



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

SPARTA

Email: SPARTA@dft.gov.uk

Tel: 07884 390878



TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD _____	3
Membership _____	4
The Annual General Meeting (AGM) _____	5
The General Management Committee (GMC) _____	6
Regional Associations _____	6
SPARTA London Based Clubs _____	7
The Civil Service Choir _____	7
Fitness Club _____	8
SPARTA Golf Society _____	9
History Society _____	9
Martial Arts Club _____	9
Softball _____	10
Superstars Cricket Club _____	10
Table Tennis _____	10
Tennis _____	11
Tenpin Bowling Club _____	12
Yoga Club _____	13
2020 and beyond _____	15

FOREWORD

by our Vice Chair, Susan Johnson

2019 has seen plenty of change for SPARTA: Rod Paterson took over from Phil West as Chair, and we now have a full time General Secretary in post, Jason Marchant, who has taken over from Ruth Chambers.

I would like to thank Phil and Ruth for their involvement in SPARTA and the contribution they made during their time with us.

One of our Independent and Honorary Life Members, Bob Clark, resigned at the end of 2018. I would like to take this opportunity give a very special thank you to Bob for his hard work and dedication in supporting SPARTA over the last 50+ years. His knowledge and dedication to SPARTA is greatly missed. We will be looking to find another Independent member in the coming months.

'Fit for Business Day' in 2019 was an opportunity to incorporate more about health and wellbeing as part of the programme. There were a wide variety of activities available on the day including a Mindfulness session, massages, and Yoga. Feedback from staff was very positive and many enjoyed the stronger emphasis on alternative activities. The day was well supported by Bernadette Kelly and DfT senior managers.

Finally, I would like to thank all those Clubs that have contributed to this year's Annual Report. This report gives members the opportunity to see what is going on in their own clubs as well as in others. I would also like to thank all the volunteers including members of the Committees that take the time, in their busy schedules, to organise SPARTA clubs, recruit new members, establish new events and publicise the activities of the clubs.

MEMBERSHIP

It is not easy to determine the precise changes in membership due to the different ways that people can join, i.e. new members who might pay directly through their clubs, but there appears to have been little change in the membership since the last AGM.

It is hoped that new members will be attracted to join through better publicity and by invigorating and enhancing SPARTA's offer in the future. Incentives such as Wimbledon tickets, continue to have a positive impact.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

The 44th Annual General Meeting was held on 27th April 2018.

Two motions were proposed at the meeting:

a) 'Could Wellbeing formally be included in the SPARTA constitution.'

The meeting was advised that a change of this nature would need to be formally submitted at the next AGM.

b) 'The choir asked if it could amend its own constitution'.

The meeting was advised that it could, but any change would need to be ratified by the General Management Committee.

THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (GMC)

The General Management Committee met on 31 January 2019.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee were due to meet in March 2020 to consider the annual bid for funds from the London clubs. Due to COVID 19 restrictions this was completed through correspondence.

Regional Associations

No reports from Regional Associations this year.

SPARTA LONDON BASED CLUBS

Over £6,000 of SPARTA funding was distributed to clubs to support them with putting on their events and activities throughout 2019. A report of each club is below:

The Civil Service Choir

Following a long history of choral activity being supported by SPARTA (Victoria Singers (1997-2000), Marsham Singers (1972-97)), the Etcetera Choir was established ten years ago to offer staff within Defra, DfT and MHCLG the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of singing. Its name came from the initial letters of Environment, Transport and Communities.

As the choir's activities and reputation developed, and to broaden its appeal and presence in the wider civil service, it became known as 'Etcetera - The Civil Service Choir'. It has been highly successful in attracting members from across Whitehall departments and now has around 150 active singers. Following advice from music professionals, and a near unanimous vote by the membership, in May 2019 permission was sought from and granted by the Cabinet Secretary, Mark Sedwill, for the choir to be officially recognised as The Civil Service Choir.



In 2019 the choir gave 23 performances - in five concerts and at 18 departmental or other events. Charity collections at the choir's concerts raised £5,300 for local charities and by January 2020 the total amount raised for charities had reached £40,000. In total the choir has now given 126 performances large and small, including 41 public concerts.

Of the five concerts in 2019, four were in the prestigious venues of St John's Smith Square and St Martin-in-the-Fields and included concerts by special invitation in the St John's Smith Square Holy Week Festival; the Brandenburg London Choral Festival; and the London Jazz Festival.

The choir sang in the Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of Jeremy, Lord Heywood of Whitehall in Westminster Abbey; opened the Department for Transport Centenary celebration in Central Hall Westminster; opened the Civil Service Awards ceremony at Lancaster House; and has established an annual Remembrance Sunday commemoration at the Civil Service Rifles Memorial at Somerset House. For details of past performances see www.civilservicechoir.org.uk/performances/

Across the choir's performances in 2019, the combined audiences were in excess of 5,000 people.

Following its appearance in the London Jazz Festival, the choir received the following feedback from Ben Parry - Artistic Director of National Youth Choirs of Great Britain and Assistant Director of Music, King's College, Cambridge:

"If anyone needed further proof that singing can bring people together and transform our lives, look no further than the Civil Service Choir! Their enthusiasm and sheer enjoyment of performing is infectious, in addition to their commitment and diligence in entertaining their audience with truly heartening performances."

For more information see www.civilservicechoir.org.uk/.

Fitness Club

The Fitness club continues to operate with a solid number of attendees at every Friday lunchtime session in GMH. The refurbishment work in GMH has meant the relocation of the club from the large LG1 function room in the basement to a much smaller meeting room (5L) on the fifth floor. The room is not ideal, but the view is far better than the basement. A move back to the basement is due in 2020 once the refurbishment work of the basement floor is completed.

The new exercise mats that have been provided by SPARTA have been a welcome addition. The old mats were in a sorry state of repair and despite many attempts to clean and disinfect them they still had the smell of ten years' worth of workouts imbedded in them.

The club is continuing to recruit new members through posters and word of mouth.

SPARTA Golf Society

The SPARTA Golf Society held a number of very successful events in 2019.

Full details can be found on their website at <http://www.spartagolf.co.uk/>

History Society

The History Society arranges talks and guided tours for members of SPARTA and for staff in DfT, CLG and Defra.

During 2019 we held eight lunchtime talks covering a varied selection of subject's attendance at talks had remained at good levels with new people attending. The Society worked with DfT Internal Comms on the DfT100 Sir Eric Geddes talk. The talk was live streamed.

A key success has been managing to maintain the high quality of our talks and the positive feedback received from those who attend our events.

As meeting rooms were unavailable our plans for 2020 include organising a couple of talks in partnership with Westminster City Archives Centre. The Society will be looking maintain organising lunchtime talks during the year as well as tours of the Westminster and Victoria.

Martial Arts Club

The Martial Arts Club has found since the move from Eland House that space available to them is a lot smaller and so training can only really involve one or two pairs working together at a time (depending on what techniques they are doing). Because of that (and the fact they aren't in an MHCLG building) they haven't re-advertised the club this year but have been doing some training with the existing group.

Softball

We continue to have an enjoyable time playing in the Civil Service league most Wednesdays in Hyde Park throughout the summer. New players are always welcome - no previous experience is necessary - and all the equipment is provided.

Members also ran another successful softball tournament at the Fit for Business Day, which as usual was oversubscribed.

The softball club did not seek any funding from Sparta this year.

Superstars Cricket Club

The club, formed in 1987, plays mostly midweek evening games against a range of teams with the majority coming from other Government Departments. Our home games are played in South Wimbledon. Last season we had a very successful tour of the Isle of Wight winning 5 out of 6 games and in total we played 32 fixtures over the Summer.

New players are always welcome whatever your ability and we run nets at the Oval in March and April. Next season's fixtures, including a tour of West Wales at the end of May, can be found on our website superstarscricket.org.uk

Barry Gigg

barrygigg@yahoo.co.uk

Table Tennis

Before the start of the 2018/19 season, some of the Table Tennis club's longest-serving players - Bob Clark, Neville Laporte, David Underwood and Charlie Gaan decided to hang up their table tennis bats. All had made notable contributions to the team over a number of decades and would be greatly missed. Sparta welcomed back former member Mike Loveder,

an experienced player who helped enhance the team's performance. The team completed all matches that season and finished a credible 4th from bottom in Division One of the London Banks and Civil Service Table Tennis League.

For the 2019/20 season, the team has managed to secure 2 wins and 1 Draw, and is currently standing 4th from bottom, halfway through the season - 31 Dec 19."

Tennis

SPARTA entered a Mens, Ladies & Mixed Team in the CSSC Team Doubles Tennis Tournament at Nottingham Tennis Centre held over 3-days in October. Each Team comprises 2 pairs playing against each opposing pair over 3 sets. We also helped field another Mixed & Ladies Team (ATHENIAN) with our ladies joining forces with partners from other Departments to help bolster the number of Teams.

Our Men's Team was hampered with last minute unavailability and was somewhat understrength. However, we managed to win 1 match, losing 2 by 3 rubbers to 1 and losing 4 rubbers to 0 against the eventual champions. Of the 5 teams we were 4th.

Our Ladies performed excellently winning 3 of their 4 matches with ease. The 4th match ended up 2 Rubbers each so went to Game count-back which was again equal at 22 Games each. Reaching for the Rule Book the decision went the way of our opponents (HASSRA-1) on the basis of the A verses A combination. Small margins and the first time a match has been so decided for a long while. Consequently, we finished runners-up to HASSRA-1. The ATHENIAN Ladies team also performed well taking a rubber off our SPARTA Ladies Team, winning 1 match and losing the 2 other matches to finish 4th of the 5 Teams.

Our Mixed Team lost a tight 1st Round match then went out in the Plate semi-final losing this on game countback the rubbers being tied at 2 all. This was exactly the same fate as the ATHENIAN team.

Brian Oliver

SPARTA Tennis Organiser

Tenpin Bowling Club

SPARTA tenpin bowling club is based at Lewisham bowl in South East London. We currently have 14 members, plus reserves. This is a handicap league run on Wednesday evenings at 7.15pm. It's not all serious stuff; as well as weekly league matches, we have competitions and fun nights.

There is a winter league which runs from September to May as well as a spring\summer league which runs from June till August. During the league we run an Individual Knockout Competition (IKO) and the Masters.

We welcome new members whatever level of ability so if you feel this could be for you please come down to the Bowl any Wednesday evening for a chat or if you would like to know more feel free to contact the Chairman or Club Secretary (contact details provided below).

The results for the 2019-2020 Winter season are as follows;

League Winners: Magic

League Runners Up: Ebony & Ivory

Handicap Individual High Game: Neville Price

Handicap individual High Series -Neville Price

Handicap Team High Game - Ebony & Ivory

Handicap Team High Series - Past Times

Competitions;

Peterson Points award - Martin Procter

Individual knockout competition - Dave Stanley

The Masters (open-scratch) Tournament;

Winner - Neville Price

Runner up - Steve Hattrill

(The finals of this event take place separately between the Winter League and the Spring/Summer League)

In November 2019 the Club was 50 years old and one of the founder members, Peter D'Costa, is still bowling today. This was celebrated by a competition and trophies from the late Jon Reeves were presented.

Finally, in 2019 Kevin McAnuff who was our Treasurer for over 10 years and a longstanding member, returned to Ireland following an illness. He will be greatly missed.

The Club now looks forward to the next 50 years.

Chairman: Rose D'Costa

Club Secretary: Peter D'Costa

Yoga Club

The SPARTA Yoga Club has continued to be relatively successful.

We have been affected by the refurbishment work in Great Minster House. The works in the lower ground floor meant classes were transferred to the fifth floor. While the room is smaller, it is sufficient for our numbers and has the advantage of natural light and being warmer. Attendance at classes has been steady with a mixture of staff including SCS members attending regularly.

The refurbishment work has impacted on the running of classes and the club is working with the relevant contractors to ensure future arrangements work smoothly for the club.

Gareth Williams

Yoga secretary

FIT FOR BUSINESS DAY 2019

On 26 July 2019, SPARTA invited staff to participate in the annual Fit for Business Day in association with the Charity for Civil Servants and Heads Together; a mental health campaign involving eight charities to challenge mental health stigma and change how it is perceived.

Over 500 colleagues across the organisations came along to network with colleagues and to learn about ways to improve their wellbeing - while raising money for charity.

Just over £1200 was raised in total and was split between SPARTA, Heads Together and the Charity for Civil Servants.



A huge thank you from SPARTA to everyone in DfT and MHCLG who volunteered their time and are so important in making the event happen.

2020 AND BEYOND

It's an exciting time for SPARTA as it enters the next phase in its long history, especially celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2021. Finances are relatively stable but there is still more to be done to attract new members by appealing to staff based in DfT and MHCLG.

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

*SPARTA - Your Sports and
Recreation Association*