



## Report of the trustees

### 1. Introduction

The trustees submit their report and financial statements for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

The trustees have overall responsibility for the direction, management and control of the CIO.

### 2. Objects and activities

The club's primary purpose is to encourage the sport of croquet to everyone. Croquet is particularly suited to encourage healthy recreation for people of all ages and physical abilities. At the same time it can be played as a serious competitive sport.

The club is situated in a large public park in Watford, and is easily accessible to all.

Our aim is to provide a welcoming social environment for casual players, and in parallel to develop as one of the top clubs in the region for competitive croquet.

### 3. Review

The CIO was set-up in October 2019 by simple transfer from the old unincorporated club. This was therefore our fourth year of full operation as a CIO.

The winter period from October to March is traditionally a quiet time for all croquet clubs because weather conditions are generally not very conducive to lawn maintenance. But as winters have tended to get a little warmer than they were decades ago a limited amount of winter play has become more common amongst croquet clubs, the popularity of winter play has increased, and in the first 3 months of 2023 our club had one court in use which was well used.

Membership numbers dropped by about 15 for the start of the 2023 summer playing season in April, but by the end of the year we had recruited enough new members to bring the numbers back up to the same level as at the end of the previous year. A significant proportion of those new members joined in order to be able to play in the 2023-24 winter season as well as in the summer.

During the summer the club ran its largest ever programme of formal open tournaments, adding a new Golf Croquet 2-day 'Open' tournament as part of the national 'Open' series and a new 1-day handicap doubles tournament in addition to the other 6 open tournaments that were repeated from 2022. We also hosted one East Anglian regional tournament for club champions in the East Anglian region.

It is worth noting that the club once again ran a 1-day Charity tournament in April as part of a national club charity competition, this year in aid of UNHCR, and for the third consecutive year

Watford raised more money for charity than any of the other 200+ croquet clubs in the country.

The club also played in four AC and five GC inter-club regional and national team competitions: five knock-outs and four leagues, winning one of them, runner-up in a second and reaching the semi-finals of two others.

In addition there was the usual full programme of internal club competitions, most of which ran throughout the summer.

In the last the months of 2023 the club reverted to winter play on one court, and a new series of one-day golf croquet “speed doubles” tournaments proved to be particularly popular. Unfortunately with the very wet weather in December combined with the larger than usual numbers of people crowding onto one court it was decided that the prospect of court damage was too great to continue this amount of winter wear, so these tournaments were suspended at the end of the year to give the courts a rest for a while. An additional difficulty is that Veolia, who maintain the courts under contract to our landlords Watford Borough Council and not to the club, have continued to insist that no more than one court at a time can be used in winter, which means that all the wear is then concentrated on the one court which is in use.

The new pavilion continued to be extremely well used, and is a significant factor in our goal of making Watford a “top tier” croquet club.

The plans for the installation of a proper lawn irrigation system which had been hatched in 2022 were developed in more detail in 2023, and it was decided that the preferred solution for the supply of water was to obtain it from a new borehole. Accordingly a professional hydrogeological assessment was commissioned. When a favourable report was received, towards the end of the year tenders for borehole drilling were invited and a preferred contractor selected, subject to final approval by WBC. WBC had indicated its willingness in principle to allow the proposal, though at a late stage it also decided that the whole irrigation project had to obtain planning permission as well. A formal planning application was duly submitted in December, and at the date of this report the outcome of the application is still awaited.

#### 4. Finance review

2023 was a fairly typical year financially, with the membership numbers at the same level at the end of 2023 as for 2022 and with the only significant new items of expenditure being some initial capital costs for the irrigation project (hydrogeological assessment, tender documents and planning application). Trophy costs increased mainly because of the purchase of additional trophies for new tournaments, and to replace two others which had been lost.

Total income for the year was £11,316 compared with £9,902 in 2022, while total expenditure was £9,431 compared with £6,728 in 2022. The net surplus for 2023 was therefore £1,885. Excluding the initial irrigation project capital costs, income rose by £1,414 (about 14%) compared with 2022 and expenditure rose by £1,149. Total funds carried forward to 2024 increased to £26,769. With the general rise in interest rates it also became desirable to put the majority of this into a new interest-bearing, instant-access savings account with the Skipton Building Society.

The full statement of accounts follows as Appendix A.

## 5. Trustees

Under the constitution of the CIO, there must be at least three and no more than twelve trustees. At the end of the year there were 11 trustees (marked \*), and the trustees serving during the year were:

<b>Janet Lewis*</b>	(re-elected 13 March 2023 to 2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Chair
<b>André Machell*</b>	(re-elected 4 March 2021 to 2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	Treasurer
<b>Jonathan Lambton*</b>	(elected 21 March 2022, 1 <sup>st</sup> term)	Secretary
<b>Simon Hathrell*</b>	(re-elected 13 March 2023 to 2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	
<b>Roger Nicholls</b>	(re-elected 21 March 2022 to 2 <sup>nd</sup> term, died 29 November 2023)	
<b>Geoff Johnson</b>	(re-elected 4 March 2021, resigned 13 March 2023)	
<b>George Skinner</b>	(re-elected 23 March 2021, resigned 20 November 2023)	
<b>Mike Grossmith*</b>	(elected 21 March 2022, 1 <sup>st</sup> term)	
<b>Hazel Archer*</b>	(elected 21 March 2022, 1 <sup>st</sup> term)	
<b>John Walker</b>	(elected 21 March 2022, resigned 13 March 2023)	
<b>Eddie Chung</b>	(elected 13 March 2023, resigned 3 November 2023)	
<b>Kevin Currie*</b>	(elected 13 March 2023, 1 <sup>st</sup> term)	
<b>Kevin Connolly*</b>	(appointed 12 December 2023)	
<b>Paul Lakra*</b>	(appointed 12 December 2023)	
<b>Şebnem Kaya*</b>	(appointed 12 December 2023)	
<b>Linda Williams*</b>	(appointed 19 December 2023)	

The trustees meet regularly, approximately six times a year, and as needed to resolve any ad hoc issues that arise.

The trustees are satisfied that our governance processes are in accordance with our constitution and fully compliant with the requirements of the Charities Commission.

This report was approved by the trustees on 31 January 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Janet Lewis  
Chair



## **Independent examiners report to the trustees**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Watford (Cassiobury) Croquet Club, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, for the year ended 31 December 2023.

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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect, the accounting records were not kept in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Havill', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Brian Havill**

Independent examiner  
25 February 2024

Watford (Cassiobury) Croquet Club  
Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Charity number 1185646  
Annual report and financial statements  
for the period 1 January 2023 - 31 December 2023



## Appendix A

Statement of accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023

Amounts in £

	2023 86 members		2022 86 members	
	£	£	£	£
Member subscriptions		7,165		6,990
Tournaments		1,896		1,061
Course fees		0		50
Key deposits		40		70
Hire charges		227		331
Guest fees		498		250
Charity 1-Ball receipts		992		1,010
Interest		277		0
Donations		10		140
Gift Aid		211		0
<b>Total income</b>		<b>11,316</b>		<b>9,902</b>
Park season ticket (Veolia cost)	(3,314)		(2,891)	
CA/EACF Member Registration	(1,265)		(1,078)	
Entry Fees - CA/EACF tournaments	(395)		(364)	
Equipment - Playing	(83)		0	
Equipment - Non-playing	(265)		(268)	
Bore Hole costs	(1,554)		0	
Refreshments and consumables	(533)		(474)	
Trophies	(604)		(291)	
Insurance	(348)		(176)	
Pavilion costs	(15)		(150)	
Other administration expenses	(63)		(26)	
Charity 1-Ball payment	(992)		(1,010)	
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>(9,431)</b>		<b>(6,728)</b>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>1,885</b>		<b>3,174</b>
<b>Funds at start of year</b>		<b>24,884</b>		<b>21,710</b>
<b>Funds at end of year</b>		<b>26,769</b>		<b>24,884</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>				
Cash at Bank		<b>1,769</b>		<b>24,884</b>
Cash at Skipton BS		<b>25,000</b>		

The accounts were approved and authorised for issue by the trustees on 31 January 2024, and signed on its behalf by:

  
Janet Lewis  
Chair

  
André Machell  
Treasurer