

WESTON HOMES COMMUNITY STADIUM

COMMUNITY BENEFIT REPORT FOR 2016-17







CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

CLIVE GILHAM

Welcome to our annual report covering the community benefit created and achieved at the Weston Homes Community Stadium throughout the 2016-17 year.

Our collective goal for the Community Stadium is to provide both a superb home for Colchester United Football Club to play professional football and a substantial events and hospitality venue for everyone to benefit from. In recognition of this important role for our public asset, achieving a wide and diverse community benefit is of paramount importance to us all and so we measure it and publish it in this review. We recognise that every single activity and event provided at the Community Stadium is a benefit to someone – the user. Consequently we record all of this use by way of a Community Yield measurement process which scores every single event and activity, other than the professional football itself, according to their community benefit.

As this annual report demonstrates, the Community Stadium has experienced an increasingly wide range of events and activities throughout the last year and has served a diverse group of local people. Overall we have seen very high levels of the more community benefit orientated events and activities. I would highlight the Olly Murs concert in June which was a tremendous occasion drawing a crowd of around 17,500. The Community Yield achieved this year was 356,044 points, which was marginally down on last year due to new recording methods for the Colchester Half Marathon. Finally including the attendance at Colchester United matches, total traffic at our Community Stadium was an impressive 277,466 users.

Looking to the future, in July 2018 the Community Stadium will be playing host to another exciting live concert in the form of Little Mix which will draw a very different audience compared with our first stars – Sir Elton John and Lionel Ritchie. We will continue to host a number of new events and activities alongside the many proven existing ones. Our local neighbourhood is expanding at quite a pace now with plenty of new homes being built and leisure facilities opening up so we are looking forward to providing even more community benefit in the future.

Clive Gilham
Chair of the Community Benefit Panel
Approved on Thursday 3rd May 2018

MEET THE CCSL COMMUNITY BENEFIT PANEL



CLIVE GILHAM

*Chief Executive
Colchester Community Stadium*



TIM WADDINGTON

*General Manager
Colchester United Football Club*



LUCIE BREADMAN

Colchester Borough Council



CATHERINE CLOUSTON

Myland Community Council



ANNA SCHLERF

Colchester United Football Club



STARS OF THE FUTURE

The 2016/17 season saw the Club's youth academy continue to flourish, with the emergence of yet more young talent into the Colchester United first team.

Academy products contributed over 200 league and cup appearances for the senior side during the course of the season as John McGreal's side pushed for the play-offs.

The U23s had a successful campaign of their own as they defeated Premier League sides Hull City, Manchester City and Sunderland on their way to the Quarter Finals of the Premier League Cup, as they caught the headlines.

Players young and old in the first team squad also continued to strengthen their relationship with the local community, with many of them working closely with the Club's burgeoning Football in the Community programme.



That included appearances at awards nights and other events at the Community Stadium, where the Club's community offering steps up to a different level compared to its peers up and down the country.

A host of players also took on ambassadorial roles with the Football in the Community scheme, working closely with the community coaches to lead on the new and exciting projects that the U's undertook during the course of the past twelve months.





A PUSH FOR PROMOTION

The 2016/17 season came to an exciting conclusion as the U's chased a play-off spot in the second half of the season.

Their form in front of their own supporters saw the U's head into the final day of the season with hopes of reaching the play-offs and it was only two late goals that stopped them reaching the top seven by the time the final whistle blew on the campaign.

And the town responded in kind. Crowds soared in the second half of the season and, in the final eight games of 2016/17, the average attendance rose to just under 5,000 per game as the team were backed all the way by their supporters.



The WHCS was visited by nearly 300,000 people from the local area and beyond, and the Club's non-football business continued to flourish, as the Community Stadium continues to be a destination venue for the town and the region.

The U's continued to offer a host of not for profit events at the Community Stadium. The U's extend the invitation to charities, local groups and other fundraising causes to apply for these events, where room hire is provide for free and staff and food at cost price to allow maximum funds to be raised.

Nearly 4,000 came along for a festive night out during our Christmas party season, whilst thousands attended comedy clubs, live music nights and other social events during the course of the last twelve months.

The summer of 2017 also saw the U's hold their third summer concert as Olly Murs brought some star quality to the WHCS in the third concert at the Community Stadium.



A TRUE COMMUNITY CLUB

The rest of this annual report provides a taste of the depth and breadth of the Club's commitment to our local community.

From the efforts of the Football in the Community coaches to the wide range of visitors to the WHCS, we believe that we are a true community club.

COLCHESTER FENWICK THANK YOU PARTY 20TH OCTOBER

Following the opening of the new Fenwick Store on Colchester's High Street, the Management Team organised a 'Thank You Party' for all of their new staff.

"On behalf of the Fenwick Store I just wanted to thank you for everything yourself and the team did for our event. It was a brilliant evening and we think everyone enjoyed it – we are getting very positive feedback. This is the first time we have held an event at the Weston Homes Community Stadium but I don't think it will be the last!" – *Fenwick Colchester*

**"THIS IS THE FIRST
TIME WE HAVE
HELD AN EVENT
AT THE WESTON
HOMES COMMUNITY
STADIUM BUT I
DON'T THINK IT
WILL BE THE LAST!"**

RACE NIGHT IN AID OF EAST ANGLIA'S CHILDREN'S HOSPICES (EACH) 26TH OCTOBER

Hoping to organise something fun alongside a networking opportunity, Rutherford Briant Recruitment Services held a Race Night and Raffle for 100 local clients at the WHCS.

"We did not want to make a profit on the event and were happy to cover the costs. Therefore, we decided to donate all proceeds to EACH, East Anglia's Children's Hospices as this is an important local charity. We raised approximately £2500! The money will be used to support local children and their families during difficult times.

"Thank you very much to everybody who helped to make this event happen. The staff who were on hand on the day of the event were incredibly helpful and friendly. Nothing was too much trouble."
– *Rutherford Briant Recruitment Services*

**"WE CHOSE YOUR
VENUE AS THE
LOCATION IS PERFECT,
EASY TO FIND, FREE
PARKING. THE REPUTATION OF YOUR VENUE TO BE ABLE
TO HOST A GREAT EVENT WAS A BIG CONSIDERATION"**



NHS BLOOD DONORS ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Throughout the 2016/2017 season, the NHS Blood & Transplant held 20 blood donor sessions at the Community Stadium. As a result of the large space which we are able to provide, the NHS see around 120 donors attending each session. In total, they collected an astonishing 2,480 pints of blood over the course of the season, which in turn will help to save the lives of around 7,000 people!

**OVER THE COURSE
OF THE SEASON, THE
PUBLIC DONATED
2,480
PINTS OF BLOOD
AT THE WHCS!**



STAR OF HOPE BALL IN AID OF MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

4TH NOVEMBER

"We had an autumnal themed ball to raise awareness and money to help provide Macmillan nurses and services to the local areas. Wendy Ofuasias was the core behind the project, who herself has a brain tumour and cancer in her back and has been supported by Macmillan. This ball is also her way of giving something back for all their support." - *Macmillan Cancer Support*

Guests of the Star of Hope ball enjoyed a three-course sit down dinner, charity raffle and auction followed by entertainment and dancing. The ball not only raised a whopping £6,000, but also awareness of the fantastic work which Macmillan carry out in the local area.

**THE STAR OF HOPE
BALL RAISED £6,000
FOR MACMILLAN!**



COLCHESTER UNITED VS LEYTON ORIENT MATCH

12TH NOVEMBER

Fans of Colchester United and Leyton Orient remembered the fallen as part of Remembrance Weekend commemorations at the Weston Homes Community Stadium.

Parachute Regiment band bugler Corporal Steve Duncombe signalled the start of the silence ahead of kick-off. The match saw the U's welcome members of the local regiment to their latest home game and the Club were also privileged to host Colchester Garrison Commander Lieutenant Colonel Ciaran Griffin OBE and his family at the match.

Lieutenant Colonel Griffin joined Club director Kevin Bull pitchside to affirm the U's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.



COLCHESTER SPORTS PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2016

21ST NOVEMBER

Colchester's top sporting talent came together at the Weston Homes Community Stadium for a celebration of outstanding sporting achievement.

"The event is attended by sports leaders from the Borough and County, Civic and Council officials and Councillors, and members of the Business Community who support the event via sponsorship and relatives and friends of the athletes. It showcases the incredible talent and commitment of amateur athletes and volunteers from Colchester via 16 individual and team awards"

The Male Sports Personality Prize went to olympian Dominic King whilst the Female Sports Personality Prize was awarded to triathlete Melissa Dowell.



"WE WERE VERY PLEASED WITH THE WHCS. THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE WAS VERY GOOD AND WE WOULD CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL HAVE US AGAIN NEXT YEAR"

COLCHESTER SPORTS PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR AWARDS

ROTARY CLUB OF COLCHESTER JUNIOR CHOIR COMPETITION

24TH NOVEMBER

The finals of the Colchester Junior Choir Competition returned to the WHCS once again in November. Six schools participated in the event with around 30 children making up each choir ensemble.

"This was the 3rd year that Colchester Forum Rotary club has organised a singing competition for primary schools (children aged 7-11 years). The venue is excellent from the point of view of having a stage from which the individual choirs can perform and this also provides a good viewing to the many parents and grandparents who attended." - *Rotary Club of Colchester*



"THE VENUE IS EXCELLENT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF HAVING A STAGE FROM WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL CHOIRS CAN PERFORM"

CHRISTMAS PARTIES DECEMBER

Throughout the month of December, the Weston Homes Community Stadium turned into one big Christmas Party. Nearly 4,000 guests attended Christmas Party Nights, Masquerade Balls and Private Christmas Parties enjoying festive celebrations, and excellent food and drink.

New Year's Eve also saw 188 guests dance the night away and welcome in 2017.



**NEARLY 4,000 PEOPLE
ATTENDED CHRISTMAS
PARTIES AT THE WESTON
HOMES COMMUNITY STADIUM!**



THE TANGERINE BALL 19TH DECEMBER

Since 2013, The Tangerine Ball has been held at the Community Stadium in support of Colchester Young Carers. School children aged 9 – 11 attend for an evening of fun in a safe and secure environment. The children had a fantastic evening; celebrating, dancing and enjoying the photo booth!

"We are proud to support such a well-run charity that recognises the increased pressures that children are under and works to support them to find solutions to everyday problems they encounter.

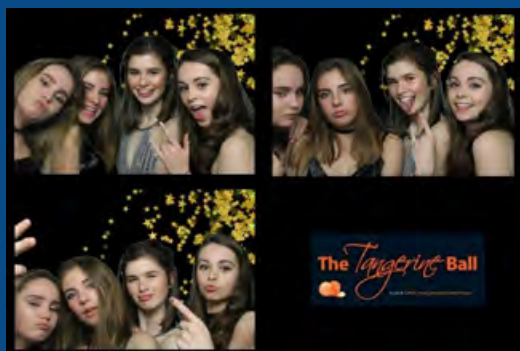
"We are very pleased with the continued support for the Community Stadium to help us run this ball. Very shortly we will be submitting a cheque for £2750 to the charity.

"The team at the Weston Homes Community Stadium were attentive and professional and made our job very easy. Thank you." – *The Tangerine Ball*

Following the success of the event, the Tangerine Ball will be returning to the Community Stadium once again in 2017!



**THE TANGERINE
BALL RAISED £2,750
FOR COLCHESTER
YOUNG
CARERS**



PANTOMIME: DICK WHITTINGTON 8TH JANUARY

Chaplin's Entertainment returned to the WHCS to host our annual Pantomime Show. This year, Dick Whittington took to the stage and once again the performance was a sell-out event. Packed with comedy, excitement and adventure, the children cheered for hero Dick Whittington and booed Captain Blood.



BURNS NIGHT 27TH JANUARY

Scots and non-Scots alike were invited to the Colchester Caledonian Society's Burns Night, hosted at the Weston Homes Community Stadium. Complete with the 'Address to the Haggis', the 'Immortal Memory' and the 'Toast to the Lasses', the evening brought a true celebration of Scotland to the Stadium. Of course, no Burns Night would be complete without a Ceilidh!

"We were very happy with our event at the Weston Homes Community Stadium. The food was lovely and the staff were very attentive on the evening. Communication before the event was also fantastic, there was always someone on the other end of the phone that would be happy to help." - *Colchester Caledonian Society*



"WE FELT IT WAS A VERY SUCCESSFUL EVENING AND THERE WERE MANY GOOD COMMENTS ABOUT THE DELICIOUS MEAL. PLEASE THANK THE CHEF!"

COLCHESTER CALEDONIAN SOCIETY

BOXING DINNER 29TH JANUARY

The WHCS once again hosted the Harwich BC Boxing Tournament which saw 20 junior and 8 elite boxers take to the ring. Hospitality guests enjoyed a 4 course meal as well as an exclusive raffle and auction with prizes including a boxing glove signed by Anthony Joshua!

"Our successful partnership with CUFC in co-promoting amateur boxing shows in the town extends to over 10 years now! During this time, we have built a solid reputation on showcasing some of the best boxing talent in the region at an excellent venue." - *Martin, Harwich Boxing*



EMERGENCY SERVICES EXERCISE

26TH FEBRUARY

In late February, we closed the Weston Homes Community Stadium for the Emergency Services to hold a large scale training exercise. Fire Officers, Essex Police, and the East of England Ambulance Service joined on-site match day staff for this large-scale multi-agency exercise in which they responded to an unknown training incident.

"This multi-agency exercise was a huge success. Training exercises like this are an excellent opportunity for us to work alongside our emergency services colleagues and the on-site staff to practice all of our response and procedures." – *Lee, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service*

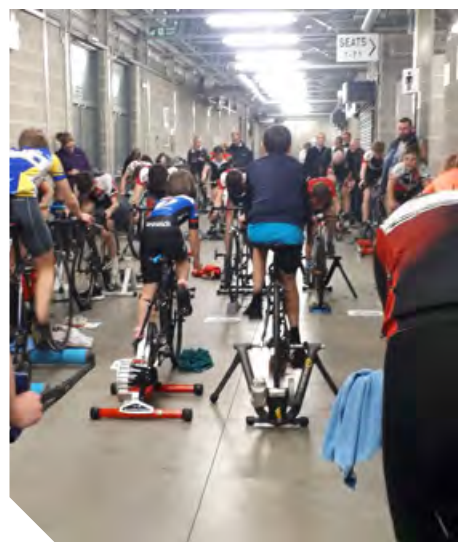


COLCHESTER ROVERS CYCLING CLUB

THROUGHOUT THE WINTER

From October through to March, the Colchester Rovers Cycling Club hold weekly indoor turbo sessions in the Community Stadium concourse. The training sessions cater for cyclists of all ages, with the youngest member being just 8 years old.

"By running these sessions, we have got several new youths to start winter cycling and join Colchester Rovers CC. Every other week we have a coach from British Cycling to run the sessions to mix the format up. On average, we have around 20 people taking part in the sessions consisting of youth and adults and both males and females. It's a great evening to keep them fit throughout the winter as Colchester Rovers have no facility to do this anywhere else in the winter." – *Colchester Rovers Cycling Club*



**"EVERY OTHER WEEK WE
HAVE A COACH FROM BRITISH
CYCLING TO RUN THE SESSIONS
TO MIX THE FORMAT UP"**



BUSINESS EAST FEATURES: 50 EXHIBITION STANDS SPEED NETWORKING SEMINAR THEATRE, NETWORKING CAFÉ VIP RECEPTIONS

BUSINESS EAST 9TH MARCH

Our annual Business to Business Exhibition returned again in march, with over 650 individuals pre-registered to attend. Fifty companies exhibited at the event and as ever, we hosted a packed seminar schedule as well as extremely popular speed networking sessions.



COLCHESTER HALF MARATHON 12TH MARCH

The Half Marathon saw a heroic set of around 2,800 runners take to the streets of Colchester, raising funds for charity, smashing personal bests and achieving personal goals. The official charity of the race was the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance and in total an astonishing £60,000 was raised for them.

"Colchester Colne Roundtable each year organise a half marathon to raise needed funds for one or two local charities. Based on our expectations, our money will mean the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance can fly for 400 hours or complete 19 full missions.

"Having the Weston Homes Community Stadium as our start/finish point is great as again we are all very proud of our football team Colchester United and this is their home. All the staff on site on Sunday went over and above to make sure we had the best event possible - thank you."

- **Colchester Colne Roundtable**



**"ALL THE STAFF
ON SITE ON
SUNDAY WENT
OVER AND ABOVE
TO MAKE SURE
WE HAD THE BEST
EVENT POSSIBLE
- THANK YOU"**

COLCHESTER COLNE ROUNDTABLE

**£60,000 WAS RAISED FOR THE
ESSEX & HERTS AIR AMBULANCE.
THIS WILL ALLOW THEM TO FLY
THE HELICOPTER FOR 400 HOURS!**



BARCLAYS CHARITY QUIZ 28TH MARCH

Barclays Bank hosted one of their annual charity events at the WHCS in March – a quiz night in aid of the Jubilee Sailing Trust and PHAB. The Jubilee Sailing Trust is an accredited disability charity, promoting integration through the challenge and adventure of tall ship sailing; whilst PHAB inspires and supports children, young people and adults to make more of life together. In total, £350 was raised for the two charities.

“Just brilliant. The support and guidance provided was first class and the team ensured we held a wonderful and successful event – thank you!” - *Barclays*



BOBBY MOORE CANCER TRUST

RIDE OUT FOR BOBBY MOORE CANCER TRUST 2ND APRIL



Up to 500 scooter riders met up at the Community Stadium for their ride out to Clacton in aid of the Bobby Moore Cancer Trust. Once they arrived in Clacton, they collected donations from members of the public, raising £1,000 in total for the trust.

The funds raised will be used by Cancer Research UK to fund pioneering, life-saving bowel cancer research.



FOOTBALL SHIRT FRIDAY 24TH APRIL



Also in aid of the Bobby Moore Fund, Football Shirt Friday was an event which couldn't pass without participation at the Weston Homes Community Stadium. Staff donned their favourite retro shirts in aid of the charity.

GLAM! 30TH APRIL

Glam - our Health & Beauty Show returned to the Weston Homes Community Stadium for the second year. Fifty exhibition stands were sold to local and national health and beauty retailers, and over the course of the day, almost 400 people visited the show. Visitors enjoyed the ultimate girls day out of shopping and pampering as well as fashion shows, sponsored and hosted by Fashion Candy Style, and a timetable of demonstrations led by the exhibitors.



**"I REALLY ENJOYED THE GLAM
EVENT, IT WAS A GOOD DAY FOR US"**

PINK OSTRICH, EXHIBITOR AT GLAM

AFRICAN ADVENTURE - SCHOOL VISIT IN KENYA APRIL 2017



Colchester United staff took part in a one week visit to the Walk Centre School in Nakuri, Kenya. They helped to decorate the 'Big Build' school block, taught children English and Maths, and alongside our Football in the Community Team, they delivered their first ever football coaching session. This tremendous experience helped to educate everyone back at the Community Stadium.

**"IT REALLY
WAS THE BEST
EXPERIENCE
OF MY LIFE.
I FEEL SO
LUCKY TO
HAVE HAD THE
OPPORTUNITY.
THE COUNTRY
IS AMAZING
AND THE
CHILDREN ARE
INCREDIBLE.
I CAN'T WAIT
TO RETURN IN
2018"**

ABBIE, COLCHESTER UNITED

END OF SEASON DINNER 2ND MAY

The U's End of Season Dinner saw players, staff, fans and sponsors attend a night of celebration. A total of nine awards were presented to staff and players.



The Young Player of the Season went to Tom Lapslie, Goal of the Season

was awarded to George Elokobi and the player's awards ended with the Official Player of the Year being presented to Brennan Dickenson. Tony Cottey joined the evening and entertained the audience with highlights from his career.



KEEP DANCE ALIVE 6TH MAY

'Keep Dance Alive', Bard to Bollywood, is an exciting programme of outdoor arts & sports events marking the 2017 UK-India year of culture that was announced by former Prime Minister David Cameron to celebrate the UK's cultural ties with India.

2017 was the biggest performance year yet, with over 1,000 children and young people taking part in the project and involved in the mass-movement dance performances.

The programme is fully inclusive and aimed at education and community groups with performances scheduled at events at Colchester United Football Club, Essex County Cricket Ground and Essex School Games.



Over 350 dancers appeared at the Weston Homes Community Stadium for the match against Yeovil on May 6th.



"2017 WAS THE BIGGEST PERFORMANCE YEAR YET, WITH OVER 1,000 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE PROJECT AND INVOLVED IN THE MASS-MOVEMENT DANCE PERFORMANCES"

PITCH HIRES 8TH – 29TH MAY

After the U's finished their season, the Weston Homes Community Stadium's main pitch was available for hire over a three week period. Groups of friends, football clubs, local businesses and the Suffolk FA hired out the pitch to experience what playing on the big stage is like. In total, 7,300 people played and watched matches taking place on the pitch.

"What a fantastic experience, I honestly can't stress enough how great you have been, nothing was too much to ask and the freedom we had was worth every penny! I can safely say that we will be back next year to do it all again." – Paul



JDRF TYPE 1 DISCOVERY DAY 12TH MARCH

"Type 1 diabetes is an auto-immune condition and is an indiscriminate and devastating condition which can strike at any time, affecting children as young as a few months old to adults. A person with type 1 diabetes has to manage their condition 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Type 1 gives no reprieve, no break – for them or their family. This community event aimed to bring together adults and children living with type 1 diabetes plus their extended families for an educational and inspirational day. Parents and adults heard from a range of speakers, and were provided with information on the local support available to them. The children and young people attended activities organised by Colchester United's Football in the Community team. To round off the day we organised a JDRF One Fun Run for the children around the Community Stadium.

"The team were fantastic at Colchester helping us with our event. The two representatives from the Football in the Community team, did a superb job with all the children and made sure that everyone was included from the youngest (aged three) to the older teenagers. The catering team provided excellent service on the day and were happy to help with any requests made to them." – JDRF

**"A PERSON WITH
TYPE 1 DIABETES
HAS TO
MANAGE THEIR
CONDITION 24
HOURS A DAY, 7
DAYS A WEEK"**

JDRF



**"THE TEAM WERE
FANTASTIC AT
COLCHESTER HELPING
US WITH OUR EVENT"**

MIDNIGHT WALK 27TH MAY

"The St Helena Hospice Midnight Walk has taken place at the Community Stadium for the past nine years. St Helena Hospice helps local people with an incurable illness to live well and die with dignity and choice. All the services are offered to patients and their families free of charge, but the cost of this is around £8.8 million per year, of which approximately £6 million is raised by the generosity of local people.

"The Midnight Walk is a vital event in our fundraising calendar which helps raise in the region of £70,000 each year which all go towards caring for our patients and their families. It also helps raise the profile of the charity and the work of the hospice."

St Helena's Hospice



**AROUND 1,000
WOMEN TOOK
PART AND SET OFF
AT 10.30PM IN FULL
FLURO ATTIRE!**



MONTHLY SEMINAR WITH MIKE GEORGE 28TH MAY

"Colchester Meditation hold a monthly seminar and invite a guest speaker. The topic is different every month but covers aspects of spirituality, wellbeing and positive lifestyle.

"Holding the event in a different venue ie. the Weston Homes Community Stadium definitely attracted a few new people. Our aim is to bring benefit to as many people in the local community as possible, so the location definitely enabled us to do just that." - *Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University*

**"OUR AIM IS TO
BRING BENEFIT TO AS
MANY PEOPLE IN THE
LOCAL COMMUNITY
AS POSSIBLE, SO
THE LOCATION
DEFINITELY ENABLED
US TO DO JUST THAT"**

BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

OLLY MURS CONCERT 10TH JUNE

Around 17,500 people came to the Weston Homes Community Stadium to see Olly Murs perform in his Home County. Supported by Louisa Johnson, both former X Factor contestants put on an excellent show to wow the audiences.

For our third concert, hospitality areas were once again packed, with many enjoying the after party late into the night.



"I ATTENDED THE OLLY MURS CONCERT LAST SATURDAY (10TH JUNE). WE WERE IN THE LAYER SUITE FOR THE MEAL AND HOSPITALITY BEFOREHAND AND WE CANNOT PRAISE OUR EXPERIENCE ENOUGH. FANTASTIC SERVICE, OUR MEAL WAS LOVELY AND STAFF WERE VERY ATTENTIVE AND HELPFUL. THIS IS A GREAT VENUE! IT WAS OUR FIRST TIME HERE BUT DEFINITELY WON'T BE OUR LAST - WE WILL BE KEEPING AN EYE OUT FOR FUTURE EVENTS. THANK YOU!"

SARAH

BOOTS 2 AFRICA ONGOING

Boots2Africa is a brilliant initiative through which old football boots are collected and sent to aspiring football players in Africa. Their team regularly attend matches at the Weston Homes Community Stadium as well as other events such as our annual Open Day to collect boots.



IN TOTAL, BOOTS2AFRICA HAVE NOW DONATED OVER 3,500 PAIRS OF BOOTS TO COUNTRIES INCLUDING KENYA, TANZANIA, GAMBIA, CONGO, GHANA AND MALAWI

HEDINGHAM SCHOOL 16TH & 17TH JUNE

For the third year in a row, Year 10 pupils from Hedingham School visited the Weston Homes Community Stadium as part of their GCSE Geography studies. The students were told all about the Weston Homes Community Stadium's community contributions, whilst also learning why a move to the north of the town was necessary, as well as the economic benefits to the town in general of the new site.

OPEN DAY 16TH JULY

Hundreds of families visited the Weston Homes Community Stadium as the U's again threw open the doors to their home in their now traditional pre-season launch event. Fans flocked to the Club Shop to purchase the new kits and the sun shone as John McGreal and Steve Ball put the U's players through their paces.

Questions were fired at John and Robbie as part of our new season Q&A, whilst the signing session once again saw the players sign hundreds of autographs as they welcomed fans of all ages to the U's stadium.

Youngsters enjoyed a wide range of fayre games and activities including free coaching sessions by our Football in the Community coaches and our giant inflatable foot-dart board.



**"I HAVE LOST
SERIOUS AMOUNTS
OF WEIGHT
FROM WALKING
FOOTBALL. I LOVE
ATTENDING EVERY
MONDAY TO SEE
MY OLD FRIENDS
AND PLAY THE
BEAUTIFUL GAME –
IT'S THE HIGHLIGHT
OF MY WEEK"**

GARY, WALKING FOOTBALL TEAM PLAYER

WALKING FOOTBALL ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Every week, we host two Walking Football groups run by our Football in the Community coaches. The players' ages range from 50 all the way up to 74 and the sessions focus on ball skills, mini-games and having fun! The team also competes against local EFL clubs and they've seen great success this season.



DASHAIN CELEBRATION 24TH SEPTEMBER

Dashain is the most widely celebrated festival in Nepal. Many ex-Gurkha and their dependents came over from Nepal to settle in Colchester after the historic announcement made by the government in 2004. Over 350 members of the community came together to celebrate and enjoy the festival of Dashain at the Weston Homes Community Stadium.

"Members from the age of 4 to 74 years in the strength of over 350 participated and enjoyed the night to the fullest; Nepalese food and entertainment in their native language. It was especially good for those elderly members who otherwise have no other place to go. This event helped the society to achieve their objective of promotion of language, culture and heritage."

– *Chitra, Colchester Nepalese Society*



DRUGS DOGS & POLICE DOGS TRAINING ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

"I have been in the British Army for 17 years and the Drugs Detection Dog Handler at The Military Corrective Training Centre in Colchester, since September 2016. I am always looking for new locations to train my dog, Lola. Lola is a four-year and nine-month-old black Labrador, who has been a drugs detection dog for two years.

"Colchester United Football Club have kindly allowed me to train at the Weston Homes Community Stadium with Lola every few months. Access to the WHCS has been very helpful as it is not always easy to find different places or larger areas to train in; the Community Stadium is perfect for Lola to have a long search in a more complex environment.

"Our training consists of searching for 'hides'. I hide these in the stand area or in the toilet and admission area and Lola will conduct a search. Searching in new locations such as the rows of seats, which she would not normally search, challenges Lola in new ways and helps continue with Lola's development. When Lola successfully finds the hide or soak, she is given a reward which, for Lola, is her beloved tennis ball."



TRIBUTES, COMEDY CLUB AND PARTY NIGHTS WEEKLY EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE SEASON

Every month, we welcome a range of talented tribute acts and comedians to the WHCS. The events have become very popular with acts selling out on a regular basis. Guests have the option of pre-ordering a two-course meal or purchasing bar food on the night, and enjoy live entertainment, our LED dancefloor and DJ, and free use of our photo booth all night!

Over the course of the season, we hosted 32 different tribute acts ranging from Queen, Michael Jackson and the Jersey Boys to the Spice Girls, Michael Buble and Robbie Williams.



Colchester United is proud of its unique position within the Colchester sporting, business and social communities and of the benefits it brings to the local economy and social landscape.

The football team proudly carries the town's name the length and breadth of the country and draws opposing fans to the Weston Homes Community Stadium. The economic impact of a professional sporting organisation to a town cannot be underestimated. Our own charity works in schools, charities and local communities delivering healthy and inclusive activities, improving sports participation and educating and inspiring thousands of people on a weekly basis. Our Academy offers elite sporting opportunities to local young people, coaches and support staff with six academy players now mainstays of the Club's first team. Each season the Club competes in the EFL, FA Cup, Carabao Cup and Checktrade Trophy, as well as a host of youth team and development squad matches, and England fixtures are becoming regular events in the sporting calendar here in Colchester.

Whilst the Club has always been very much woven into the fabric of its local community, moving to the purpose built Community Stadium has given Colchester United new opportunities to support its town. The WHCS has become a genuine hub for businesses with national, regional and local organisations, capitalising on the excellent road and rail links and ample parking, hiring the purpose built facilities for conferences, meetings and events throughout the year.

On evenings and weekends, the Community Stadium is a vibrant social space and an array of tribute acts, comedy clubs and party nights are held every week of the year. The summer months see outdoor events and regular concerts featuring global stars pull thousands to the town.

Amongst all these regular activities, the Club is committed to supporting local charities and community projects and offers use of the facility on a not-for-profit basis, allowing qualifying groups opportunities to reward staff and volunteers, and raise important funds for their organisations. These Community Events are intended to provide fantastic value for appropriate beneficiaries located within our local and wider community.

We hope to see a rich and exciting range of events and activities from groups enjoying this significant community benefit. If you would like your project or organisation to benefit from the use of the facility, please contact our Events Team – we'd be delighted to welcome you to the Weston Homes Community Stadium.

Tim Waddington
General Manager, Colchester United Football Club







Weston Homes Community Stadium
United Way
Colchester
CO4 5UP

Telephone: 01206 755 443

E-mail: events@colchesterunited.net

Website: www.colchesterstadiumexperience.com