

This is the Knole Park chair's report for the season 2020/21

I took over the chair role from Willemijn last June just as we were returning to the hockey pitch after the first national lockdown for covid -19 was ending. It was wonderful to be back playing hockey after such an abrupt end to the previous season. We enjoyed many hours of mix in hockey at Knole Academy and 5 weeks of summer camps.

Our second season began in September in a similar fashion to how we had ended our first season with plenty of fast, skilful, creative and attacking hockey resulting in some notable scorelines. I will leave Duncan to elaborate further on the hockey side of things later in his director of coaching report.

Sadly, a second national lockdown in November and a third lockdown from January to March curtailed the hockey playing again but, not to be thwarted, Duncan embarked on a remarkable online training program and our members once more transformed their living rooms and gardens into mini arenas. Daily online strength and conditioning sessions and skills coaching, combined with weekly team skills session incorporating individual feedback gave enormous scope for technical improvements. A fitness program was set and weekly 3 K blast times submitted to gain team points. There were also webinars where technical skills and tactical team plays were analysed by watching footage of KP or European hockey.

During this period there were also other weekly team competitions and skill challenges to keep our members entertained and connected, including amongst others, another very successful and mouthwatering KP bake off, the keepie uppie challenge and the very popular balloon challenge.

It was with great excitement that we returned to the pitch again at the end of March and the success of the online program was evident with the quality of hockey and the fitness of the players as we embarked on a series of fun mix in matches and a hugely successful inter club summer league.

One of my main aims when I became chair was to try and help us become one of the strongest junior clubs in the country and this is already well on the road to being achieved with our under 14 and under 16 girls both in the semi -finals of the re-scheduled England Hockey cup. The under 14 boys and Women's 1st team are in their respective Plate semi-finals and the under 18 girls reached the ¼ finals. An incredible achievement after only 2 seasons (and both being cut short too).

This is true testament to the incredibly professional academy program that Duncan runs at KP. The quality of coaching, the low coach to player ratios at training, the access to GPS devices at training and matches, video analysis and regular individual feedback (written, verbal and videoed) clearly sets us apart from other clubs. Our teams are hugely successful and we produce extremely talented individuals who represent their county, Performance Centre or country and of course club with great triumph.

Another one of my aims was to maximise the social element of the club. Obviously this has been severely impacted by covid and so we have missed out on the fun and fundraising

opportunities of Hockeyfest, Christmas party, team socials, parent socials and end of season party. However, it was great to see a large crowd turn up to support our Women's 1's in their first round cup match against National premier league side East Grinstead. The camaraderie and enthusiasm of the parents and younger players was a delight to see. This is very much what I would like to happen more in the future with teams supporting each other and friendships between players and parents of different age groups blossoming.

Our recent innovation of Tuesday night back to hockey and adult session has been another personal highlight for me with parents playing together and learning to experience for the first time or the first time since school the pleasure their children can have on a hockey pitch. The added bonus of post training beer and social is also a welcome treat for all!

The happiness of our members is exceptionally important to us at KP and with this in mind we have now got a wellbeing team of 5 qualified welfare officers- Steve, Kelly, Josie, Willemijn and myself. We have a newly updated wellbeing policy and will be advising the membership shortly of some new initiatives in this respect.

Now a few important thank yous :-

Firstly, to the committee for their tireless support, hard work and commitment to helping KP thrive.

-To Nadia for her behind the scenes dedication to enrolling new members and sorting out membership queries.

-To Steve for the enormous amount of work he has put in to updating policies, club documents and the club constitution. The policies and procedures are in place for everybody's enjoyment and protection. Sadly there has been an unpleasant parental off pitch series of incidences which are now being resolved by England Hockey. Thankfully having these policies in place at club level has protected us and our members, and just highlights how important it is for everyone. All the policies have all been updated and are on the website for members to view and use as necessary.

-To Dale for all his hard work with the accounts and club payments. It has been difficult as a new club with no home pitch to balance the huge outgoings of pitch hire, the cost of equipment and the need to pay Duncan an appropriate fee for all his coaching and administrative work whilst providing affordable hockey for all our members.

- To Josie for her endless enthusiasm and positivity despite the lack of socials that have been allowed due to covid. She has also helped with valuable fundraising for the club with the Easyfundraising initiative and the ordering and sale of club merchandise.

-To Kelly for her efficient and reliable secretarial work that makes my life much easier. She completes the club's administration brilliantly, including finding new sponsors for the club. She also set up the crowdfunding page which raised the incredible £8870 to buy new indoor boards and help subsidise the summer program.

-To Adam for his fun and positivity on the committee, as well as his work in the umpiring and coaching pods. Due to work commitments Adam will sadly be stepping down from the committee next season but he will be continuing to help and support us as much as his time allows.

- To Duncan, our awesome director of coaching, for his unparalleled commitment and endless passion to helping every player achieve their potential.

Our reputation and profile over the last season has developed considerably, in no short measure due to the excellent social media presence we now have. A big thank you to Sarah for her hard work and innovative ideas that make our Instagram, Twitter and Facebook posts so enthralling. As a result of seeing our posts the English universities team contacted us about playing a match against our Women's 1's team which was a great occasion for all those involved. Many of our posts have been liked by England Hockey and used on their posts as well. England Hockey have also featured a detailed account of our online program on their website which is fantastic publicity for the club.

Katrin has continued to take high quality and exceptional action and team photos that feature prominently on our website, in the local press and on Social Media. A big thank you to Katrin for her many hours spent on the side lines capturing these magical moments.

The website administrators- Willemijn for keeping the website up to date and informative and Katrin for the amazing photos and Duncan for the excellent match reports

The umpires – Duncan, Adam, Charlotte, Sarah and Matt for giving up their time to umpire various junior and senior teams. Matches can't happen without umpires so this is an essential job so thank you.

Young leaders- In September we ran a second Young Leaders course to help develop future coaches and umpires. Many of the 20 participants have gone on to take umpiring and coaching qualifications online. A big thank you to Betrys, Kammy, Mackenzie, Jess, Charlotte, Josefina, Lottie, Anna, Katie, Pascale, Bea, Cordy, Grace and Camille who all regularly help out with junior sessions and help to inspire the next generation of superstars!

The managers- Thank you to Willimijin, Kelly, Stuart, Nadia, Helen, Steve and Jen who help chase sign ups, check availability, sort logistics, pass on information and help pitch side at matches to ensure each age group runs smoothly.

The coaches- As stated earlier Duncan is our amazing director of coaching and delivers exceptional game based sessions to every age group, but his job would not be possible without Adam, Matt, Sarah, Martha, Steve and LJ who volunteer their time to help with different age groups. They are all qualified teachers and / or coaches who bring a wealth of enthusiasm and experience to every session too. KP couldn't exist without you all so a massive thank you !

The sponsors- Nutshell- our brand new front of shirt sponsor and also Springbank for their continued support and to Burlanes who have joined the team this season. Thank you for your financial support which has been so valuable.

Thank you to the parents for endless journeys to training and matches, sideline support, signing your children up to events and your belief in the KP set up.

Thanks to the supporters – all 28 of you -those generous parents, friends and grandparents who want to be part of the club and share their children, grandchildren or partners hockey journey. We have loved having you all on board.

Finally thank you to the players – to have 189 playing members in our first two years is amazing - you are at the heart of KP and we are incredibly proud of all of you. We love that all our members are fully active and are accessing playing opportunities every week! Even after three lockdowns! Thank you for your energy, enthusiasm, commitment and brilliance!

I am incredibly proud to be the chair of such a forward thinking and successful club. What we have managed to achieve in such a short period of time is nothing short of a miracle. Thank you for joining us on our exciting journey and I hope that next season will be even better with fewer challenges, less interruptions and more wonderful hockey!