



Report of the trustees

1. Introduction

The trustees submit their report and financial statements for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024.

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 fifth year of full operation as a CIO.

The winter period from January to March started with play suspended for the first 4 weeks following a programme of speed doubles tournaments in the previous December which, although popular with members, proved to cause too much wear on the courts in often damp and muddy conditions, so that a period of rest was needed for the grass to recover. Thereafter normal winter play resumed on one court until all four courts opened again in April for the summer season.

Membership numbers had increased when cheaper winter-only membership had been offered in 2023, but the trustees decided that with only one court available for winter use and with demand for it and wear on it both quite high, it should in future be prioritised for full members. It was therefore decided in 2024 to stop offering winter-only membership in future and instead to allow only annual membership, but with new members able to join the club at any time and renew on their anniversary of joining. Annual fees are still very modest compared with most other sports.

The summer season proved to be the club's busiest ever for formal competitions, with 32 inter-club matches and 8 open tournaments of various kinds, compared with 19 and 8 respectively in 2023, as well as running the usual full programme of internal all-season tournaments. In addition, the club ran another Charity 1-ball tournament raising funds in aid of the British Heart Foundation as part of the national Charity 1-ball competition, and once again raised over £1000 including Gift Aid recoveries, representing more than 10% of the total raised by all 220 croquet clubs in the country affiliated to Croquet England.

A particular highlight worthy of mention is that one of our members captained the Hertfordshire team in the 4-day AC inter-counties tournament, winning the national county championship for the first time since 1908 – a 116-year gap.

Alongside the croquet play, and without interrupting it, the other big activity of 2024 was the drilling of a borehole and the installation of a new, automatic irrigation system. The project had been agreed and preparations had started in 2023 but progress had been delayed by the need to obtain planning permission, which was finally obtained in April 2024 after a formal hearing by the Council and a lot of documentation. The borehole was dug in May over a period of a couple of weeks, with a plentiful supply of free water found in the underlying chalk aquifer at the expected depth of about 15m. Then 400m of trenches for pipes and control cables were dug in just a day, and then the irrigation system was designed, procured, installed and tested by club members on a DIY basis. Back-filling the trenches and clearing some tonnes of surplus soil and stones in particular proved to be quite a substantial manual task.

The satisfactory outcome was a system that works as intended, capable of delivering up to about 15m³ of free water per day depending on weather conditions (within the Environment Agency 20m³ daily limit), out of sight when not in use, and well below what it would have cost to have a similar system installed commercially. Although it was only completed quite late in the summer season, there was enough time to provide evidence of improved grass quality and the elimination of bare patches in periods of dry summer weather. The club is optimistic for the future prospects for playing conditions.

Together with the addition of a 4th court along with the laser levelling of the 3rd and 4th courts in 2017 and the new pavilion in 2020, the club has now made good progress towards becoming one of the top clubs in the country.

4. Finance review

There were three new factors which had a major influence on the accounts for 2024. Firstly, we finally purchased our own defibrillator at a cost of over £1,000. However, £700 of this cost was offset by some very generous donations and the proceeds of an internal tournament. Secondly, the irrigation system was completed at a cost of nearly £35,500, most of which was paid in 2024. Donations and grants of nearly £21,000, and gift aid recoveries of about £4,000 meant that our funds were only reduced by £10,500.

Both these costs will not occur again; however we are now having to pay rent for the pavilion each year. In 2024 we paid £3,500, representing £1,500 for 2023, when the lease was signed, and £2,000 for 2024. In 2025 this will rise to £2,500, then £3,000 in 2026, after which it will be re-negotiated. Note that since the rent is billed annually, not monthly, it is accounted for in the calendar year in which the annual payment is actually made rather than being apportioned between years based on the anniversary of the lease.

Full membership dropped by 13 to 73, and a decision was taken to no longer offer a winter membership, and for memberships to run for a full year after joining. In spite of this, income actually increased by £200 to nearly £7,400.

Income from open tournaments was steady at £1,900, and hiring the courts out for externally run tournaments earned £650, a figure which should grow as the quality of the courts increases due to the irrigation system.

The court maintenance bill was down £900 to £2,400. This is because the charge is based on the number and age of members, rather than the amount of work Veolia actually have to do.

Membership of the CA and EACF was £1,350 (up by £100). Other costs were in line with previous years. This means that the deficit for the year was about £8,500, bringing the total funds available to about £18,000.

We are expecting income and expenditure to be about the same in 2025, mainly because of the rent payment.

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 9 trustees (marked *), and the trustees serving during the year were:

Janet Lewis*	(re-elected 13 March 2023 to 2 nd term)	Chair
André Machell*	(re-elected 11 March 2024 to 3 rd term)	Treasurer
Jonathan Lambton*	(elected 21 March 2022, 1 st term)	Secretary
Simon Hathrell*	(re-elected 13 March 2023 to 2 nd term)	
Mike Grossmith*	(elected 21 March 2022, 1 st term)	
Hazel Archer	(elected 21 March 2022, 1 st term, resigned 11 March 2024)	
Kevin Currie*	(elected 13 March 2023, 1 st term)	
Paul Lakra	(appointed 12 December 2023, resigned 11 March 2024)	
Kevin Connolly*	(elected 11 March 2024 to 1 st term)	
Şebnem Kaya*	(elected 11 March 2024 to 1 st term)	
Linda Williams*	(elected 11 March 2024 to 1 st term)	

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 23rd January 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Janet Lewis
Chair

Watford (Cassiobury) Croquet Club
Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Charity number 1185646
Annual report and financial statements
for the period 1 January 2024 - 31 December 2024



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 2024.

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.

Brian Havill
Independent examiner
3rd February 2025

Watford (Cassiobury) Croquet Club
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Appendix

Statement of accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024

Amounts in £	2024		2023	
	73 members		86 members	
	£	£	£	£
Member subscriptions		7,375		7,165
Tournaments		1,873		1,896
Course fees		0		0
Key deposits		30		40
Hire charges		661		227
Guest fees		150		498
Charity 1-Ball receipts		885		992
Interest		937		277
Donations		20,950		10
Gift Aid		4,039		211
Defib donations		785		-
Total income		37,685		11,316
Pavilion rent (2023-24)	(3,500)		0	
Park season ticket (Veolia cost)	(2,414)		(3,314)	
CA/EACF Member Registration	(1,351)		(1,265)	
Entry Fees - CA/EACF tournaments	(265)		(395)	
Equipment - Playing	0		(83)	
Equipment - Non-playing	(41)		(265)	
Irrigation costs	(35,450)		(1,554)	
Refreshments and consumables	(498)		(533)	
Defibrillator	(1,074)		-	
Trophies	(366)		(604)	
Insurance	(364)		(348)	
Pavilion costs	0		(15)	
Other administration expenses	(26)		(63)	
Charity 1-Ball payment	(885)		(992)	
Total expenditure		(46,234)		(9,431)
Surplus for the year		(8,549)		1,885
Funds at start of year		26,769		24,884
Funds at end of year		18,220		26,769
Represented by:				
Cash at Bank		418		1,769
Informal Meal prepayment		(198)		
Cash at Skipton BS		18,000		25,000
		18,220		26,769

The accounts were approved and authorised for issue by the trustees on 23rd January 2025, and signed on its behalf by:

Janet Lewis
Chair

André Machell
Treasurer