

Annual Report May 2022



# WIMBLEDON IN SPORTING HISTORY

A Living History



Preserving and promoting Wimbledon's  
unique sporting heritage

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# WELCOME TO WiSH

We are delighted to welcome you to Wimbledon in Sporting History, which – after three years – is now established as a dynamic and successful, fully registered sporting heritage charity here in south west London.

In our Annual Report, we want to share with you our vision, our record and our plans to preserve, promote and celebrate the rich history of numerous sports which have their roots in Wimbledon – but with a particular focus on the quite incredible history of football in our local community over more than 130 years... a story we like to bill as “The Greatest Story in Football”!

In just a very short few years, WiSH has expanded from being a small band of dedicated sporting heritage enthusiasts to become a thriving charity of almost 40 volunteers all committed to shaping and sharing Wimbledon’s rich sporting history...and doing so without being paid or even claiming personal expenses. We believe we are doing something right: our attrition rate is only 2%.

Our creative WiSH business model has demonstrated what we can do with just £5,000 and a few dozen volunteers – including building, furnishing and operating a brand new museum in London. Our 2022/2023 Business Plan looks at generating over £250,000 from 12 different revenue streams. These numbers show we need to grow the team, so we would love to hear from you!

We have an exciting story to tell – and we hope that you will enjoy reading all about it in the pages ahead. We hope too that you will be inspired to learn more about our local sporting heritage, and to support WiSH as it continues to grow and expand in its ambitions to share Wimbledon’s fascinating sporting history with our local communities, with sports fans generally, and with visitors from much further afield wanting to discover some great historical treasures and stories in this corner of south west London.

Do enjoy – and thank you for your interest in Wimbledon in Sporting History!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael".

**Michael Padmanathan**  
WiSH Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Lynch".

**John Lynch**  
WiSH Managing Director

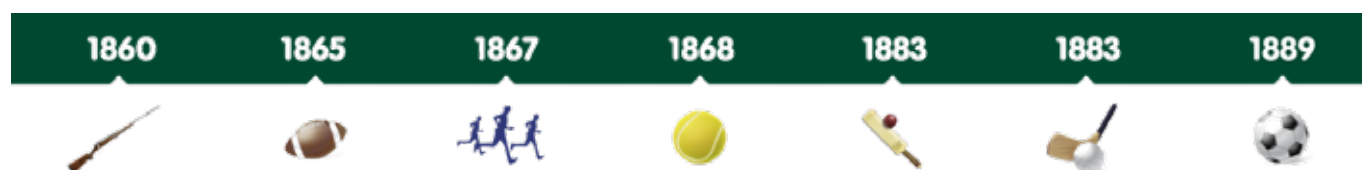




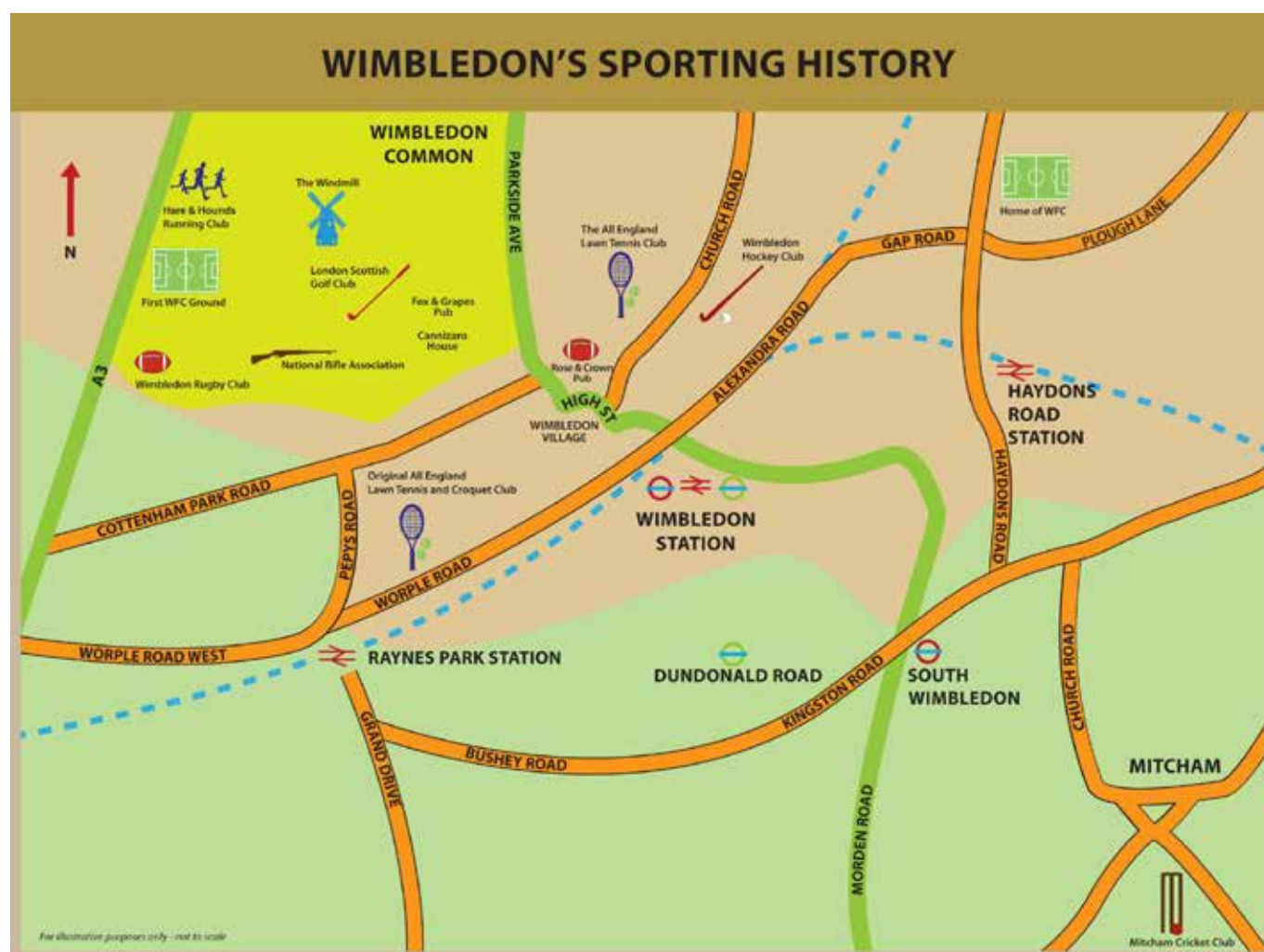


# WIMBLEDON'S SPORTING HISTORY

A number of different sports have fascinating roots in and around Wimbledon Common, dating back to the mid-19th century.



Shooting, long distance running, hockey, rugby, cricket, tennis and football - all have stories to tell in their origins in Wimbledon long before transforming into global sports.



Details of Wimbledon's unique sporting history landscape can be found on the WiSH website at <https://wimbledoninsportinghistory.org/overview/>

# THE WiSH MISSION

WiSH's central aim is to safeguard, curate, celebrate and showcase Wimbledon's sporting heritage and its associated cultural stories.



WiSH was founded in 2019 after extensive market analysis and became a fully registered charity in the summer of 2021, committed to sharing and celebrating the heritage of football and other sports in the London boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth.

A member of Sporting Heritage, WiSH is an independent organisation but is closely affiliated with AFC Wimbledon with whom it works to help record and promote “the greatest story in football”.

WiSH was in the making for a number of years, driven by Wimbledon sporting enthusiasts who are also mainly fans of AFC Wimbledon. The rich history of sporting stories in the local area was captured in the 2012 book and film

“Common Ground”, first screened at the Wimbledon Odeon, which sowed the seeds for the formation of Wimbledon in Sporting History.

WiSH is deeply rooted in the local community but keen to help put Wimbledon and Wandsworth on the wider London tourist map.

The new football stadium in Plough Lane is at the heart of WiSH's work. It presents an exciting opportunity to produce a creative, artistic hub and dynamic community centre in south west London for the benefit of all. It is a perfect fit for WiSH's goal of creating a living history – celebrating Wimbledon's past in a way that keeps it live, fresh and constantly updated.





# THE WISH TEAM



A highly experienced and complementary management team is responsible for managing an operational team of approximately 40 volunteers. With backgrounds in the commercial and charity sectors, finance, the media, and a number of other fields, it is a strong team with decades of experience to bring to WiSH, ensuring clear and decisive leadership.

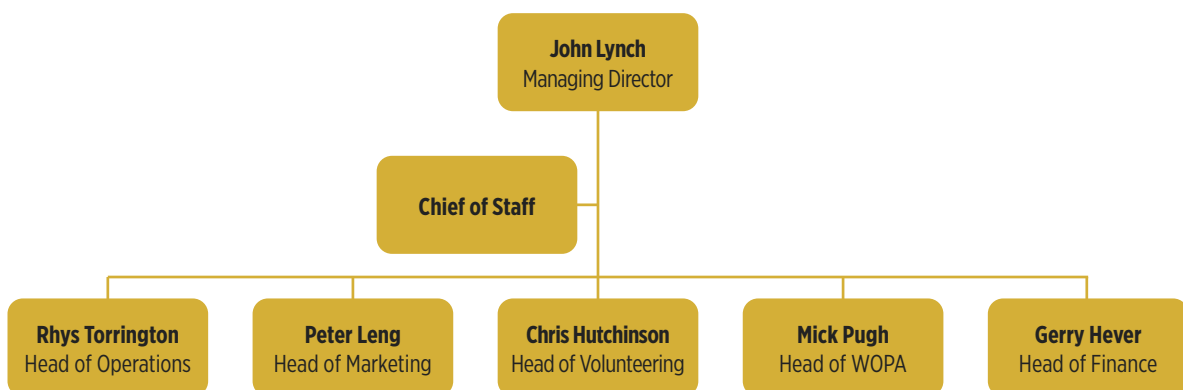
A board of five Trustees oversees the charity's operational work with defined and distinct responsibilities, ensuring due diligence and full compliance in all areas.

The management structure of WiSH has been reorganised recently to make it more streamline and efficient. Michael Padmanathan has stood down as Managing Director to be Chairman of the Board – while John Lynch, who has been working closely with Michael since 2019, takes over as Managing Director leading our newly designed operational project-led organisation. This is ideal as John is instrumental in creating and driving through new projects. John will be supported by five Management team members and a Chief of Staff. WiSH's heritage work is supported and

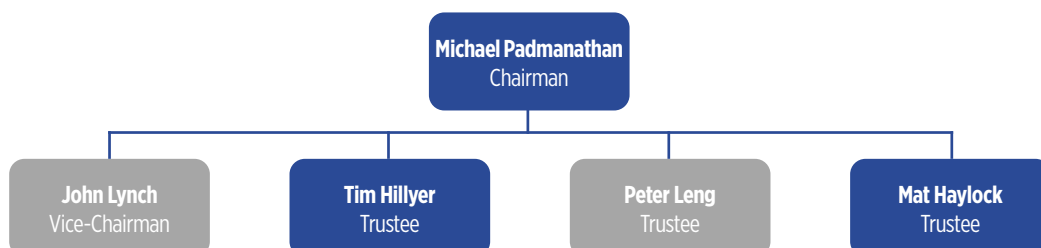
promoted by a number of leading figures from the local community and sporting world:

Maureen Batsford (President)  
Dickie Guy (Vice President)  
Barry Briggs (Vice President)  
Mark Robinson (Ambassador)  
Terry Brown (Ambassador)  
John Scales (Ambassador)  
Will Nightingale (Ambassador)  
Terry Gibson (Ambassador)  
Mike Kelly (Ambassador)  
John Martin (Ambassador)  
Ian Cooke (Ambassador)  
Erik Samuelson (Ambassador)

## The Operational Organisation



## The Board



# VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering is the lifeblood of WiSH, with some 40 committed volunteers ensuring the charity delivers for incredible value on its pledge to preserve and promote Wimbledon's sporting heritage. No wages, commissions or fees are paid, and expenses are not claimed.

Our volunteers work across the heritage field: as museum hosts, stadium tour guides, curators, archivists, historians, project managers, and fundraisers – as well as all the vital support work needed to sustain our operations in finance, administration, marketing, and so much more.

WiSH can only operate thanks to the extraordinary and selfless dedication of its hardworking and talented volunteers – our greatest asset.

## WiSH Volunteer Hours and Financial Value

	Volunteer Hours	Financial Value
2019	2,358	£42,500
2020	2,622	£47,080
2021	8,099	£137,816*
2022 (Jan/Feb)	1,133	£20,210
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,212</b>	<b>£247,606</b>

\* Includes £2921 in unclaimed expenses

In order to calculate a financial parallel, hourly rates below have been used – though these in no way reflect the actual worth of each volunteer's input:

£20 per hour for a management role

£10 per hour for a non-management role

These hourly rates used in the WiSH accounting policies are significantly lower than the market rate. The principle we use is: if we were going to pay someone for their time and work, what would be that fee? For our calculation purposes, we adopt a prudent approach - which has the significant benefit of opening the door for match funding.

We are always keen to welcome new volunteers - so if you would like to get involved in our exciting work to promote Wimbledon in Sporting History, please do get in touch with us at: [chris@wimbledoninsportinghistory.org](mailto:chris@wimbledoninsportinghistory.org)







# ACHIEVEMENTS 2021

**2021 marked a year of significant achievements for Wimbledon in Sporting History, with major successes including:**

## **Registered charity status:**

full recognition from the Charity Commission in July 2021



**New museum:** a new exhibition space ("The Greatest Story") opened in September 2021, securing recognition and membership of the Museums Association (see page 10/11)



**Stadium tours:** WiSH guided tours of the Plough Lane stadium launched in October 2021



**Crowdfunding:** a major fundraising campaign successfully completed for a major heritage timeline project at the football stadium



**Honours boards:** installing at the stadium Wimbledon's old honours' boards from the old Plough Lane ground, Selhurst Park and Kingsmeadow



**WiSH website:** our new comprehensive website was launched in September 2021 - [wimbledoninsportinghistory.org](http://wimbledoninsportinghistory.org)



**Community outreach:** engaging effectively with our local communities, as at Merton's Heritage Day in August 2021



# ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

2022 sees us continuing the positive record of 2021, with the launch of a number of new (and old!) exciting heritage installations and projects at AFC Wimbledon's stadium:



**Heritage timeline:** a visual timeline of football in Wimbledon from its origins in 1889 to football's return to Plough Lane in 2020.

**Allen Batsford tribute:** a display dedicated to Wimbledon FC's great 1970's manager who secured Wimbledon's entry into the Football League in 1977.



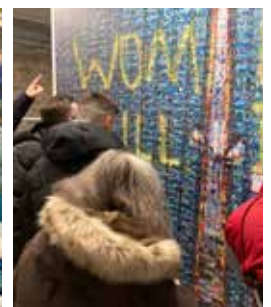
**Original 1912 turnstile:** from the old Plough Lane stadium installed next to the new electronic ones in the West Stand of the new stadium.



**Fans' photo mosaic:** a stunning mural recreating - through thousands of fans' photos from over the decades - the iconic image of the graffiti'd locked gates at the old Plough Lane stadium. In the West Stand.



**We are Winners Walls:** eye-catching ceiling to floor images celebrating some of Wimbledon's great football successes from 1963 through to 2016.



**Enhanced mosaic mural** of the old Plough Lane gates, including hundreds more fans' photos, with a heritage timeline bordering it. In the East Stand.



**Oral Memory Capture Project:** a major project ("Wombles from the Lane"), in partnership with digital-works, to record the recollections of generations of Wimbledon fans - shared in a film documentary in May 2022.





# “THE GREATEST STORY IN FOOTBALL”



WiSH is particularly proud of “The Greatest Story” exhibition room – our museum which opened on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2021 at the AFC Wimbledon Stadium.

This space is dedicated to sharing what we believe to be the greatest story in the world’s most popular sport, football, played out here in Wimbledon – celebrating the unique rise TWICE from non-league to full Football League status of Wimbledon FC and then AFC Wimbledon.

The TGS room, or museum, is the jewel in our heritage crown and is the result of months of careful preparation and planning, and then a summer of incredibly hard work by WiSH volunteers to furnish and finish the museum space.

Donated carpet tiles were fitted and walls painted by volunteers, before extremely heavy display units were brought in from all over the country – donated by the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Children’s Museum, and Leicester Cathedral among others. It was backbreaking

work by a brilliant team of volunteers to have the building blocks in place for establishing Wimbledon’s first predominantly football museum.

WiSH has accumulated an estimated £1 million in sporting memorabilia, much of which is now showcased in our museum and other displays around the football stadium. The displays include the many historical items belonging to Wimbledon FC, retrieved for the local community by the London Borough of Merton in 2007.

The Greatest Story museum is situated off the club shop in the AFC Wimbledon stadium – and is well worth a visit!







WiSH was delighted to appoint Rebecca Hamlin to be manager of the new museum, bringing with her over ten years' experience in arts management, events and operations (including at the Barbican Centre and Design Museum). Rebecca transformed a large rather ramshackle collection of memorabilia and artefacts into a well organised, carefully logged but visually exciting and thoroughly immersive exhibition space.





# PROJECTS DIARY

WiSH has a number of exciting plans for 2022 and 2023 to further celebrate Wimbledon's rich sporting history. Here are some key dates for many of the projects in our pipeline:

**May 2022:** installing in the stadium the iconic old blue, graffiti'd Plough Lane gates – bringing them back to Plough Lane!

**May 15:** One Club Family/Heritage Day at AFC Wimbledon stadium

launch on May 15 of the “Wombles from the Lane” film of fans’ memories

launch on May 15 of [Wombles CD](#) with three brand new songs, featuring the Wombles Choir

**May 22:** 150 Years of Sport on Wimbledon Common – a celebration, with the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators, of the many different sports which have their roots on our local common.

**May 22/ongoing:** Community Heritage Plaque Trail - 100 heritage points of interest across the boroughs of Wandsworth, Merton and Kingston

**July 10: Heritage Day** (marking 20 years since AFC Wimbledon's first game)

installing on July 10 three statues in the stadium precinct area: football (Allen Batsford), speedway (Ronnie Moore),

Womble (Orinoco statue/Wombles Bench)

**July 8-10:** staging of “A Fans Club” play by AFCW fan and WiSH volunteer, Matt Couper

**July 10:** book launch of updated publications of Niall Couper's two great histories of football in Wimbledon

**July 10:** WiSH to be part of Wandle Wombles Eco group to clean and maintain stadium area and installations made of recycled materials

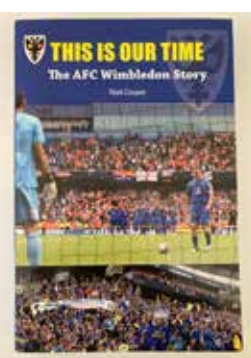
**August 20:** Merton Heritage Day – WiSH will again be celebrating our sporting heritage with our local community

**September 5:** “Batsford Boys” Dinner (ticketed event), to mark the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wimbledon FC's election to the Football League

**Summer/Autumn 2022:** launch of Greyhound Racing history film and installation of famous Mick the Miller greyhound mosaic in Greyhound Parade

**Autumn 2022,** plan to establish a WiSH sports learning/ research/library resource room at AFC Wimbledon stadium

**Late 2022:** Virtual Museum: staged development from later 2022 of a WiSH virtual experience to complement our physical displays at the football stadium





# WOMBLING WISH

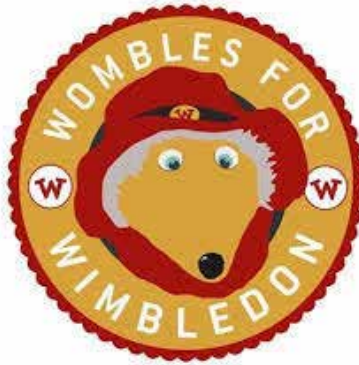
Wimbledon in Sporting History is proud to be closely tied with the very public and famous history of The Wombles in Wimbledon – cementing again historical sporting and cultural ties for our local community.

WiSH has established close links with the family of Elizabeth Beresford, the creator of the Wombles in her books from 1968 and the 1970s television series, and it has embraced the green credentials of our furry friends in our business plans and heritage installations around the Wimbledon football stadium.

The first football Womble appeared in 1975 at Elland Road for Wimbledon FC's FA Cup match against Leeds United, creating the Wombling bond which has remained ever since. Wandle and Haydon Wombles joined the clan in later years and were seen together for the first time at Merton's Heritage Day in August 2021, while the original Orinoco Womble was on hand for the grand opening of The Greatest Story exhibition room in September 2021.

In 2022, WiSH is spearheading four projects putting the

Wombles firmly at the heart of our heritage and other work around the Plough Lane stadium in Wimbledon:



[Wombles from the Lane](#) – The fans memory capture film

[Wombles Choir](#) - Recording of our charity CD single

[Wombles Plaza](#) - The installation of a bench and Womble statue on Plough Lane

[Wandles Wombles](#) - The creation of an eco group looking after the stadium and surrounding area.

WiSH is committed to putting the environment and green objectives at the heart of our charitable work, with planned heritage sculptures being made from recycled wood and metal.

WiSH will be working on the various Wombles projects in partnership with the Beresford Family, Wombles LTD, Wombles for Wimbledon – as well as Merton and Wandsworth Councils' heritage departments, Galliards, AFC Wimbledon and its Foundation, and the Dons Trust Board.





# WIMBLEDON OLD PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

The Wimbledon Old Players Association (WOPA) is a not for profit organisation, allowing former Wimbledon FC and AFC Wimbledon players to stay in touch with one another, whilst keeping them aware of events happening at AFC Wimbledon and throughout the community of Wimbledon.

WOPA forms part of WiSH, encouraging former players and managers to contribute to and be part of the heritage of football in Wimbledon. Many ex-players have donated playing kits, winners medals and other items to WiSH to exhibit in The Greatest Story museum and display units around

the stadium. Our history makers are helping to preserve and celebrate the history they've created, and many of them are now also WiSH Ambassadors to promote this heritage.



WOPA maintains a database for WiSH and AFC Wimbledon but also for the benefit of players and their families to stay in touch. The players themselves benefit in a number of ways, keeping in contact with each other, renewing old friendships but most importantly receiving support in times of need. Many members require support due to old age, loneliness and, all too commonly, dementia.





# IN MEMORY OF DAVE WILLIS

No one perhaps epitomises more what WiSH stands for and works for than one former Wimbledon FC legend of the great 1963 FA Amateur Cup winning team, Dave Willis, who passed away in April 2022. Mick Pugh, who runs the Wimbledon Old Players Association, was a close friend of Dave's, and remembers a Wimbledon sporting great who gave back to the very history that he helped create:

"Dave was enormously proud of his time at Wimbledon and commented in a video interview I did with him, almost in disbelief: 'I'm actually part of the club's history'. Many years ago, Dave presented me with his entire 1963 Wembley Kit and said: 'Mick, sell this when you want and raise some money for the club'. I refused and said: 'I promise you Dave, that when we get our own museum, it will be the very first thing you see as you enter'.

Well, here he is in September 2021, pictured in our "TGS Museum" proudly standing next to that very same kit, which had been under a plastic cover in my wardrobe waiting for this day. His first words when he visited the museum and saw his old kit? 'Mick, you kept your promise'.

Dave thoroughly enjoyed every moment he spent as a Wimbledon player and was justly proud of the attention he and his team mates receive in the TGS Museum at Plough Lane. He believed passionately in the work of Wimbledon in Sporting History, and indeed became a WiSH ambassador to help promote the cause of preserving and celebrating Wimbledon's rich footballing history. He was a keen participant in Merton's Heritage Day at the Merton Civic Centre in August 2021, teaming up with a more recent Wimbledon FC legend, the 1988 FA Cup goalkeeping hero Dave Beasant, having his photo taken with Dave B and the FA Cup, and the many members of the public and fans who wanted to hear more about the club's great moments of the past.

Dave's contribution to WiSH was immense. He couldn't do enough for a cause which became very close to his heart. Shortly before he passed away, Dave commented: "I love what WiSH have created and I'm honoured to be part of it. We had a couple of functions after winning the 63 FA Amateur Cup, then nothing official – until WiSH came along and contacted me".

Dave was the personification of WiSH's "living history", and all at WiSH are desperately sad at losing a great friend, a passionate advocate and supporter of WiSH's heritage work – and one of the greats of Wimbledon's footballing history.

RIP Dave Willis, 15.09.1941 – 13.04.2022





# BUSINESS PLAN

WiSH is embarking on Phase 3 of its three-and-a-half-year existence.

## Phase 1

01/19 – 10/21

Start up Phase – to launch TGSR

## Phase 2

11/21 – 05/22

Audits undertaken – 8 workstreams for Compliance. Operational efficiencies identified. New roles identified.

## Phase 3

From 06/22

Business as Usual (BAU) – 2022/2023 Business Plan, Target Operating Model (TOM), New Organisations with more accountability and structure.

Phases 1 and 2 were done under the stewardship of Michael Padmanathan as Managing Director. It was all hands-on deck as the WiSH team opened The Greatest Story Room at Plough Lane in eight weeks. The following six months were spent getting the organisation ready to meet the goals of the 2022/2023 Business Plan. The main tasks completed were as follows:

**1. The 2022 and 2023 Business Plan with a goal to raise over a quarter of a million pounds from 12 revenue streams**

**2. A new Target Operating Model (streamlining processes within WiSH and with our partners whilst enabling Departmental responsibility and accountability)**

**3. Creation of a secure, centrally held Memorabilia and Old Players' Databases**

**4. Secure Cloud based infrastructure to support internal workflows (e.g. email, document repositories)**

**5. New accounting software and a robust but pragmatic Financial Controls Policy**

**6. DBS checks and FA Safeguarding course undertaken by all Management Team Members**

To get us ready for scale, we needed to streamline the organisation so that The Managing Director should have a maximum of 5 reports (as opposed to 9 to date) and be supported by a Chief of Staff. Moreover, the Board would need at least 60% of people who are non-operational so that they can govern effectively. This number will increase as WiSH matures.

The Board will also support the Operational Organisation by providing "Feasibility Studies" on potential new projects to the Operational Team, which will become a project led organisation focusing on projects in the short term (the next 12 months from May 2022).





# WISH IN NUMBERS

## The Volunteer Spirit



**37**

Inducted  
Volunteers



**8,099**

Volunteer  
hours donated  
in 2021



**6**

Strong Management  
team



**26**

Founding  
Members



**35**

Heritage displays/  
installations at  
Plough Lane

## Financial Snapshots

**£10k**

Revenue from  
memberships

**£5k**

Approximate cost to  
open the exhibition

**£25k**

from private  
sponsors

**£300k+**

Value of  
pro-bono contributions

**£1m+**

Estimated value of  
memorabilia



## Other Funding

**£60k**

HLF grant  
to build  
Memory Project

**£7k**

Grant to build a  
digital sporting  
game

**£2k**

Heritage Compass  
Bursary grant  
approved

**£2.5k**

Grant awarded  
by True Volunteer  
Foundation

**£10k**

p.a. - from  
private sponsors



All information as at May 2022. The WiSH accounts are due later this year. Updated information will be published thereafter



# PARTNERS

WiSH's achievements so far and our ongoing heritage work is in large part thanks to those many sponsors, grant-making bodies and associated organisations who support us in so many ways to deliver what we aspire to do. A big thank you to all!

WiSH is always keen to engage with companies looking to fuel their Corporate Social Responsibility strategy through the sponsoring of a unique historical project. Sponsor packages range from £500 – £50,000 (including the provision of pro-bono products/services and grants). Benefits can include:

- Sponsor's Certificate
- Organisation's name on Sponsors' plaque
- Dedicated museum and stadium tours for 2 groups
- Invitation to all WiSH events
- Visibility to thousands of people
- AFC Wimbledon match tickets

All programmes are unique and custom made. For more information please contact John Lynch, Head of Partnerships, at: [info@wimbledoninsportinghistory.org](mailto:info@wimbledoninsportinghistory.org)

## Associated Organisations

- True Volunteer Foundation
- AFC Wimbledon
- AFC Wimbledon Foundation
- Dons Local Action Group
- The Dons Trust
- Historical Dons
- WISA
- AELTC
- Dons Den Speedway





# WiSH CONTACTS

**Email:** [info@wimbledoninsportinghistory.org](mailto:info@wimbledoninsportinghistory.org)

**Address:** Cherry Red Records Stadium,  
Plough Lane, Wimbledon, London. SW17 0BL

**Phone:** 0208 547 3528

[www.wimbledoninsportinghistory.org](http://www.wimbledoninsportinghistory.org)

**Facebook:** Wimbledon in Sporting History - WiSH

**Twitter:** @in\_wimbledon

**Instagram:** [wimbledoninsportinghistory\\_](https://www.instagram.com/wimbledoninsportinghistory_)



# WIMBLEDON IN SPORTING HISTORY

A LIVING HISTORY

