



Sutton United

SUNS

the Sutton United Newsletter for Sustainability

Issue One

October 2023

Welcome to the first edition of our brand new newsletter, SUNS, which will be a quarterly magazine designed to update everyone on our progress towards becoming more environmentally sustainable.

As chairman of the board of directors I took the lead on environmental matters for the club, it seemed a good fit as I am a Chartered Environmentalist and it's what I have done as my day job for longer than I care to remember. When I retired as a director last year our COO, Tim Allison, took on the board level responsibilities for all things CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) but I was asked to continue to lead on our programme of environmental initiatives and reporting. I am pleased to say that I have since been joined by another volunteer, Liam McSherry, who has already proved a very useful addition to the team and was, for example, the driving force behind us installing vape recycling points.

Reporting

We issued our first CSR Report back in 2015, one of the very first clubs to do so, and the intention was to report annually. But things got in the way (2 promotions, FA Cup runs, upgrading the stadium etc etc) and I never seemed to have the time. However, we reported again last year, with full quantified disclosure of our carbon emissions, ([link - Sutton United F.C. CSR Report 2021/22 by suttonunitedfc - Issuu](#)) and we are working on our 2022/23 report.

Assessment

Last year the EFL launched its Green Clubs programme, inviting all 72 clubs to participate in a Green Code initiative, which would lead to accreditation. Our initial score in the survey was good but a little below the threshold and we developed an improvement plan and we will be re-assessed very soon to see how we are getting on. Only one club passed last year, Forest Green Rovers not surprisingly. Furthermore, in September this year the London Borough of Sutton launched its own scheme, Green Mark, which we have also signed up for. This scheme is aimed at businesses in the borough that want to make a difference.

One of the initiatives we put in place was to develop an environmental management system (EMS), although we do not currently plan to seek certification under ISO:14001. We also operate an energy management system aligned to ISO:50001.

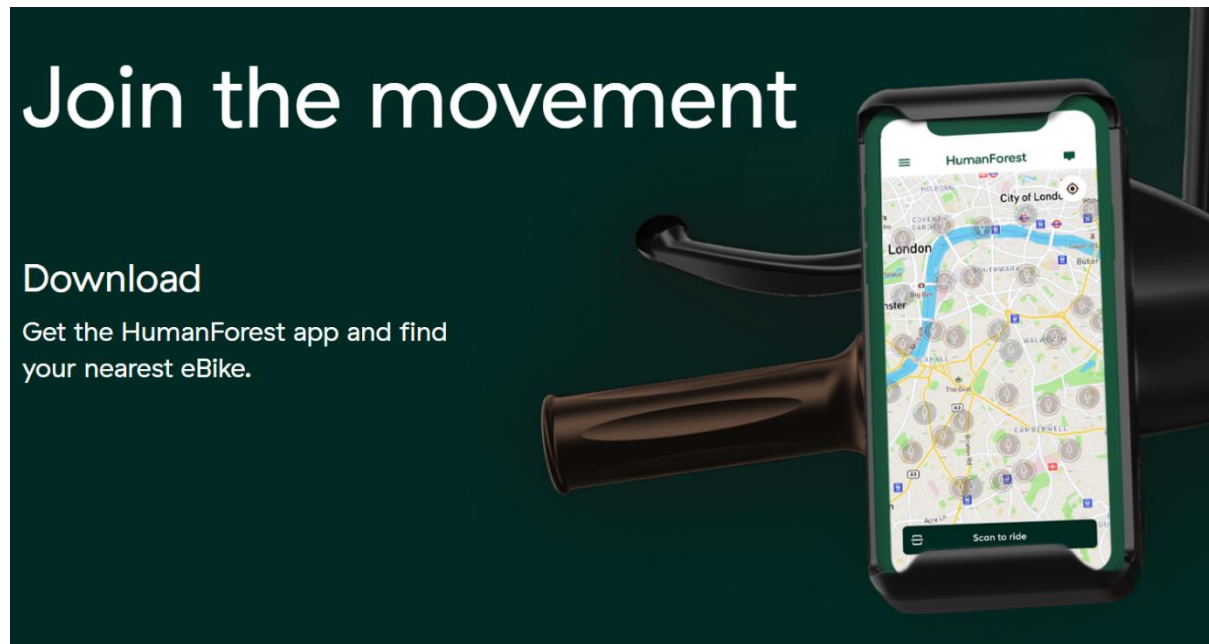
Initiatives

We have been implementing a range of initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint and other impacts over a number of years. These include:-

- Replacing the windows to the MBA Lounge with double-glazing
- A continual programme of upgrading our internal lighting to low energy LEDs, and of course our floodlights are also LED
- Replacing the heating to the boardroom and MBA Lounge with heat pumps
- Decommissioning one of our gas boilers
- Waterless urinals for the toilets to the MBA Lounge
- In the last year we have installed recycling points for vapes, as mentioned above, and also established the club as an official hub for Human Forest e-bikes.

Last spring I visited three local schools to address their pupils during assembly about sustainability, as part of the EFL's Green Football weekend, and also delivered an internal, game-based climate change awareness session known as a Climate Fresk. We did invite Sky, the FA and EFL and were disappointed that they didn't accept.

We have also put in place a Pollution Incident Response Plan



So, what's coming up? We are looking to improve onsite biodiversity, with a range of options to consider including raised beds and some wildflower areas, but will probably wait until our development work is completed. Kit-man Clive's old van has done some sterling service but we are hoping to replace it soon with a new EV (electric vehicle) and also install a couple of charging points in our car-park. We are about to launch an energy efficiency awareness campaign, with a series of posters, and hope to arrange an environmentally-themed volunteering day for staff in the spring.

SOCIAL VALUE

Led by our Foundation, the club remains very active within the community. In each issue of SUNS we will aim to provide brief details of some of the many things that we have done in the previous quarter. Many thanks to Bobby Childs for the information.

- Friday coffee morning. Introduced last winter as a Warm Spaces initiative, the club's 1898 Lounge is open every Friday warming with a free invitation for the borough's residents to pop along for a chat, a coffee and maybe a slice of cake. As autumn draws to a close and the months turn colder, we hope this service will prove popular with people who need somewhere warm or maybe just someone to talk to.
- We run a twice-weekly walking football session for the over 55s, with more than 30 men and women attending on a regular basis.
- We have more than 40 girls playing regularly each Monday evening, from first-timers to more experienced players, many of whom represent our competitive teams on Sundays. This is an area we are hoping to grow and to see more players progress into our senior teams.
- Our disability football section under Steve King is one of the most successful in the region, and we now field three teams.
- We work with many local schools to provide a varied offering that includes curriculum-based activities around literacy, for example, as well as traditional football sessions.
- We also operate a special needs schools outreach programme with Carew Manor Academy and hope to expand this into other, similar local schools.

- Our exciting 4-0 win over Walsall was also our club Foundation Day, when we celebrated the work of our charitable foundation:-
 - *In the morning there was a 7-a-side walking football tournament at Goals in Cheam, featuring Sutton United, Fulham, Better Sutton Vets & Walsall, while our disability teams the Jays and Ganders both had games against Southwark in Collingwood Recreation Ground. All players then came to lunch in our Fans' Zone before enjoying the Walsall game.*
 - *Players from the Foundation's Girls Development centre (Girls aged 5-10 years train every Monday, at Goals) were also present with twelve of them acting as flag bearers when the Sutton and Walsall teams walked out before the game. We also welcomed 100 members of the Hong Kong community (the Sutton Hong Kongers Football Group) and members of Onside Soccer in Carshalton. The Sutton Hong Kongers group meet for coaching on Sunday mornings at Aberdour School between 9.00 and 11.00, with an hour session each for children and adults.*
 - *Sutton Community Works were present to receive donated food items as they aim to eradicate food poverty in Sutton. They collected donations of pasta sauce, tinned fruit, long life juice, coffee, sponge puddings, tinned meat, fish and vegetables and long life milk.*
 - *We are also signatories to the Muslim Athletes' Charter and have established a dedicated multi-faith prayer room at the club, free for all to use*
 - *We have appointed a new club chaplain*

A big growth area is women's football, and we want to build on the back of the recent successes of the England Lionesses. We have a thriving programme of girls' football, leading up to three senior teams, a first team competing at what is effectively national Tier 5 (London & South-East Regional Women's League), a reserve side and a development team. The first team will be at home to Maidenhead United in the women's FA Cup first round, and we'd love to see a good crowd for that game. But we also want to champion inclusivity in terms of female support at our men's first team matches. After all, if we are not a welcoming venue for female supporters then that is roughly half of our potential fan-base that we are disenfranchising. Sarah Aitchison (SuttonSal) is our appointed HerGameToo representative and is always helpful and enthusiastic in helping women and girls to feel at home at Sutton United and striving to promote an inclusive atmosphere free from aggression and abuse. Sarah was recently joined in our HerGameToo team by Emma Harmeston-Taylor.

Finally, October is Black History Month and we are planning a feature for our website to record the achievements of some of our most prominent players of black heritage.

Dave Farebrother CEnv

Sustainability Lead