



# 'Stepping into the future'

## 1. Club context

Chelmsford City WFC was founded in 2012 by chairman Terry Buck.

We started, like most clubs, with a few blokes kicking a ball around in the local park.

The club has been at the forefront of developing the game across Essex.

We now have over 70 registered players ranging in age from their early 50' to approaching 80, with 15 new players joining in 2020 directly as a result of our marketing campaign.



Promoting walking footie to the community

Another great footie gathering!

The COVID -19 challenge has understandably slowed our development process, but it has also graphically shown us that walking football has the power to create connectedness at times of isolation – whether it's a global pandemic or the first steps into retirement.

We take a great pride in being a community based recreational walking football club. This will always be our bedrock. However, we have also shown our competitive ambition too. We are proud of both.

We were over 60' Essex WFU Cup champions in 2014/15/16/17 and Essex Walking Football League runners-up in 2017 and champions in 2018. The over 60' were also National League Trust Plate winners in 2016.



Essex o60' 2018 champions



Essex Age UK Cup champions



Getting serious on tactics!

In 2019, the over 65' were both Essex and South East WFU Cup champions making it to the national finals, whilst a mixed age group side won the Essex Age UK Cup.

The club has also been active on the international scene in every sense of the word. The club side has appeared several times at the Amelo City Cup competition, taking a very hard fought 3<sup>rd</sup> place in 2018. The club also boasts the over 60' WFA England captain and coach.

We are proud of both our community roots and our achievement.

## 2. So who are we trying to appeal to?

We have club members from around Essex (and beyond), but the majority of members are from the Chelmsford and the surrounding area.

In the 2011 Census the population of Chelmsford was 168,310. (49% men / 51% women).

The detailed breakdown of our target audience (both genders) is

50 -54	- 11,157
55 -59	- 10,047
60 -64	- 10,972
65 -69	- 8,239
70 -74	- 6,469
75 -79	- 5,446
80 -84	- 4,092

This tells us that nearly 34% (56422) of the Chelmsford population were aged 50 -84 in 2011. This is estimated to rise to well over 60,000 in the 2021 Census.

Of the 56,422 there were over 17,000 people who had retired.

Whilst club membership is open to men and women, our experience is that we have had very few enquiries to play walking football from ladies.

Given that the general population split in Chelmsford of 49% men / 51% women, it is reasonable to conclude that there have been c27,000 men (c8,500 retired) who we could have been appealing to. These numbers will rise in the 2021 Census.

Allowing for illness, disability, travel difficulties or just plain disinterest, there is still a significant untapped part of the Chelmsford o50' population that we could encourage to think about playing walking football.

The vast majority of this group will not have played elite sport or possess exceptional capability. They are likely to be people who have retired and want to fill a void; who want to get fitter; or who have health challenges and want to improve their resilience. They may just want a sense of camaraderie and fun or they could be attracted for all of these reasons.

Our starting point is to make it easy for people to get involved, then see where it leads them.

There is no doubt that 2020 has been a year of navigating COVID -19, it has been a year of less football and more reflection. It has also presented us with an opportunity to take stock.

With this in mind we thought that it is timely to be clear about our purpose, values and direction of travel - to be clear about how we' step into the future'.

### **3. Our core purpose**

We are here to -

- provide general fitness & health benefits (physical & mental) to men & women over 50;
- create a focal point of social interaction and camaraderie;
- help minimise loneliness;
- create a thriving community / network amongst the over 50' (and particularly the o60' / 70' and beyond);
- create recreational & social fun;
- play walking football;

### **4. What we stand for**

We believe that -

- the welfare of our members is our first priority;
- our foundation is 'recreational' walking football;
- participating is more important than winning;
- for those who are more competitive, we will provide opportunity to compete in league and cup competitions;

- for those who are particularly talented, we will sponsor and promote their progression to play at county, regional or international levels;
- we are an inclusive club and our first priority is to ensure that everyone is involved in a way that suits their health, capability and aspirations;

## **5. Our direction of travel**

Over the next 6 -18 months we will -

- successfully navigate the COVID-19 period;
- extend CCWFC' reach into the community;
- increase club membership to 100+ by March 2022;
- further develop the 'recreational' element of our training;
- progressively develop more challenging training routines;
- extend the provision of 3G pitch training sessions;
- establish a tangible sponsorship relationship with Chelmsford City FC;
- establish a club o70' team and campaign for an Essex o70' league.
- actively nominate and sponsor players for county, regional and international trials;
- re-establish a vibrant social scene, once COVID-19 guidelines allow.

The CCWFC committee will underpin our 'stepping into the future' vision with a detailed action plan.

It will not be a plan to collect dust, neither will it be the sole responsibility of the committee to deliver it.

It is 'our' club and we welcome the participation and hard work of club members to help us encourage more o50' enjoy the benefits of walking football.

## **Chelmsford City Walking Football Club Committee**

**October 2020**