

8th December 2020

Dear Members,

I hope you are all well and staying safe. I wanted to write to you to and give an update regarding some of the issues that we are facing at the Walker Ground.

As a member of a club which uses the Walker Ground, I am sure, like me, you feel passionately about its future development. Therefore, I think it is important that you are made aware of the problems that are facing the ground.

Like thousands of other businesses and organisations the Walker Ground is suffering from the effects of the Covid-19 virus not only financially but also from a prolonged closure of our sporting facilities.

All of our user clubs have been affected. For example, the cricket season has been decimated for both our clubs, revenue from Colts has been severely affected. A full season of corporate cricket had to be cancelled with a huge loss of revenue.

The squash courts have been closed for long periods so unfortunately members haven't been able to play the sport they love. With this and the loss of cricket, rugby and football the Walker Bar and our caterer have seen a real slump in customers and takings.

Both the Nursery and the Scout group have been unable to operate for periods of time and have suffered financial and membership difficulties.

Our biggest fund-raising event of the year, our Fireworks Night, had to be cancelled for Covid-19 reasons. This will have a big impact on our finances and on our ability to continue to fully function as a premier sports venue.

Jas, our General Manger has been applying for grants to help with our financial situation and has had some success and our staff have at various times since March been on furlough and recently on flexi furlough. While this money is welcomed our financial position remains a real concern.

Further Government restrictions in Tier2 have made it very difficult for us to keep the bar open. Certainly, we cannot sell alcohol (unless it is part of a 'substantial' meal) and this looks likely to carry on until at least March 2021. This will get even worse if we are put into Tier3 restrictions. A Government review of all tiers takes place on 16th December.

All these issues are further exasperated by the fact that the Walker Ground is being administered by only three (2 full trustees and 1 associate) Trustees, all of whom work on a voluntary basis. For a sports venue, the size of the Walker Ground this is clearly not sustainable and, in my opinion undemocratic. This is a situation that quite simply cannot continue.

As you know we work under the auspices of the Charity Commission and as such we need the Trust to truly reflect the size and makeup of the organisation. My fear is that one day the commission will come 'knocking' on our door!

We need help. We need members to come forward and commit some time as a volunteer or potentially as a Trustee. If you are interested and would like further information please contact Jas our General Manager in the office or email me at mayalan@hotmail.co.uk.

Please continue to support the Walker Ground. Support our staff, all of whom work extremely hard to keep the Walker Ground running.

Enjoy your sport whatever that happens to be.

Kind regards and stay safe

Alan May

Chair of the WCGT