



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



WALSALL F.C.
FOUNDATION

THE CLUB'S OFFICIAL CHARITY
1087147

INTRODUCTION



It is with great pride that the EFL currently calculates our Social Value as a £3.5 million return on our work carried out across Walsall.

2023 represents the 5th year of our Annual Report publications and, once again, has been a busy and productive year. Producing the Annual Report always gives us the chance to reflect on the previous 12 months and remind us of the positive impact we have had, as a Club and Foundation, across the Walsall Borough.

I am always proud of the work we carry out and enjoy the time of reflection. It reminds me that this work is not possible without all of the staff, Trustees, partners, community links and friends that we rely on to support our delivery. I take this opportunity to thank them all because they are so important to us and help to make a big difference to so many people's lives.

Once again we have seen growth across the Foundation and, in particular, our workforce. Our Departments (Education, Health, Sport & Engagement) have expanded in staff numbers and project outputs and the impact has increased across them all. Particular achievements include the number of fans engaged across our School Partner Games, the introduction of new Health Projects, the move to an internal BTEC programme within the Sport Department and the impact we have had delivering the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme for Walsall Council.

In 2023 the EFL published a report, "Measuring the Impact of the EFL", that followed a series of reporting that each Club Foundation was asked to submit. Similar to this Annual Report, the EFL study reported on impact and case studies but also calculated the Social Value that each EFL Club represents through the work of Foundations. It is with great pride that the EFL currently calculates our Social Value as a £3.5 million return on our work carried out across Walsall. Most importantly we can highlight qualitative and quantifiable data and this Report shines the light on key impact and individual case studies.

I hope that everyone enjoys reading the Walsall FC Foundation Annual Report for 2023 and is heartened by the fact that we strive to make 2024 an even bigger success.

ADAM DAVY
FOUNDATION DIRECTOR



BRIAN ADSHEAD
CHAIR

Following a year as Interim Chair of the Foundation my colleague Trustees placed their faith in me by appointing me as Chair for this past 2023 – 2024 year, for which I am most grateful.

The year has been interesting and challenging in equal measure. We commenced by strengthening the Management Structure of the Foundation to give Adam more 'thinking time'. This was done by appointing Paul Larvin as 'Senior Operations Manager' and followed this by appointing Joe Roberts 'Education Manager'. I was assisted in the interview process by Trustee Tony Millard, and it showed us the high quality of Staff we have working for us.

We continue to seek Trustees who can add to the wealth of experience we currently have, and this year we have added Peter Sturgess (former FA Youth Development Manager and England Futsal Team Manager) and Walsall MBC Councillor Gary Perry. Unfortunately, we are losing the legend that is Mick Kearns who is standing down from the Foundation having been its Founder some 35 years ago this coming December and carrying out every job imaginable, including a Trustee for the last Ten Years, to ensure its progress to where we are today. Thank you Mick, you are leaving a legacy which will be unsurpassed.

Once again I am pleased to say that the targets set for the Foundation have been achieved and exceeded thanks to the excellent work of Director Adam Davy and his Team. Despite posting a small deficit for the year the finances are in good order and allow us to plan for the coming year with confidence.

I would take this opportunity of offering a big thank you to Adam who has once again led the Foundation with enthusiasm and his Management Team of Paul Larvin, Marc Wilkes, Martin Manley, Chris Springthorpe and Joe Roberts together with all of the other Members of Staff who all go above and beyond.

I would also thank my colleague Trustees who have given their time freely for the benefit of the Foundation – your commitment (wherever you are in the world) does not go unnoticed.

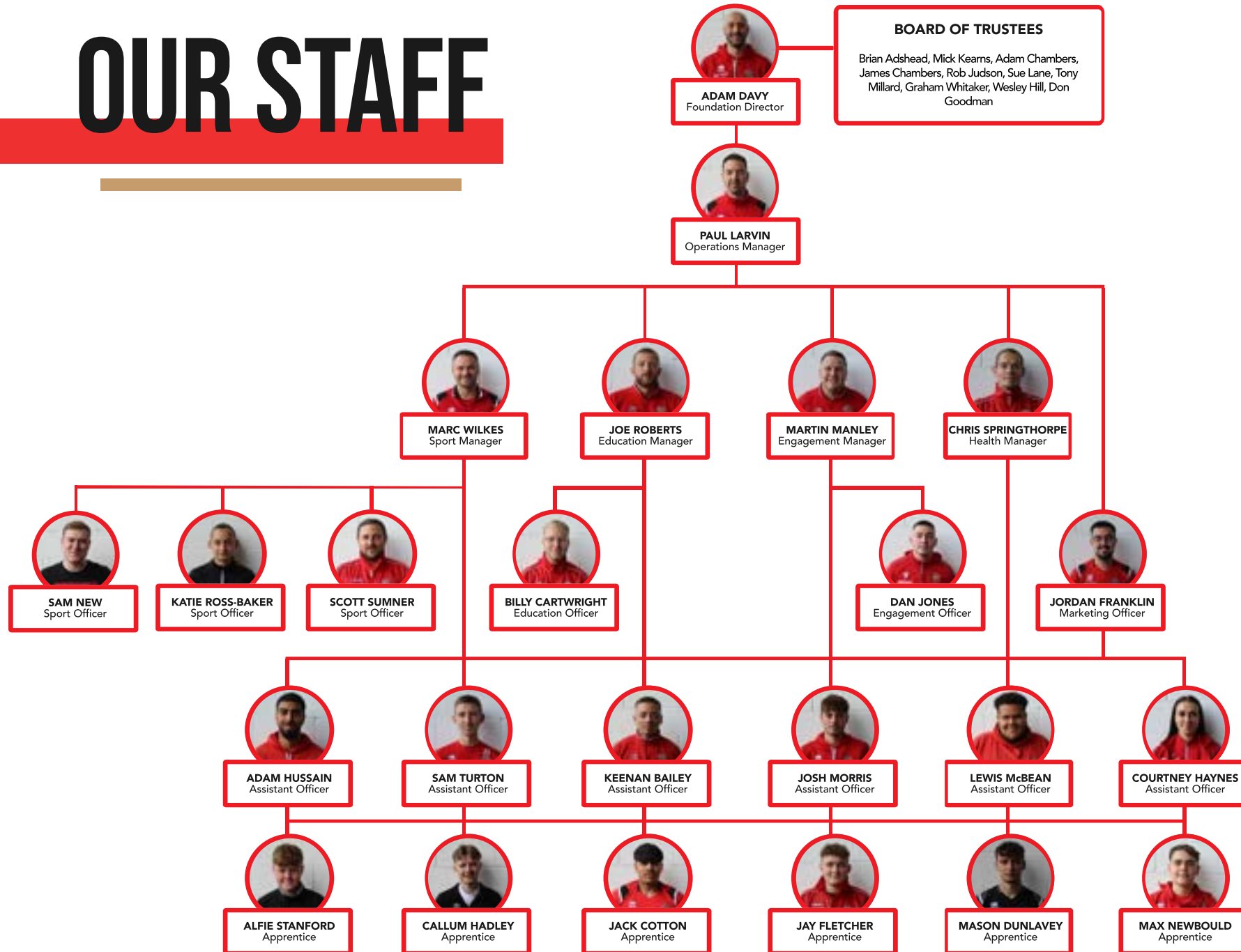
To everyone who has helped us in any way "Thank You" and hopefully we can count on your support over the next twelve months.



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TRIVELA FOUNDATION



The Trivela project is titled as the 'Assist to Achieve' programme. The initial goal for the project is 'to support, inspire and mentor children at a critical stage of their education.' The project is set up and delivered around providing children within the school the opportunity to succeed within their education by helping them overcome certain boundaries and obstructions that they may face throughout their life within school.

By identifying individuals within the school, who require support with different aspects of their learning journey, it allows our member of staff and the school the opportunity to tailor their approach in different ways in order to have the greatest impact upon the individuals who are part of the project.

By approaching a school close to the stadium we know that the pupils will be living in the 10% to 20% most deprived areas in Walsall/UK. They, by demographic, also include a variety of ethnic backgrounds and children from low income families and with less opportunities than children from other wards.

IN 2023 WE...

ESTABLISHED A BOY'S FOOTBALL TEAM

STARTED A GIRLS FOOTBALL AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

DIRECTLY SUPPORTED 50+ PUPILS

DELIVERED STADIUM TOURS

FACILITATED ONLINE CALLS WITH TRIVELA GROUP

PROVIDED MATCH TICKETS



Trivela Foundation is extremely proud of our partnership with Walsall FC Foundation and what they have accomplished through the Assist to Achieve programme. These direct interventions in the lives of young members of our community represents a meaningful investment in our town that will bear positive fruit in their young lives, in their families, and in our town for years to come

BENJAMIN BOYCOTT
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TRIVELA GROUP

PROVEN SUCCESS

Throughout the first term of the academic year we began working with a select group of pupils within the school who, for particular reasons, needed some extra help with their school life. One pupil who stood out more than others was Kqshyrah, this was due to her very poor attendance at school. While at school Kqshyrah also struggles with her Maths and English, this results in a lack of confidence within her lessons. An outcome of her lack of confidence leads to her becoming distracted within lessons, furthermore this results in a lack of ability to build relationships with peers.

The first solution we devised with school to combat the poor attendance was a meeting with Kqshyrah's dad. We managed to establish that the reason behind the poor attendance was the distance the family had to travel to be at school. To counter this we decided to encourage the family to bring her to breakfast club at school where she would receive breakfast and early morning activities to start her day on a positive note.

With the breakfast club having a positive impact in the first two weeks from implementation (her attendance over this period was 100%) we started to look at how we could improve her attitude towards her Maths and English lessons. After working with the school it was decided that we would move Kqshyrah next to her friends in these lessons to make her feel more comfortable. Following on from this we would run a small intervention group within her class to help her improve on her relationship building with peers. This made the sessions more relaxed and less pressured and we quickly identified an improved attitude towards her Maths and English lessons

To help with her relationships with peers she is now helping our coaches at school with lunch time activities and will also be attending our girls football after school club following the Christmas break. By helping her build these relationships it is feeding into the classroom environment as it has made her feel more comfortable within the structure of a classroom setting. Her behaviours around school as a whole have improved following on from the support that she has received from Adam and the coaches within school.

Moving in to the second half of the academic year we plan to continue to develop and improve the support that we are giving to all participants including Kqshyrah. We will continue to monitor her development and regularly review her targets and the help that is provided within the classroom and out of the playground. We have seen vast improvements from Kqshyrah within her school life in the first term of the academic year and hope to see even more improvements in her final year of primary school.



EDUCATION

Throughout 2023 the Education department continued to develop projects through the foundations that had been laid in 2022. Having delivered a wide range of projects across the borough, this year has allowed us to build new links and relationships to enhance our positive impacts within the community.

Our School Partners programme continued to develop following on from the efforts of the previous year, this has allowed us to build more positive working relationships throughout the year with existing and new schools with the opportunities to grow the programme moving in to the new year. The Premier League Primary Stars Programme has grown throughout the year, we have engaged with 4 new schools this year alone, along with our 6 existing partner schools. Having built these new partnerships with schools it has put us in good stead to further expand our programme and to broaden the impact it has across Walsall. Through the work we have done within our main programmes it has also allowed us to improve and grow other programmes within education such as EFL Kids Cup, Cyrille Regis Legacy Trust and our Trivela backed project 'Assist to Achieve'.



The impact that we can have on the individuals that we engage with throughout our programmes within the Education department has once again been a huge positive for us and for the schools that we work with. We always strive to better our programmes to further improve the positive impact we can have

JOE ROBERTS
EDUCATION MANAGER



PREMIER LEAGUE PRIMARY STARS

The Premier League Primary Stars programme is designed to use the power of the Premier League and professional football clubs to empower students to learn, be active and develop important life skills. Available to every primary school in England and Wales, it inspires girls and boys aged 5-11 in the classroom, the playground and on the sports field. The programme covers topics from PE, English, Maths, PSHE with sessions based around the key Premier League Primary Stars values; be fair, be connected, be ambitious, be inspiring.

It is not just children that benefit from the Premier League Primary Stars programme however; during 2023 we also supported 38 teachers across multiple teacher PE support workshops. These workshops provide support for the staff within their delivery of PE sessions to help develop their knowledge, confidence and skills to result in higher quality PE lessons for the students.

126

TARGETED INTERVENTION
SESSIONS

920

STUDENTS ON PLPS

38

TEACHERS SUPPORTED

24

SCHOOLS WORKED WITH

14

SCHOOL COMPETITIONS



It's all about giving the pupils the best possible chances we can to succeed within their school lives and providing them with the opportunity to be exposed to new and exciting possibilities within school

MARK DAKIN
ST.GILES PRIMARY HEADTEACHER

UTILITA KIDS CUP

The Utilita Kids Cup is a national tournament for junior footballers which offers primary school children the once in a lifetime opportunity to play at the national stadium. The Cup involves over 16,000 children and creates one of the country's largest national football competitions, which culminates in exciting finals at Wembley Stadium in front of thousands of fans before a major national final, as school children live out their dream.

It's always great seeing so many schools getting involved in the programme and being able to offer their students this opportunity. After many hard fought games and close competition, Cooper & Jordan CofE School won our 2023 Walsall FC Finals Day and earned their place in the regional finals.

This in itself was a fantastic accomplishment that each player could take pride in however Cooper and Jordan went above and beyond time and time again, ultimately progressing forward in the Utilita Kids Cup and earn their place at Wembley Stadium.



It's a lifetime experience for them isn't it? Many footballers don't even get the chance to step onto Wembley, let alone to play on it in a final. It's a memory that will stay with them forever

RYAN MOSELEY
COOPER & JORDAN TEACHER



LIAM KINSELLA VISITS SCHOOL

Following the teams victory at the regional finals, we were happy to reward the students with a surprise visit from Walsall FC Player, Liam Kinsella. Over the course of the visit Kinsella shared his experience with the children and answered all of their burning questions. The special guest truly inspired the kids and raised the excitement for the day even further than before.



It was great to go and meet the lads and give them some advice ahead of the big day at Wembley, It's a fantastic achievement and I wish them the best of luck and hopefully they bring the trophy home!

LIAM KINSELLA

WINNERS AT WEMBLEY

An amazing 3-0 victory over Stockport County resulted in the school claiming the League Two Utilita Kids Cup trophy at Wembley in May 2023. We are proud to have helped the school throughout their journey and hope the children look back on these memories for years to come.



SADDLERS SUPPORT FUNDRAISER FOR VERITY

In 2023 Walsall FC Foundation supported a fundraiser for Verity, a pupil from Ryders Hayes Primary School in Pelsall.

Verity was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer this autumn. A high-grade brain cancer was found on her brain stem. Having had surgery to remove the mass in September, she has since undergone a long course of chemotherapy and radiotherapy, involving daily treatment at home and daily visits to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for radiotherapy until December.

Her school, Walsall, and the local community have been fundraising, with a view to raising enough money to send Verity and her family on a special trip, provided Verity is well enough.

Many special events have taken place to contribute to this goal across a number of local schools and the local community 'held hands for Verity' in a show of support and solidarity across the village.

During a Christmas Jumper Day event, 75% of any proceeds had gone to Verity's Fund and 25% to Save the Children.

An Auction with sealed bids, was also held at Ryders Hayes' Training School, where lots were viewed by the public, including an official McLaren Team Cap signed by Lando Norris; a hospitality box at the Saddlers v Leyton Orient match; a signed Tyson Fury boxing glove and much more to boost the fund-raising.

Mrs Paul, Head Teacher, said: "We are on track to smash the original target of £5000 and give the family an amazing holiday together, as well as provide any specialist equipment which Verity may need in the coming months."

As a pupil at one of our Partner Schools we were proud to support Verity with;

- Auction prize donations
- Promoting efforts via social media
- Attending and Supporting fun raising events

Verity has responded well to her treatment and is looking forward to a gradual and very welcome reintegration back into school.



We are on track to smash the original target of £5000 and give the family an amazing holiday together, as well as provide any specialist equipment which Verity may need in the coming months.”

MRS PAUL
HEAD TEACHER

HEALTH

It's been another year where we have had a positive impact on people's health in Walsall. It's always great to continue to support people on a consistent basis but also great to support new people through new projects and programmes. Our newest project "Back on your Feet" is an employment based project linked with Active Black Country, DWP and Walsall College looking to get people 50+ back into work while engaging them in physical activity. We have also designed our own men's weight loss football league to further support men in Walsall called "Tackle Your Weight". The aim is to lose weight which is rewarded with end of season awards with a 45 minute game of football as the hook to encourage people to attend each week.

'Beat the Block' has also continued to support people with their mental and physical wellbeing through football, walking football and café's with over 50 new participants across sessions this year.



Although we're 3 years on from Covid lockdowns people are still feeling the impact and with the cost of living crisis having an even bigger effect it's been more important than ever to support the people of Walsall with their physical and mental health across all ages and backgrounds.

CHRIS SPRINGTHORPE
HEALTH MANAGER



BACK ON YOUR FEET

'Back On Your Feet' looks to engage participants, raise their fitness & confidence levels and offer employment training and education opportunities as they look to regain employment.

In partnership with Walsall College and the local Job Centres, and funded by Active Black Country, the 12 week pilot delivered sessions at the Poundland Bescot Stadium to seven participants on a weekly basis. The pilot has served to shape future delivery of the project. In 2023 Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, visited the final session of 'Back on your Feet' to cast an eye on the delivery, listen to participants and understand the project further. He was joined by guests from the partner organisations and former Walsall FC player, Don Goodman, who serves as a Trustee for Walsall FC Foundation.

100%
OF PARTICIPANTS FEEL
MORE ACTIVE

100%
COMPLETION RATE

100%
OF PARTICIPANTS FEEL
MORE CONFIDENT



It's been great to have support getting back in to work but also to have a purpose each week to get up and about, to meet new people and to start getting fit alongside hopefully getting back to work.

'BACK ON YOUR FEET' PLAYER



TACKLE YOUR WEIGHT

In 2023 we started our own weight loss league, taking place here at Bescot Stadium each week with the goal to support men in Walsall. We felt that we could do more to support this demographic by offering them sufficient football time alongside weight loss support and a positive atmosphere. By using football as a vehicle we are able to incentivise men into making positive lifestyle choices, additional competition facilitated via the league system further encourages victories both on and off the pitch with end of season awards making their way to those who have lost the most weight. Currently we have 4 teams signed up to the league with 10 players in each squad, this has been a fantastic start to a promising project and we can't wait to grow further.

50+ KILOGRAMS OF
WEIGHT LOSS

75% OF PLAYERS
LOST WEIGHT

100% OF PLAYERS
FEEL FITTER



It's great to play with guys who have a similar goal each week. The atmosphere amongst all the guys is brilliant and a lot of us have made new friends while either playing in the same team or against each other

TACKLE YOUR WEIGHT PLAYER

BEAT THE BLOCK

Throughout 2023 our 'Beat the Block' mental health sessions continued to grow and maintain its positive influence on Walsall. Participants enjoy a one hour football session run by our staff, before up to a 30 minute social in the community room. In this safe and friendly environment, they can chat to coaches, each other, and mental health professionals.



Just a quick thank you for what you guys do at Beat The Block I really enjoyed my time playing with yourselves and all the others associated with the organisation. I'm fully back in work now hence why I haven't been for a while. Brilliant bunch of staff you have there.

'BEAT THE BLOCK' PLAYER



We were also happy continue building upon the success of our 'Beat the Block Coffee Afternoons'. These sessions offer people a safe space to socialise with others, speak about their mental health and enjoy a hot drink. We have continuously added new topics and themes to each session to engage participants and act as ice breakers, this has included quizzes, arts & crafts and board games.

HAYWARDS TRANSPORT KIT LAUNCH

Throughout the year, Walsall FC Foundation run numerous sessions every week to benefit the local community.

Ranging from youth sessions for disadvantaged youths, to walking football sessions for those aged 50+, we strive to ensure there is a session for everyone to benefit from.

Friend of the Foundation, Sean Hayward of Hayward Transport, has kindly offered support to these sessions by sponsoring a full custom Walsall FC kit for our participants to wear. These new kits will help our players further connect to Walsall FC and better allow them to represent the club at tournaments and events across the country.

It was great for Sean to visit us here at the stadium to meet some of our players and present the brand new kits at our weekly Beat the Block match, a mental health focused football session. Sean got involved in the highly competitive game learning what it's all about from our regulars and the positive impact sessions like this can have on people.

We sat down with Sean after the game to hear his thoughts on the project.

"It's great to be given a chance for Hayward Transport to get involved," he said.

"We understand how important mental health, physical health and sessions like this are to the community and wanted to help out."

"This session has really impressed me; we didn't completely know what to expect but the commitment, honesty and hard work was all there. We're really impressed with the guys from the Foundation and of course all the participants who get involved."

Health Manager Chris Springthorpe added: "We really appreciate the support being offered by Hayward Transport and the benefit it will bring to our participants."

"Being a part of the football club is what motivates and drives many of our players; it gives them even more sense of community. These new kits are going to further expand on that connection by enabling our participants to better represent Walsall FC."

"Our staff and players are already looking forward to using the kits at future competitions; we can't wait to get started."

Thank you again to Hayward Transport for their kind support, we hope to continue working together and benefiting the Walsall community.



We've had a great workout and fully intend to come down again and continue to support what we see as a great opportunity for Walsall Football Club and the local community



SEAN HAYWARD
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF HAYWARD TRANSPORT

SPORT

Throughout 2023, the Sport Department has continued to deliver its core programmes such as our Player Development Centres (PDC), MJPL squads and Match Day Experiences.

Within our PDC and MJPL Squads, we have made a number of additions to further support the players learning and aid the acceleration of their individual development. Players are now given Individual Learning Plan (ILP's), Player Reflection Reviews, as well as the standard face-to-face Progress Assessment twice per season.

2023 has also seen the introduction of Women's & Girls Development. The 2022/23 season has seen Walsall Women's 1st Team become a fully affiliated club under the Walsall FC umbrella for the first time. In partnership with the club, and backing and support of the owners Trivela, we have appointed a Women & Girls Development Officer. This gives us the opportunity to provide Women & Girls a platform and pathway to excel within the various programmes available to them, from Wildcats Centres, Grassroots Teams, Post 16 F&E, as well as potential opportunities to represent Walsall Women 1st Team.

September 2023 saw the biggest programme development in the shape of our Post 16 Football & Education Programme. For the first time we are in position to house all our students here at The Poundland Bescot Stadium, which gives us the opportunity to shape and grow the programme on a yearly basis. With funding received from the League Football Education (LFE), we will be able to further grow the workforce, make continual improvements and offer our students the best possible experience to excel.



2023 has seen continual growth and built upon the foundations, high standards and success of 2022 within the Sport Department. This growth has enabled us to increase opportunities, as well as providing quality provision and experience for all our participants to enjoy and thrive

MARC WILKES
SPORT MANAGER



MATCHDAY EXPERIENCES

Through our Matchday Experiences we are happy to welcome in hundreds of guests to every Walsall FC home game each season. Local junior teams, and groups schools are able to come down to the Poundland Bescot Stadium to participate in various activities including; Match Visits, Festivals, Flag Bearers and Ball Assistants.

This is a great opportunity for children and their families to experience a live match day at an affordable rate thanks to our discounted ticket offers. All opportunities also include complimentary tickets for participants and a number of accompanying adults.

192

GROUPS WELCOMED

5829

TOTAL MATCH TICKETS PROVIDED

2223

PARTICIPANTS

2702

ADDITIONAL ADULT TICKETS

904

ADDITIONAL JUNIOR TICKETS



Another two of our teams have had a brilliant day at the Walsall FC Foundation today! All the lads enjoyed the day and we're proud to say all were excellent ambassadors for our club. Huge thanks to the Walsall FC Foundation, amazing hosts as always!

CRADLEY TOWN
LOCAL JUNIOR TEAM



POST 16 FOOTBALL EDUCATION

On completion of our application, due diligence and quality assurance site visits, the League Football Education (LFE) accepted our application and agreed to fund Post 16 student places from September 2023. Up until this point, we had a very positive and successful partnership with Walsall College, in which we provided the delivery of the Football within the Post 16 Football & Education Programme. However, when LFE approached us in 2022 with the proposition of them becoming our primary education funding partner, it was too good of an opportunity to turn down.

We are now in a position where we are able to offer students the unique experience and opportunity to study, train and play at a Professional Football Club, here at The Poundland Bescot Stadium. Within this first year of delivery, we have a cohort of 18 students, all of which are studying the 2 year BTEC Level 3 in Sports Coaching and Development course. Alongside their studies, all students also have the opportunity to train and be coached at a high level, as well as representing Walsall FC Foundation in the EFL CEFA League. Additional opportunities including Strength & Conditioning Gym Sessions, Match Analysis Reflection, Volunteer and Work Placement opportunities. 2024 will see us more than double the cohort of students up to 40, as well as growing the Post 16 further by providing Girls Post 16 provision, which will also be essential pathway within our Women & Girls Development.



It's great working with the staff and students at Walsall FC Foundation. The staff have a genuine drive for quality education, and supporting students in their learning journey. We have seen so many early successes already in our exciting partnership

MATT DORGAN

LFE STUDY PROGRAMME REGIONAL OFFICER



EFL CEFA LEAGUE

Students represent Walsall FC Foundation in the EFL CEFA League every week. We compete against other professional clubs, in the coming season we will have a second squad.



My educational goal is to try and get more merits and hopefully a distinction. So it improves my chances of going to America to study at university. My main goal is to study football media. To do this I will have to work a lot harder and use my brain more by putting much more detail in my assignments.

POST 16 STUDENT

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

Being based at the stadium, and our close links with the club allow us to provide unique experiences to our students.

In addition to regular studies and weekly games, further opportunities are made available including Strength & Conditioning Gym Sessions, Match Analysis Reflection, Volunteer and Work Placements.



BEN LANE

Ben Lane is a student within our Post 16 programme and started his Journey with us as a participant on our weekly Saturday Club activities. These are fun casual football sessions for children of all abilities looking to build upon their interest. From here Ben's enthusiasm toward the sport began to increase further, he quickly became a regular participant within our holiday camps taking place during school breaks.

Football was a way for him to meet new friends while also incrementally improving his ability in the game.

His time from age 9 to 12 at Walsall FC allowed Ben to find a place of belonging that was irreplaceable, enjoying his experience at the club fuelled his desire to go a step further and earn his place among our Talented & Gifted Programme and MJPL squads.

The Walsall FC Foundation Talented & Gifted Development Centres are football sessions coached in an exclusive environment by professional coaches, these offer an accelerated pathway to improving young players football ability. Our Under 11 to Under 16 age groups are then able to compete in the Midland Junior Premier League. Ben maintained his place within our squads right up to the conclusion of the Under 16 season.

Still greatly enjoying his time playing football under the Foundations Guidance, and now interested in pursuing a career in sport, it was a natural transition for Ben to enrol into our Post 16 Football & Education Programme.

"Within my course I'm aiming to reach a distinction so it can set me up nicely towards a career in sport, there's also apprenticeships at Walsall FC Foundation which is a great option if I do well in my BTECs"

Ben is now also a qualified referee thanks to his efforts beyond his time at Walsall FC, further gaining experience and knowledge in the game. His mother added the following;

"Walsall has given Ben the opportunity to improve his game both on and off the pitch. It has improved his self confidence, social skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. Ben has now qualified as a referee and is often one of the officials for the academy games."

It has been great seeing Ben develop as both a person and a player over the past 10 years. His aspirations and enthusiasm toward the sport have never wavered as he continues to demonstrate a positive work ethic and attitude. We hope to further act as an integral part of his journey moving forward.



I love my time with Walsall, it's a great club. There's always been a clear pathway for me to progress down that I hope to continue working towards. I also hope to land an apprenticeship here after Post 16

BEN LANE
POST 16 STUDENT

ENGAGEMENT

Our Engagement Department had a very positive impact through its programmes during 2023. Throughout the year we have supported the most deprived areas within Walsall by making our activities accessible for them. Across Community Core offers, we have found out 82% of participants join us from high IMD areas (Index of Multiple Deprivation)

This year was a continuation of our partnership with Walsall Council delivering the Holiday Activity and Food programme. Local families can access free activities during the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays, while receiving a free hot meal every day. Our HAF programme is delivered here at the Poundland Bescot Stadium and St Giles Church of England Primary School. In 2023 we delivered 28 Days of HAF Football/Multi skill Camps, engaging with 245 young people and providing 772 meals.



Our goal is to enhance the accessibility of football and sports in Walsall, promoting physical and mental wellbeing for all. By breaking down barriers and promoting inclusivity, we aspire to create a healthier, happier community where everyone can thrive through the power of sports participation.

MARTIN MANLEY
ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

During October Half term, One Walsall have received £30,000 of funding from NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board to be distributed in the form of small grants of up to £1,000 to be used to tackle health inequalities. We engaged with 100 families through our HAF programme to continue to providing experiences to children and their families that will benefit their health and wellbeing. The biggest impact was children and young people making new connections with other children. New friendships have been formed for many children on HAF which has improved their confidence and self-esteem.

We also continued our Homeserve Holiday and Play programme during the February / Easter and Whitsun school holidays. We delivered 10 days of Holiday and Play, engaging with 79 young people, young people in social care, young people with SEND and raising children's mental health and wellbeing with Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, community reflections team.

2050
PARTICIPANTS SEEN

4884
HOURS COACHED

1200
FREE PLACES PROVIDED



Just want to say I think the club is absolutely great in the holidays. Thank you for giving us the opportunity and hope we will see you again soon!"

HAF PARTICIPANT'S PARENT



PREMIER LEAGUE KICKS

PL Kicks is one of the Premier League's Flagship programmes, to inspire children in some of the highest needs areas in England and Wales. It gives young people the opportunity to access free football sessions and workshops, providing them with opportunities and pathways to fulfil their potential. This year we have delivered 310 Kicks sessions, engaging with 579 participants, 12% were female, 62% were aged 14+ and 10% were participants with disabilities. To support our Kicks offer we continue accessing support from Youth Connect and bringing mentorship for our Foundation staff, guidance, and a general positive influence to our sessions. We also formed a new partnership with Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, supporting the wellbeing of our participants through surveys and signpost support.



310 SESSIONS
DELIVERED

579 PARTICIPANTS
ENGAGED

10% WITH A
DISABILITY



Since attending PL Kicks sessions I have joined a grass roots team in the local area and made lots of new friends. I feel more confident and happy and look forward to coming to sessions every week!

KICKS PARTICIPANT



NATIONAL WINNERS

On Wednesday 26th July we took our participants, who won the regional competition in February, to the nation Kicks cup finals, where our participants won and became PL Kicks cup champions for 2023!



We picked our participants based on their resilience and application shown across the PL Kicks provision and we were lucky enough to be able to highlight this by advancing from the regional to the national finals and exceeding everybody's expectations.

DAN JONES
ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

STREET GAMES SUPPORT

As part of the Sport for Development Coalition, StreetGames has commissioned 220 organisations nationally, 28 across the West Midlands and 3 in Walsall. Walsall FC Foundation are one of those organisations to deliver mentoring through sports to those young people who are involved in crime, anti-social behaviour and serious violence. Since January we have received 32 referrals into the programme.



WALSALL FC FOUNDATION HONoured FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY WORK

Walsall FC Foundation have received a national award for our work supporting young people who are at risk of falling into the criminal justice system.

Walsall FC Foundation is this year's winner of the StreetGames Community Safety Award, which recognises individuals or organisations who have gone above and beyond to create safer and more inclusive spaces within their localities.

Staff within the Engagement Department have worked tirelessly to develop new interventions to support vulnerable young people and have done some outstanding work to enhance the local community's safety and reduce the likelihood of vulnerable young people being involved in violence and crime.

In November 2019, the Foundation received funds from the Premier League Charitable Fund but initially struggled to engage young people from the immediate vicinity. Undeterred, the Foundation accessed support via StreetGames to develop referral pathways in and out of the provisions we set up to help guide young people in the local area towards the support they need.

In 2020, utilising the learning and support from StreetGames, the Foundation successfully applied for a Sport Diversionary Inclusion Programme fund to provide activities and mentoring for at risk young people.

Initially, numbers from the local area were low, and the 14+ cohort was not engaging. So, we formed a partnership with a local youth and community organisation called Youth Connect, which had been working in the heart of the local area for several years and had developed considerable trust with local young people by delivering detached, outreach and centre-based youth work. Through this partnership, youth workers worked alongside Walsall FC coaches to deliver doorstep sports sessions for young people in the local area.

In 2021 and 2022, we received further funding from StreetGames via the local VRU contract, which led to the development of the Walsall Violence Prevention & Sport Programme in 2022-23. This programme saw 4 local groups, including Youth Connect and ourselves, working across Palfrey, Caldmore and Pleck to develop secondary-level interventions for young people vulnerable to entering the Youth Justice System and being involved in violence. The programme led to a nearly 100% increase in weekly doorstep sports sessions across the Local Authority, going from just 15 to 29, and a 250% increase in intentionally designed targeted secondary work from 4 to 14 weekly sessions. The Foundations work and partnership work was central to this programme's success.



The work that Walsall FC Foundation are doing to support young people in the local community is a brilliant example of the difference sport can make, bringing people together and providing positive role models and support for young people

MARK LAWRIE
STREET GAMES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PLAYER APPEARANCES

We continued working alongside Walsall FC to get players engaging with the local community and using their presence to make a positive impact. Across 2023 we have completed over 150 player appearances and look forward to facilitate more in 2024.

Walsall FC Player Manny Monthe won the PFA's Community Player the Season Award to conclude the 2022/23 season thanks to his positive involvement with disadvantaged youth. On multiple occasions the player volunteered himself forward to speak with participants and share his past experiences, once again we would like to thank Manny for his continued support of the Foundation.



FOUNDATION MASCOTS

Every season Walsall FC Foundation is able to offer many deserving children the opportunity to walk out onto the stadium pitch as our Community Mascots!

The initiative identifies deserving participants and is made possible by our friends at Free Kicks Foundation. Their charity provides football related activities for ill, bereaved and disadvantaged children, giving them a day to remember at their favourite football club.



"Free Kicks is such a brilliant idea and one we just had to link with. Our work, across Walsall, leads us to identify appropriate participants across the whole season and it always makes us feel so pleased and humbled to be able to offer these opportunities to children and families.

ADAM DAVY
FOUNDATION DIRECTOR

ALFIE DONNELLY



We first met 10-year-old Walsall fan Alfie in special circumstances along with his friend, six-year-old Grimsby Town fan Reggie. Both children unfortunately suffer from complex heart conditions with them undergoing multiple high-risk surgeries and continuously fighting for their lives. For the Walsall FC V Grimsby Town fixture we offered a unique opportunity to bring Alfie and Reggie together through the sport, and with the teams they love. The two boys walked out onto the stadium pitch with their respective teams. Thanks to Free Kicks Foundation Alfie represented Walsall FC in his brand-new home kit!

Alfie's mother told us: "Alfie has always been one of kind with a complex heart condition, our cardiac consultant said she's never seen anything like it in 22 years. Research has just started into this condition but it's still at the very beginning with only two centres world wide offering the specialist scan, but no treatment is available."

"After many conversations between the cardiac team, a difficult decision was made for Alfie to undergo his fourth open heart surgery. Despite the anticipated risks, Alfie has amazed surgeons with his recovery while keeping in high spirits as he continues valiantly fighting."

Alfie's Mother, Claire, sits as the Chair of Trustees for the charity Young at Heart. Founded in 1982, the organisation offer help and support to families of babies and children diagnosed with heart defects. All these children and their families have spent many weeks/months in hospital undergoing major heart surgery. Some children have had numerous operations throughout their short lives. Sadly, some do not survive and for others their only hope is a heart transplant. Young at Heart provide a critical support line and network with regular ward visits, telephone support line and parents social forum groups, for parents during their time in hospital with their sick child but also when at home.

We have since developed a great relationship with Young at Heart and have invited many more children from the charity to follow Alfie in becoming Walsall FC Mascots. We look forward to welcoming more families to the stadium thanks to Free Kicks Foundation and putting smiles on deserving children's faces.



I'm a father and some of my players are too, seeing the smile on Alfie's face is exactly what we want to give to our children

MAT SADLER
WALSALL FC MANAGER

THE YEAR AHEAD

STAFFING – As with 2023, we expect to grow the Foundation workforce over the next 12 months. CPD and training opportunities for all staff we ensure that our workforce remains motivated and qualified to deliver high quality provision across the Borough.

HEALTH – A number of new delivery programmes are expected to be delivered across 2024 thanks to new funding streams. This will include the Joy of Moving, a children’s healthy lifestyle provision, and our Sky Bet Building Foundations project that will help support adult employment.

SPORT – We are excited to have opportunities through 2024 to expand our BTEC Sport provision to field 2 boys teams (40 students) in the EFL CEFA league, and also, include a small cohort of girls on the programme which will also support plans to expand on our Women and Girls football offer.

EDUCATION – Growing our offer to local Primary and Secondary Schools remains a priority for 2024. This will include us ensuring maximum reach of our School Partner Programme, the School Partner Games, Premier League Primary Stars and our ever popular football festivals and competitions.

ENGAGEMENT – A new Alternative Provision programme is planned for 2024 which will see staff trained in Sports Mentoring and working within local schools to support students in education who need particular help and encouragement, using football as a vehicle for behaviour and attainment change.



PARTNERS



Professional Footballers' Association



SPONSORS AND FUNDING



MADE IN THE MIDLANDS



League Football Education

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NHS Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust



One Walsall



www.WalsallFCFoundation.com

