



Appendix A

Annual Report to Dartford Borough Council Scrutiny Committee

13th September 2022

Background

Dartford Cricket Club can trace its origins back to 1727 making Dartford one of the oldest towns in the United Kingdom that is associated with the game of cricket in the World.

Dartford Cricket Club has been playing and promoting the game of cricket in our local community from the ground at Hesketh Park since 1904.

In 1977, Dartford Cricket Club celebrated its 250 year anniversary with a week-long Festival of activities.

In 2016, Dartford Cricket Club reshaped its constitution to become a private members, not for profit Community Amateur Sports Club (a "CASC"). This coincided with the development of a new build pavilion at Hesketh Park that was substantially funded and supported by Dartford Borough Council.

In 2017, Dartford Borough Council (as (i) Trustee of The Hesketh Park Charity; and (ii) as Landlord of owned land) and Dartford Cricket Club entered into a twenty-five year maintenance and repair lease of the facility at Hesketh Park that attracts annual lease rental payments at commercial rates that are linked to annual inflation uplifts.

The Covid pandemic has negatively impacted the quality and appearance of Hesketh Park playing area due to extreme overuse by the general public that took place at that time when indoor sporting venues were closed. Dog walking activity increased exponentially during that time and has continued. The same is true for unaffiliated organised football training and certain physical health outdoor training sessions.

Currently Dartford Cricket Club has over two hundred active members comprising approximately forty-five life members and vice presidents; fifty two adult playing members; over eighty junior members (boys and girls cricket aged between five and seventeen years) and over twenty-five social members. There is a strong ethnic representation (particularly Asian black) within the membership in keeping with the dynamics of the local population. There is, however, very little interest in cricket participation from the local African black origin of our local community.

Dartford Cricket Club Limited is affiliated to the England and Wales Cricket Board ("ECB") and is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority under the Co-Operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.



Recap on activities of note during the last twelve months

- St John's Ambulance – location of choice for various activities in the provision of workplace training with increasing focus on mental health champions and cardiac emergency support.
- SLGR – weekly location for a local running club charity for their community runs; fund raising days; committee meetings etc.,
- SEEDS – facility provision for yoga during the winter and as a weekend base for long ride for a local cycling club.
- Location venue for Kent County Council “Safe Hands” welfare courses.
- Weekly yoga classes arranged for group of twelve local members of the community.
- Frequent hosting of meetings for the local Beaver Scouts group.
- Full week of a local schools Kwik Cricket tournament arranged for children under the age of ten.
- Two charity fund raising activities organised by Orchard Garage and the Fun Friends Group. Combined total amount raised exceeded £5,000.
- Location venue for Bexley and Sidcup Charter annual dinner.
- Location venue charity cricket match for C.R.Y (Cardiac Risk in the Young).
- Joined forces with Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust and Dartford Borough Council to host a memorial cricket match in honour of the late Dr Tariq Shafi, a consultant haematologist who contracted and died of Covid in May 2020. The event raised in excess of £1,000 for Valley Hospital Charity.
- *EDI generally* – venue provision for a range of multi-cultural ethnic; same sex and gender neutral gatherings alongside regular venue hiring for weddings; birthday occasions; wakes and local community recognition presentations.

Areas of Continuing Concern

- Notable increase in anti-social behaviour in and around the main pavilion.
- Clear evidence of drug related activity in the car park during day time as well as evening - reported March 2022.
- Suspicious behaviour in Hesketh Park after gates are locked – particularly adult men drinking and drug taking.
- Regular incident reporting into Kent Police and Dartford Borough Council.
- CCTV became inactive and in need of replacement in March 2022. First initial awareness contact with PCSO in November 2021 and subsequent meetings/requests with Dartford Borough Council since April 2022 but no decision on funding replacement forthcoming.
- Hoax acid attack – May 2022
- Pallets moved and memorial benches destroyed in random attacks.



ESTABLISHED 1727

DARTFORD CRICKET CLUB

- The following are just some of the examples of unauthorised and inappropriate use by locals on the cricket ground square and outfield. *Note: Dartford Borough Council reacts quickly in all cases:*
 - I. Personal trainer seen (captured on Instagram video promotion) using the cricket sightscreens as resistance training – July 2022.
 - II. Large football coaching (approximately 17 teenagers and adults) for an unidentified football club.
 - III. Certain dog walkers that needed to use the cricket square to exercise their dogs “because their paws could not cope with the dry ground” despite the area being roped off – July and August 2022.
 - IV. Remote controlled drone aircraft activity flown from the cricket outfield – August 2022
 - V. Dirt bike being driven by a child under ten years of age accompanied by parental guardian – August 2022.

Harry Bright

Chairman and Director.