

# Trustees' Annual Report for Hythe Cricket & Squash Club

Charitable Incorporated Organisation No: 1204650

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Report for the Financial Year 1st October 2023 – 30th September 2024

Trustees during the reporting period: Philip Carter, Martin Cobb, Steve Eggleston, Tom Locke, Ken Pollock (retired May 24), James Pope.

Company Secretary: Rachel Gainsford

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## **Introduction**

The Trustees of Hythe Cricket & Squash Club are pleased to present the Annual Report for the 2023-24 financial year. This year marks a significant milestone in the Club's 168-year history, with the transition from **Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC)** status to operating as a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**. The Club's objectives remain firmly rooted in promoting community participation in sport for the people of Hythe and the surrounding areas.

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## **Objectives**

Hythe Cricket & Squash Club's primary objective is to promote community participation in healthy recreation by providing facilities for cricket, football, squash, and other sports. We aim to foster inclusivity, offering opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to engage in sporting and social activities to benefit their physical and mental wellbeing.

## **Values**

Our core values are **welcoming, sporting and inclusive**. Defined by club members and community partners through a consultation in 2023, these values guide everything we do, driving our vision of a vibrant community hub where sport and social connection thrive in a safe and inclusive environment.

A Club Code of Conduct shared with all members, visitors, hirers and partner organisations underpins these club values.

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## **Structure, Governance, and Management**

### **Organisational Structure**

Following registration of Hythe Cricket & Squash Club as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 11 September 2023, the Club transitioned to a new governance and management structure.

### **Governance**

The CIO Constitution outlines the responsibilities of **The Board of Trustees**, who must ensure that the club adheres to its charitable objectives and operates in line with its values, for public benefit. The bi-monthly Trustee Meetings in this first year of the CIO focused on financial sustainability, defining strategic objectives, exploring local partnerships, and developing the club policy framework.

Individual Trustee areas of responsibility are: Finance, Community Engagement, People, Legacy, Facilities, and Chair. The CIO was established with six Trustees in post and one vacancy. Following

the retirement of one Legacy Trustee during the year, two new Trustees are being sought, with a focus on community engagement and marketing skills. Two Trustees completed charity financial management training during the year.

### **Management**

**The Club Committee** comprises staff and volunteers representing cricket, football, squash/racketball, the bar, safeguarding, membership and grounds/building maintenance.

Bi-monthly meetings focus on information sharing and problem solving to coordinate and support the day to day running of events and activities across the club. One Trustee joins each meeting, to ensure effective communication between The Board and The Committee.

Football, cricket, and squash/racketball each have a **Section Committee**, organised in a format agreed by the section to enable delivery of their sport within any compliance requirements of the relevant sport governing body (The ECB, Squash England, The FA).

The Club employs a part-time Manager, who manages a small team of part-time bar staff, liaises with regular hirers and organises social events and activity bookings/catering. Since January 2024 the Club has employed a part-time Company Secretary/Administrator.

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## **Activities and Achievements**

### **Sporting Participation**

The club offered a range of opportunities to take part in cricket and squash/racketball to anyone aged 8+, from taster sessions to regular training and club nights, games, competitions and tournaments. The club achieved a 40% increase in sporting memberships, with an estimated 23,024 hours of sport played during the year.

Trustees applaud the contribution of the 16 cricket and squash coaches, whose commitment and expertise play a vital role in increasing participation, enhancing enjoyment, and driving achievement. Four coaches achieved new qualifications.

**Cricket** participation flourished, with 108 adults and juniors actively training and competing. The newly formed women's softball team competed in their first tournaments, the successful Hythe Smash men's competition attracted new spectators, while the Saturday 1st XI men's team finished the season as League Champions.

A highlight was the growth of girls' cricket, with more girls than ever before participating, U13 girls reaching Kent Finals, three girls achieving selection for District Squads, two women achieving coaching qualifications, and three father-daughter pairs playing in club matches.

Beyond the pitch, the club expanded its reach by launching the Hythe Cricket YouTube channel, which live-streamed matches and proved instrumental in attracting new sponsors.

**Squash/Racketball** highlights included partnering with Dover Racketball & Squash Club to host the Kent Coastal Racketball Tournament, engaging over 50 players from across the UK in 90 matches, and raising over £2,000 for two local charities. The introduction of 'Squaffee Mornings' engaged a growing number of women in squash activities, while Mixed Ability Squash sessions received glowing feedback from a local group for people with learning disabilities.

With over 160 adults and juniors actively playing squash and racketball during the year, the Squash Club Finals Day showcased the best of club sporting and community spirit. A BBQ, live band and full day of competition attracted players, families and community supporters.

In a year of transition for junior squash, Trustees extend their gratitude to outgoing Head Coach Baz Hodson for his exceptional contribution to engaging young players in the game.

The **Football** section celebrated 50 years of The Grove Grovellers, highlighting some enduring friendships forged through the team. The club hosted three community men's teams alongside two Grovellers teams for the season, more than doubling the number of people playing footballer at the club. The annual Football Fiesta brought together eight local teams, drawing strong community support. Away from the club, a standout achievement was Grovellers player Ken Pollock's performance as England Over-70s Player/Manager.

### **Community Engagement**

The granting of a full premises licence for the club bar in 2023 paved the way for opening club social events to the wider community, and for working with neighbouring sports clubs on joint social activities. There was a 38% increase in club social memberships across the year.

Charity status enabled a new focus on promoting club facilities as a valuable community resource for sporting and wellbeing purposes. The roll out of a new booking system aims to further improve community access to club facilities from 2025.

To reflect the new charity identity, the club rebranded with a 'one club' ethos, launched a new website, and strengthened our digital presence, engaging contributors from the sporting sections in club social media channels, to promote sporting and social activities to a broader online community.

The club hosted weekly pilates, yoga, and dance classes, along with a runners' group, and established a new partnership with Age UK to host a range of exercise and wellbeing activities for older people in Hythe. There were School Games cricket competitions, cricket sessions for a Brownies Group, weekly walking football sessions, and free access for local school PE sessions. A local charity held twice weekly morning activities for young adults with learning disabilities, while a table tennis group began regular evening sessions. Members of Sandgate Boules Club volunteered to extend the club boules court and hosted friendly Friday night games, as well as an annual tournament with a visiting French team.

The Club partnered with volunteers from a local hospice charity bookshop to launch a small sporting literacy project, joined a scheme to donate sports clothing to a local refugee charity, and worked with the Mayor of Hythe to host a fundraiser for the local Youth Centre.

Strengthening our commitment to wellbeing and inclusion, the club partnered with the Kent & Medway Talking Therapies Team to promote mental health support to the sporting community, liaising with 8 local sports clubs to co-host online mental health support sessions. The club Safeguarding Officer represented the club in county and national forums, and engaged students in workshops at 3 local schools and colleges.

When the Football section secured funding for a defibrillator, the club invited members of the neighbouring tennis and bowls clubs to a 'Start the Heart' training session provided by Kent Fire Service.

Following participation in a Hythe Town Council community consultation on sport and recreation in Hythe, the Club began work in partnership with the Town Council and Tennis Club, exploring the feasibility of a shared padel tennis facility at The Grove.

### **Financial Sustainability**

In this first year as a CIO, Trustees prioritised streamlining financial reporting for greater accountability and accurate forecasting, and established a Reserves Policy. They oversaw the transition to fully electronic banking and accounting systems, ensuring all payments and receipts are accurately coded and tracked.

Financial reviews focused on key income streams (bar, facilities hire and membership) and key expenditures (insurance, maintenance, energy, staffing) with sustainability options under consideration.

Rebranding TheBar@TheGrove created a distinct identity to drive income and lay groundwork for a potential Trading Arm separate from the Charity. A brewery loan agreement was secured to fund bar and cellar lighting and safety improvements.

Following grounds maintenance expenditure reviews, Service Level Agreements were developed for the club groundskeepers and, alongside a Football Foundation grant achieved by the football section, Trustees secured an ECB interest-free loan to fund new grounds maintenance equipment.

Looking ahead, roll out of a whole-club membership model and new online membership system is planned, to simplify payments, improve accountability, boost income, and more easily tap into new sponsorship opportunities and charitable income streams.

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### **Dual Financial Statements**

During this year of transition from a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Trustees appointed a new firm of accountants with expertise in the charity sector, and oversaw the transfer of assets to the new entity. As a result, the organisation continued to trade and has reported as a CASC until the end of the financial year, with the first financial return as a CIO reflecting a zero balance.

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### **Looking Ahead**

Alongside activities and plans reported above, Trustees look forward to:

- Fostering greater diversity and inclusion across the Board of Trustees, Club Committee, and Section Committees/Leadership Teams, ensuring broader representation to reflect the community the club serves.
  - Improving communication, and providing more opportunities for members and partner organisations to provide feedback, benefit from lessons learned and celebrate joint successes.
  - Determining the feasibility of facility upgrades to support the club commitment to inclusive sport and increased participation.
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### **Conclusion**

The financial year 2023–2024 has been a transformative year for Hythe Cricket & Squash Club, with the successful transition to CIO status positioning the club for sustainable growth and greater community impact. The focus on sporting participation, community engagement, and financial sustainability provides the foundation for future success.

While the cost-of-living crisis, increased staffing, energy and maintenance costs, lower profit margins on food and drink, and an unfit for purpose building provide significant challenges to future financial sustainability, the commitment of club members, staff and volunteers remains a great strength.

The Trustees would like to extend sincere thanks to club members and community partners, and particularly to the volunteers and staff whose dedication and support through a year of significant administrative change has been critical to the success of the club.

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### **Signed on behalf of the Trustees:**

[Name]

[Position]

Date: [Insert Date]