

## **Wicken Sports Club – Report to the Wicken Parish Council May 2021**

Off, On, Off, On, Off, and hopefully On, has been the main feature of 2020 into 2021 for the Sports Club. Like everyone else we came to a halt on 23 March 2020 as the first pandemic lockdown was imposed on the whole country.

The Clubhouse, itself, has not been re-opened since then, so near enough 14 months so far. Even when we were between lockdowns, the rules put in place by the Football Association, the English Cricket Board and Archery GB did not allow for opening of the Clubhouse. Social activities, principally the Seniors Club, Craft Club and Language Clubs have not been able to meet since early 2020.

Village events that normally would have been accommodated at the Club, like the Macmillan evenings, the events hosted by the WVC, such as the May Day Scarecrows, the BBQ and others have not been possible to put on. This has caused a real dent in Village social activity.

It has been possible between lockdowns and indeed during phasing of lockdowns, to hold sports activities to varying degrees. Sometimes that has just been allowing training, but no contact games. The various sporting sections and the Club management have had to get their heads around various protocols to allow sport to happen in a Covid safe way. We have all become knowledgeable on sports risk assessments that seem to change each and every time we have moved a level on the lockdown steps.

Archery was not able to go to their normal indoor venue for the winter because it is a school hall; they therefore extended their outdoor season by changing times. They also needed to limit numbers, but hold more sessions.

Football lost the end of their 2019/20 season, although most of our teams had got through a significant proportion of the season. The 2020/21 season has been very much stop/start, but they have now managed to complete it. We have been very successful with numbers, despite everything this year, in that we have been able to have two senior adult teams, the veteran's team, and an Under 10's side.

Cricket probably suffered the most disrupted season of all the sports only managing about a third of their games for 2020. But they are hoping for much better things this coming season.

As the sports have come back, particularly after this latest lockdown, the challenge has been to manage the competing demands to get on the field, but all understand the pent-up need to get back to playing so it has all worked out well.

Tennis was a surprising winner for the summer of 2020 as people were looking for something the family could do closer to home – the membership went up substantially. It would be good if that could be sustained going forward.

The Club has been progressing works on the new boiler, kitchen refit and other items with financial help from the Solar Fund, whilst the lockdown has been on. We have also been able to avail of government support to offset lost revenue. In addition, we have been able to tap into grant support from the Football Foundation which has meant funds being made available for pitch maintenance. All of these have been hugely beneficial and as a result we have not lost money from the pandemic

impact, for which we are very grateful. There was a real fear going into this that the financial burden could be too great to weather, but we have not been set back in that regard at all.

We very much look forward to getting everything back to normal, although some of the social activities may still take a while. There is still great demand for sports facilities and we are receiving fresh requests on a regular basis.

Fenlon Dunphy

Chair - WSC