

SPORT GODALMING

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2022

Welcome to our AGM and Open Meeting, which this time is being held at Holloway Hill Sports Association's pavilion and my thanks in advance to our friends there for their hospitality.

I am very pleased to particularly welcome the Deputy Mayor of Waverley – Cllr. Penny Rivers and her Consort Cllr. Paul Rivers and the Mayor of Godalming – Cllr. Shirley Faraday – along with representatives from many of our sports clubs and other guests.

This report reflects on what we did in 2022 and a little bit on what we are planning this year – 2022 wasn't quite 'back to pre-COVID days' but I can summarise what we did enjoy...

We had an excellent and very well attended AGM and Open Meeting in March at Farncombe CC with an encouragingly wide range of stakeholders and sports clubs represented, including the Mayors of Waverley and Godalming - we said goodbye to Matt Kiley and Bernard Smith and were able to give Bernard a well-deserved round of applause on the night - Neil Boosey (Waverley Harriers) joined the team and we also welcomed Lea Benn (Godalming Leisure Centre) as a co-opted member. Lots of highlights including an inspiring talk from Tom Manning from Godalming Youth Services and my conversation with Yasmina Hasan - what she has achieved since we first met her at Godalming & Farncombe Bowls, maybe ten years ago? is almost like a fairy story!

On Sunday 22nd May, after a delay of a couple of years, the Godalming Run finally celebrated its tenth anniversary at the Phillips Memorial Park. This is a great community event – as well as some 500 runners competing in 10K, 5K and a 1K fun run, there are an army of volunteers taking registrations, being on the various parts of the routes to direct and encourage and at the finish, giving out drinks and medals, not to mention all the families and friends coming out to support the runners.

We organise the run alongside the Waverley Harriers Running Club and Godalming Town, Waverley Borough, and Surrey County Councils. Once again, the event was generously sponsored by Charterhouse School which celebrated 150 years in the town. All the proceeds, after costs, have been set aside for 'Go for Gold' and other grants supporting our local athletes in their endeavours.

On Friday 3rd June we put on a 'Sport for All' day, which started its planning the previous autumn and this was part of the Town's celebrations for the Queen's Platinum jubilee. And it happened ... and did it happen...! We had lots of member clubs involved and other sporting groups and individuals offering demonstrations, games, and taster sessions, as well as local concessions and a climbing wall, arranged courtesy of the Town Council... probably a couple of thousand attended on the Phillips Memorial Park – and the whole event was FREE...

My sincere thanks to Seymours who gave us some sponsorship - thanks also to all the team who helped on the day and especially to Michael O'Sullivan who took over the reins from me. This showcased Sport Godalming to the Town and is testament to our commitment to the community and... it was a great success.

Also in June, we finally were able to organise the Simon Steel Legacy. As you may be aware from earlier meetings, this arose and was financed from a bequest from the late Simon Steel. Sport Godalming, in partnership with the Surrey Cricket Foundation, who run a Waverley wide junior school cricket competition for years 5 & 6 children, we part sponsored the three matches for boys and girls held at Farncombe CC. Sport Godalming provided the three winners with shields (Year 5 winners Busbridge - Year 6 winners Wonersh & Shamley Green & Godalming winning the girls competition) and all the participants were given medals. We think, with the funds we received, this legacy in its present form could last for the next ten years.

Through 'thick and thin' and avoiding all those nasty bugs, Graham Robinson has managed to run the 'Sport Godalming Bowls Championships' again... and in August, I went along to Wonersh Bowls Club to watch the finals and to present the trophies. A really good evening - I have been going to these for so long that I am almost part of the Bowls fraternity... our old friend Alex Neil won the men's final comfortably for the fifth time and debutante Chelsea Macfarlane won the ladies cup in a seesaw and absorbing match.

And to our Sports Awards on Friday 25th November - again for the first time since 2019 and again at the Wilfrid Noyce Community Centre. In the company of deputy mayor of Waverley Penny Rivers and immediate past mayor of Godalming Michael Steel, a packed house enjoyed an evening of good sporting stories & achievements from our many local teams and individuals - our 'guest speaker' was Guildford Hockey Club's Dan Fox, who joined in with many of the presentations and gave us all a very interesting and inspirational talk.

The whole event was captured by our photographer Phil and lots of picture's can be found on our website - also for the 'Sport for All' day as well - www.sportgodalming.org.uk

A special thank you must also go to Andy Goodridge from Waverley Harriers, who not only arranged the on-line registration but also the excellent programme - it should also be mentioned that he set-up the Godalming Run website as well - what a guy!

Mention should also be made of Bill Braid - our treasurer - who steps down from this role at this AGM... Bill has been in post for many years and it's his meticulous stewardship that has kept us all on the 'straight and narrow'. In past days, Bill has been our chairman, our secretary, and of course a trustee - it was his efforts that got us registered as a charity - Hugh will be talking over the reins after this AGM.

Mention should also be made as well of Michael O'Sullivan, who is stepping down as organiser of both the Godalming Run and the Sports Awards programmes – I can't say enough about Michael, his drive and enthusiasm have really helped to catapult Sport Godalming into the force it is now and makes us the best Sports Council in Surrey (my opinion folks!) Neil will be taking over the organisation of the 'Run' and Hugh, the running of the Sports Awards.

However, all these events we organise are built around team involvement, so my thanks to all those involved with Sport Godalming for their on-going commitment.

So, looking forward to this year...

As many of you will be aware, the Broadwater Park Golf Club closed about four/five years ago due to waste coming up through the earth (it was originally built of a landfill site) but at the time, with approved plans to up-grade. A change of local government at Waverley Borough Council saw the proposed new lease to the land being withdrawn. During this period there has been lengthy legal negotiations between the council and the former tenants. This now appears to be coming to an end.

Waverley Borough Council called a meeting with all sports clubs that currently use Broadwater Park and all other interested clubs and organisations, in the Godalming area, at the end of January with a view to collecting information and suggestions that could be incorporated on the site. The initial period for consultation ends on February 28th.

Planning permission will be required and this is expected to take a minimum of one year due to many agencies having to be consulted. The start date for all of this is unknown and it may be several years before work can commence and nothing of course can proceed until the site is re-capped.

Sport Godalming MUST be involved in this regeneration programme.

With COVID and the shutdowns experienced over the past couple of years, we have been unable to run our annual 'Go for Gold' funding programme as simply we did not have the funds generated from the events we organise, like the Godalming Run, which will happily happen again on **SUNDAY 21st MAY** and that of course is a major source of income for this initiative. At our Open Meeting, we will meet those athletes who we can support and hopefully hear from on the night as to what 2023 holds for them.

We hope we might be able to re-start our series of 'schools challenges' again in the summer and also the Simon Steel Legacy cricket series that started last year – there maybe other things in the pipeline... we will see!

Have you looked at our website recently? www.sportgodalming.org.uk - this is kept up to date by Phil Kemp – we always like feedback on what we do and any thoughts on the website are always appreciated.

So that is our 2023 and this will conclude with our Sports Awards evening at the Wilfrid Noyce Community Centre on **FRIDAY 17th NOVEMBER** - so another date for your diary.

Please come and support us at all these events – remember we are doing this because we care passionately about all sports and, whenever possible, are promoting those individuals, be it elite or just starting on that ladder, as well as listening to our clubs and helping them, if we can when they ask us...

Sport Godalming is a well-respected and well-run outfit, involving itself in our local community with a cross-section of sportsmen and women as part of our team. We counsel and lobby for our members and provide information as well as grants where possible, both large and small, to help athletes in their pursuits of sporting excellence.

We are always on the look-out for new members to join our 'team', so if you are interested in sport and want to get involved with a wider picture of how our clubs operate and how you could make a difference – call me and we can chat...

In conclusion, my thanks to all my colleagues for their assistance and help and support over the past year and let us make this year a very special one!

Simon Crowther – Chairman
February 2023