

# SPARTA Newsletter

August 2021



## ITS OLYMPICS TIME

Welcome to the August edition of the SPARTA newsletter.

As this month's newsletter is published the Tokyo Olympics should be just finishing. Hopefully Team GB will be returning with sacks full of medals and loads of new sporting heroes.

I personally know at least three of our track and field athletes so am hoping that the next time I see them I will be congratulating them on their achievements.

SPARTA also needs its own heroes. You don't need to be brilliant sportsman or woman (but that would be nice) but just someone who is willing to help us create new opportunities for our members by setting up and running our clubs.

This month's newsletter includes an article giving feedback from the SPARTA survey. As you will see there is quite a lot of interest in

setting up some exciting new clubs.

There are plenty of DfT and MHCLG staff who could benefit from your valued support. SPARTA are here to help you in creating the club that you want, all we need is people who are interested in taking forward these ideas and developing clubs that can fuel the interests of all the DfT and MHCLG staff.

SPARTA offer financial support for its clubs so that the club members can enjoy the sports, recreation and wellbeing activities that suit their wants at a subsidised cost. Our aim is to ensure that you get what you want, at a price that you can afford, and that you get to enjoy these activities with colleagues across both Departments.

This helps to improve social and wellbeing aspects across the board and in the overall more inclusive civil service agenda.

## CSAA 10K ENTRIES OPEN

**The Capital Challenge 2021 10k race is the host this year of the CSAA 10k championships.**

Fancy running a 10k at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in September?

It is a great chance to enjoy a run around the Olympic Park and be part of a Civil Service event at the same time.

Why not enjoy a day out supporting the event.

The Civil Service Athletics Association arranges a number of events throughout the year. Find them all on the CSAA website

<http://www.csaa.org.uk/>

Entries are now open and close on 11 August 2021.

The entry form for the 10k is available on the SPARTA website.

[SPARTA@df.gov.uk](mailto:SPARTA@df.gov.uk)



Check out the SPARTA website for upcoming events



# SPARTA SURVEY THE RESULTS ARE IN



*The SPARTA survey closed at the end of June. Here are some highlights*

We were very pleased that 176 people completed the SPARTA survey. Thank you to all of you that took the time to complete our survey. Your responses are very important in helping shape the future of SPARTA.

There was a good spread of respondents across all ranges including age groups. Of the 176 respondents only 42 were already SPARTA members. Unfortunately, nearly half of the people who completed the survey did not know that SPARTA ran two virtual activity weeks and only 32 of the respondents had taken part in the Virtual Activity Weeks.

Question 6 (see below) showed that there was interest in joining the current SPARTA clubs. We will be following this up further with those that showed interest.

The majority of people answering the survey were based in London (see right). It was nice to see responses across the UK as we are very interested in holding future SPARTA events outside of the London area.

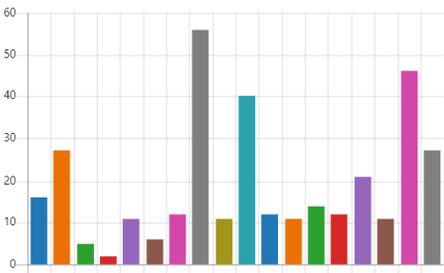
This is something that we are looking to do when restrictions are fully lifted, and we look forward to working with people across the country to offer more events

outside of the Central London area.

Birkenhead	2
Birmingham	4
Bristol	3
Farnborough	1
Hastings	3
Leeds	3
London	130
Manchester	2
Newcastle	1
Nottingham	2
Retired	5
Sheffield	1
Truro	1
Watford	1
WFH	1
Woking	1
Wolverhampton	1
Didn't Say	14

6. Of the current 16 SPARTA clubs which would you be interested in joining? (Select all the clubs that apply)

- [More Details](#)
- If already a member of a SPAR... 16
- Art Club 27
- Bridge 5
- CD Club 2
- Civil Service Choir 11
- Cricket 6
- Drama Club 12
- Fitness Class 56
- Golf Society 11
- History Society 40
- Martial Arts 12
- Railway Society 11
- Softball 14
- Table Tennis 12
- Tennis 21
- Tenpin Bowling 11
- Yoga 46
- None of the above 27



On the question of the cost of SPARTA membership 136 of the 176 respondents said that the current £2 cost was good value and about right.

There was a fair few suggestions for sports and recreations that you would like SPARTA to include such as Netball, Volleyball, Badmington, Watersports, and Triathlon.

These were not the only suggestions and we will be looking at ways of how we can offer these opportunities in the



# SPARTA SURVEY CONTINUED...



*More details from the SPARTA survey which closed at the end of June...*

future as part of your SPARTA membership.

You will see from the answers below there was also a lot of interest in setting up new clubs.

can help us with their knowledge in these areas in creating new clubs that meet your needs.

If you are interested in helping us in the start up of these new clubs

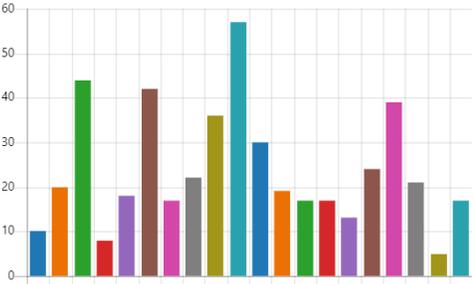
If you would like to contact us with any further comments then please get in touch at [SPARTA@dft.gov.uk](mailto:SPARTA@dft.gov.uk)

[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/)

7. SPARTA is always looking to expand the amount of activities available to members. If new clubs were set up would you be interested in any of the following clubs? (Select all that apply)

[More Details](#)

- Online Gaming Club (PS4, PSS... 10
- Netball Club 20
- Theatre Nights Out Club 44
- Rugby Club 8
- Football Club 18
- Running Club (General runnin... 42
- Athletics Club (Track and Field... 17
- Cycling Club 22
- Gourmet Restaurant Club 36
- Rambling/Walking Club 57
- Adventure Activity Club 30
- Family Day Out Club 19
- Swimming Club 17
- Water Sports Club (Rowing etc) 17
- Sailing Club 13
- Board Games Club 24
- Wine Tasting Club 39
- Climbing Club 21
- Skydiving Club 5
- Other 17



Rambling/Walking, Theatre Nights out, General Running, Wine Tasting and Gourmet Restaurant clubs came top of the list.

SPARTA want to create these new clubs for you. We need people who are interested in these areas who

then please do get in touch with us.

We promise to offer you as much support as we can including financial support in setting up these new clubs that can benefit all our members.

### UPCOMING SPARTA CLUB FIXTURES/EVENTS

**August**

**10<sup>th</sup>** – Superstars v Marauders – Earlsfield 6pm

**11<sup>th</sup>** – Superstars v Reserves London XI – Cricklewood 6pm

**18<sup>th</sup>** – Superstars v LSE – Berrylands 2pm

**19<sup>th</sup>** – Superstars v LT Dinos – Chiswick 5.30pm

**26<sup>th</sup>** – Superstars v Dodgers – Chiswick 2pm

**September**

**4<sup>th</sup>** – Superstars v Green Sox – Dundonald Pk 1pm

**7<sup>th</sup>** – SPARTA Golf Society Captain’s Day – Knowle Park, Sevenoaks, Kent

Details of club contacts can be found on the SPARTA website [www.spartarecreation.co.uk/](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/)



# SPARTA LIFE

## *Stephen Hall, music director of the Civil Service Choir, talks about his and the choir's long involvement with SPARTA*

I started work in the old 2 Marsham Street in the 1990s. I discovered that there was a choir, the Marsham Singers, which rehearsed on a lunchtime in the basement. I had sung at university and at school, so why not at work? I went down to the basement, was handed some music, joined the bass section, and hence joined DOETRA (now SPARTA). I have been a member of SPARTA ever since.

In the late 1990s the choir moved to Eland House in Victoria and was renamed the Victoria Singers. The choir struggled to retain membership and standards dropped. I became the chairman and, with the then two music directors, tried to keep it going - including collaborating with a similarly struggling Home Office choir, the Queen Anne Singers. We made the difficult decision to disband the choir in 2000.

From then on, the choir only had an intermittent existence to prepare and sing Christmas music for the staff carol service, which in later years I conducted.

In 2009, some colleagues and I decided the time was right to try to start a new choir which we called ETCetera - the Environment, Transport and Communities Choir. For the first rehearsal we only had 4 singers but by our inaugural concert a few months later we had grown to 25 singers. By 2019 membership had grown to 150 singers from across Whitehall - making it one of the largest workplace choirs in the country - and we were officially recognized

as the Civil Service Choir. We have given 134 performances large and small, including 41 public concerts. Through collections at concerts £39,500 has been raised for charities.

We have performed in Westminster Abbey (in a memorial service for Jeremy, Lord Heywood of Whitehall); in St John's Smith Square; in St Stephen's, Rochester Row; in the Guards' Chapel, Wellington Barracks; in St Martin-in-the-Fields, St Sepulchre-without-Newgate and St Katharine Cree as part of the Brandenburg London Choral Festival; in the London Jazz Festival; in Lancaster House; in Central Hall Westminster; in the Victoria and Albert Museum; and at events in various Government Departments in Westminster. We undertook our first tour in October 2018 during which we sang at the Menin Gate Last Post Ceremony in Ypres and gave a concert in Bruges, Belgium.

It remains to be seen whether the choir can return to anything like what it was following the Covid-19 pandemic. Changing work patterns will certainly make things more difficult. We have produced some virtual recordings in the meantime and on three occasions it has been possible to have a small group of singers performing together.

The support of SPARTA has been an integral part of the development and success of the Civil Service Choir and will be in getting the choir back singing and me conducting it post Covid-19.



CHECK OUT THE  
CS CHOIR WEBSITE  
[www.civilservicechoir.org.uk](http://www.civilservicechoir.org.uk)

**WANT TO START  
A CLUB OR  
MAYBE JUST  
HELP AT A  
CLUB?**

SPARTA are always looking to build on our portfolio of clubs. If you want to start a club or are already running one and want SPARTA's help, then please get in contact.

Want to help at a current club? Then please get in contact with us

[SPARTA@dft.gov.uk](mailto:SPARTA@dft.gov.uk)

Details of current club contacts can be found on the SPARTA website

[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/)





# THE SPARTA CLUBS

*SPARTA supports a number of clubs and associations across the UK and is always looking to start new clubs. Here is just a taster of the current clubs*

**CD CLUB**   
[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/cd-club](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/cd-club)

**SPARTA GOLF SOCIETY**   
[www.spartagolf.co.uk/](http://www.spartagolf.co.uk/)

**YOGA CLASSES**   
[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/yoga](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/yoga)

**SUPERSTARS CRICKET CLUB**   
[www.superstarscricket.org.uk](http://www.superstarscricket.org.uk)

**SOFTBALL CLUB**   
[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/softball](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/softball)

**RAILWAY SOCIETY**   
[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/railway-society](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/railway-society)

**CIVIL SERVICE CHOIR**   
[www.civilservicechoir.org.uk](http://www.civilservicechoir.org.uk)

**HISTORY SOCIETY**   
[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/history-society](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/history-society)

**FITNESS CLASSES**   
[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/fitness-class](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/fitness-class)

**TENNIS CLUB**   
[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/tennis](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/tennis)

**TENPIN BOWLING**   
[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/tenpin-bowling](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/tenpin-bowling)



Check out all the SPARTA clubs on our website

**SPARTA**  
[SPARTA@dft.gov.uk](mailto:SPARTA@dft.gov.uk)

Phone 07884 390878  
[www.spartarecreation.co.uk](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk)