any major league restructuring, the Ladies 1st XI finally lost their struggle to cling on to EHL status, and the Men's 7th XI, after finishing third from bottom, face a nervous wait to see if restructuring relegates them.

On a more positive note, I'm delighted to report the appointment of former GB and England player, not to mention former Ladies' 1st XI coach and current Under-10 girls' coach, Glenn Kirkham, as the new Ladies' 1st XI coach for next season. We have also decided to enter a Men's 8th XI for the new season, though finding a captain and other adults willing to play in a young team must be addressed.

Our Junior Section continues to thrive. The full details are covered in Sally Dalton's Junior report but participation levels of circa four hundred are twice what they were ten years ago. As well as numbers, the quality is also high, with many juniors successfully transitioning to the senior club teams and junior teams and individuals enjoying success and recognition locally and regionally.

Off the pitch

Several social events, including the Whisky Tasting, Quiz Night, Gin & Cocktail Night, Men's Dinner, Ladies' Night and Golf Day, were organised and, while attendance levels were mixed, enjoyed by those who did attend. Well done to all the organisers. In this, our 125th year, we look forward to the Anniversary Ball in November and other events.

Special mention too to Sam Prebble for organising another successful end-of-season Mixed Tournament culminating in a keenly contested final on a very enjoyable Club Day. The popularity of this event suggests it will be a permanent feature in the calendar for some years to come.

On the facilities front we have continued to catch up with maintenance by completing decoration of changing rooms 5 and 6, servicing the heating and water boilers, upgrading the intruder alarm, replacing obsolete smoke and heat detectors and failed emergency light batteries. While, on the pitch, we have serviced the floodlights, replaced forty rotten perimeter fence boards and twelve damaged fence panels behind each goal.

Major facilities projects in the pipeline for this year include plumbing remediation work for legionella management, a new pitch-side kit storage facility, LED floodlighting upgrade and stand flooring replacement.

Challenges

As always, our activities are affected by several challenges, both social and hockey related, including player regularity/availability, cost of living/energy crisis, pitch invaders, bedding in of the EH league structure and GMS. While they all pose a different challenge, the one thing that causes the most frustration amongst management committee members and other volunteers is the antisocial behaviour of some of our own members. This season we have had to contend with:

- Kit going missing from the building and pitch-side storage;
- Changing rooms being left unlocked and unalarmed, with the last team captain to use them even refusing to return to secure them;
- Building lights left on;
- Taps left running;
- Pitch floodlights left on;
- Unnecessary and unauthorised use of full power (500 lux) floodlights;
- Litter left on pitch;



CHELMSFORD HOCKEY CLUB

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023

-
- Goals and ropes being left out of position, so the next user is forced to move them;
 - Pitchside Café items taken without payment; and
 - Keys going missing.

It really is quite depressing to think that I feel it necessary to mention this in my report, but unless we confront it then attitudes will not change. Please do everything you can to ensure that all members respect your/their club and its property.

Other highlights

- We were once again awarded England Hockey's Club Mark accreditation to certify that we are systematically meeting EH's minimum operating standard with appropriate risk assessments, policies and procedures in place. Thanks to Sally Dalton and Kath Macdonald for their work in achieving this.
- Sally Dalton has now set her sights on achieving England Hockey's new Talent Centre accreditation which, if successful, will evidence that we provide high quality provision for players at early talent development level.
- Former 1st XI coaches, Craig Fulton and Dave Passmore, were appointed Head Coach of the India men's team and USA women's team respectively. Both visited Lea Valley with their teams for Pro League fixtures this month where some of us were able to catch up with them in person.
- The Pitchside Café/Tea Hut continues to generate significant new revenue, especially now that we have an alcohol licence (some now refer to it as the Beer Hut). The profit generated to date has now covered the 2021 cost of the build, so it looks a wise investment. We are indebted to Adrian "Tufty" Tuff for his diligent management of the facility.

Vacant roles

There are still a number of vacancies next season. While all contribute to the smooth running of the club, there are four that are a priority to fill:

- Fixture Secretary
- Club Umpires Secretary / Umpires Liaison Officer
- Kit Manager
- Bar Secretary

We can provide more details on any of these roles. Please ask for further information if you think you could help. If we fail to fill these roles, there is a very real risk that your hockey will be impacted. Please don't assume someone else will volunteer!

And finally...

Sadly, we lost four Vice-presidents this year. Ken Carr, Dennis Cracknell, Alan Harrington and Peter Woodward all made a significant contribution to the club at various times, and they will all be missed. We should also not forget Jane Ardener, a more recent club member, who finally lost her long battle against illness.

I must record the club's thanks to the Chelmer Park ground staff, Martin, Shane, Terry and Alan, who are never anything but helpful and supportive of our activities. My personal thanks too to all volunteers, but particularly the Management Committee members. You all perform your duties, and more, in the best interests of the club and its members with little recognition, while tolerating my occasional rants and forthright opinions. Thank you for doing it all with such good humour!

To conclude, we continue to develop as a club and enjoy success. We're not perfect but we are moving in the right direction thanks to the hard work of a minority of committed club members and despite significant challenges. I'm proud to be a member of such a club and I know many others are too. I'm also proud to contribute to our achievements. After reading through this report, I'm genuinely surprised by how much we've done and how much we plan to do. If I hear complaints around the club, it is generally from those who contribute little or nothing to the running of the club. If there's something you don't like or think could be improved then step up and do something about it.

David Kitchiner
June 2023