

LEWES FC

IMPACT REPORT

2021-2022 Season



LEWES FC

For a relatively small fan-owned club Lewes FC packs a mighty punch. We've a strong vision, huge ambition, and a massive sense of purpose. For some of us it's all about the football, but for most of us...? Well, we're Fans of Change, wanting to make an impact so great that we change hearts and minds the world over. At the end of the day, the power of football makes this so much more than just a game...





1

ON THE PITCH

1. ON THE PITCH

In the FA Women's Championship, spectators were welcomed back to the Dripping Pan following a season playing behind closed doors. However, the Pandemic still influenced the season with several matches being called off at short notice due to Covid-19 outbreaks and Lewes forced to field a Covid-reduced squad in our FA Cup tie against Bristol City. This led to a disjointed pattern of fixtures which translated to inconsistent performances on the pitch.

The team obtained its highest tally of points, also attracting its highest Women's Championship Crowd of 2,347 in the final game of the season, when they beat newly-crowned champions Liverpool FC in a spectacular match at the Pan. A first ever sell-out. Despite this, they were unable to surpass their best ever finish of 5th on the FAWC table.



1. ON THE PITCH

Meanwhile, in the men's Isthmian Premier League, the Rooks 2021/22 season saw the men's side with a new management team in the form of Tony Russell and Joe Vines, who recruited and prepared a fresh squad for a very competitive season.

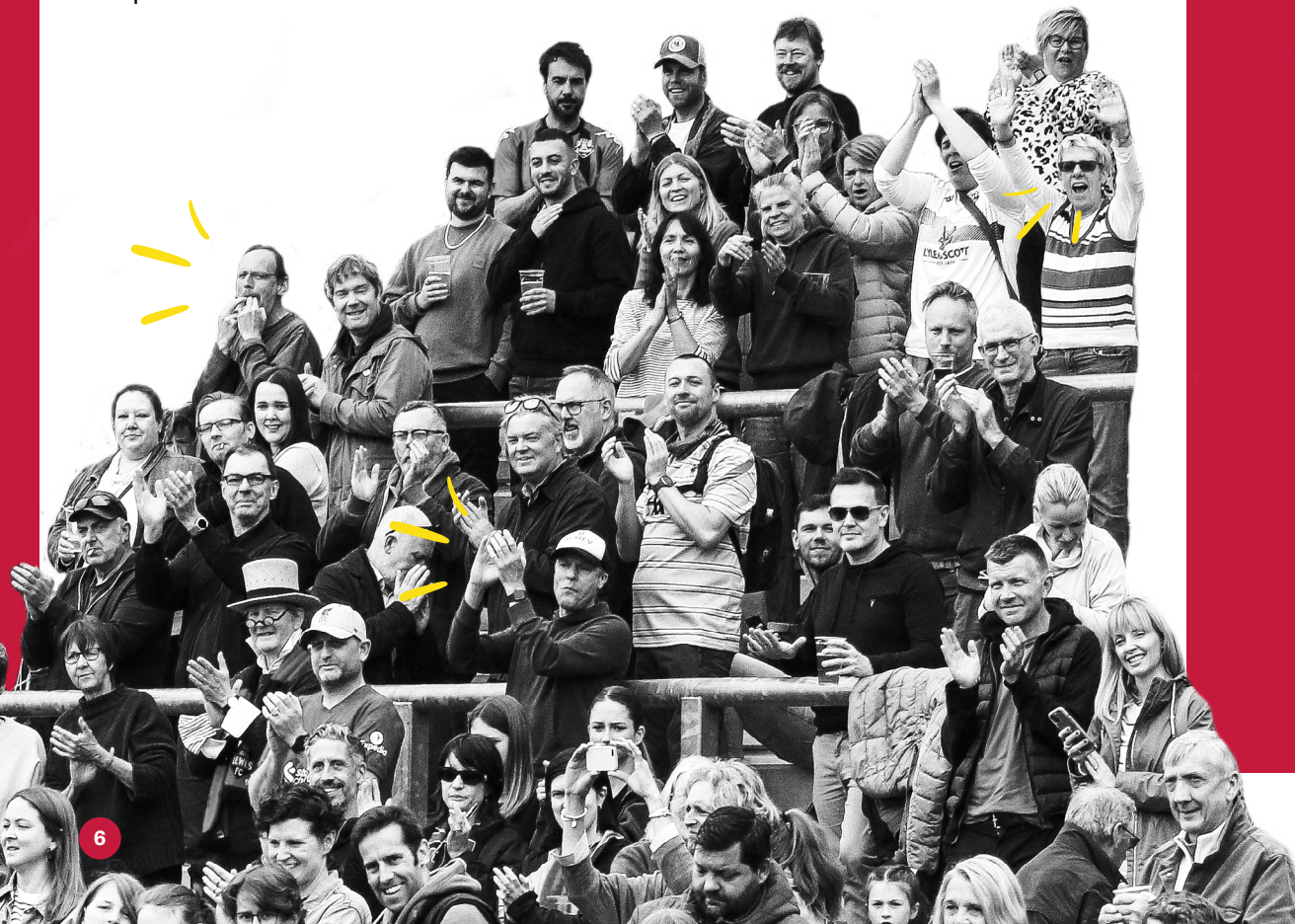
New faces to the Pan included Joe Taylor, a prolific striker, Bradley Pritchard, formerly of Charlton Athletic and Leyton Orient, and fans also saw the return of goalkeeper Lewis Carey. Russell and Vines, along with Head of Recruitment Adam Drew, complimented the experienced squad with a number of young players who had been released by professional sides. Some of these players went on to join clubs at a higher level at the end of the season including Michael Klass who went to Aldershot Town, and Ollie Tanner who, after significant interest from Premier League and Championship sides, joined Cardiff City for an undisclosed fee.

Ollie Tanner, referred to as **'The New Pele'** by Chef Giancarlo Caldesi, during his sponsored commentary.



1. ON THE PITCH

On the pitch the team's attacking style brought goals flooding in and the Rooks were always on the hunt for a play-off spot, but a home defeat against Worthing, in front of a highest ever attendance since records began at the Pan of 2,347 (and the biggest in the Isthmian Premier League for the whole season), dented promotion ambitions.



Highlights of the season included not only the attractive style of play that Tony Russell brought to the Pan, but also the goals of Joe Taylor – all 33 of them – the development of youngsters such as Klass and Tanner, as well as the second highest average attendances in the Isthmian Premier League. The figure of 863 also represented the best average attendance at the Pan for over a decade.

Fans raved about the famous matchday culture at the Pan and once again, the Dripping Pan was voted Away Fans Favourite Ground to visit by the Isthmian League.



**TOGETHER WE
CREATE CHANGE**



2

PATHWAY TO THE STARS

PATHWAY PLAYERS

Our Pathway Players kept the hope alive with our Under 14 Girls coming 3rd in their JPL league and winning their Sussex County Cup Final 6-0. The team embedded several new players with half the squad – actually under 13 – playing a year up. It was an impressive season both on and off the pitch for the Under 14s, with the group maturing and taking clear ownership over their own development.



Our Under 16s also did well in their JPL league and triumphed in their Sussex County Cup Final 17-0. Overall, an impressive season given the majority of the squad are under 15. Throughout the season multiple players also trained with our Development Squad, highlighting their true abilities.

As for the DS itself, the girls finished 3rd in the FAWNLR Reserve League – an impressive season with five players being registered with our 1st team and multiple players featuring against Bristol City in the FA Cup.

2. PATHWAY TO THE STARS

Meanwhile, our Under 18 Boys finished second in the Isthmian Youth League behind a strong Worthing side. Two U18 players (Detony Ojo and Finley Jenkins) were registered and involved with the 1st team at different points during the season.



Following in their footsteps, our Under 14 Boys finished 1st in the Mid Sussex U14 division and won the League Cup Final 2-0 against a strong AS Eastbourne side. They are also to be congratulated for winning the Sussex County Cup.

2. PATHWAY TO THE STARS

A key success for last season was the establishment of a brand new grass-hybrid pitch over the summer of 2022, after many months of planning and pitching for a grant from the FA and Premier League.

The club was delighted to be awarded a grant of £750,000, designed to support the growth and professionalisation of teams in the FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship – but it will of course have significant impact on the whole club. The new pitch will benefit women's and men's teams alike, allow youth matches to be played at the Dripping Pan again, and unlock the potential for us to generate additional revenue from external use. It's true what they say about equality being a rising tide that lifts all our boats...

Thank you Roger, for all your work over the years getting our pitch matchday ready!



KELLY

We seek to be realistically **AMBITIOUS**, understanding what we can control and what we cannot control.

We look forward to next season with a 'phased strategic approach across all our football' brought about with the help of our Head of Performance, Kelly Lindsey. Coach Lindsey joined us at the start of the 2021-22 season, after stints coaching the national women's teams of both Afghanistan and Morocco, and was attracted to Lewes by our work on gender equality. Led by Lindsey, we developed eight key principles to build a culture of development, from professionalisation to medical robustness.



A photograph of two men working on a garden bed at a football stadium. The man on the left is wearing a dark jacket and light blue jeans, and the man on the right is wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans. Both have yellow crowns drawn on their heads. They are surrounded by gardening tools, a wheelbarrow, and a green bin. In the background, there is a football pitch, stadium seating, and a building with various signs, including one that says 'KICK GAMBLING AWAY FROM FOOTBALL'.

3

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE
IN OUR COMMUNITY**

BRAD'S PIT

Our midfielder, Bradley Pritchard, turned a grey corner of the Dripping Pan green this season, starting a Community Garden in the south-east corner of the ground. Aiming to 'grow good food and good relationships', and working with local compost expert Michael Kennard, Pritchard established raised beds, and planted up vegetables and herbs.

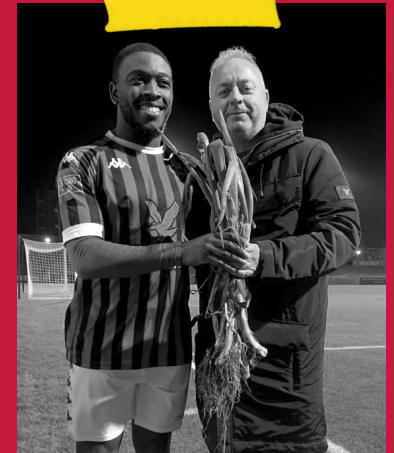
Following a call out to our owners around the world about what to name this oasis of fertility, we give thanks to a fan in the Netherlands who suggested 'Brad's Pit'. Great to have a corner of Hollywood glamour at our club.



3. MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

A team of some 22 local volunteers pitched in and successfully applied for grants for gardening equipment, fencing, seeds and the like. Harvests went towards our women's teams lunches, local food banks, our community volunteers, as well as our Players of the Match. Composting barrels mean that nothing is wasted, and leftovers go straight back into the soil.

We can happily confirm and quote here from a volunteer that those tomatoes were **'to die for'**...



Bradley getting radishal!



THE LEWES FOODBANKS

Speaking of our town's three Foodbanks, staff, players, directors, and members of our Men's and Women's Vets teams once again joined in with the collective efforts of Lewesians to help alleviate food poverty in Lewes. We were proud to support foodbank collections organised by local activist and football fan Mark Perryman outside our supermarkets, and will carry on supporting to combat this national crisis.



Directors from our 'Impact on the World' pillar collecting outside Aldi in Lewes.



Once again, our community teams have thrived on and off the pitch.

The Men's and Women's Vets proudly offered over 100 twice-weekly open football sessions for Over-35s (Vets) on the 3G pitch, and collected thousands for charity.

There was a 30% growth in Vets membership since lockdown ending. The Vets have established their own Old Quality League with four mixed teams made entirely of their own players, allowing strictly no slide tackles and reciting a poem emphasising friendship before every game.



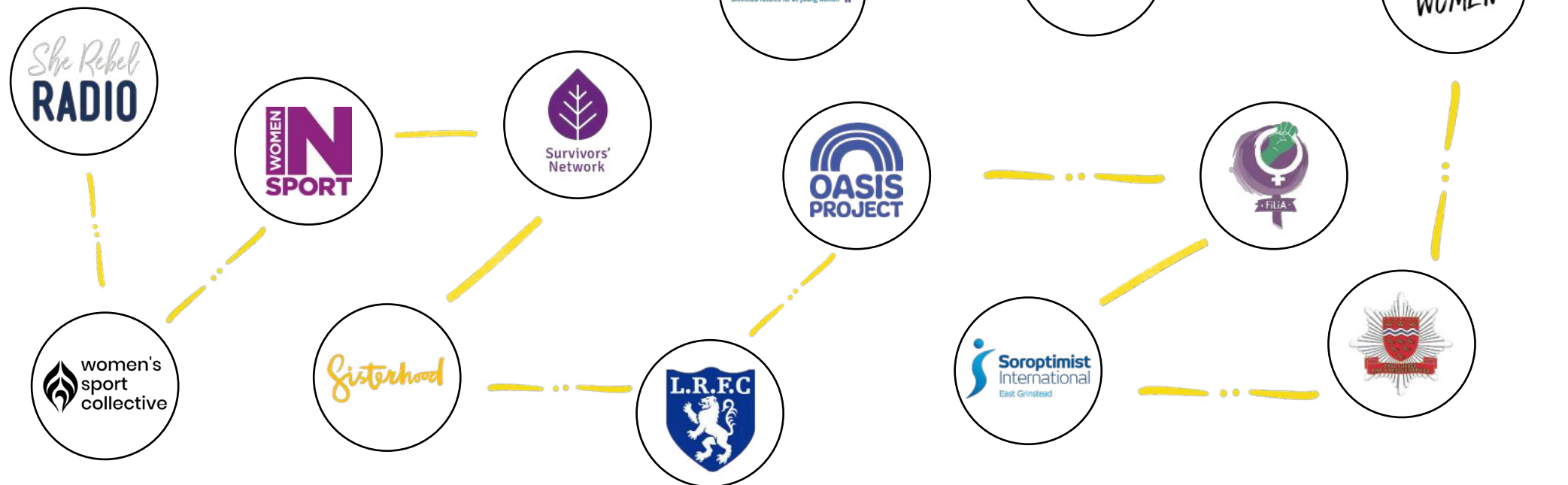


Meanwhile, our Football Therapy Team were back on the pitch on Thursday evenings, offering a brilliant way to combat mental illness through playing football supported by both a Coach and a Support Worker. Players spoke a lot about the negative impact of lockdown on their mental health, not being able to get out and play together, and so were delighted to get back to the pitch.

The team also collected for the charity 'If U Care Share' at 1st team matches, and highlighted the importance of getting 'what is inside, out' by wearing their clothes inside out as they collected.

LEWES FC SISTERSHIPS

We enjoyed another valuable season's work with our Sistership network – organisations seeking to empower girls and/or women – in a myriad of ways.



3. MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Collections took place for Rise, Survivors' Network and Brighton Women's Centre; Lewes Women in Business used the Rook Inn; whilst we designed and ran an Awayday Course for Sussex Police, aimed at female PCs aspiring to be Sergeants in the male bastion of the police force. We were humbled by the amazing feedback for our club.

FEEDBACK

Unlike any other training day.

Not corporate.

REALLY REFRESHING.

The confidence from all the women in the club and how comfortable the men are with it –

YOU CAN'T BE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE.

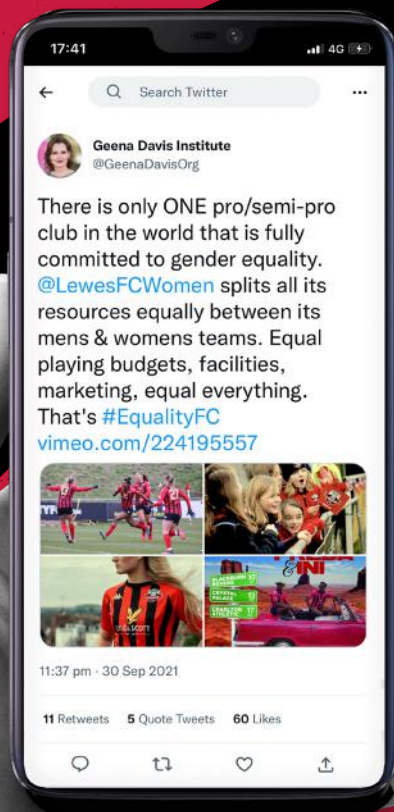
It would be

REALLY BENEFICIAL TO SENIOR LEADERS

in our workforce as well. So much of football can be applied to the workplace!



3. MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY



We were delighted when the 'Geena Davis Institute for Gender Studies' tweeted about us after we based a matchday poster on Geena's star-making movie, 'Thelma and Louise'. Thanks to centre-mid Frida, and striker Ini, for their willingness to parody the famous American feminist female buddy story. We love to reference popular culture in our matchday posters – because we know that football is a part of the wider culture with huge influence over hearts and minds. Let's harness it where we can!



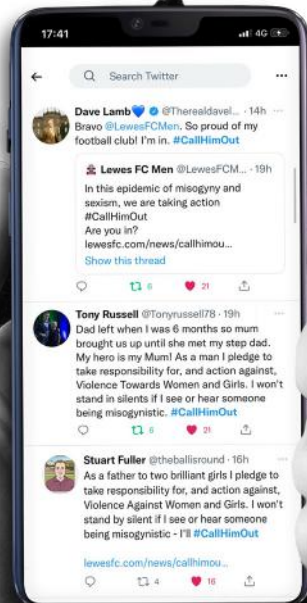
CALLING HIM OUT!

Our relationship with our Sisterships galvanised a crucial development for our men's team this season. After the widely publicised murders in the UK of Sarah Everard, Sabina Nessa and sisters Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry at the hands of men, our Sisterships were despairing. We witnessed many online conversations between women about fear of being attacked or harassed by men, and lack of trust in the police.

#CallHimOut

In another effort to use football as a vehicle for social change, Lewes FC Men publicly pledged to take responsibility and be accountable for misogyny and sexism when they found it in themselves and others. Understanding their influence as role models to others, our team and coaches took to Twitter to declare their accountability and how they were taking responsibility for the misogynistic soup we live in together.

Not only did women on Twitter breathe easier that these men were activating, but other men were inspired to do the same.



3. MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Club are proud of the #CallHimOut campaign and hope to grow it so our 1st team can mentor our Under 18 Boys.

Members of the team, and staff and directors at Lewes FC, took part in a Bystander Training course offered by our Sistership Survivors Network, and learnt how to make our responses to witnessed abuse 'survivor-centric', and how to have conversations with perpetrators if we encountered verbal abuse at the Dripping Pan.



The campaign brought in new owners and fans – Eva Carneiro: 'The work you do gives me hope that change is possible' – and it wasn't long before the local Labour party, and Lewes Town Council, also approved motions to adopt the #CallHimOut campaign amongst their own male members.

4

TALKING UP THE CLUB

'If women do not attain roughly
equal fame and fortune in sports, it
leads both men and women to
think of women as naturally
inferior'

Jane English

PLATFORM

KICKERS
WOMEN
3.0

TALKS & EVENTS

The season saw the Club once again in demand for talks, interviews, and corporate and media appearances on subjects ranging from gender equality in a male bastion, to leadership skills, democratic ownership, and women's empowerment.

Lewes FC were proud to host a Leadership Awayday for female members of Sussex Police, including sessions on resilience, values and taking up space and finding your voice. We also spoke to the senior leadership at the John Lewis Partnership about experiences working within business with both a democratic ownership model and a social purpose.



2021-22 TALKS

We also spoke at events for Xero, British Universities and Colleges Sport Annual conference, Cederberg, Natwest Bank, Irwin Mitchell, CASS Business School, The Worthing Chamber of Commerce, Platf9rm, University of Bedfordshire, Acumen Business Convention, and Brighton Housing Trust, whilst featuring on BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC Woman's Hour, BBC Radio 4's Today Programme, Sky Sports, The Times, The Telegraph, the Daily Mirror, ITV's Driving Force Documentary series, Euronews, regular contributions on BBC Radio Sussex, and a Financial Times documentary on the business case for women's football.



EXPERIENCES

Laura Ford

I have left the Dripping Pan feeling so motivated to be the change you want to see, plus for the first time ever I'm now interested in football so
I'M BACKING THIS CLUB ALL THE WAY!

Attendee
Acumen Business Convention

Lewes Football Club are
BREAKING THE MOULD and bringing women's football into the spotlight that men's football has dominated. Inspirational! Where do I sign up?

John Lewis Partners

We were delighted to learn from Lewes FC directors how they are agitating change within football, and being a
TRUE LEADER OF EQUALITY in the field. The feedback from our audience has been phenomenal.

Beth
Accountant

Women's football was banned between 1921 and 1971 –
WHAT THE LIVING CHUFF?!

4. TALKING UP THE CLUB

It's worth noting that lots of progress has been made towards our ambitious ownership targets with large numbers of owners signing up after talks, and also after our Ownership campaign of 2021 – 'It's About Bloody Time'.



Indeed, after interviewing Eni Aluko at the Pan for her TV series Driving Force, tennis legend Judy Murray signed up to become an owner saying, 'I love the ethos behind this incredible football club and all the people I met who work or volunteer there. Community spirit at it's absolute best. Plus, they have Prosecco on matchdays. What's not to love?'

4. TALKING UP THE CLUB



Even more fabulous owners joined us on the back of the independent documentary made about Lewes FC, following our 2021-22 football season: 'Lewes FC: A Different Ball Game'.

Our sincere thanks go to Jack Tompkins and Ben Marlow of Ben and Jack Productions for their work and support.



DISABILITY SURVEY

As well as putting significant investment into improving our aging facilities, we undertook two disability audits to create a more accessible environment for all our fans. At the end of the season we established full access around the pitch, wider access points, and a third bar for when predicted matchday gate figures require it.



ROOKIE KICKERS

The Rookie Kickers, starring Lewes FC Women players as coaches, proved to be a huge attraction for another season. Some kids aged between 6 and 13 enjoyed the sessions of a Saturday morning down on the 3G, raving about the 'crazy warm ups' and 'fun football fitness' led by our fabulous players.

INTERNATIONAL SOUP KITCHEN

Some tasty collaborating with Diversity Lewes resulted in Lewes FC hosting the fourth 'International Soup Festival', featuring soups from all over the world. The Rook Inn was a flavour for sore taste buds that day, as we screened Liverpool v Lewes on the club house TV... whilst slurping delights like Caldo from Spain, Mama Ji's Dahl from India and, of course... Rook Soup from England!

Edina from Bosnia performing a dance in the Rook, hosted The Launchpad Collective.



Volunteer at the International Soup Festival.

FA CUP PRIZE CAMPAIGN

We received a lot of positive recognition when the FA announced its increase in the women's FA Cup Prize money. But we're not stopping until EQUAL prize money is achieved. Aside from addressing the gender imbalance, we also believe distribution of the total prize pot remains skewed towards Premier League clubs. In 2021-22, 60% of the total FA Cup Prize money went to Premier League Clubs.



We built an online tool with two proposed alternative models that offered redistribution to reduce the disparity between men's and women's clubs, and between big clubs and small clubs, allowing people to learn about the disparities and also challenge the status quo. We divvied up the prize money to make things (much, much) fairer for all, and brought out a special calculator on our website, where anyone could find how much better (or worse in 10% of cases) their club would be using our system. Go ahead – try it!

BEA ON THE BALL

We were delighted when Lewes owner (and former volunteer Lewes men's Progcast editor), Paul Sheppard, wrote a book for young adults inspired by our equality campaign!

'Bea on the Ball' is a great read, and certainly our Under 16s were impressed. Go Bea, and go our Under 16s!!



Amy
Defender

It's a **BRILLIANT BOOK**, because I've never read a book about a girl playing football before. Ever.

Bernie
Midfielder

This book has literally **INSPIRED ME TO PLAY MORE FOOTBALL**. As Bea was the only girl who played football at school in the book, I related. It's the first book I've read about a girl who plays football.

Amy
Left Winger

Seeing girls' football is now in books shows **HOW IT'S GROWING!**

ANTI-GAMBLIFICATION OF FOOTBALL

Men's first team player Lewis Carey – who himself battled a gambling addiction – ran a workshop with one of our pathway teams on the dangers of gambling, visited local club Newhaven FC, conducted several talks with EMC Academy and visited Charlton Athletic's Academy to talk about his experience.



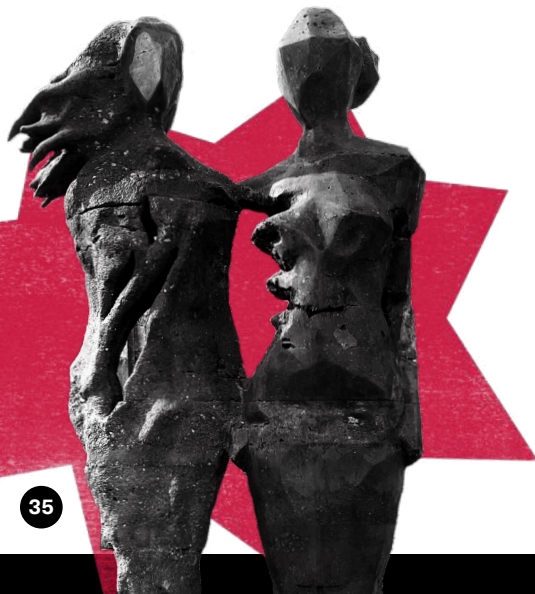
IMPRESSIVE AUDIENCES

Our matches sold out twice, once against Worthing for Lewes FC Men and once against Liverpool for Lewes FC Women. Having hired a Fan and Community Engagement Manager, who has worked hard on ticketing and improving the matchday experience for all, we coped well with the crowds and provided a memorable experience for thousands of fans.



CULTURE AT THE PAN

As ever, thinking of the club as a community asset, we have tried to ensure that the Dripping Pan appeals to a wider audience beyond matchday. We were delighted to host an artist for the district's Artwave Show, get would-be community gardeners in at Brad's Pit, and finally, to welcome a statue of 18th-Century female pirates to the Dripping Pan, bringing history and culture into the football space. We also have an Audioguide Panel outside the ground linking into the town's Audioways project.



In this vein, it was joyous to have various choirs open up our women's matches. We were particularly moved to receive this feedback from an Away fan on Twitter when he heard a clip of the Rock Choir belting out a famous Whitney Houston number prior to Lewes v Crystal Palace:

Away Fan

My Mum died in May – that song was played last at her funeral; she was also football mad.

THIS HAS MADE MY YEAR.

Away Fan

I took my daughter to watch our team London Bees at The Pan a few years ago – you can't help but **FALL IN LOVE WITH EVERYTHING ABOUT THE CLUB.**

THE ROOKER PRIZE

This season also saw the introduction of 'The Rooker Prize' – Lewes FC's new international writing competition. Entry was open to all Lewes FC's 2,400 owners in 37 countries around the world. Would-be authors were asked to submit 'the first 250 words of a novel in the specified genre of their choice'. The winning entry, selected by a panel of judges, was Duncan Brown's powerfully descriptive 'Black Premonition'.



The club donated £250 to Duncan's chosen charity, Kangaroos, and Duncan has left the fine pen-nib award, fashioned from oak and brass by local engraver Neil Turner, in The Rook Inn for all to enjoy.

Really chough-ed, as you might expect, to receive an award called the Rooker Prize. I really enjoyed writing the piece – quite a change from my day job as a medieval archaeologist.



CULTURE PIONEERS OF INCLUSION

The club itself was honoured to receive a Culture Pioneers award this season, with judges saying, 'Lewes Football Club is a worthy winner of the 2021 Culture Pioneers of Inclusion Award. They tackled inclusion head on, making it a real game changer, not just for the players but for the whole industry, by role modelling what is possible when willing to change the established order and mindsets'.

With that in mind, it's not surprising that we opened a designated baby changing area for matchdays in our Portacabin, complete with red and black changing mat, donated by Sistership, Rise.

Supporter

This is a club like no other,
Steward Rosie not only escorted me to a lovely private room with a comfy chair, she also made a welcome cuppa for me and my partner whilst I fed the baby.

We'll be back next weekend!



**Culture
Pioneer**
Awards 2022

INTERNATIONAL HEADLINE

Thanks to the fan who sent us this piece from an Israeli newspaper – glad to be getting more global attention. It's simultaneously brilliant and shameful, that we're still the only pro or semi-pro club the world over practicing gender equality.



Ollie Bayliss

Lewes FC are the only football club in the world to pay men and women footballers the same. Players also play on the same pitch and use the same training facilities.

GREAT TO SEE PROGRESS being made for
#WomenInFootball





INSPIRED KIDS

Ten year old George Rice used his Easter Holidays wisely... building a Lego model of the Dripping Pan! George and his family are Watford Season Ticker Holders, but having seen the Hornets lose 10 games on the spin, they started coming to our home games even though it is a 4-hour round trip. Dad Daniel takes up the story...

Daniel
George's dad

GEORGE LOVES HIS LEGO and the Dripping Pan has so many unique features he decided to **CHALLENGE HIMSELF** and try and build it. As it's Easter Holidays, he had some time but didn't take him too long, maybe **4 HOURS OVER THE LAST 2 DAYS.**



Food options just keep getting better – vegan meatballs anyone?



EQUAL PLAYING FIELD SUMMIT

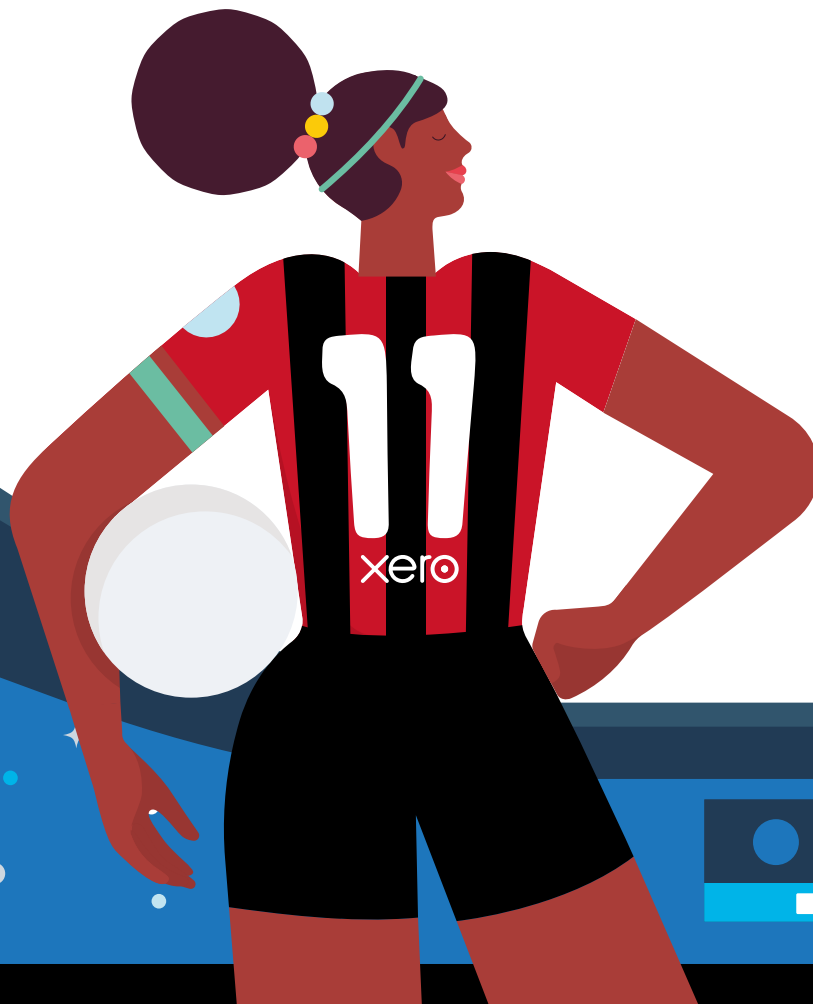


We were delighted to partner with Equal Playing Field this Summer – an organisation co-founded by our CEO Maggie Murphy, and dedicated to bringing respect, opportunity and equality to football. We contributed to EPF's 'Equality Summit' in London, bringing together thought leaders, activists, business leaders, media representatives, policy makers and legends of the game, amidst a growing interest in the women's game.

BIGGEST EVER SPONSORSHIP DEAL

We also announced our biggest ever multi-year sponsorship deal with Xero, in a partnership that will 'show how the drive for equality in sport and financial sustainability are inexorably linked'.

Xero – an accounting software product that allows business owners to better manage their finances – added, 'For Lewes FC, every penny they spend they have to make themselves. This makes them more innovative, creative, and able to focus on great matchday experiences, with local food and drink and a welcoming inclusive environment. And it makes the business behind the club more sustainable in the long term'.




LEWES FC SUPPORTERS CLUB

Our Supporters Club was established to bring fans together to fundraise and help the club. Over the season, as volunteers, they have helped on matchdays in a host of ways, as well as actively fundraising to support projects in and around the ground via matchdays raffles, the Golden Goal competition, and their Pan for Gold lottery.

Monies raised went towards helping the club pay for a new disabled loo, repair works, and emergency lights in the Philcox stand, as well as redecoration and painting work.





BREAKING THE MOULD



THANK YOU TO ST NICK'S TEAM

We're honoured to have clients of St Nicks, who work with adults with learning disabilities, support us every week, rain or shine. Their help has been invaluable to the club on a Monday, when they litter pick, carry out repair works, and generally help create a wonderful atmosphere at the Pan. The group are supervised by a Support Worker and our Facilities Manager, James Barker. Presenting shirts to each of the volunteers as a token of our esteem and gratitude was a wonderful moment for all involved.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



We'd like to say a huge thank you to all these amazing organisations who work with us to not only put on quality winning football of a weekend, but to shift beliefs around the world's most popular sport. You have already helped us make history, and we look forward to travelling further together as we prove to the rest of football that when you invest in equality, you change culture positively for everyone.



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS



Thank you to our indispensable team of Volunteers (James and Justine pictured). Without you we would be nothing. They say it takes a village to raise a child. We say it takes a community to run a world-changing, pioneering football club! We ❤️ and salute you.





**TEAMWORK IS
MASSIVE**

LIKE WHAT WE DO?

OWNERSHIP

Join our movement and become an Owner here:
www.lewesfc.com/become-an-owner/

SPONSORSHIP

To sponsor or partner with us, contact Stef McLaughlin,
our Commercial Manager, at Stef@lewesfc.com

PART OF OUR COMMUNITY?

Get in touch with our Community Engagement Manager,
Shrey Nilvarna, at Shrey@lewesfc.com

MEDIA

For media enquiries talk to Jack Towers,
Communications Manager, at Jack@lewesfc.com

