

WBCA LTD CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT – AGM FOR 2024

Although inflation came down in 2024, from the previous highs, utility costs remained relatively high and unpredictable as to what level would be imposed on the centre throughout the year.

However, as in previous years, the centre continues to obtain its energy via the Crown Procurement Service, a government body which bulk buys for government buildings, universities, charities and the like. This has continued to provide savings for this expenditure item.

This has meant that 2024 has mainly been another year of consolidation at the centre as regards 'in house' projects.

The general upkeep of the centre has continued with maintenance contracts and repairs carried out, where necessary.

This includes £4,500 spent on additional 'crumb' for the astro in August.

Statutory inspections and resulting comments have also been complied with and appropriate insurance policies continued.

The carpark extension, mentioned in the last statement, which was managed by Basildon Council and installed by their preferred contractor was finally completed in May. This has helped with parking issues at busy times but not to the extent originally hoped for, due to the reduced number of bays, noted in last year's statement, in the final layout.

Also highlighted in the last statement, a new tractor was delivered on the 10th January 2024. This was heavily subsidised via a grant of just under £28,000 (75%) from the Football Foundation.

The tractor and associated attachments have been widely used throughout the year to help maintain the football pitches, such as 'spiking' and to augment 3rd party maintenance of the astro surface.

In the office, the IT set-up is in the process of being upgraded. New network switches and telephone set up have been installed.

New PCs have been purchased and are in the process of being prepared for deployment as is a replacement printer.

The trustees are investigating replacing the sound panels in the main hall with quotes and suppliers being reviewed.

Trustees have continued to review how the space of the final old tennis court area can be best utilised.

Ideas, such as a paddle board court, have been discussed but the capital cost of such projects can't be justified by the likely return, unless substantial monetary assistance can be obtained for such a project.

With the bar fully closed, and the actual bar area closed off, use of the Community Lounge has been high with First Aid courses taking place and a number of companies using the space for their training courses amongst other hires.

This area is still used Tuesday to Thursday for bridge clubs as well.

Use of the centre, in general, has continued to be high, both indoor and outdoor, to the extent that waiting lists exist for some facilities at certain time periods.
Following on from 2023 the 5-A-Side astro cage has continued to be popular.

However, the main astro area still continues to be the biggest single source of revenue.

The list of hirers providing classes, such as dance, martial arts, and other activities, and services, such as dog grooming, has remained steady throughout 2024.

NHS blood donation continue to use the centre, as do other outside groups, such as, Billericay Striders who have their base at the centre.
Hannakins Farm senior and youth football clubs also continue to be based at the centre.

A full list of activities and facilities available at the centre can be found on the web site along with a current news page.

So as noted in previous statements, the future of the centre continues to look positive on the bookings and use side and is now helped by slightly lower utility costs, compared to recent years.

Finally, Trustees would like to put on record their thanks for the continued excellent running of the centre by the manager and her staff.