



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## SPARTA

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# FOREWORD

by our Chairman, Rod Paterson



I am delighted to provide the Foreword to this, the 2024 Annual Report, for the final time as Chair of our Sports and Recreation Association, SPARTA. I am delighted that Nick Adams has agreed to be my successor and I know that you will all provide him with your full support.

It was outstanding to see so much activity from the SPARTA clubs this year along with a number of new ventures. I was particularly happy to see our representation grow in the regional offices, particularly in Leeds where new running, board games and football clubs have taken shape this year. The way these clubs they have been set up is why we changed the constitution last year. It now allows the members to set up clubs in a modern more flexible way that work for them. I was also pleased to that we were able to hold a popular Personal Safety course at the start of the year which continued as the Martial Arts club throughout the year.

The SPARTA History Society held another wide range of events including arranging several history events that were not concentrated in London. They are looking to hold more regional events in 2025. The Civil Service Choir were once again very active and held some excellent concerts including performances of Brahms Ein Deutches Requiem with Kensington Philharmonic Orchestra, Haydn Little Organ Mass and Schubert Mass in G at the Easter Festival at St John's Smith Square and Kim André Arnesen's Holy Spirit Mass which they performed twice in France!

It was good to see that the regular SPARTA activities on three lunch times a week continued to be popular and added to these were lunchtime runs from Great Minster House in London and Wellington Place in Leeds. I also know how many of you give your time up in the evenings to run or participate (or rehearse!) in many of our activities which is something of which I am greatly appreciative.

This year's Sport and Wellbeing Day was another incredible success with well over 500 people attending. I'd like to thank all the volunteers who either help run the huge array of events or

who help out on the day. Once again, the day was delivered in close partnership with the Civil Service Sports Council (CSSC), it was really successful and was delivered with the help of Sports Society and Rounders England. With Sport and Wellbeing Day 2025 set for Friday 18 July 2025 I hope many of you will be involved again because we need you!

I was delighted when, shortly after I had passed the SPARTA reins over to Nick, the SPARTA team won the Civil Service Cross Country Championships in October. He certainly has had a good start as did our wonderful running team.

As you read through this Annual Report you will once again appreciate that SPARTA only functions thanks to the dedication of the people who run and participate in all our clubs and societies. As I have reflected in previous years, we continue to be keen to attract new members both for our own future as an Association but also to be the next generation of volunteers who will continue to take our clubs and societies forward.

As ever, I want to thank my fellow committee members for their hard work once again. As always, they have kept the organisation moving forward and their help and dedication cannot be underestimated.

As I step down, I would like to wish Nick all the best and hope that he gets as much joy from working with you all as I have. And, for a final time, I want to pass on my enormous thanks to Sue as our Deputy Chair, Paul our Treasurer and Jason our General Secretary upon whose shoulders much of the success of SPARTA rests.



Rod Paterson  
Chair, SPARTA  
MHCLG and DfT Sports and Recreation Association

# FINANCIAL REPORT

23/24 YEAR ENDING 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024

by our Honorary Treasurer, Paul Jones



The SPARTA bank account is in a reasonable condition at this time as we held a bank balance of £66,804 at the end of the financial year (2023/24).

## **SPARTA Income for the year was £18,707**

This was made up of three main income streams, CSSC, Membership and Sports Day. Also, running 2 clubs through SPARTA, Yoga and Martial Arts plus one revue stream trail T-Shirts (running T-Shirts).

CSSC provided their main grant of £8,350 (in two instalments). Down from the previous year's grant of £8,500 (-£150). We were refused our bid for the Choir as CSSC insisted they put in a bid directly to CSSC London.

Membership income was £4,666. This was down on 22/23 which had been £4,885. That is a drop of £219 which equates to 4.48%.

Some of the drop in membership income can be put down to issues we had in getting new members payments onto payroll. This would account for memberships increasing from 193 at the start of the year to 200 at the end (even with the usual membership churn). The payroll issue has now been resolved.

Sports Day generated income of £1,657.

Income Type	£
CSSC 23/24	8,350
Memberships (excluding Pre Payments)	4,666
Sports Day Income	1,657
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>14,673</b>
Yoga	1,730
Martial Arts	1,685
T Shirts	210
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3,625</b>
Reimbursement of CSSA 5-10km run	403
Charitable donation	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>408</b>
	<b>18,707</b>

**Expenditure for the year was £19,469**

This is made up of payments made and cost accrued for the year.

**Clubs Bids for 23/24** (calendar year 2024) totalling £8,599 were paid out to all the clubs apart from the Fitness, Table Tennis and Choir. Yoga and Martial Arts costs and income are going through SPARTA directly rather than via the clubs. We were refused funding from CSSC for the Choir as CSSC want the Choir to request funding directly.

Breakdown:

Expenditure Type	£
<b>Club Bids</b>	
Clubs Bids - Cricket - 23/24	1115
Club Bids - Golf - 23/24	3800
Clubs Bids - Ten Pin Bowling 23/24	2088
Club Bids - Tennis 23/24	328
Club Bids - History 23/24	1268
	<b>8,599</b>

**Regional Bids (Rebates to Affiliated branches) totalled £772.**

Currently only DVSA Nottingham has claimed for 23/24.

Breakdown of the Regional rebates:

Expenditure Type	£
<b>Regional Bids</b>	
DVSA Nottingham Rebate FY 22/23	772
<b>Reversal of accruals</b>	
Clear accrual DVSA Nottingham Rebate FY 22/23	-825
Clear-TRL 19-20 as over 2 years £221.14	-221
Clear DVLA Swansea	-3733
<b>Re-accrued for 23-24</b>	
DVSA Nottingham Rebate 23-24	772
TRL Crowthorne Rebate 23-24	221
	-3014

The “Rebates to Affiliated branches” is showing an expense figure of £3,014 as the accounts had to be adjusted to clear the over accrual for DVSA Nottingham 22/23 payment, TRL and DVLA Swansea write off for not claiming for over 2 years.

Accruals have been put on for DVSA Nottingham and TRL for 23/24.

I have not included any further years accrual for DVLA Swansea. The proposal is for DVLA to reclaim their rebate direct from CSSC, however this arrangement has not yet been agreed and finalised between CSSC and DVSA. While I have been accruing as a matter of prudence since 2020/21, I’m now releasing these accruals as the 2 year limits expire. I don’t intend to continue to accrue going forward as believe we have given DVLA enough time to arrange their rebate directly from CSSC.

### **Sports & Wellbeing Day cost totalled £3,256**

The main cost for Sports Day was paid directly by CSSC.

Expenditure Type	£
<b>Sports &amp; Wellbeing Day</b>	
Medals for Sports Day 2023	146
Bouncy Castle Sports Day 2023	906
Band Sports Day 2023	900
Sports Day 2023 Officials Expenses	1304
	3256

Further categories of expenses for the year are shown below:

Breakdown:

Expenditure Type	£
CSSC 5-10k Run	798
CSSC Lawn Tennis	25
Reimbursement of CSSA 5-10km run	(403)
	420

Expenditure Type	£
Yoga Costs	2,160
Yoga Reimbursement	(1,730)
	430

Expenditure Type	£
Martial Arts	2,300
Martial Arts Reimbursement	(1,685)
	615

Expenditure Type	£
T Shirts	548
T Shirts Sold	(210)
	338



Expenditure Type	£
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Meet the Club Events: Expenses	28
Barclaycard Anywhere Card Transaction costs	40
Table Tennis Balls	10
Football Trophy: new base & engraving	65
Taxi	6
Charity Donation British Heart Foundation & Charity for Civil Servants	800
Netball Bibs	61
	1,010

The next page contains a statement of SPARTA finances as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

**Financial Statements**

	FY 23/24	FY 22/23	FY 21/22
<b>INCOME STATEMENT</b>	<b>Year Ended 30-Sep-24</b>	<b>Year Ended 30-Sep-23</b>	<b>Year Ended 30-Sep-22</b>
	<b>£</b>		
<b>Income</b>			
Sports day income	1,657	1,108	1,122
SPARTA Member subscriptions	4,666	4,885	4,901
CSSC Rebate	8,350	8,500	17,500
T-Shirts	210		
Martial Arts	1,685		
Yoga	1,730		
Other revenue	5	-	50
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>18,304</b>	<b>14,493</b>	<b>23,573</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Rebates to affiliated branches	3,014	(4,406)	(3,413)
Grants to clubs	(8,599)	(11,740)	(8,945)
T-Shirt Costs	(548)		
Martial Art Cost	(2,300)		
Yoga Cost	(2,510)		
Representative matches	-	-	(258)
Sports day cost	(3,256)	(5,293)	(9,680)
Entry fees	(420)	(300)	(477)
Miscellaneous	(460)	(1,463)	(2,674)
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>(15,080)</b>	<b>(23,203)</b>	<b>(25,447)</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>3,224</b>	<b>(8,710)</b>	<b>(1,874)</b>

<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>	<b>At 30-Sep-23</b>	<b>At 30-Sep-23</b>	<b>At 30-Sep-22</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	-	350	-
Petty cash	106	21	38
Cash at bank	66,804	67,729	73,113
Cash at building society	0	0	0
Unpresented cheques	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>66,911</b>	<b>68,100</b>	<b>73,152</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Creditors	(0)	(115)	(0)
Accruals & Provisions	(9,190)	(13,488)	(9,945)
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>(9,190)</b>	<b>(13,603)</b>	<b>(9,945)</b>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS / (LIABILITIES)</b>	<b>57,720</b>	<b>54,497</b>	<b>63,206</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>57,720</b>	<b>54,497</b>	<b>63,206</b>
<b>Equity and Reserves</b>			
Equity at beginning of year	54,497	63,206	65,204
Movement in Reserves	-	-	(124)
Surplus/(deficit)	3,224	(8,710)	(1,874)
<b>TOTAL SHAREHOLDER EQUITY</b>	<b>57,720</b>	<b>54,497</b>	<b>63,206</b>

# MEMBERSHIP

Our finances show that membership income was down during the financial year 23/24 by 4.48%. Part of the drop is down to issues we had in getting new members onto payroll and part is our normal churn. The payroll issue has been resolved.

As always it is not easy to determine the precise size of our membership due to the different ways that people can join, i.e. new members who might pay an annual membership directly to their SPARTA club.

Our finances show that we currently have 200 members who pay directly to SPARTA. That is an increase of 7 members from the start of the year (193).

# THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

The 50th Annual General Meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

The meeting was held in Room 3.15, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 4DR and was available virtually online using Microsoft Teams

Following a full consultation with the members, a motion was put forward to amend the SPARTA Constitution. This new constitution was passed unanimously at the meeting.

A copy of the AGM minutes is available on the SPARTA website

# SPARTA COMMITTEE MEETINGS (GMC AND FGPC)

The Officers of the Association meet as a committee on a weekly basis apart from that the General Management Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee also meet during the year.

This year the General Management Committee met on 20 March 2024.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee met this year on 29 February 2024 at 16:00 hours online using Microsoft Teams. At this meeting the club bids were considered to be recommended for the GMC and were passed forward and duly agreed.

## Regional Associations

No reports were received from Regional Associations during this period.

# SPARTA LONDON BASED CLUBS

The SPARTA London based clubs had a good year. A report of each club is below:

## The Civil Service Choir

### Concerts

The choir gave six concerts in 2024. In March, the choir was joined by Kensington Philharmonic Orchestra in a collaboration to perform the momentous Brahms Ein Deutes Requiem at Smith Square Hall. A chamber choir was also set up to perform music by German-speaking composers in the first half of the concert.



The choir's music director, Stephen Hall, conducted the chamber choir and was chorus master - training the choir - for the Brahms Requiem. The Requiem was conducted by the orchestra's conductor, Claudio di Meo, who said afterwards that "From the very beginning, the atmosphere was charged with magic, thanks to the incredible performance of the Choir."

To everyone's surprise, in the audience there was the pianist, band leader and television presenter Jools Holland, who was effusive about the choir's performance. He was happy to be quoted and said, "This choir is one of the best I've ever heard."

Later in March, the chamber choir returned to Smith Square Hall to sing in the Easter Festival and performed Haydn's Little Organ Mass and Schubert's Mass in G, accompanied by a string ensemble and chamber organ. The concert raised £1,300 for charities.

In July, the full choir returned to Smith Square Hall with a string orchestra to perform a contemporary work by Norwegian composer Kim Andre Arnesen called the Holy Spirit Mass. Also featured were works by British composers, performed by the full choir and the chamber choir. The concert raised £3,300 for charities.

In September, the choir went to Normandy for a short tour. Performances of the repertoire from the July concert were given in large churches in Rouen and in Beauvais to delighted audiences. The choir also visited the house and gardens of Claude Monet.



In November the Civil Service Choir celebrated its 15th anniversary. Almost to the day of its debut concert, it returned to St Stephen's Church, Rochester Row to give a concert, The Mystery of Winter, accompanied by a string ensemble, organ and piano. The concert featured Haydn's St Nicholas Mass and shorter works by British composers and by contemporary Norwegian, Swedish and American composers. (At the time of going to press, an amount raised for charity has not been confirmed.)

## Other Performances

In March the choir sang at an event at the Department for Health and Social Care, which included a talk about the health benefits of being in a choir. A packed canteen was invited to join in with the singing. Later in March, the choir sang at the Whitehall Easter Service at the Emmanuel Centre, Marsham Street.

In June, the choir sang at a memorial service for Paul Rowsell CBE at Smith Square Hall, at the behest of the Department for Communities and Local Government. Later in the month, the choir sang a jazz mass setting in a Eucharist service at St Stephen's. In September the choir was invited to sing at the Civil Service Women in Leadership Awards. In November, the choir sang for acts of remembrance at the Department for Business and Trade and at the Civil Service Rifles Memorial at Somerset House.



At the time of going to press, the choir is expecting a busy December, which includes the Civil Service Awards, its own carol service, the Whitehall carol service and various departmental events.

## Promotion

The choir's profile has been raised by concerts and events, coverage in the Civil Service Weekly News bulletin and through its own publicity efforts. It has received joining enquiries throughout the year. The choir promotes SPARTA in its publicity, printed programmes and on its website.

## Raising money for charities

Across the 15 years of concerts the choir has raised more than £50,000. Charities supported this year include the poverty charity the Cardinal Hume Centre on Horseferry Road (with which the choir is strongly associated), the Charity for Civil Servants, Sinfonia Smith Square, and St Stephen's Church.



## YouTube recordings

At the time of going to press, there had been over 11,000 views of the choir's outputs on YouTube in the past year and across the lifetime of all the choir's recordings on YouTube there have been over 76,000 views.

## More information about the choir

For more information visit [www.civilservicechoir.org.uk](http://www.civilservicechoir.org.uk)

## Fitness Club

The Fitness club continues to operate on a hybrid basis taking place every Friday lunchtime beginning at 12.30. Attendees are able to join either in person or online via Microsoft Teams.

This year has seen a continued regular turnout by the regular strong core of people and also a record attendance post covid. We are hoping that the class will continue to build during 2025 to pre covid levels and beyond.

The club is always actively seeking new members.

The club has been operating in Room LG1 in Great Minster House every Friday Lunchtime.



## SPARTA Golf Society

Attendance at meetings this year continues to be low despite our efforts to attract new recruits and a change to the format at some meetings. Our efforts to increase numbers will continue next year with visits to more interesting venues although with prices still on the rise, some of our choices will be out of our price range.

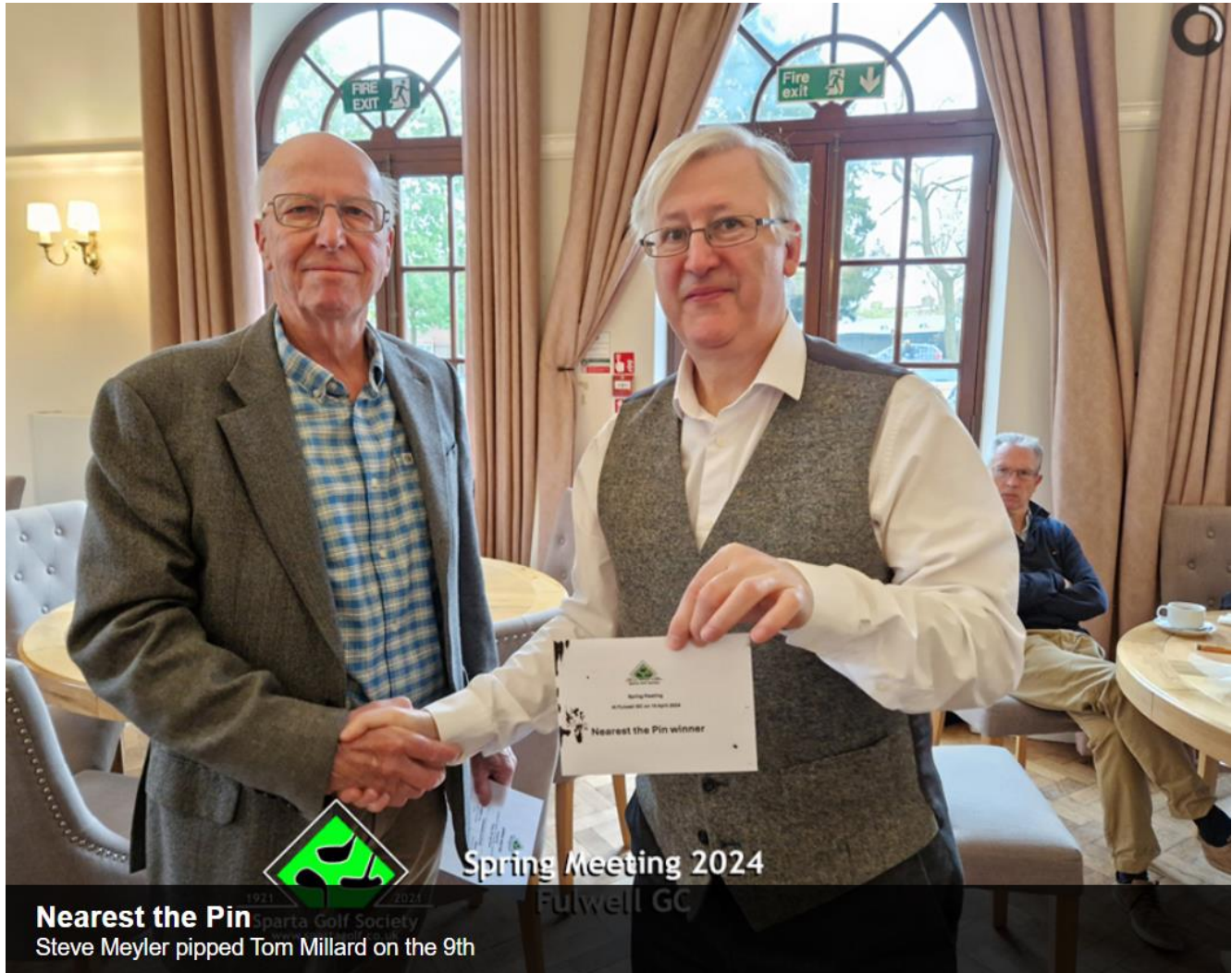


**The 9th hole**

With the adoption of 18 hole meetings, a number of trophies have had to be retired but we still play for the originals which are now over 100 years old. Also, competition amongst members remains keen and our Captain this year has tried to make sure that prizes are more evenly distributed.

We also continue to support our members in national competitions and this year our team of four ventured to Tewkesbury to compete in the CSSC Haddow Trophy. Hopes were high after the first round as we were leading but unfortunately our team could not maintain their form

and finally finished in a creditable 5<sup>th</sup> place.



Our annual match against friends from the Hastings area was unfortunately called off at the last minute. Overnight rain had forced the club to ban trolleys and buggies. This information was passed to the Hastings team members, many of whom decided not to travel. However, on the SPARTA side we decided to make the decision once our team arrived and negotiation with the club did allow us to play using trolleys. However, the match was off and whilst some of our members wanted to claim a walkover, diplomacy was adopted, and the match was recorded as 'Not played due to course conditions'.

It was good to see our Sparta General Secretary (Jason Marchant) at that event which was followed by our AGM. At that meeting there was one major change of committee personnel in that the Society's Secretary (Vince Rossiter) had decided to stand down after nearly 30 years. Whilst a replacement was not appointed at the meeting, afterwards two candidates did come forward and both were accepted, one as secretary the other as assistant.

It is hoped that the future of the society is now secure, and it can continue to grow strongly into the future.

Our website continues to be updated with all the results, reports and pictures of our activities. On it you can also find our full calendar for 2024 can be found. Go to [www.spartagolf.co.uk](http://www.spartagolf.co.uk) to find out more.

## History Society

### 2023-2024 Report

During the year the History Society has organised 20 events 15 virtual and hybrid talks (with many available to watch on YouTube) and five walks. The talks are attended from Civil Servants from across the UK. The society has a mailing list of over 500 people and the estimated number of participants is over 600. The talks have covered various historical subjects from Witches to East Germany featuring bestselling historians and broadcasters such as Malcolm Gaskell, Tracy Borman, Katja Hoyer and John Dickie. I'm happy to say, members of the Society Brian Spurrell, Bryan Boese and Nick Jesson have presented talks.

The five walks include two walks in Leeds organised by Ben Blaxall. Ben also mentioned organising the walks when he took part at the DfT October all-staff live event as part of One Big Thing which helped raise the profile of the Society. We have taken part in Meet the Clubs events leading to people joining SPARTA and highlights the need to inform new members of staff about SPARTA clubs.



Above Right: London Slave Trade Walk outside The Tower of London

Looking forward to 2025 the Society aims to continue to undertake a variety of events. It will look continue organising joint events with different Staff Networks. The planning for talks next year has already started talks will include 200 Years of RNLi and will seek to work with DfT colleagues on talks and events commemorating Railway 200, we aim to continue to find high-profile speakers present talks to us.



The History Society display at the SPARTA Meet the Clubs event

Please contact Robert Baker if interested attending any of our events.

Details of our talks can be found on the SPARTA website:

<https://www.spartarecreation.co.uk>



Robert Baker

History Society Secretary

## Martial Arts Club

**PERSONAL SAFETY**  
And Martial Arts Classes

**TUESDAY**  
5:00 - 6:00 pm  
Starting  
16 January 2024  
Room LG1, Great  
Minster House

**TEACHER**  
Sifu Nick  
Martin

**CONTACTUS**  
07884 390878  
SPARTA@dft.gov.uk  
www.spartarecreation.co.uk

SPARTA started 2024 with a very popular Personal Safety course that was run over a period of 8 weeks by Stay Safe Global. The course was a real success, covering everything to help equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed for confident navigation through life's challenges. This comprehensive program is designed to ensure personal safety and the safety of your loved ones, bolstering your confidence in any situation.

Training also covered danger awareness, avoidance, physical escape, and defense skills and was delivered by Sifu Nick Martin

Following on from the course we continued with weekly classes teaching Wing Chun Kung Fu. A Martial Art that is designed to help a smaller opponent overcome a larger stronger opponent. A truly fascinating subject.

Attendance at the Martial Arts classes was not as high as we hoped but we are hoping to recruit more pupils next year.

## St James's and Westminster Players

St James's and Westminster players are a London based, nonprofessional drama society made up of current and former civil servants and have been going for over 70 years. We cover classic and new plays as well as showcase pieces written by members of the society.

In 2023/2024 we did a couple of productions. In the summer of 2023 we were the first amateur dramatic society to take on “Sheila’s Island”, a play written by Tim Firth, which features a team of epic adventurers, aptly stranded on an island in the middle of the lake district by their captain Sheila, dirty washing gets aired, truths get told but will they ever find Fay’s arctic parrot!. Later in the year we put on a piece of new writing called “Wicked Wedding”, short monologues and scenes all about the 7 deadly sins of marriage - the sloth priest, the angry wedding photographer, the lustful best man, the envious mother of the bride. Both productions were immensely fun to do.



We also took part in one of the meet the clubs session and have grown the membership to now 53 in London.

We are currently in production of “Twelfth Night” which we will be performing on 1st & 2nd December at the Camden Peoples Theatre. Tickets can be purchased using the link below <https://cpttheatre.co.uk/whatson/Twelfth-Night>

In the new year with the assistance of some SPARTA funding we are moving into online productions to enable even more of our membership, including those no longer based in London, to take part.

## Superstars Cricket Club

Superstars Cricket Club enjoyed a curate's egg of a season in 2024.

The fixture list would tell you that we only played one game before June 6th, a third of all our games were rained off, abandoned or otherwise cancelled, we didn't win a game until the end of July, a rusty loss in the first game of Sparta sports day cost us the chance to defend our title, and overall we lost three times as many games as we won.



Moreover, the season's statistics—whose quality would rival those of many a professional club—show unsurprisingly that if you don't play many games, you don't score many runs and you don't take many wickets. Indeed, we recorded only one half-century, only two batsmen scored enough runs to qualify for the

batting averages, and no bowlers took enough wickets.

And yet... We turned out a full side for almost every game, with (relatively) little effort and sometimes even having to convene the selection committee. We welcomed a slew of new players, some of whom made a real difference to both the quality and the enjoyment of our cricket and complemented the core of long-standing (if



increasingly long-toothed) players. Most of the games we played went long in overs, even if



we lost by large numbers of wickets. Win or lose, we played some thoroughly enjoyable games (which, after all, is the point). And we did win the Caterham six-a-side tournament.

So next year we'll carry on doing what we do best: enjoying each other's company, cheering our successes (however infrequent they may be), accepting that someone else may win most of the time (QV), and looking forward to the next game!

Matthew Conway  
Superstars Cricket Club Chairman

## **Table Tennis**

The Sparta Table Tennis Club did not enter the team into the London Banks and Civil Service Table Tennis League this year.

The weekly 2-hour lunchtime sessions held in GMH on Wednesdays have proved to be very popular, with numbers in attendance going into double figures. There doesn't seem to be much interest in playing after work, but messages will be cascaded to staff to obtain views.

## **Sports Day 2024**

The Table Tennis event took place again this year with the number of participants lower than past events. Winner was Amanda John (DfT). We will look to hold the event again in 2025.

## Tennis

### SPARTA Tennis Report 2024

#### Civil Service Over 50's Tournament Bath on 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> April 24

CSSC held this inaugural event with SPARTA entering a Ladies Team and a composite Team playing under the MoD name.

There were 4 Ladies Teams with teams playing each other once each day.

- 1st day the teams were given a handicap based on player strength. 1st match we lost to Cheltenham 1-3 Bridget & Maggie losing 4-8 but winning 8-7; Ruth & Caroline lost both 2-8 & 1-8. 2nd match we had a losing draw against RCSL on game countback 17-21 with Sue & Bridget winning both 8-1 & 8-4 but Maggie & Caroline losing 0-8 & 1-8. Our last match saw us winning 3-1 against HASSRA.
- 2nd day the teams played without handicap, and we beat RCSL 3-1 with Maggie & Ruth winning 8-6 & 8-1 and Sue & Bridget splitting 8-0 & 6-8. We the beat HASSRA 3-1. This left us with Cheltenham when we could have finished champions with a win or 2nd or 3rd with a lost depending on game countback. As it turned out we finished 3rd but still don't quite know how as there was some mathematical adjustments with handicapping.



Ruth, Maggie, Hilary, Sue & Caroline

The Men's had 7 Teams so formed 2-pools, we were in a group of 4 and had a good run reaching the final stages and coming away with a prize if not the Trophy.

#### CSSC Team Doubles Tennis Tournament Nottingham on 2nd - 4th Oct 2024

We entered Teams in the Ladies, Men's Division-2 and Mixed, unfortunately a long list of last minute withdrawals left us without a full Mixed Team and a composite Team was put together.

## Ladies

With withdrawals we did struggle to get the Ladies Team together but managed in the end with some local help. With only 4 Teams playing and 2 of a considerably high standard it was always going to be tough, playing both strong teams before the last weaker Team did not



Anne, Katie, Allison & Jenni

help. Allison playing with Jenni throughout managed to get some games in the 1st match and did much better in the 2nd match losing the 2nd rubber 3-6 & 2-6. Katie & Anne struggled in the 1st match but came back to at least win a game in each off the 4-sets of the 2nd match. Our last match was more even and to our credit Allison & Jenni won a rubber and Katie & Ann won a set. Our Team spirit was noted as being the best both on and off-court.

## MENS

Our Team by contrast was a great success augmented by 2 new young recruits Charlie & Graham R. We had a Team of 5 with Brian, Rob & Graham K making up the squad. Rob & Graham K continued their partnership from previous few years. Graham R teamed up with Charlie in all bar 1 match as it looked the best option, Brian coming in for a match giving Graham R a break. We won our 1st 3 matches reasonably comfortably, Rob & Graham K winning all sets as did Brian & Charlie with Charlie & Graham R dropping just 1 rubber on a Championship Breaker



Charlie, Graham R, Brian, Rob & Graham K

Our last match proved to be the Division's final both teams being undefeated. In a titanic struggle RCSL just came out on top; a few points the other way in the end deciding that match and our Runner-up position.

The players recorded their appreciation of the support of SPARTA and the support of CSLTA who run the event; personal thanks were given both to Nigel Daniels the event organiser, Gul Rashid the Tournament Referee and Greg Taafe CSLTA Chairman in making the events such a success. They appreciate SPARTA's entry in both, we being one of just a few Departmental Associations to enter.

### Sports Day

Tennis was competed for this year but due to the last minute withdrawal of the organisers the event had to be reorganised on the day and was not a great success, congratulations go to Rob Green and Graham Kinshott who took the trophy and did not drop a game in the process. It is hoped for a better more competitive 2025 event.

### SPARTA Meet the Clubs events & London Tennis

Tennis put on a show at all of the events organised by Jason. We gathered a good list of people interested in tennis and sent out a questionnaire with a view to organising something. Our attempt for a summer session foundered as court availability was an impossible hurdle to overcome. We are looking for a winter indoor session as surprisingly it's easier to book indoor courts than the possibility of a Padel Tennis taster event that may lead to more regular organised sessions. There may also be interest around the Leeds area and we are pursuing this.

Brian Oliver

SPARTA Tennis Organiser

## Board Games Club

The SPARTA games club continues to have a regular attendance and is well supported. A popular regular game is power grid. The club meets regularly every two weeks on Wednesday after work.

We have found the DfT 5th floor canteen in Great Minster House to be an amazing venue, perfect for gaming, and we have a few games stored for anyone to use in the lawyer's library.

Civil Service pass holders can just rock

up, but it is best to let Ben Payne ([Ben.Payne@communities.gov.uk](mailto:Ben.Payne@communities.gov.uk)) know you are coming so that we can let the reception know; friends are also welcome but you will need to be escorted.

With Board Games Clubs also set up in Leeds and Birmingham this is an really popular pastime that is growing and growing.

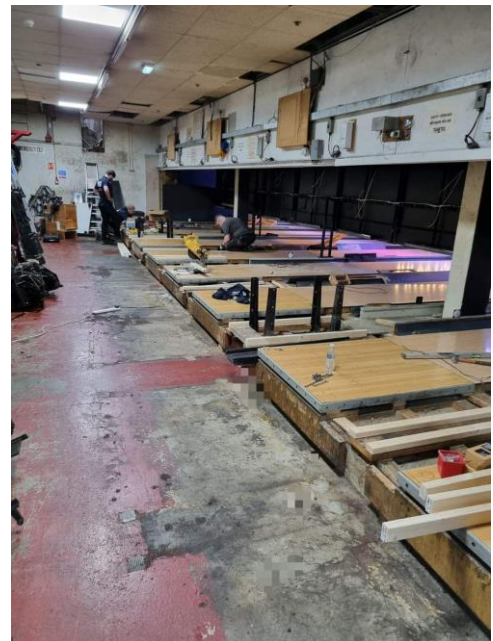


## Tenpin Bowling Club

A year of great change for the Sparta ten pin-bowling club with founder member Peter D'Costa stepping down from active participation in the league and a newly refurbished bowling alley to get to grips with. The initial refurbishment has given the alley a sparkly arcade party feel; music, lights and video games. Thankfully we can turn off the disco lights when the bowling begins!

We started the 2023/2024 season in November 2023, with a combined team (doubles) and singles format. As we approached the Easter break league games were suspended because Lewisham Lanes began an upgrade to the bowling lanes themselves, moving from free-standing pins to 'pins on strings'.

Out with the old...



...in with the new



With the 'upgrade' complete we resumed bowling in June. The winner of the singles league was Mark Leigh with newcomer Alan McCulloch runner-up. Mark and his team mate Patrick Allchurch also won the doubles league closely followed again by Alan and his partner Jan in second place.

The debate about how the new pins on strings affects the dynamics of pin movement, after the ball has hit them, is ongoing (and will run and run). Initial feelings are that it has resulted in lower scores and that the system isn't flexible enough to deal with the mistakes that it makes. We will persevere!

The 2024/2025 Season started in September continuing the dual singles/teams format. Just after starting we welcomed several new members; Hazel Braund, Sandy Kirk, Conrad Simpson and Sue Street.

The club bowls at Lewisham Lanes (...in Lewisham) on Wednesdays at 7:30. It is friendly 'mixed ability' social league (no cash prizes). We are happy to welcome new members at any time during the bowling season, which runs from September to July.

## Yoga Club



The yoga club has been up and running, since the Covid closure, for 18 months and is continuing to attract new students. The classes are hybrid for students to join online or in person. We have a very experienced and knowledgeable teacher who is keen to advise and help students improve their practice and understanding of yoga.

A new payment system was introduced in September 2024 for students to pay in advance for a block of 4 classes, and, for the first time, provides a discount for students who are members of SPARTA to encourage more students to subscribe to the association. The new system aims to encourage students to attend on a regular basis to improve their practice and also means classes can begin promptly avoiding delays for student payments at the beginning of each class.

Since restarting the classes, we have built up a small core number of regular students which is great, but we really do need more students attending to enable us to continue on a viable basis.



Susan Johnson MBE  
SPARTA Yoga Club



# SPARTA NEW CLUBS

SPARTA has started to expand this year and offer new clubs to staff around the country.

We recognise that without adapting to the needs and wants of our members SPARTA will become stale and stagnate. This is something that we must avoid at all costs. It is imperative that we develop new clubs to meet the needs and wants of our members. To do this we need willing volunteers to take forward the establishment of new clubs.

This year we have been happy to welcome a new London Running Club along with several new clubs in other locations that are reported in the Regional Activities section.

## SPARTA London Running Club

A new SPARTA London Running club was set up to hold informal lunchtime runs from Great Minster House on Wednesday lunchtimes. The club is run by James Nichols and Nileshe Tailor who are both keen runners.

The runs are open to all staff across DfT and MHCLG, and their inclusive nature has made them highly successful, attracting participants of all abilities. James and Nileshe are hoping to encourage more participation across 2025.



# REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Apart from the new SPARTA clubs SPARTA has been working to help the regional offices start up new activities.

This year we are very happy to report that we have been able to recruit the help of some willing volunteers in the Leeds office, Simon Reiss (MHCLG), Daniel Basquill (MHCLG), Richard Wall (DfT) and Will Reay (DfT)

## Leeds Office

The staff from both MHCLG and DfT share the same floor in the Leeds Office, Wellington Place. This has helped our volunteers to set up a number of clubs based in that location.

There is another successful running club (set up along the same lines as the London club) with over 40 members who meet on Tuesday lunchtimes for regular runs.

Along with that there is a popular monthly board game club and a weekly game of football which involves a mixture of staff from across DfT, MHCLG, Homes England, Government Legal and a few other Departments based in the Leeds office.

Although these activities are not officially SPARTA activities, SPARTA has been instrumental in encouraging the start up of these clubs and has helped the volunteers to get these off the ground. It is hoped that in 2025 we can bring these clubs under the SPARTA banner and help them to grow.

# CIVIL SERVICE EVENTS

SPARTA always encourages participation in Civil Service events.

The Tennis club has sent teams to the Civil Service championships for a number of years and in the last couple of years our runners have been very successful.

Running has become really popular recently particularly with thousands of people across the UK taking part in Parkrun events every weekend. This success has flowed over into the SPARTA teams in the Civil Service running events. Here are the details of our successes in the Civil Service 10km and 5km races and the Civil Service Cross Country Championships.

## CS 10km and 5km

SPARTA sent a large team to the Civil Service 10km and 5km races held on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024

The awesome Jack Millar (below right) won the 10km event for the third year in a row which he said he was taking easy as he was running a marathon a few days later. We also had the third-place finisher William Ford. SPARTA had an incredible 47 finishers in the 10km.

The SPARTA team won the Men's team prize following the superb performances by Jack Millar, William Ford, James Nichols and Matthew Herbert. Full results are below

Place	Name	Time
1	Jack Millar	32:50
3	William Ford	33:57
25	James Nichols	39:20
27	Matthew Herbert	39:26
47	Thomas Speed	42:09
50	Gavin Armstrong	42:20
54	Nilesh Tailor	43:04



57	Danton Bounds	44:00
65	Matthew Eglinton	44:36
68	Robert Crangle	45:30
69	Felix Ivers	45:39
82	Martin Rooney	46:33
84	Sion Pithouse	46:41
85	Pippa Savill	46:52
88	Andy Covington	47:02
104	Ben Toogood	48:31
114	Rachel Millen	49:20
116	Christy O'Driscoll	49:29
118	Stanley Rudkin	49:33
122	Sam Offler	50:00
127	Charlie O'Halloran	51:01
128	Alice Forsyth	51:02
129	Emily Jones	51:02
136	Catherine Barham	52:02
140	Ludovic Maguire	52:43
143	Beth Evans	53:04
146	Tom Preest	53:32
150	Zavinta Krukauskiene (right)	54:14
151	Jason Marriott	54:37
155	Sarah Afrane	55:04
157	Sophie Mitchell	55:11
159	Laurence Mallows	55:27
163	Oliver Mulcahy	55:38
168	Giordana Vicidomini	56:17
170	Martin Marshall-Clarke	56:38
171	Roisin Bowe	57:02
175	Aurelia Heyworth	58:20
179	Roxanne Appleyard	58:36
180	James Taylor	58:50
183	Ryan Shean	58:59
184	Jade Oni	59:04



187	Claire Baxter	59:34
194	Miranda Schroder	01:01:32
195	Cara Jamieson	01:01:32
196	William Rennicks	01:01:32
197	Elena Barcan	01:01:28
200	Chris Peel	01:01:44

In the 5km race SPARTA had 26 finishers. They were led home by Henry McMaster and Luke Watson who finished 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively.

Place	Name	Time
2	76 Harry McMaster	18.40
3	118 Luke Watson	19.45
5	53 Maciej Idzikowski	22.12
6	65 Miles Knight	22.17
8	84 Lottie Newman	22.31
9	83 David Newman	22.41
10	101 Tim Sharpe	23.02
11	12 Simon Birks	23.12
12	13 Morgan Border	23.40
14	120 Fanus Weldensae	24.01
22	24 Tom Caughley	26.35
23	123 Mark Woollett	27.04
31	39 Kelly Finnerty	28.52
37	41 Matthew Fox	29.44
38	14 Ellie Boyle	29.44
40	58 Emily Kenning	30.10
44	11 Catherine Bean	30.59
47	70 Elan Llwyd	31.47
48	44 Victoria Hair	31.48
57	122 Sarah Wilks	37.24
58	30 Lucy Creasey	37.54
67	66 Riah Knowles-Brock	47.18
68	20 Phoebe Cadle	47.18



69	90	Nathan Peters	47.18
72	7	Kay Asuni	53.27
95	72	Sangeeta Mandalia	60+

## CS Cross Country Championship

Runners from across the regions and across MHCLG and DfT came together to compete at the Civil Service Cross Country Championships on 16<sup>th</sup> October at Parliament Hill Fields in London.

The Civil Service Cross Country Championships has a long history dating back over 100 years. Over that period there have been many individual winners from both MHCLG and DfT and their predeceasing Departments but rarely have our departments won a team trophy. The team trophies have been dominated by the likes of the MoD, DEFRA and other larger Departments.



So, it was a huge achievement that the SPARTA Men's team won the team trophy on a bright sunny day at Parliament Hill Fields.

As you can expect with a name like Parliament Hill the cross country course was rather hilly and a good test for any runner undertaking the 8km course but that didn't stop our runners for showing what they are capable of doing. The SPARTA team was led home by David Taylor who finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in a time of 31 minutes 32 seconds, next in was Luke Watson in 4<sup>th</sup> place, closely followed by Richard Wall in 5<sup>th</sup>. With 4 runners to complete the team it was a nervous wait for our final scoring runner who was Matt King who finished in a fantastic 21<sup>st</sup> place with

George Plemper (24<sup>th</sup>) Thomas Speed (25<sup>th</sup>) and Simon Cereda (29<sup>th</sup>) only a few seconds behind him it was a real race to be the teams fourth scorer.

David Taylor (pictured right) not only took home the silver medal for finishing second but was also the first runner aged 35 or over home so took the gold medal in his age group. It was great to see runners of all ages competing, the oldest was in the over 70's age group so it was truly an event for everyone. Full results of our runners are below and pictures from the event can be found on the SPARTA website.

### Results

- 2 David Taylor (98)
- 4 Luke Watson (108)
- 5 Richard Wall (105)
- 21 Matt King (49)
- 24 George Plemper (77)
- 25 Thomas Speed (92)
- 29 Simon Cereda (20)
- 48 Ben Toogood (101)
- 52 Dan Lineham (56)
- 53 Miles Knight (50)
- 58 Simon Birks (12)
- 74 Peter Brohan (14)
- 78 Maciej Idzikowski (42)
- 81 Tim Roast (83)





Miles Knight powers up the hill.



# SPARTA SPORT AND WELLBEING DAY 2024

The SPARTA Sport and Wellbeing Day was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024 this year. Once again, this year's event was part of the CSSC Sports Days pilot project. SPARTA was happy to be considered as one of the Government Departments to be involved in the project again. CSSC are currently reviewing the project and at this time it is uncertain if it will continue into future years.

The day was a huge success with over 550 people attending. We held a full programme of sports and recreation events along with musical entertainment and a bouncy castle assault course attraction that proved once again to be very popular. Events included were:

- Cricket
- Football
- Netball
- Tennis
- Rounders
- Touch Rugby
- Petanque
- Table Tennis
- Athletics
- Novelty Events such as Wanging the Wellie
- Tug of War
- A Quiz
- Yoga



Thanks to the help of all our volunteers the day was a huge success and we received some excellent feedback.

Here is a list of just some of the wonderful volunteers who helped to make Sports and Wellbeing Day such a fantastic day.



Jason Marchant  
 Sue Johnson  
 Rod Paterson  
 Kieran O'Shea  
 Lexi Johnson  
 Nick Adams  
 Sheena Sadler-Weekes  
 Darren Cooper  
 Silvester Aina  
 Steve Hattrill  
 Mark Leigh  
 Paul Shepperson  
 Michael Oliver  
 Emily Kenning  
 Judith Skipper  
 Amanda John  
 Gillian Brown  
 Beverley Bramwell

Sheron Gurley  
 Valerie Fitzpatrick  
 Pamela Richard  
 Roger Bennett  
 Steve Norris  
 Coreen Beckford  
 Daniel Seech  
 Stuart Pugh  
 Philip Welch  
 Malcolm French  
 David Gott  
 Felicity Drown  
 Peter D'Costa  
 David Misell  
 Paul Weekes  
 Adrian Redfern  
 Ana Luvy

We would also like to thank the Sports Society, Touch England, Rounders England, CSSC and all those that helped who are not included in this list.

# 2025 AND BEYOND

2025 should be an exciting year for SPARTA. Our new clubs are taking shape and levels of attendance at events is heading back towards pre covid levels. We have a new Chairman, Nick Adams, taking up the reins to continue the excellent work of Rod Paterson and drive SPARTA forward over the next year.

We will be looking to expand all our activities and help the Regional Offices to expand their opportunities for staff. We really want to expand the SPARTA family and ensure that all our activities are as inclusive as possible for all staff across the country.

SPARTA finances are still relatively stable, so we can still offer good monetary support to the clubs and regional associations going forward over the next year.

If you would like to help in SPARTA activities, then please do get in touch with us at [SPARTA@dft.gov.uk](mailto:SPARTA@dft.gov.uk)

We hope, with your support, we can ensure that SPARTA remains a valuable asset in the health and wellbeing of all staff across both departments.

***SPARTA - Your Sports and Recreation  
Association***

