



SWINTON LIONS' COMMUNITY SPORTS FOUNDATION

Annual report 2023-24

Damian Ridpath | Director of Development | Board of Trustees



Introduction

Welcome to the Swinton Lions Community Sports Foundation annual report for 2023. It has been a ground breaking year for the foundation with a record number of projects delivered and a record number of participants engaged. The foundation's strapline is Providing people with Hope, Aspiration, Chance and Choice and throughout 2023 we have provided a platform to enable all participants to achieve at least one of those key objectives. Before you continue reading about our fantastic year, please note the following statistics.

- 95% of the participants in our projects are resident in areas of IMD 1 and 2 across Greater Manchester.
- Over 55% of our participants were representatives of BAME Communities.
- 50% of our participants were Women and Girls.
- 28% of our participants were recorded as having a disability.
- No participants were asked for a fee or charged to take part in any of the projects, all projects were funded by donations, external funding or by the Swinton Lions RLFC board.
- 6545 individual participants in 20 projects (24% increase) Record for the foundation 3 years running.
- 31,254 visits to projects (33% increase) Record for the foundation 3 years running.

STATEMENT FROM CHAIR OF TRUSTEES - John Hesketh

Lions Community Sports Foundation is driven by a Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers united in common purposes: to lift eyes and spirits; grow hope, self-belief, motivation and resilience; educate and upskill for life, work and leisure; increase and diversify participation in sport and physical activity; and improve health, wellbeing and connectivity across the communities of interest, place and social identity with which we work in Salford, Manchester, Trafford and Bolton.

As our director's report for 2023/24 reflects, we connect with and positively impact the lives of people of different age, faith, gender, race, sexual orientation and ability/disability, living in varying degrees of financial hardship and independence. Over this last 12 months we have uplifted more than 6,500 people and cultivated feel good factor, determination towards self-improvement and community development, new community spirit and social capital in many different ways.

We have:



- Established an under 18s Talent Pathway.
- Grown the participation of girls and young women in rugby league through the innovative Rugbees programme.
- Sustained a Lionesses team in the rugby league championship and established a new cohort of role models for local girls and young women, stirring aspirations with and breaking through multiple and complex issues (many living in poverty, experiencing cold, hunger, emotional neglect and more at home, and being without any strong sense of purpose or positive possibility in complex situations where caring responsibilities, debt, domestic abuse, crime, addiction and prevailing, multi-generational cynicism towards the system can all be evident).
- Provided bespoke information, advice, guidance and advocacy support to minimise reasons for drop-out and sustain positive momentum in both development of the women's game and wider social regeneration.
- Successfully engaged Black, Asian and ethnic minority young people with rugby league – giving them opportunity of building physical strength, friendship and transferable skills for life: communication, teamwork, problem-solving capacity, conflict resolution, positive relationship management and appreciation of the value in social diversity, healthy living, self-care and cross-cultural peer support among others.
- Enabled learning disabled young people's participation in rugby league.
- Engaged Deaf young players for the first time.
- Enriched school, college and community-based learning through inputs on nutrition, healthy living, and life skills – focus and self-control, perspective-taking, connection-making, critical-thinking, challenge-taking, self-directed and engaged learning among others.
- Delivered a youth violence prevention programme.
- Offered strength and conditioning and work experience placements to young people across our foundation and the professional Swinton Lions Rugby League Club to which we are linked; helping ambitious MSc students prepare the way for prosperous careers.



- Extended advice and guidance, and arranged Coach to Coach skill-sharing opportunities through our local community clubs' network and farther afield in Devon, Ireland and Nigeria
- Facilitated inter-generational learning around community safety.
- Engaged over 50s with a community gym programme, building their strength, fitness and confidence, reducing the likelihood of falls and mobility difficulties later in life.
- ... and this just scratches the surface.

It is well worth your reading on for more insight!

All at the Foundation are very proud of what we have achieved, but so that we can go on building and becoming stronger we have set about diversifying the skills, knowledge and lived experience represented on our Board; strengthening present policies, procedures and performance management methods and adding new ones; framing Trustee, staff and volunteer training plans; brokering new partnerships; pooling community needs data – quantitative and qualitative – to inform our planning for impactful delivery, and composition of compelling cases for grant funding, corporate and private donor support so that we can go on reaching further and building on our impact. The Community Foundations Forum that the Rugby Football League convene provides further benchmarking and learning exchange opportunities, but we are proactive in seeking regular feedback from commissioners, funders, partners, stakeholders and direct beneficiaries because we are all driven to make the Foundation the best version of itself that it can be – and we also have our eyes on the Trusted Charity Mark as a means of improving practice still further through independent scrutiny and challenge, building our grant and commission readiness to the best possible point.

Swinton Lions Community Sports Foundation is a very special organisation led by highly knowledgeable, skilled and professional people vocationally driven to improve life experiences and communities – but also filled with humility, sharing strong self-awareness, commitment to critical self-assessment and the proactive invitation of others' observations and guidance as we push forward and strive to be better.



In 2024/25, we expect to see our new Wheelchair Rugby League team come to be; we're hopeful that we can bring the rich heritage of the Swinton Lions Rugby League Club to life; and we have many exciting ideas in our pipeline – all responsive to niche need within the parameters set by our charitable objectives, and all – hopefully – set to find increased exposure through the website development and social media works we want to drive forward with new, in-kind supporters' help.

Anyone interested in learning more about our work and opportunities to get involved through partnership, sponsorship, community/employee volunteering or whatever it might be should get in touch. You will be ensured of a warm welcome and plentiful scope to help push our Foundation forward.

STATEMENT FROM DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT - Damian Ridpath

2023 was a fantastic year for the Swinton Lions Community Sports Foundation. We exceeded all expectations in our set targets for engagement, numbers of visits and retention of participants. Our delivery is fully inclusive, and our staff and volunteers find a way to make sure everyone has an enjoyable experience, whether that is a 7-year-old child or a 77-year-old pensioner.

It has been a pleasure to lead the foundation since 2020, which has been no easy task, navigating the waters in post-covid has been among one of the hardest challenges I have undertaken in my 30 years plus in the Sport for Development Sector, combined with the cost of living crisis we are currently in, it is safe to say that we are in unprecedented times and very much an era of moving landscapes and a consistent uncertainty across all sectors.

With all this, to factor in achieving what we have in 2023 with an extremely modest budget is nothing short of miraculous and if ever an organisation made every penny count, then Swinton Lions Community Sports Foundation is a prime example.

We have managed to grow when others have retracted. Our relationship with Swinton Lions RLFC is simply fantastic and in my opinion market leading, we work symbiotically to achieve a common goal and assist each other daily, which in other similar organisations doesn't happen. In terms of governance both parties have a representative on each other's boards and at the highest level provide support for each other.

Please enjoy reading about our journey and the projects we deliver that are far wider ranging than the sport of Rugby League, the greatest team sport in the world.

School Celebration Assembly @ Godfrey Ermen Primary School with Damian and Darna.



Mission Statement

To provide hope, aspiration, chance and choice for ALL.

OVERVIEW

All our staff have undertaken a significant level of CPD and are of the highest quality. Our team of 2 full-time staff, 3 part-time and 10 casual coaches plus over 25 volunteers are all working together in the same direction. One of our key areas is to ensure that all staff are trained in the Theory of Behaviour Change Model, which has been a significant reason for the success of our projects.



Our Projects in 2023

The Swinton Lions Community Sports Foundation has 8 main key areas that we provide services and opportunity for engagement; these are the following.

- Women and Girls
- Inclusion
- Disability
- Community Safety
- Elite Performance Pathway
- Education
- Community Sport Development
- Community Gym



Women and Girls Projects.

Swinton Lionesses

The Swinton Lionesses team was developed and is supported directly through the Swinton Lions Community Sports Foundation. Launched just before the first Covid lock down in March 2020 on international women's day, the team to date has been extremely successful and in 2023 finished a creditable 8th place in the RFL Women's Championship in their first season at that level after winning promotion to from League 1 the previous season.

The team completed 18 fixtures throughout the year and due to our strong inclusion policy throughout the club 41 players represented the team in match day action, the team also grew strong links with Ashton Bears, and we provided playing opportunities for squad players at Ashton to ensure all players at ample gameday action.

In addition, for 5 of our younger players the club provided a dual registration system with Wigan Warriors Women's Super League under 19s to help develop their individual talent.



One player Mia Atherton was selected to play for England Community Lions and featured in games against Wales and went on the end of season tour to Serbia, where she was voted player of the tour. (featured far right)

Rugbees

Rugbees is a National Program designed by the RFL post the Rugby League World Cup 2021 to encourage and engage girls ages 7-11 to become involved and choose Rugby League as sport. We delivered the project in 3 areas of Greater Manchester within 2023, Bolton, Manchester and Eccles. In total over 75 girls took part in the 20-week program with Swinton Lions Community Sports Foundation recording amongst the highest numbers for this initiative in England. The most successful program took place on a Saturday morning in Gorton, East Manchester.

Inclusion.

Jose Kenga Diversity and Inclusion Project

The Jose Kenga Diversity and Inclusion Project has been successfully delivered since 2021. The project is named after a former Swinton player who was racially abused in 2019 by a chair of a fellow professional club. The project offers a six-week bespoke offer which was designed by Damian Ridpath our Director of Development and combines a rugby league activity program with a workshop that discusses a range of social issues such as racism, sectarianism, inclusion and diversity. Over 600 young people took part in the project across Greater Manchester in 2023 and since its inception over 1500 young people have taken part between the ages of 7-16. This project is delivered both in community and educational settings.



TRYZ

Tryz is a pan-disability program that offers Rugby Activity that covers a wide spectrum of disabilities within one session. In what is an extremely challenging area of work but the most rewarding. Delivered with support initially from specialist disability charity Access Sport we provided community activity linked to 4 specialist needs education centres (SEND) across Greater Manchester and provided activity for over one hundred young people with disabilities in a six-week delivery.

In addition to TRYZ we also supported a pan-disability multi-sport festival with over 100 participants taking part at the Manchester Regional Arena.





DEAF RL

The foundation also provided Deaf Rugby League as part of a multi-sport day also at the Manchester Regional Arena with over 100 participants taking part in the day.

Community Safety

Salford Healthy Schools Project

The Salford Healthy School project was delivered in 3 centres, one in Langworthy and 2 in Eccles throughout 2023. Delivered in both educational and community settings over 500 young people took part in the project delivered in 8- week blocks to each cohort of young people. The project focused on rugby league activity, multi-sport and dance, whilst educating young people about healthy lifestyles, nutrition and also in the latter part of the year September onwards has focused on developing appropriate interventions for young people (y5-y6) who were affected greatly by the Covid lockdowns and ensuring they can build a range of skills to take them forward in life. The project was funded by Salford CVS and NHS.

GM Anti-Youth Violence project

This project again was delivered across the full year and funded by GM Anti-Youth Violence team. The project was multi-layered and linked both the Foundation and professional club. We launched the program with the Lions first home game of the season v Newcastle Thunder in February a designated Anti-Hate Crime match and followed with delivering the project across Greater Manchester using RL activity to engage targeted young people to begin their journey of youth violence prevention. Over 600 young people took part in the 6-week delivery programme.





Lions Talent Pathway

The Lions Talent Pathway provides opportunities for players boys and girls aged 12-18 to engage in an enhanced training and game opportunity with different players from across the Northwest and Wider areas. Our program is open access and provides monthly sessions for all the age groups. This program also links with a National RL program with clubs having to obtain accreditation to deliver the program which also includes community coach development. Over 130 players have taken part within this program in 2023. 5 of the players who attended this program in 2023 gained international recognition with selection for England Community Lions and Ireland respectively.



As a pilot study in partnership with the RFL Swinton Lions launched an under 18s LTP program the first of its kind within Rugby League. The project was a great success with 34 participants attending the 6-month program and concluding with a match day experience. A full case study was provided to the RFL who in 2024 will begin to roll out a wider under 18s program with its member clubs.



Swinton Lions Under 18s LTP v Leigh Leopards December 16th, 2023.



Lions Pride Celebration Assemblies.

As part of our commitment to local communities and to showcase the young people whom we work with we delivered over 20 Lions Pride Celebration Assemblies across schools in Greater Manchester, at these assemblies which are very inactive and fun based we present young people with medals and certificates for their achievements within any of our projects. We have also enabled every child to have access to a free Swinton Lions season ticket on application. Over 1000 children have attended this assemblies in 2023.

Inspired by 9s.

Inspired by 9s is a Rugby League initiative developed by the RFL young people in school years 7 and 8 children to engage in Rugby League for the first time and specifically targeted at areas and schools that may not traditionally play Rugby League. Swinton Lions CSF were the only foundation in England to deliver this project in more than one local authority area with us delivering in both the Borough of Trafford and City of Manchester. In 2023, across the two boroughs 200 new players were introduced to rugby league, with the winning school teams attending a National Finals Day in Warrington



Manchester Metropolitan University

In 2023 we have delivered Rugby League at Manchester Met University, delivering training sessions and managing the team through our Community Development Manager, Mark Robinson. Over 30 players have engaged in the program, and we will be looking to expand this delivery in 2024.

Intern Placements



We facilitate internship opportunities for students and in 2023 we linked a student who was doing a MSC in Strength and Conditioning at Bolton University with our Lionesses team. After completing his course and the season with the Lionesses Paul was able to secure full-time employment in the sports industry. We were proud to support Paul on his journey.

Community Sport Development

Community Forums And Workshops

We facilitate quarterly support forums for community coaches from the Greater Manchester and our wider club support areas which include Devon Sharks, Belfast Eagles, Longhorns in Ireland and Kano Lions in Nigeria. In addition, we provide as much CPD as we can for our staff. (See below photos of a coaching disabled athlete's course. We provided support for over 30 volunteer and community coaches in 2023.



Match Day Opportunities and Festivals

We delivered several school festivals in 2023 and 2 Swinton Lions match days in 2023, with the GMPDL festival with 58 new participants to Rugby League and to coincide with the Kings Coronation we delivered the Coronation under 7s Festival for community clubs with just over 100 participants attending. Over 200 young people attended Swinton Lions matchdays in 2023 and were given the opportunity to be match day mascots and flag bearers at games.





Belfast Eagles

Annually we deliver a weekend of coaching children in Belfast through the Belfast Eagles RL team and provide coaching workshops to local community coaches to spread the word of Rugby League and Swinton Lions to a new audience. Over 200 people attended sessions in 2023. See Gareth Pratt below delivering feedback to a group of young people.



Community Gym

In 2023, we were able to use the Swinton Lions professional team as a community gym for a couple of projects, the first project was letting community teams access the gym to assist in their own training and 3 teams with a total of 75 players accepted this opportunity. In addition, in a project funded by GMVCO we delivered for 26 weeks an over 50s program for developing wellbeing and supporting positive mental health which had a targeted group of participants involved with over 20 participants.

Appendix

Administration.

- Trustees; John Hesketh (Chair), Stephen Wild, Kelly Wray and Matthew Williams
- Director of Development (Foundation CEO) - Damian Ridpath
- Community Manager - Mark Robinson
- Registered office - 9 Worsley Road, Swinton, Manchester, M27 5WN
- Independent Examiner and Accountants - David Jones
- Bank- Royal Bank of Scotland
- Solicitors - Harrison Drury

Charitable Objectives



To benefit those working or studying in Swinton and Greater Manchester, in advancing education, health, amateur sport and local heritage. (1) Education via appropriate projects. (2) Health via sporting activity and encouraging healthy lifestyles. (3) Amateur sport participation, especially rugby league. (4) Advance and protect the Heritage of Swinton Lions RLFC and the town of Swinton.

Funding Received And Purposes/Impact.

The following have funded projects in 2022/23, The funding has covered a number of schemes that have focused on the following, Diversity, Inclusion, Disability, Women and Girls, prevention of youth violence, Covid-19 recovery in young people, Health and Wellbeing of older participants, mental health support in young people and adults.

Financial Review

- Our funders for the 2023/24 were the following: Rugby League World Cup 2021 Legacy Fund, Rugby Football League Development Plan, RFL Rugbees, Green King, Helix Homes. Sport England, Salford CVS, Children in Need, GMCVO, McDonalds, Equilibrium, Salford Healthy Schools, Sported Cash 4 Kids.
- Swinton Lions Community Sports Foundation also received small revenue from the following, small lottery revenue from the Swinton Lions Rugby League club and small supporter donations. We also had commissioned work from within the educational sector.

Learning In Year

A fantastic year, we are looking forward to 2024/25 to further develop our offers to the community. We are consistently learning more about the communities we are serving, particularly all the diverse communities within Greater Manchester with their differing needs and various cultures and complexities around becoming resident in a new country of area. The feedback from consultation we have received has been significantly helpful in shaping our future offers and developing a stronger more consistent approach.



Future Plans

We are looking to expand provision in 2024/25 and target some key demographic areas who are in desperate need of some form of supported activity.

Damian Ridpath
Director of Development





CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

SWINTON LIONS COMMUNITY SPORTS FOUNDATION

On accounts for the year
ended

31st MARCH 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1167461

Set out on pages

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

John

Date:

24.03.2025

Name:

JOHN DAVID JONES

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

QUALIFIED CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT (1972)

Address:

LETHBRIDGE RD

82, KING STREET

MANCHESTER M2 4WQ

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).



CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

SWINTON LIONS COMMUNITY SPORTS FOUNDATION

On accounts for the year
ended

31st MARCH 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1167461

Set out on pages

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** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

J D Jones

Date:

24.03.2025

Name:

JOHN DAVID JONES

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

QUALIFIED CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT (1972)

Address:

LETHBRIDGE RD

82, KING STREET

MANCHESTER M2 4WQ

Section B

Disclosure

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