



Herts Disability  
Sports Foundation  
Charity Number 1156034

# Herts Disability Sports Foundation Trustees' Annual Report 2020/21



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## Chair's Report – 2020/21



I must begin my Chair's report for 2020 with a sincere message of thanks for each member of staff, every volunteer and all of our supporters. During what was one of the most difficult years in living memory, the full team at Herts Disability Sports Foundation worked together to continue our great work with adults and children with disabilities. Well done!

Our delivery moved 100% on-line within a week of the first lock-down and continued through the year with exercise classes, discos and bingo. All of these sessions helped to keep us active and also addressed many examples of isolation amongst those we support. It is testament to the commitment and energy of our staff and volunteers that after six months of lock-down the number of people HDSF support had increased by 30%. This really is a wonderful success story.

As I write in the autumn of 2021 we are back working face-to-face, although our plan is to move forward with a blended offer of face-to-face and on-line support. We feel we learned a lot during the lock-downs and that some of what was delivered on-line should now be retained.

2020 was a challenging year in which our full team worked together. We took some risks, were prepared to make mistakes, focused totally on what was best for those we support and finished the year stronger.

Looking ahead to the next twelve months there are new challenges for us including:

- Securing extra storage facilities at our delivery base at Stanborough Park. This project is scheduled to be implemented in the summer of 2022 providing essential storage for bikes and other equipment close to where we use them.
- Building on the recent success of Team GB at the Paralympics and realising benefits from the expected high profile of the next Commonwealth Games in Birmingham
- Broadening our support to adults with disabilities to include training and coaching on using public transport. This will help us reach communities who would otherwise find it very difficult to attend our face-to-face sessions
- Maintaining healthy finances through a mix of earned income, generous donations and appropriate grants

Thank you once again for your continued support. We look forward to the next year with confidence.

*Nigel Kippax*  
**Chair of Trustees**

## Highlights of the Year 2020/21



Lockdown was announced at 8pm on 23rd March 2020 and with just 1 day to prepare and test, our first online session took place on 24th March - an amazing team effort!



Being chosen as Charity of the Year by Knebworth Golf Club and Hitchin Town Football Club.



The Trustees met at least monthly during the Covid crisis, to review what was needed and how to adapt.



The opportunity to plan for a more permanent cycle hub at Stanborough Lake, Welwyn Garden City



Developing new contacts across Hertfordshire and increasing the number of users who benefit from our services.



The success of our online activities (since March 2020) enabled HDSF to secure new grant funding to ensure we remained a going concern.

## User Testimonials

“

HDSF are a **life changing organisation**. Their sessions bring a sense of belonging and promote physical and mental wellbeing for kids who are otherwise unable to access these things elsewhere. Invaluable sessions. Thank you HDSF.

“

In 9 years, we have come across and interacted with many charities, organisations and community groups. HDSF has been one of those that has had the greatest impact- the team and the work they do, as well as how they go about doing it, is simply wonderful for children with additional needs. **It is sporting inclusion at its absolute best.**

“

The bicycle skills session have enabled my daughter, who has Down's Syndrome in addition to a physical disability, to access cycling in a way I never thought I would see. **The difference** this will make in helping her to live with her disability is **profound**.

“

This is an amazing charity that we have loved being a part of ...Wheelchair basketball tournaments were the most **inclusive and enjoyable** events that the **whole family** attended before lockdown...the weekly [online] discos have provided **fun and respite** in equal measure.

And there have been some fantastic comments about how our staff have helped people especially during periods of lockdown. One parent said "to us, they are just the best there is" and we know that so many people who we work with share the sentiment below.....

The sessions and the amazing staff have given our family so much in these particularly difficult months

