

# blue ribbon Foundation



## **DOWNHAM MENS GROUP Walking Football Report**

**April 2023 to December 2023**

# blue ribbon Foundation

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The Blue Ribbon Foundation aim is to target men and to provide a local outlet in which to meet and develop companionship, with a longer-term view to helping improve their health and wellbeing.

We were drawn to work in Downham, which has both a SE6 & BR1 postcode, by local health information and our own research which identified that Downham men are at risk of being left behind by British society.

High unemployment, poor health, age and limited prospects render it difficult to motivate them to look after their health, or to take up opportunities for the benefit and wellbeing of themselves, their families or their communities.

We had two major outcomes for our work in Downham:

- Reduce isolation and improve male health and wellbeing.
- To build a stronger Downham community.

## **Summary of Downham Men's Group outcomes**

The Blue Ribbon Foundation has developed a men's group in Downham in south Lewisham. During 2023 the funding for the Walking Football came from two major sources:

London Catalyst  
The Blue Ribbon Foundation

Thanks to funding The Blue Ribbon Foundation were able to support a part time self-employed coordinator, Trevor Pybus.

Our Walking Football programme was designed to identify and engage with people who are socially isolated, including the 10% of residents in the target wards who are over the age of 64 and the 19.8% people in the Lewisham population with common mental health problems.

Walking Football is exactly as the name suggests - you play football, walking.

Our core group is Men over 50's. We can play games that are 4 a side up to 8 a side but the sessions are planned to be inclusive, fun and sociable. Although the games can be slow-paced our matches lacks none of the passion or excitement of the original game.

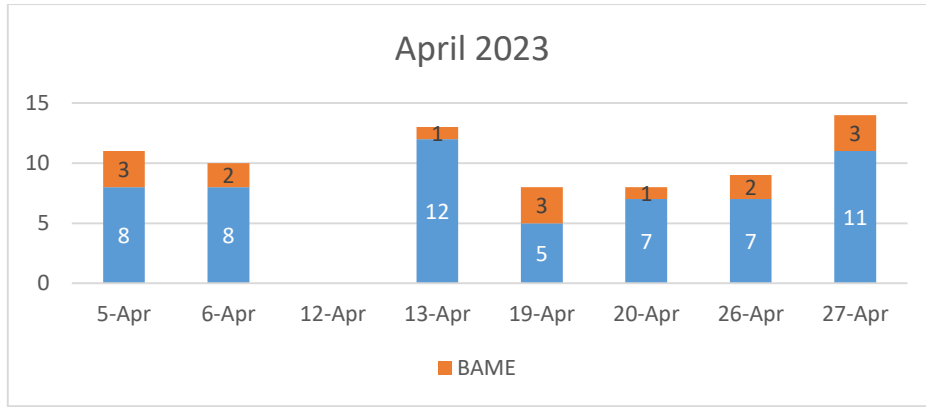
Whether you're looking to keep active, stay fit, or simply want to play for the love of the game, Walking Football offers the perfect opportunity to take to the pitch.

As well as the health benefits associated with most forms of physical activity; keeping fit and active, weight loss etc. there are also many social health benefits that come with playing Walking Football.

Taking time to socialise, meet new people or even build confidence are all part and parcel of taking part in this slower version of the beautiful game.

As a major part of our plans to increase the amount of Afro Caribbean men playing Walking Football we moved our sessions to the Ten Em Bee development centre in Downham.

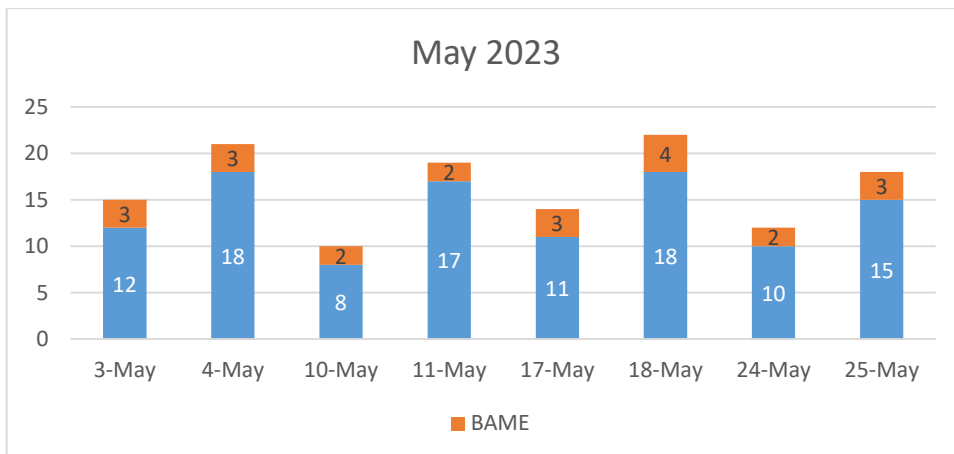
During 2023 Downham Men's Group completed in three walking football tournaments.



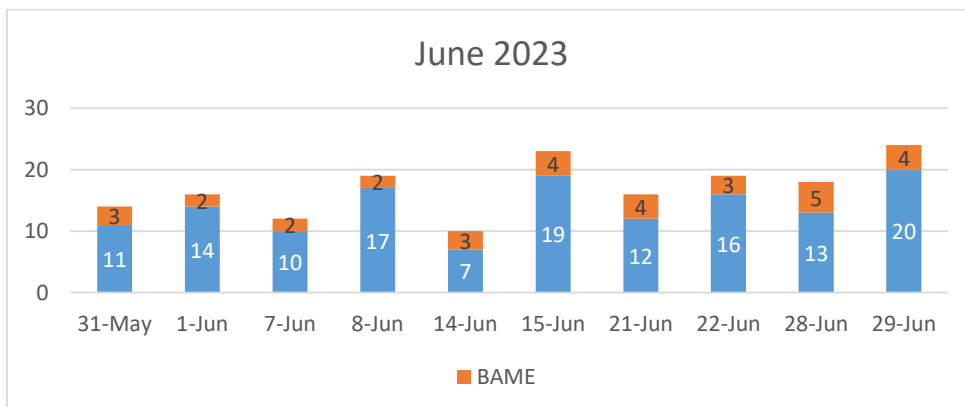
The health inequities report that came out from the COVID 19 pandemic and our own research information, we started to actively trying to increase the amount of Afro Caribbean/black African men playing walking football.

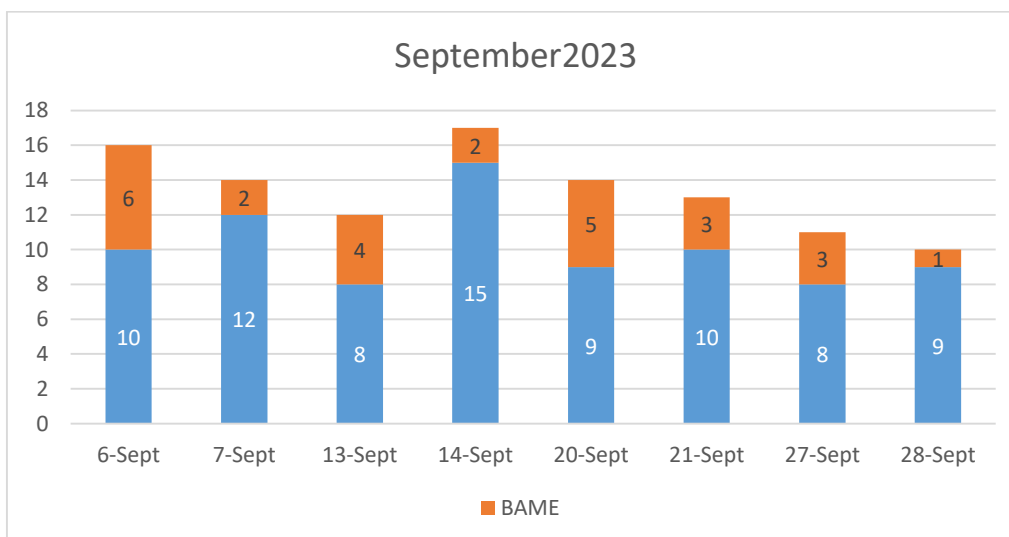
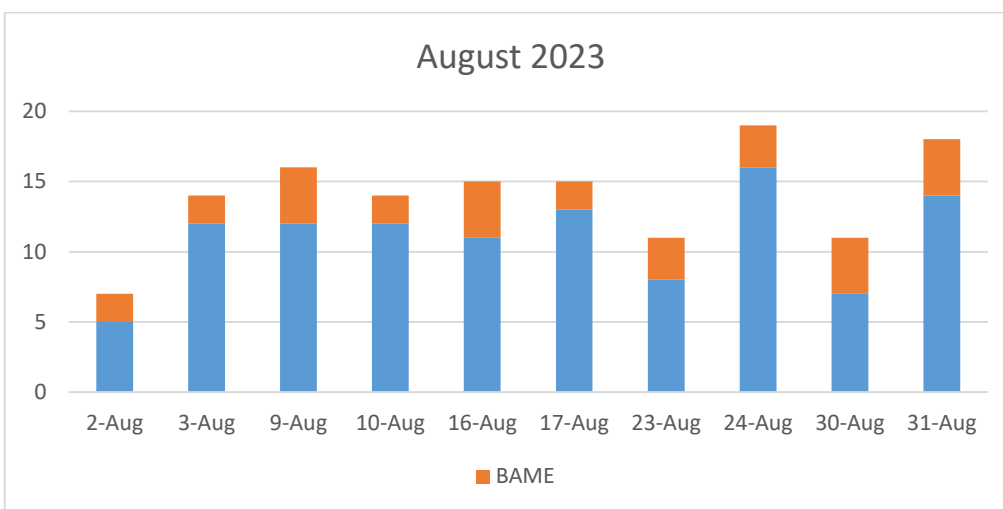
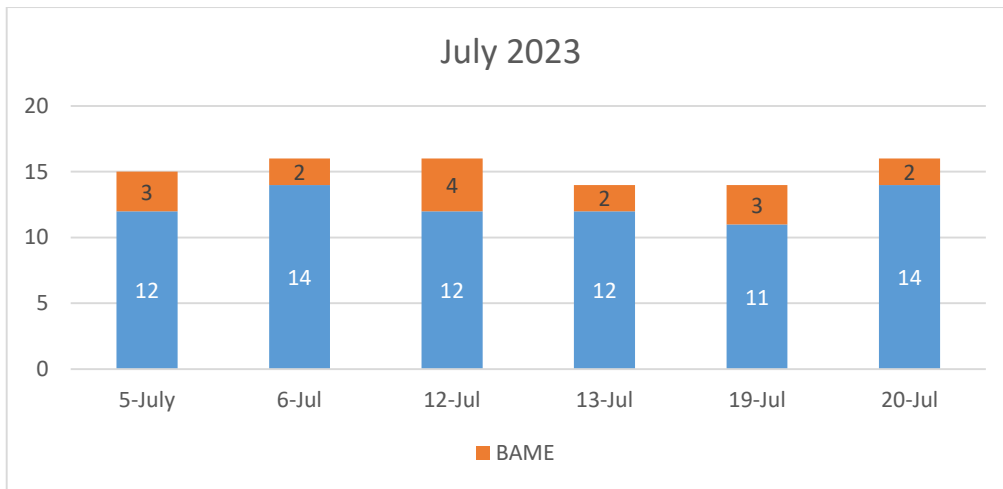
As a first step we move our Walking Football sessions from Downham Leisure and Lifestyle centre to the Ten Em Bee development centre, 120a Old Bromley Rd. Ten Em Bee is managed by a Black led management committee.

At the start of the year we had 12 members are Afro Caribbean, 2 members who are African and 1 Tamil



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## Walking Football

At the end of 2023:

- ❖ 40 men are on the Walking Football database
- 14 members are Afro Caribbean/2 members who are African
- 7 members who I am aware have a mental health issue

## Football Tournaments



Amateur FA Walking Football Festival 55plus

**Sunday 4 June 2023**

Powerleague Battersea/Nine Elms, 130 Thessaly Road, London, SW8 5EJ (Pitch 5).

5 Teams entered. Although we did not win the tournament, in fact we came last, we beat the team that came first. The experience was really excellent and allow us to have a positive experience of a tournament.

GLL Club, 60plus games

**Friday 22 September 2023**

The National Sports Centre Crystal Palace, SE19

There were 9 teams entered for the tournament, however one team had a breakdown on the motorway. Downham Men's Group represented GLL Lewisham, who supplied shirts. The remaining 8 teams were broken down into 2 groups of 4.



We won one, drew one and lost one game – so did not go into the knock out phase of the tournament.

Millwall Community Walking Football Festival 55 plus  
The Lions Centre, Bolina Road, London SE16 3LD

**Saturday 23 September**



The festival included 5 teams' playing 15 minutes 6 aside with goalkeeper (7) plus 3 subs. The games were played on the full pitch, which is a lot bigger than most venues, inside the Lions Centre.

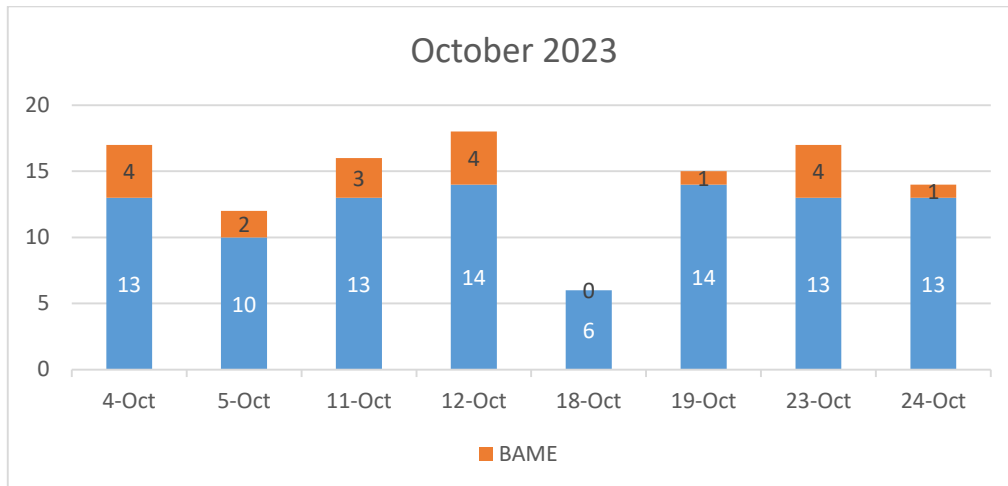
We did not win a game but drew 3 and lost one, so ended up in the middle of the league.

**Learning going forward:**

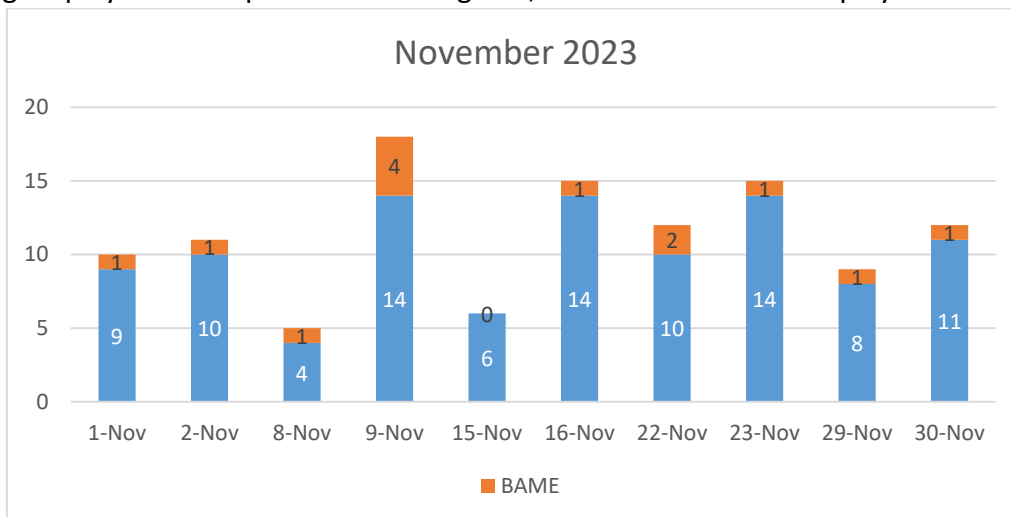
- A core group of players want to play more tournament.  
4 players played all tournaments
- We need to talk before the tournaments about how we are going to play  
We need to know who is defending and who are the attackers!
- Work out a plan for substitutions
- Need to meet up earlier



During this period the rain affected the delivery of the Walking Football sessions.

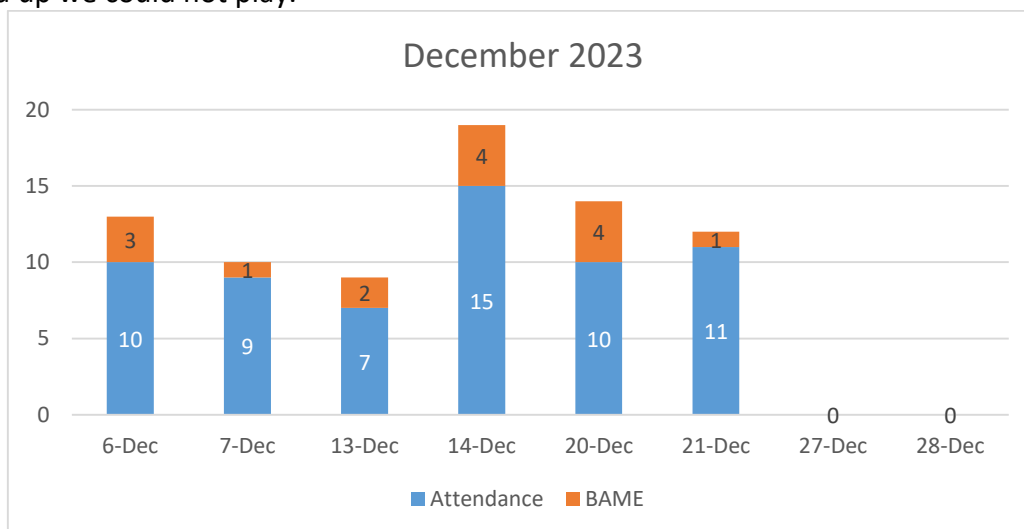


Although 6 players turn up for the 18 Oct game, due to rain we did not play



During November we had more rain.

On the 8 November 4 players turned up but it just poured down so we did not have a session. Again on Wednesday 15 November the rain was really heavy and although 6 Players turned up we could not play.



The session was closed 27 & 28 December.

# Fancy a game?

## Walking Football

Thursday 7pm-8pm  
Wednesday 3pm-4pm

Ten Em Bee  
120A Old Bromley Road  
Bromley BR1 4JY

**DMG**  
DOWNHAM MEN'S GROUP



## Get in touch

To join us or find out more information, please contact:

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Walking Football, is a slow-paced version of the beautiful game aimed at getting players back involved in the sport. Our sessions are aimed at (but not limited to) over 50s, those coming back from injury and those with lack of mobility.



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