



# ***MOVING TOGETHER.***

**SUSTAINABILITY REPORT  
OF VfL WOLFSBURG 2020**



VfL WOLFSBURG  
Gemeinsam bewegen





VfL WOLFSBURG  
**Gemeinsam bewegen**

# ***SUSTAINABILITY IN WORDS AND NUMBERS***

## ***ABOUT THIS REPORT***

VfL Wolfsburg does not shy away from its responsibilities for the consequences of its actions on people and the environment (Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR), and has included sustainability at the core of its thinking. VfL wants to play a leading role in professional football in this regard, both nationally and internationally. A key communications instrument in the pursuit of this strategy is sustainability and/or CSR reporting. It is primarily addressed at fans, employees, sponsoring companies and partner companies, as well as Volkswagen AG. This is also aimed at non-governmental organisations, pressure groups, as well as representatives of politics, science and research.

VfL publishes a comprehensive sustainability report every four years. In the interim years, VfL also publishes a short progress report, the last in 2018. With this publication, VfL openly and comprehensively discloses for the third time since 2012 how it handles the main topics on which it has an impact. The report concentrates here on the most important activities, but also on any deficiencies identified in the last two years, and defines the goals and planning for the next reporting period. The content has largely been selected on the basis of the materiality analysis carried out in 2020.

The reporting period basically covers the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 seasons: later developments have also been taken into consideration in individual cases where possible before the editing deadline, and already planned measures have also been announced in advance. All of the content relates to the whole VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH. The report is published in German.

The structure of this report is orientated to the preceding sustainability and progress reports. Using a similar structure enhances transparency and makes it easier for the reading target group to better comprehend the steps in the club's development. This is also helped by the standards of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) which were used as the basis for structuring the report.

Following introductions by the management and the Lord Mayor of Wolfsburg, the report then highlights the parallels between football and reporting. The following pages then present the two prime themes – diversity and climate protection – in an appropriate way. This is followed by five chapters on the main CSR areas of action identified by the club: "Strategy & Management", "Employees", "Environment", "Society", and "Fans & Members". The main themes dealt with in each chapter are first presented on an introductory page, then extrapolates these to the world of football, and points out the sustainable development goals of the United Nations (SDG) to which VfL makes a contribution in the area of action.

Each of the chapters in the report show how VfL strategically tackles each of the main topics; which measures it implements for this purpose; and the metrics it makes use of to control these actions. VfL Wolfsburg deliberately collects those metrics which can help improve the measures it implements in the football business. There is also an overview in each chapter highlighting the special milestones achieved during the reporting period, and an outlook announces the planned activities. The

information required for this purpose was gathered from conversations with each of the responsible employees.

An updated CSR programme lists the objectives for each of the area-of-action chapters for the coming reporting period, and the measures selected to implement them.

The report was prepared in compliance with the GRI standards: option "core" of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The last pages contain an overview and explanations of the GRI indicators covered, and references to the relevant parts of the text.

Additional information and news are available at the VfL Wolfsburg website at [www.vfl-wolfsburg.de](http://www.vfl-wolfsburg.de). Content focusing on sustainability, can be found at [www.vfl-wolfsburg.de/der-vfl/soziales/](http://www.vfl-wolfsburg.de/der-vfl/soziales/).

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# STRENGTHENING MORE RESPECTFUL INTERACTION

## **KLAUS MOHRS, THE LORD MAYOR OF WOLFSBURG, ON THE CLUB'S AND CITY'S COMMITMENT TO MORE PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN ALL PEOPLES**

**Dear readers, citizens and friends of VfL Wolfsburg,**

as the Lord Mayor of the city of Wolfsburg, I am delighted to again read a sustainability report from VfL Wolfsburg in 2020 which reveals what football can do for society and our city. VfL is a courageous pioneer for the sustainable change of industry and society, and stands shoulder to shoulder with Volkswagen to advance the important transitions further, and has also been involved as a reliable partner in many co-operation projects.

VfL is one of THE flagships of our city. It regularly thrills thousands of fans – hopefully also back in the arenas again soon – and not only on national and international TV screens. The outstanding performances of the women in particular are very impressive. Year after year, they bring back at least one piece of silverware to Wolfsburg. This year as well, they easily dominated German women's football, and missed the triple by the tiniest amount.

VfL also makes use of its charisma away from the pitch, to speak out and underpin its commitment to the peaceful co-existence of all people, independent of their origins, skin colour, religion, sexual orientation, age, or personal characteristics. This is all the more important today to ensure that the far-right motivated acts of extreme violence which we have had to endure in recent years in Kassel, Hanau and Halle, are never repeated. We regularly hear and see how people have been threatened because of their social commitment. These crimes are the expression of the

increasing divisions in our society, which are becoming even more apparent today in the discussions about how to combat the Corona virus, and climate change. These attitudes threaten our democracy and are unacceptable. Although one should be able to argue about controversial issues in the same way as one can discuss footballing performances, this should never give rise to mutual disrespect.

It becomes increasingly important against this background to ensure that we do more to treat one another with respect. This is the shared duty of all people in society. The public sector can provide opportunities for exchanging opinions by investing in various areas, including educational institutions, culture and sport, and digital platforms. However, the willingness of a large number of us to use these opportunities is also required, not to mention making a personal contribution for the benefit of society as a whole, whether professionally or voluntarily.

VfL is an outstanding role model here. Its commitment goes well beyond what one could reasonably expect. The players stand up on behalf of diversity with their rainbow-coloured captain's armbands and special football shirts. The club is enthusiastically involved in co-operation with the town of Wolfsburg's youth work, such as in its Fan Project, and speaks out powerfully against violence between fans. The club is also involved in climate protection, such as the reforestation project of the city forest. VfL participates actively as a networker in various public spheres, and continually works in numerous partnerships and projects to

sustainably reform football and society. I look forward to our continuing mutual co-operation, and getting involved in new areas of teamwork.

In the name of the council and the administration of the city of Wolfsburg, as well as all of the citizens of Wolfsburg, I thank VfL Wolfsburg warmly for the close working relationship, as we all strive to create a forward-looking and vibrant Wolfsburg. I look forward to many more successes in the sporting, social and environmental arenas, and wish the footballers and the whole club all the very best in tackling the future challenges.

Yours faithfully,

  
**Klaus Mohrs**  
Lord Mayor  
of the city of Wolfsburg



# INSPIRING PEOPLE TO JOIN IN

## **MICHAEL MEESKE, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF VfL WOLFSBURG-FUSSBALL GMBH, ON THE SUSTAINABILITY POTENTIAL OF FOOTBALL MADE IN WOLFSBURG**

### **Dear Readers,**

Football regularly and impressively shows how challenges can help us improve. I am convinced that this also applies to the Corona crisis. We will make our training venues and pitches safe from the virus, thrill fans again, and utilise our chances as a green, sustainably transformable football club. This is important because today, more than ever, we need to shoulder responsibility for the future of football in all of its forms, and, fundamentally for the livelihoods and living conditions of future generations. With our strategy 2020+ "We Drive Football", we have therefore more precisely defined those of our core competences where we wish to be even better and more sustainable in the future.

So that everyone can clearly see where this journey is taking us, we are the first top club in Europe to sign the United Nations "Sports for Climate Action" declaration. We thus acknowledge and commit ourselves to the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement, and make our contribution to realise these goals, for example, by concerning ourselves even more intensely with the subject of fan tourism. It is a fact that most of our CO<sub>2</sub> footprint is attributable to spectators travelling to and from matches. Measures therefore need to be implemented to get them to reconsider their choices and join in.

There are other topics where we require support from those in our field

of activities. These include fighting discrimination, racism and homophobia. In this context, VfL Wolfsburg works closely together with Wolfsburg council, the Fan Project and numerous companies and amateur clubs in the region, and regularly shows that it stands on the side of diversity, with measures including the rainbow-coloured captain's armband, not to mention special football shirts, and the diversity weeks.

Our popularity and our charisma help us to win people over for more sustainable sport and a more sustainable society. Earning their trust is something we must never take for granted. It is therefore important that we ensure the integrity of our actions at all levels. One of the measures we have implemented to achieve this is installing a new company directive for the environment-compliance-management-system at VfL.

We also recognise that we have special due diligence obligations when it comes to our youth work. We are convinced that there has to be room for integrated personality development in school and during football training. We therefore developed the "Life.Values" concept for the VfL-Football.Academy, and use it to promote the social and mental wellbeing of our talented young players. Today, it is more important than ever to stand by them, given that some of them may be having doubts about their careers as footballers because of the pandemic.

On the other hand, ups and downs are part of the fascination of football. We firmly believe that our commitment to sustainability provides enough dynamism in the club, and in all of the areas where the club has an impact, to be able to provide thrilling sustainability and football activities in the future as well.

Enjoy the read, convince yourself, and contact us at any time if you wish to discuss these matters further. This report is just one of our many dialogue offers.

I would be delighted to get you on board,

Your



**Michael Meeske**  
Managing Director of  
VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH



# TACKLING CONFLICTS WITH COURAGE JUST LIKE ON THE PITCH

## TECHNICAL SKILLS GENERATE EMOTIONS

Technical finesse is required in sport as well as in sustainability. Therefore, in just the same way as VfL Wolfsburg continually further develops its technical skills on the pitch, it also wishes to satisfy increasingly higher standards in its reporting as well. In this way, it wants to demonstrate how it measures its performance, and how it uses the findings to control its sustainability activities.

### On the field: What makes technical skills fascinating in football?

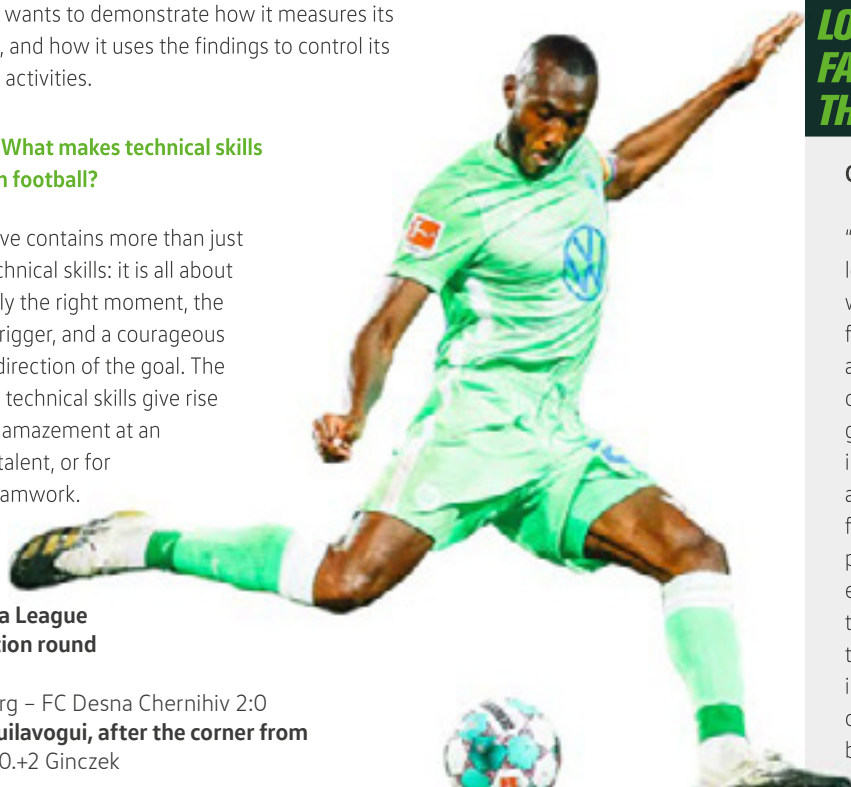
A tactical move contains more than just delivering technical skills: it is all about finding exactly the right moment, the appropriate trigger, and a courageous move in the direction of the goal. The tension rises, technical skills give rise to emotions: amazement at an outstanding talent, or for exemplary teamwork.

### UEFA Europa League 3. Qualification round

AOK Stadion

VfL Wolfsburg – FC Desna Chernihiv 2:0

Goals: **15. Guilavogui, after the corner from Mehmedi, 90.+2 Ginczek**



**“FITNESS ALONE IS NO LONGER THE ONLY FACTOR INFLUENCING THE RESULT”**

Oliver Glasner, head trainer:

“In modern football, fitness alone no longer makes the difference between winning or losing. Nowadays, all of the factors have to be involved, precisely analysed, and evaluated. We thus not only use the individual impression gained by us as a team of coaches in our daily training sessions, but also numerous sports medicine and football-relevant datasets which we permanently gather and evaluate for each of the players. This enables us to optimise the training sessions and to then develop the game strategy – incorporating our knowledge of the competitor – which we believe is the best possible means of winning.”



### In Reporting: What makes sustainability reporting exciting?

The metrics are not just pure juggling with numbers. They are also a reflection of questions and challenges, for instance: how can fans get to the stadium in a climate-neutral way? VfL's CO<sub>2</sub> footprint reveals: fan mobility accounts for the lion's share of emissions. Something has to be done here. This is a topic which is not only challenging: it not only gets one

interested in finding new solutions but also sometimes gives the managers of the club a serious headache.

The emotions associated with the reporting can vary considerably depending on the level of expectation: worry about the future of football. The desire to develop new solutions. Fascination for new technologies. It is exciting for VfL to find a solution.

### "THIS IS WHAT CONCERNS ME WHEN I DO THE REPORTING"

**Nico Briskorn, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager:**

"Sustainable issues are challenging and complex. Which lessons can be learned from the science and our own experience? Which position do we take? We often need answers quickly. For example, when it comes to climate protection or how to handle the pandemic. This makes it exciting, every day!"



The CSR department discussing the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint.

### "SUSPENSE, SUFFERING AND JOY, SOMETIMES WITHIN SECONDS OF ONE ANOTHER"

**VfL Managing Director Michael Meeske:**

"The positive emotions of the fans are the lifeblood of the football team. That is why we always want to create them whenever we can. And we have learned how to do this: through performance, technical skills, passion and team spirit on the pitch.

In addition though, we are currently also building up our competence in other areas. At the heart of these aspects is the knowledge of what our stakeholders are interested in, our fans and the workforce, and our parent company, the people, politicians and economy in the region, the partner clubs, schools and kindergartens, and many, many more. Their positive emotions depend on how we handle their concerns, and how we communicate it. Technically high-quality reporting is therefore also a really emotional issue for us as well."



### GOOD REASONS FOR TRANSPARENT REPORTING

Reporting not only involves technical skills, but also a lot of emotional moments, just as in football itself. VfL Wolfsburg is good at both: it precisely measures its sustainability performance, and discloses the data in line with recognised standards. In doing so, it courageously tackles difficult issues, plays a responsible role, and is proud when it can make important contributions.



Delay was yesterday. The final straw was the special report issued by the World Climate Council in 2018 which highlighted the urgency of the situation: businesses, politics and civil society must act now, and together, to ideally limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. VfL has already shown the way. By signing the "Sports for Climate Action" climate protection agreement of the United Nations, VfL is the first European football club in top leagues to publicly commit to the systematic reduction of its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (see page 54).

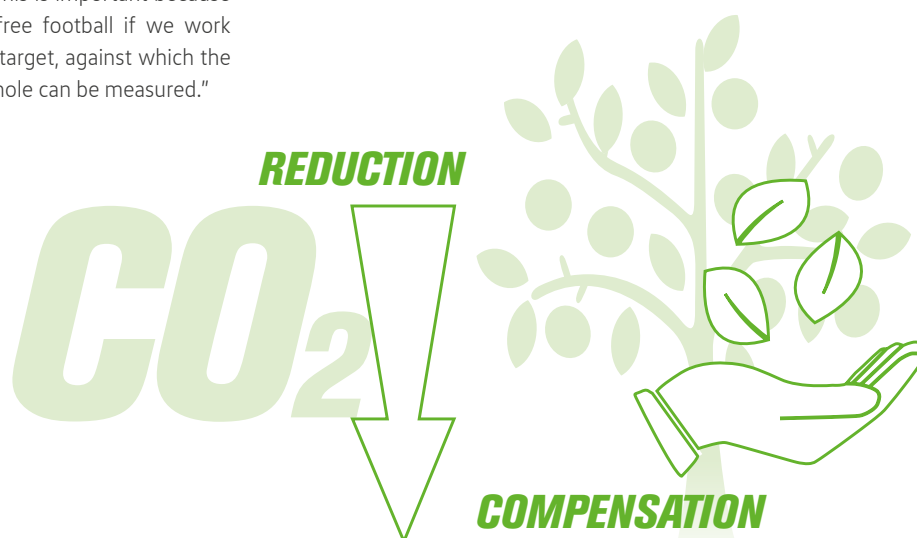
By becoming a signatory, the club pledges to make verifiable steps to achieve climate-neutral football. Managing director Michael Meeske explains what this means:

"We need more than just a memorandum of understanding. We want to bring alive climate protection at the club authentically and honestly, and establish benchmarks for the whole league. This is important because we can only achieve the transition to CO<sub>2</sub>-free football if we work together. To do this, we need a clear and fair target, against which the contribution of the club and the sector as a whole can be measured."

## **TWO EFFECTIVE LEVERS**

Net zero – that is the overriding target of the VfL climate strategy. This means that all of the greenhouse gases attributable to VfL need to be either removed from the atmosphere, or avoided at another location. The aim is to achieve this within five years, and therefore make VfL Wolfsburg climate-neutral. The football club pursues a double strategy here: reduction plus compensation.

VfL has laid down a binding course to achieve the reduction: Using the 2017/2018 season year as the reference point, all of its greenhouse gas emissions are to be reduced annually by 6.45 per cent from this level. This will achieve a reduction of around 55 per cent by 2030. VfL



can achieve this if all of the processes are converted step-by-step into CO<sub>2</sub>-saving solutions. Another of the club's intentions here is to use all of the available means as efficiently as possible.

This is why VfL supplements the reduction approach by additional compensation projects around the world. The main focus here is on projects which promote the use of renewable energy, and reforestation projects in deforested regions. These projects are a proven means of reducing emissions to zero in future, or will extract CO<sub>2</sub> from the air. VfL supports these projects by purchasing certificates. These confirm how much CO<sub>2</sub> VfL has deducted from its CO<sub>2</sub> footprint by its involvement in these projects. The certificates acquired in this way conform to the highest standards, and are acquired either via the Volkswagen power plant or the United Nations platform. The club has retrospectively calculated a total of 2,463 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent for the 2019/2020 season, and sponsored various projects to compensate for this amount.

### GO-RESPONSIBILITY FOR FAN EMISSIONS

VfL took a close look at every aspect of its business when analysing its climate balance. Major items in this balance are attributable to heating, power consumption, and the mobility of its teams. VfL can implement measures here to reduce its own emissions. However, the lion's share of the overall emissions is generated by fan mobility.

The spectators decide themselves how they get to and from the stadiums. "Nevertheless, we still feel a degree of co-responsibility at VfL for the greenhouse gases emitted

in this way," acknowledges CSR manager Nico Briskorn. "After all, it is our matches which cause the fans to travel. We can therefore also have an influence on fan mobility."

In this context, the club has developed concepts to motivate the fans to use environmentally-compatible means of transport. Those emissions which still cannot be avoided or prevented, are to be compensated for in the same way as the club's own emissions.

## SUPPORT TO HELP INDIA BECOME CLIMATE-NEUTRAL

Compensating for VfL emissions helps in many ways: Nokh, a village in the Rajasthan region of West India, achieves the energy transition.

The Indian economy has so far depended largely on coal as a fuel. VfL helps change this strategy. With the money paid for the certificates, the inhabitants of Nokh constructed a photovoltaic park to replace coal and other fossil fuels by emissions-free solar power. Another benefit was the paid work enjoyed by numerous people in the village during the construction phase. In addition to its environmental benefits, the UN-project also adds permanent value to the local community: the improved infrastructure alone makes a strong contribution to securing the economic prosperity of the local population in the long term as well.





VfL Wolfsburg and the Volkswagen Group also stand together when it comes to diversity. This is demonstrated by campaigns such as the VfL diversity kit: to mark the campaign match day in 2019, VW waived the use of its logo in favour of a rainbow-coloured emblem. But the VW logo itself shone out in rainbow colours on the 8th German Diversity Day in 2020.

### **CLEAR SIGNAL**

Our society is becoming more colourful and more diverse; life choices are becoming more heterogeneous, and more individual. There is also an increase in the tolerance and acceptance of diversity. Unfortunately, there is also an increasing polarisation between the people on the one hand in favour of diversity and an open society, and those who reject it. To ensure that society does not become completely polarised, it is important to strengthen social cohesion. VfL Wolfsburg makes a clear stand on this issue, and unequivocally and uncompromisingly stands on the side of a diverse society.

This position is also shared by the parent company Volkswagen. Elke Heitmüller, Head of Diversity, Volkswagen AG, emphasises: "One of our seven corporate principles is: 'We embrace diversity'". These must not be empty words; they must be an integral part of our everyday lives. We are a colourful, diverse company which accepts people the way they are – independent of their nationality, skin colour, sex, age, religion or sexuality." Nevertheless, there is still a great deal that needs to be done across the country: real diversity is only achieved when the right person at the right time at the right place has the right job – independent of their sex, cultural background, sexual orientation,

religion or any other attribute. If we can achieve this in the long term, then we have done a good job."

Diversity has long been part of everyday life at VfL, and the club can count on the support here of the fans and the players: "On the pitch, everyone is equal, every single person is accepted and valued as they are," explains sports director Marcel Schäfer, adding: "And everyone who watches our matches sees that we not only talk the talk but also walk the walk. And that's the way it should be."

### **SCHOOL FOR DIVERSITY**

VfL sees itself as an ambassador for diversity in its field of endeavour. Together with school educational institutions, it has therefore created offers for promoting democracy and diversity (see page 68). One of them is the "Wolfsburg school for diversity" project which raises the awareness of pupils for antiracism, discrimination, civic courage, sexism and homophobia (see page 66). Four schools in Wolfsburg took part in the project when it started in 2019, and were rewarded for their strong commitment by being handed a rainbow doorplate.

Mark Berger, deputy head of the Vorsfelde secondary school, describes the project from the point of view of the schools: "The whole ninth grade took part in the project, which included an interesting workshop for everyone in the classes. In the years to come, our aim is to raise the awareness of other grades for the topic of 'diversity', so that all pupils can actively take part and play a role in the programme."

## **DIVERSITY CHARTA: GERMAN COMPANIES SET STANDARDS**

The Diversity Charta is an initiative of German businesses under the auspices of the German chancellor. The heart of the Charta is a formal self-obligation which has so far been signed by 3,500 companies and institutions with a total of 13.4 million employees. VfL Wolfsburg has been a member of the Charta since April 2014, and thus pledges to promote diversity and esteem in the working environment.



**Pablo Thiam, head of the U23 in the VfL-Football Academy and VfL Wolfsburg integration officer, answered questions on VfL Wolfsburg's position:**

#### **Why is diversity such an important issue for VfL?**

"We live in challenging times. It is therefore very important that young people get engaged on behalf of humanitarian and democratic values, diversity, and co-operation."

#### **How can VfL make a contribution here?**

"To get the message across, young people have to come together and get to know one another. This is the only way of breaking down prejudices, and discovering, developing and strengthening shared areas of interest."

#### **Why did you choose schools as the way to promote this?**

"Schools already deal with this topic as it is. The project now provides them with an excellent framework in order to do this job more efficiently and effectively."







# ***STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT***

# STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT: MANAGING RESPONSIBILITY IN A TRANSPARENT WAY – FOOTBALL, YOU SHOW THE WAY

Clear rules and unequivocal decision-making methods, all the way to video evidence, are of utmost importance for football. They are the basis for the fans’ trust in seeing a fair match. And they make football a role model for many aspects of society. VfL Wolfsburg’s reporting also serves this purpose. By observing internationally recognised standards, it gains the club the trust of many people who have a say in its future.



## SUSTAINABILITY RECOGNISED AS A SUCCESS FACTOR

A strategic approach is just as important in football as in handling the subject of sustainability: it is only possible to act with foresight, activate the necessary forces, and ensure success, if one can keep an expert eye on all of the important issues. VfL Wolfsburg is therefore committed to sustainable development, not only in the football business, but also in everything in its orbit. This ranges from its own employees, the fans and members, and the regional economy, all the way to the widely branching supply chain. Corporate social responsibility stands for VfL Wolfsburg’s durable success, on the sporting side, as well as on the business side. This is why VfL observes the principles of responsible management, and uses its potential for the positive development of society as a whole. VfL’s strategy therefore takes into consideration all of the factors relevant for sustainable development, ranging from the work

in the office, developing the squad, and looking after the fans, all the way to environmental protection. VfL also nurtures close relationships to numerous active stakeholders across the region and beyond.

Sustainable corporate culture in all of its aspects is important for the organisation of VfL itself, as well as for the way it is seen in the world. This concerns the values, as well as the strategic orientation and structure of the company. Integrity and compliance are also particularly



important as the basis for all of the company's responsible actions. As a subsidiary of the Volkswagen Group, VfL has implemented all of the necessary measures to be an ethical company which shares democratic values, and which works hard to earn the trust of its stakeholders. This not only applies to the area directly influenced by VfL, but also to its supply chain – and its merchandising products in particular. In addition to having a sustainable supply chain, VfL also wants its other relationships to be configured sustainably, and therefore commits itself to an intense stakeholder dialogue.

The responsibility for sustainable development has been a firm part of the corporate strategy at VfL Wolfsburg for many years: the following statement is defined in the "Brand manual" from 2014, in which VfL spells out its values and its corporate identity: "Sustainably successful. We are not orientated to short-term successes and partnerships.

Our aim is for them to develop organically from healthy growth. And in our daily work, we seek to save environmental resources."

Integrity for the Volkswagen Group and all of the associated companies means one thing above all: they need to establish complete credibility as honourable and respectable

companies in the best sense. To satisfy this ambition, the integrity and the compliance programme "Together4Integrity (T4I)" was established as part of the TOGETHER 2020+ Group strategy. The T4I approach was broken down into seven corporate principles. VfL has used the corporate strategy as the basis for developing its own strategy 2020+ "We Drive Football". The launch of this strategy at



## INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTOPHER WENDISCH

Christopher Wendisch has been responsible at VfL since November 2016 for handling all legal issues concerning the Bundesliga club, including drawing up contracts, and has also acted as the official compliance officer since 2019.

**You are currently working on a list of 80 different "T4I Deliverables" covering the field of "Integrity" in the light of the restructuring process which the Volkswagen Group is currently undergoing, and all of the wide-ranging specifications this involves. How are you organising the implementation? Which resources do you have available for this purpose?**

"We discuss and document the status of the work at a regular weekly meeting with our colleagues from Volkswagen, which also includes the Group functions at Volkswagen. The colleagues help us acquire information materials and documents, and to comply with the planned stipulations. And at another weekly meeting, I also talk to our internal VfL experts for HR compliance, risk management and environmental compliance, to find out how we can provide them with optimal support. However, each expert is ultimately responsible for implementing the deliverables themselves."

**How well can topics involving a car manufacturer be extrapolated to VfL?**

"That is an exciting question. To answer it, I work together with the Volkswagen colleagues on each regulation to find a way to either implement it fully, or to implement it as a corporate social regulation adapted to our own business model. However, if this makes no sense, we have in some cases already jointly decided that implementation

is irrelevant and therefore unnecessary. Flexibility is important, and comes to the fore in such cases."

**What does "integrity" mean specifically for you and professional football?**

"Integrity for me means doing the right thing based on personal convictions – even independent of laws and regulations – so that one can always look at oneself in the mirror at the end of the day. In the case of professional football integrity – on and off the pitch – it is one of the most important qualities. It guarantees that many people continue to be fans because they can expect (generally at least) that the team that leaves the pitch as the winner is the one that played the best. For the decision makers of a club running the business solidly, integrity also means not to prioritise the prospects of sporting success over financial security."

**What would you like to say personally to the US compliance supervisor Larry Thompson who has kept a very close eye in recent years on the Volkswagen Group and its subsidiaries, including VfL Wolfsburg?**

"In no way would I want to swap my job with Larry Thompson. It is a mammoth task, purely because of the size of the Group, to globally implement a functioning compliance management system at Volkswagen. This demands courage and stamina. He does a fantastic job, particularly also together with Hiltrud Werner and their divisions. Maybe there will be an opportunity at some time during a match in the Volkswagen Arena to ask him whether he has now also become a fan of VfL Wolfsburg, given the scale of his commitment."



VfL Wolfsburg in partnership with Volkswagen hosted an event on 5 November 2018 with the heading "Football moves society". The event in Wolfsburg was attended by around 60 participants from sports clubs and associations, science, politics, administration and industry, who joined in an intense discussion on the role of football as a cohesive force in society, as well as analysing the opportunities it has for influencing sustainable development.

VfL Wolfsburg, and the definition of the VfL core competences in July 2019 based on its own brand values, demonstrated for all to see that: Integrity is also the foundation at VfL for the sustainable development of the club, its strategy and values. It therefore has overall priority in VfL's corporate actions.

VfL Wolfsburg in co-operation with the Volkswagen Group's experts defined a comprehensive set of deliverables for its compliance management in March 2019. These are to be implemented within the VfL organisation within the next one and a half years. Overall responsibility for this process lies in the hands of Christopher Wendisch, the in-house counsel and compliance officer of VfL Wolfsburg.

#### **Local roots and international orientation**

The sustainable development of VfL Wolfsburg is not an isolated process. It is driven forward in the region by the football club, the carmaker, as well as the city council. The connection between the three has grown over a period of decades, and forms a unique cluster.

The local attachment and the responsibility taken on by the football

club was confirmed in March 2020 by an analysis undertaken by the University of Bremen on behalf of Wolfsburg council. This confirmed that VfL has particularly strong "local roots", and praised its support for numerous social projects in the Wolfsburg region. For the people in Wolfsburg, VfL has become the city's most important symbol. The analysis also determined that the values defined by VfL have rarely been directly associated with VfL to date. To help the brand ambassadors get the values across to those outside the club even more clearly in future, VfL has specially developed a compact values book with all of the key messages for sporting activities, and also provides training courses on this topic. In addition, the values are also communicated via the intranet, via the website, and VfL Wolfsburg's social media channels.

The close connection with the Volkswagen Group regularly attracts criticism in the public sphere in the context of "financial fair play". VfL is an outspoken supporter of financial fairness and also points out that as a 100 per cent Group subsidiary, it is not a pure sponsoring tool for the carmaker, but rather also makes an important

contribution to the attractiveness of the employer and the location of the Group headquarters. It also sees itself as an important strategic partner for the sustainable transformation of business and industry – and not only within the region: VfL Wolfsburg has pursued a global strategy for many years now: its ambition is to win over people around the world for German football, thrill fans, and establish itself as a successful, likeable and socially involved football club. An important vehicle for achieving this is the VfL Wolfsburg brand, with its major international awareness. Brazil, China, Mexico and the USA in particular are all increasingly relevant markets for VfL. This is also highlighted by VfL's new official representative office in China's capital city, and the establishment of VfL Wolfsburg (Beijing) Football Club Co., Ltd. International connections are intensely nurtured. For instance, representatives of the Chinese Football Association and the VW Group China were welcomed on 15 August 2019. The occasion was a further training programme for Chinese Association youth trainers under the overall slogan "Volkswagen Junior Train-the-Trainer".

E-sports is a growing globally-relevant sector for VfL. VfL e-players play competitively in virtual space at international conventions.

### Sustainable corporate culture

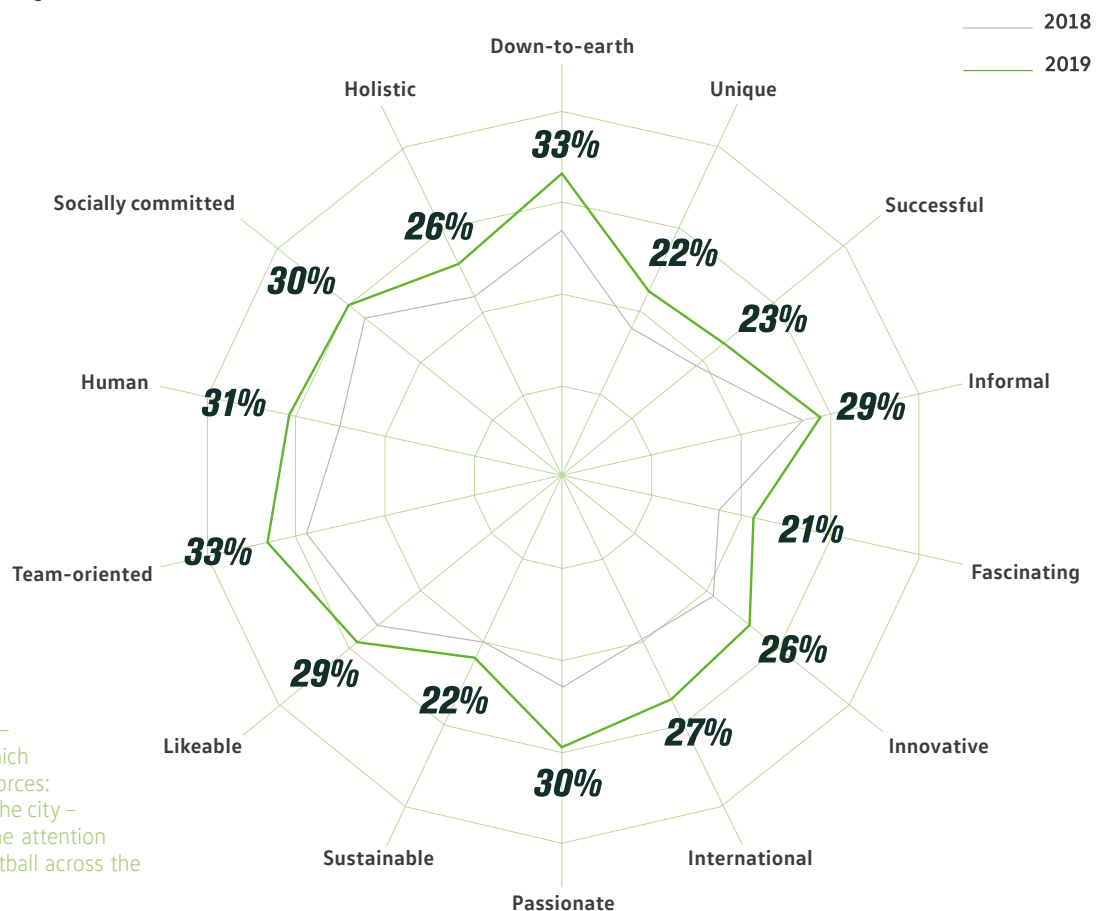
VfL Wolfsburg, as a responsible player, set itself the target of playing a leading role in professional football nationally and internationally, and to achieve this ambition, it has established an efficient modern structure at all levels within its own organisation. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is firmly anchored here at the highest management levels, and as a department it enjoys high levels of competence. This set up enables VfL to rigorously pursue its own strategic approach as part of the "Moving Together" initiative.

VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH is jointly managed by Jörg Schmadtke, Dr. Tim Schumacher and Michael Meeske, who was the third to join in 2018. The graduate social economist was previously a commercial director at

### Positive brand awareness

In 2019, the results of the annual brand tracking analysis revealed that a new core message "Work – Football – Passion", which reflect the three local forces: Volkswagen, the club, and the city – is increasingly attracting the attention of people interested in football across the country.

And in terms of the attributes "innovative, passionate and team-oriented", VfL has also been able to further increase its awareness compared to the benchmark. VfL's image was marked up higher in almost all of the assessment criteria. VfL also succeeded in improving on the previous year in a direct comparison with competitors. The people surveyed emphasised the value "pragmatism" in particular.



1. FC Nuremberg, as well as a member of the German Football League (DFL) executive committee.

The management board is appointed, monitored, advised and recalled by a supervisory board consisting of up to twelve members, and which defers to a supervisory board executive committee. The supervisory board consists of representatives of the sole shareholder Volkswagen AG, the Lord Mayor of the city of Wolfsburg, Klaus Mohrs, as well as business and social personalities from the city of Wolfsburg. The supervisory board is chaired by Frank Witter, who is also a member of the VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH supervisory board executive committee.

### CSR in organisation and strategy

Michael Meeske is in charge of the CSR department, which has five and a half full-time positions. Each member of the interdisciplinary CSR team is responsible for one of the priority topics, and as internal consultants on sustainability issues, are in close and frequent contact with other departments. The work of the CSR department primarily centres around the principles of effectiveness, sustainability and honesty. The main focus of the CSR work is on education, diversity, health

and environment, because these are the areas where VfL can achieve the most sustainable impact. They form the four pillars of the "Moving Together" initiative, within which VfL bundles its comprehensive activities embodying its corporate social responsibility. The initiative is driven by the ambition to enable and promote participation. To enable the positive impact of its projects to be evaluated, and to use this information to configure the necessary measures, VfL has now begun to analyse the causal relations of its projects as part of a pilot project. In a first step, two typical projects are selected and analysed: the Wolfsburg School for Diversity (see page 66), and the children's training bundled within the enrichment programme initiative in partner schools (see page 69).

During the reporting period, VfL made progress in all of the discussed CSR area of action with respect to the previously defined goals (see page 86).

### Sustainable corporate management supported by controlling

Responsible corporate management is only possible with a shared set of values, rules for everyday business, and the strong commitment of all employees. VfL Wolfsburg has therefore defined in writing its corporate values, key



VfL managers and external stakeholders came together at a workshop to discuss how the effect of VfL's commitment could be made even more public, and whether an impact assessment could make a contribution.



## APPRECIATION AND MOTIVATION

VfL Wolfsburg was the very first sports club to receive the SustainClub label in gold: awarded in February 2016. VfL had its sustainability performance tested again by sustainable//sports and the DEKRA testing company experts in the 2019/2020 season. The tested sustainability criteria are orientated to internationally recognised standards, such as the UN Global Compact and the Sustainable Development Goals. With 156 out of a possible 194 points, VfL again meets the qualification level for the SustainClub label in gold.

VfL sees this award as a strong motivation to boost its sustainability performance even further. It wants to achieve this by systematically analysing the results with the competent specialist departments, with a view to identifying areas of potential improvement. On the basis of this deficiency analysis, it was decided during the reporting period to, for instance, include sustainability criteria when evaluating new catering services in future.

Other clubs have also followed VfL's good example: SV Werder Bremen, Bayer 04 Leverkusen, FC St. Pauli, VfB Stuttgart and SC Paderborn 07 – five more football clubs in the Bundesliga – underwent an examination and auditing by SustainClub as part of a pilot project during the 2019/2020 Bundesliga season. With its empirical values, VfL played the role of the sparring partner, and together with the other certified clubs and the DFL, it is pushing for consideration to be given to expanding this auditing to the whole of professional football.

sustainable development. In this context, a survey within VfL Wolfsburg-Football GmbH was carried out most recently in December 2019. This database was used to evaluate various – also non-financial – risks, and the associated risk-minimisation measures. Of the top 30 identified risks, one included the risk of the club's own employees or managers damaging the diversity and climate protection values which the club has prioritised.

## INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE

VfL places a high value on the trust of its stakeholders. Inappropriate conduct and legal violations can have serious consequences for VfL, as well as its workforce. The avoidance and combatting of criminality, and raising people's awareness of risky situations, are therefore one of the key tasks for the VfL Wolfsburg management. VfL is supported in its endeavours by a management compliance system that ensures that integrity – in other words, the observance of all statutory regulations and standards – is observed. In addition, all contracts are checked by departments, including controlling and the financial, legal and

competences, and the demands it places on its human resources and its partners, to provide the basis for responsible corporate management. The code of conduct, other regulations and guidelines, including the new company directives for the environment compliance management system, as well as various other management systems, provide the framework for orientation here, alongside the statutory requirements. This ensures that the company's activities

are responsible and lawful, and that our mutual interactions, and those with our partner companies, are always responsible, fair and transparent.

VfL works closely together with the Volkswagen Group in terms of risk and quality management, and makes use of the Group's enormous experience in this area. The risk analysis carried out by the club's controlling department is an instrument which delivers valuable findings here for

***“ONLY THOSE THAT OBSERVE THE RULES OF THE GAME DESERVE THE LONG-TERM TRUST OF THEIR FRIENDS, PARTNERS AND SPONSORS. THIS IS AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT FOR A PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL CLUB AS IT IS FOR ANY OTHER COMPANY. WE HAVE THEREFORE CLEARLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY DEFINED WHAT WE EXPECT FROM OUR EMPLOYEES, PLAYERS, SUPPLIERS AND OUR MANAGERS, AND PUT THIS INTO PRACTISE WITHOUT ANY COMPROMISES.”***



Dr. Tim Schumacher on the significance of integrity and compliance

tax affairs departments, to verify that they satisfy the compliance stipulations, before they can be approved by the management board.

The management compliance system is based on the code of conduct in its latest 2019 version. This contains the main principles guiding the conduct of all employees, as well as the conduct of partner companies, and also provides guidance and orientation on legal as well as ethical matters. It also includes a clear commitment to human rights and complete intolerance for discrimination of any kind.

The compliance specifications of the Volkswagen Group also apply to the business relations of its subsidiaries. In this context, other regulations define the rules for specific areas of action. For instance, company guidelines on the prevention of money laundering, and the avoidance of terrorism financing, provide clear instructions to be observed by all of the financial transactions which VfL undertakes. To prevent violations of these regulations, to identify these early on, to stop them immediately, and to punish them, requires attentive employees, reliable channels for signs of violations, as well as rapid and objective clarification and punishment where necessary. These conditions are

defined in the company guidelines on the whistleblower system. The whistleblower system was updated during the reporting period to make sure that the necessary processes for this purpose are in place. Amendments included defining the reporting obligations more strictly, and implementing an auditing process. The whistleblower system also provides whistleblowers with external legal assistance (ombudspersons), or makes it possible for them to contact the Volkswagen Compliance department directly. Reports here can be submitted online or by phone. All reports are checked carefully. They are examined by the Group's compliance employees.

#### **New compliance structure**

VfL has expanded its capacities in the Compliance department: in addition to the new compliance officer who provides advice internally on all compliance aspects, and provides instructions accordingly, the management has also looked intensely at this topic itself. Dr. Tim Schumacher thus makes relevant publications in journals, as well as giving talks on the subject (for instance on 17 January 2019 at a technical meeting of the sports legislation research unit at the University of Cologne, where he gave a talk on the subject of "Compliance in companies and in sport").

To prevent any possible violations of the regulations, and to raise the awareness of the employees for the subject of compliance, mandatory instruction was introduced in 2019: all employees, including the managers, are obliged to take part in at least one compliance instruction seminar every two years. New employees are handed a copy of the code of conduct during their first induction meeting and explained why these rules are so important. Articles with information on the subject of compliance

are published in the intranet to refresh people's understanding of the subject and to highlight new developments. In addition, against the background of the findings from the mood barometer, VfL has also strengthened the understanding of its workforce for the subject of integrity, and increased the awareness of its employees for this important topic. It also took on board the Group-wide integrity campaign for this purpose in 2020. This is continually updated by communications measures, and communicated via the internal media.

The measures are having a very good effect: in the current reporting period as well, there were no sanctions issued for non-compliance with the rules and regulations, or any proceedings carried out for non-competitive behaviour.

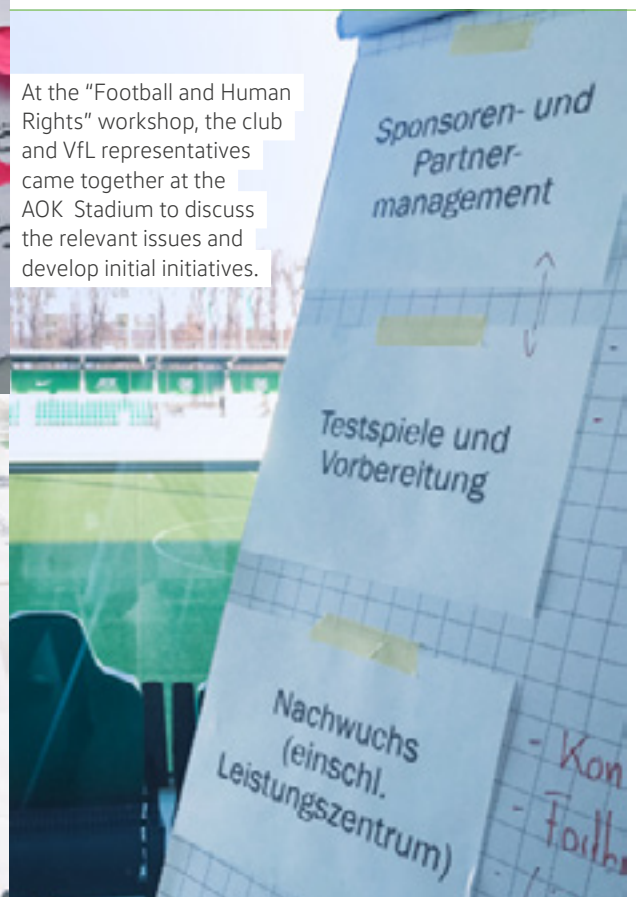
### Observing human rights

Every company is obliged to respect human rights. This also applies to VfL, and the club takes its responsibilities very seriously. It therefore holds talks regularly with a representative of Transparency International and the Volkswagen Group.

In co-operation with the DFL, VfL Wolfsburg organised an interactive workshop on "Football and human rights" in the AOK stadium in February 2019. This resulted in the production of an information brochure – produced



At the "Football and Human Rights" workshop, the club and VfL representatives came together at the AOK Stadium to discuss the relevant issues and develop initial initiatives.



alongside Ergon Associates – with the title: “Football and human rights – practical information and assistance”. The brochure informs the managers of football clubs on aspects including how they can tackle the relevant human rights issues.

#### Alliance for children’s protection

More than 40 incidents of child sexual abuse are reported to the competent authorities every day in Germany. This is an unbearable situation from the point of view of VfL Wolfsburg. As part of its youth training scheme, VfL provides children with a safe learning and playing environment. To uphold this, VfL Wolfsburg demands that each of its trainers present their police clearance certificate, and the club has also appointed two child protection officers. Nevertheless, it is still not always easy to

identify (potential) culprits, to prevent them gaining access, and to provide affected children with the necessary protection. This is why VfL has been working together with the Christian charity Kindernothilfe e.V. since summer 2020 to develop an integrated concept for the prevention of sexual abuse. “We are sending out a strong signal here against child abuse. The intolerable situations uncovered in Münster, Bergisch Gladbach and Lügde show the urgent need for a nation-wide commitment to child protection,” says Michael Meeske.

The concept will include guidelines, personnel standards, and specifications for how the topic should be communicated. The general public and partner clubs are to be contacted to raise their awareness and get them actively involved to improve child protection.

VfL employees from various departments came together on 29.07.2020 at a basic training session covering “Child protection”, where they discussed the measures to be implemented in the coming months.





***“LET US WORK TOGETHER TO DO SOMETHING IMPORTANT FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN. FOR ALL THE CHILDREN WHO ARE PLACED IN OUR TRUST, AND FOR ALL THE OTHER CHILDREN IN GERMANY. THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO GROW UP IN A PROTECTED AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT.”***

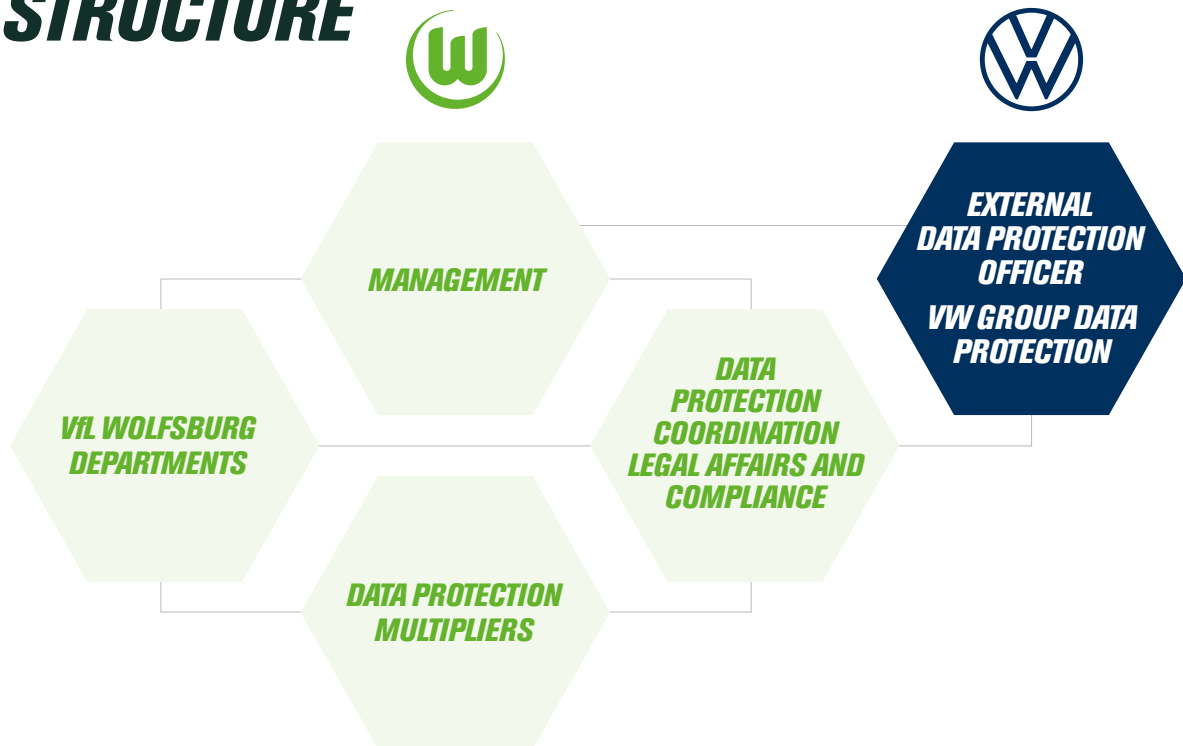
Jörg Schmadtke on the start of the partnership with the Christian charity Kindernothilfe e.V.



In training courses, workshops, joint working sessions, and close co-operation with the Kindernothilfe children's emergency aid charity, VfL develops measures to match its requirements, and sustainably strengthen child protection within the club.



# DATE PROTECTION ORGANISATION STRUCTURE



## Professionalised data protection

The law comprehensively regulates the protection of the personal data of clients, fans, partner companies, employees as well as members. VfL takes this responsibility very seriously.

VfL revised its data protection structure as part of the measures concluded in October 2018 to implement the stipulations defined in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). It continues to be linked to the Group data protection system (see diagram). The data protection standards were also harmonised at the same time. Since then, multipliers have instructed employees internally on day-to-day questions, and also carried out practical training courses in each of the affected technical departments. In order to exchange best practise in the implementation of the GDPR stipulations, VfL has established a network with other partners within the Group, as well as with the data protection officers of the Bundesliga, DFL and DFB. A portal for affected people was implemented at the end of the reporting period. A dynamic web form can be used here to request information on one's own

data, and to submit complaints. This enables these requests to be dealt with rapidly.

Group Data Protection checks the concepts and the effectiveness of VfL's measures, and publishes the findings in an internal annual report. This report is used to analyse deficiencies and to optimise the concepts further.

## No tolerance for match fixing

Doping and match fixing are a serious challenge world-wide for the integrity of competitive sport. VfL Wolfsburg takes wide-ranging precautions to prevent match fixing.

The relevant clauses are an integral part of all of the working contracts for the players in all the men's, women's and youth teams run by VfL Wolfsburg. These clauses observe the latest DFB stipulations regarding the ban on betting, the ban on match fixing, and associated information obligations, as well as the DFB anti-doping regulations, and the National Anti-Doping Code (NADC). The players accept these regulations when they sign their employment contracts. These contracts also stipulate that none of

the players are allowed to hold any shares in other football clubs.

VfL also supports its teams in running the mandatory training courses organised by the prevention officer on betting and match fixing, and the obligation to comply with the rules. The prevention officer also gives talks and carries out online tests on the subject of anti-doping in co-operation with the sports physiotherapists.

## SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN

The spectators and general public are increasingly demanding that services and products, including those from football, are produced under acceptable social and environmental conditions. As part of its integrated sustainability approach, VfL therefore sets a high priority on responsible purchasing.

In this context, for its merchandising and the kit worn by its players for example, VfL works together with a number of supply companies which frequently have strongly globalised value chains. This comes about because of the wide range of products on

offer, ranging from textiles to pins, key rings, cups and gift articles.

VfL therefore puts great emphasis on compliance with sustainability standards and integrity in the supply network. The Purchasing department is responsible for the sustainability of the supply chain, and the CSR team provides supporting advice. In addition to the suppliers, VfL also assesses co-operation activities with sponsors and other contacts according to sustainability criteria.

### New evaluation method for suppliers

Before awarding any contracts, VfL Purchasing always checks the sustainability conduct of its suppliers as part of the "sustainability ratings" launched by Volkswagen in July 2019: which takes into consideration aspects such as human rights risks, environmental protection, corruption, and in future, also the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

In the sustainability rating, the suppliers first submit their own assessment of their sustainability conduct. The details and documents supplied in this way are then cross-checked by a qualified third party, and any doubtful aspects are investigated further by carrying out additional checks on site. If any misconduct in terms of environment/social or corruption guidelines are verified, the affected companies are suspended from the tendering process.

### Products made of certified sustainable materials

The range of sustainable products offered by VfL is growing continuously: VfL Wolfsburg's range of products already includes fair trade-produced fan textiles, as well as certified textiles produced according to the high Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and the OEKO-TEX® standard. In addition, the range also includes bags made of recycled PET bottles, or sandwich boxes made from sugar cane. VfL presents the sustainable fan articles in its online shop under the slogan "Green at heart", and raises the awareness of its fans for sustainable merchandising in this way.

VfL's business relations with some companies are arranged on the basis of long-term framework agreements. These companies include the sports goods company Nike, from whom VfL has purchased a more



environmentally friendly collection of home and away kit for the men's and women's teams. The football shirts for the 2020/2021 season are made from recycled PET water bottles to help conserve resources.

Despite changing the material, the footballers still benefit from the beneficial product properties of the kit, such as improved air circulation. Another example is the co-operation with the online mail order company memo. A sports bag and a bag were developed jointly with this company, which are made from biodegradable organic cotton.

### SUSTAINABLE CO-OPERATION

VfL Wolfsburg works together with a range of different stakeholders depending on the topic and the target group. In this context, VfL is a member of the German Working Group For Environmentally-Aware Management (B.A.U.M.), and Nico Briskorn, the CSR manager, represents the company on the B.A.U.M. committee. In addition, VfL is also involved in the "Companies for the Region e.V." initiative. The club regularly co-operates with the Nature Protection Society (NABU), and maintains very close contacts with government organisations,

including Wolfsburg council, where Nico Briskorn is a member of the climate committee. The club has another co-operation agreement with Wolfsburg council for the joint promotion of youth activities in Wolfsburg (see page 64). VfL also works closely together with the Lower Saxony Ministry of Education, and numerous schools and kindergartens.

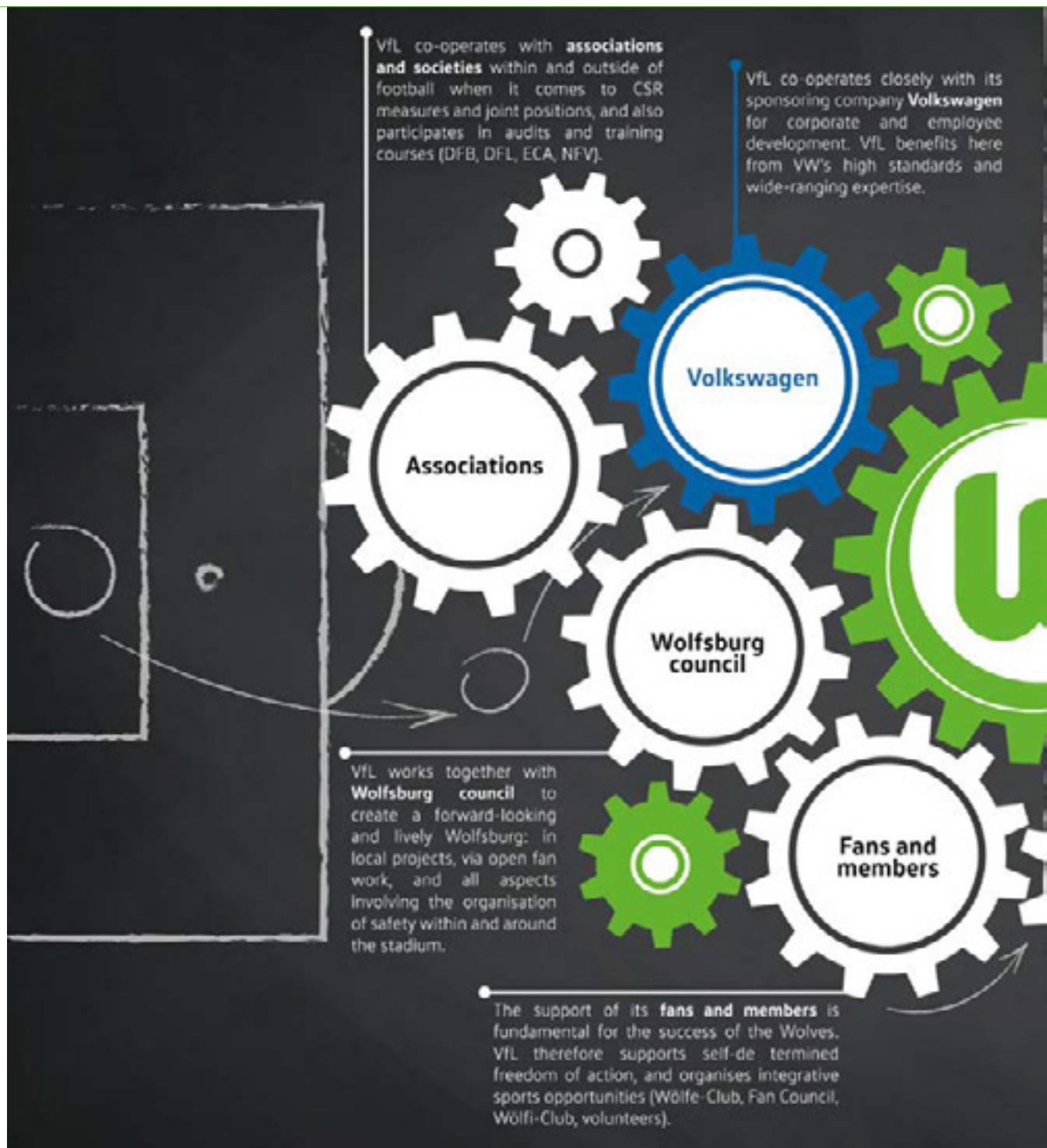
VfL is also a partner of a growing number of clubs and societies, and is involved in the Didacta association of the educational industry. And finally, the club also participates in national and international association activities on CSR topics, such as in the European Football for Development Network (EFDN), and in the CSR Task Force of the European Club Association, and represents the first and second Bundesliga in the "Responsibility" working group of the DFL foundation.

Moreover, VfL is also involved in a number of co-operation activities with businesses, including Trillux, where it works on environmentally-friendly LED lighting (see page 57). VfL also implements joint CSR projects with sponsors and suppliers, such as memo AG, or the Duden publishing house, with which it has developed teaching materials (see page 69). At a project level, VfL co-operates with other institutions, including various universities, and numerous schools, societies and kindergartens.



**The VfL Football School visited the Spanish "Club of Champions" partner Grupo Sesé, and provided attractive training opportunities for children.**

The most recent of these visits took place in October 2019, when trainers from the VfL youth teams visited the long-standing VfL partner Grupo Sesé. This time a total of 80 children from Sesé employees were coached on the training pitches of Real Saragossa – naturally completely clothed in the VfL training kit with football shirt, trousers and shin pads. The highlight of the visit was a special coaching session for disabled children by VfL Football School trainers. The kids also really enjoyed the accompanying programme with VfL professional footballer Ignacio Camacho.



### DISCUSSIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The sporting and economic success of VfL Wolfsburg can only be achieved in co-operation with its stakeholders. However, they sometimes have very different expectations of the football club. This diagram shows the mutual interactions.

The successful co-operation with the stakeholders, and the harmonisation of

their various interests, is a key part of VfL's business model. The dialogue with and between the stakeholders establishes an important understanding for the differing ambitions and expectations, serves to exchange know-how and understanding, and increases the bonds between everyone involved and the football club. Open and transparent dialogue has many benefits for VfL, including improving its understanding of which social, environmental and economic requirements are expected of it, what sustainability means precisely on the

pitch and the associated areas, and how joint progress can be made.

#### VfL Wolfsburg's dialogue initiatives

VfL Wolfsburg is involved in a great deal of dialogue at a regional and association level, and regularly sends out invitations to attend dialogue events focused on CSR. With the aim of looking outside its footballing box, and searching for ideas to energise its football operations, the club joined together with the Volkswagen



Group to invite people to attend a dialogue event on 5 November 2018 with the slogan "Football moves society". In addition to DFB president Reinhard Grindel, and Hiltrud Werner, a member of the Volkswagen AG executive board, around 60 more important players in football and society attended the event in Wolfsburg.

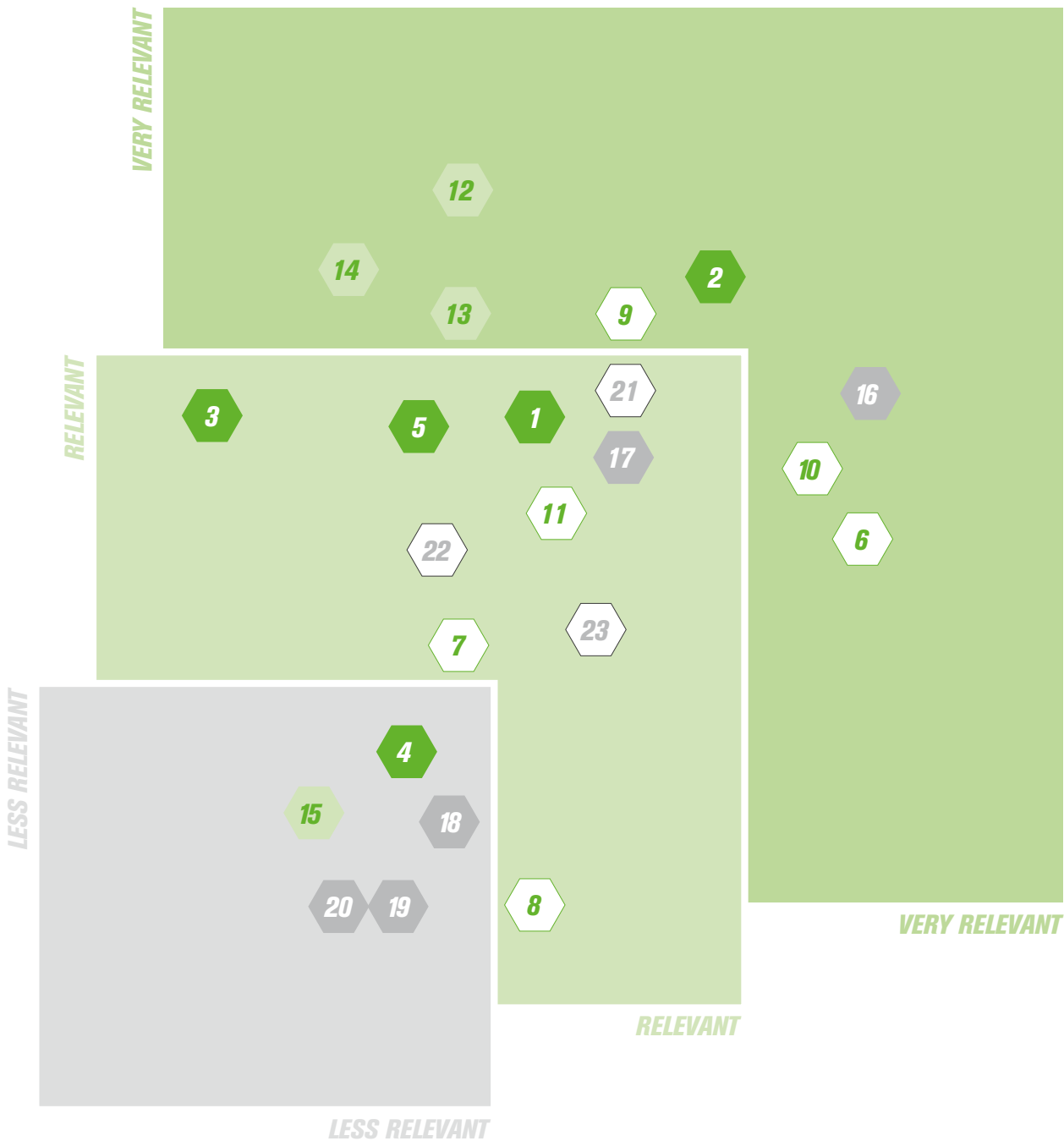
The opening speeches on the importance of social responsibility in football, were followed by two workshops.

The first focused on the important issue of "Measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of its input". The lively discussion between the participants generated the idea to develop a new concept for measuring the effectiveness of VFL's various commitments. The second topic was "Sustainable sponsoring". Volkswagen gained important ideas for the co-operation with the DFB as a result of this workshop. VFL harnessed the ideas generated by the participants to further develop its sustainable sponsoring

approach. Because of the positive internal and external feedback, all agreed to hold this form of dialogue at regular intervals. VfL Wolfsburg is absolutely unbeatable as a football club when it comes to the provision of dialogue events of this kind.

The next dialogue was scheduled for March 2020, but unfortunately had to be postponed until 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, it is very important for VfL to have sparring partners in the sector, and to exchange

RELEVANCE FOR EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



RELEVANCE FOR INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

ideas and experience with important contacts, and to be able to make mutual comparisons. This is its approach for fundamentally moving the whole sector forward.

**CONCENTRATING ON WHAT IS IMPORTANT**

It is only a small step from dialogue with stakeholders on which topics are

most important for VfL Wolfsburg's sustainability strategy and reporting, and their importance for the football club itself, as well as its stakeholders. To find this out, VfL carried out a materiality assessment to prepare for the current sustainability report. The process is based on the experience and the findings of the materiality assessment in 2016. Current developments in the sector and beyond were also analysed simultaneously.

VfL Wolfsburg has enhanced the materiality assessment by a document analysis for this report.

A first step involved an examination of whether and to what extent changes needed to be made to the main topics identified in the Sustainability Report 2016, and whether they needed to be strengthened. For instance, the topics covering education of the players and the



workforce were transferred to the "Training and further training" topic, so that they could be considered separately to the youth training work enjoyed by the footballers. This was followed by the identification and evaluation of the expectations of the external stakeholders, such as law makers, fans, media, competitors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and associations. VfL surveyed internal experts to assess the internal relevance of the topics and their influence on VfL. This feedback was assessed by VfL and used to make changes to the findings where required.

All of the results are shown in the materiality matrix. The horizontal axis shows the relevance of the topics for external stakeholders, whilst the vertical axis shows the internal relevance. The topics "Close to the goal", and therefore of particular relevance, are shown top right: "Diversity, anti-discrimination and antiracism", "Integrity and compliance", "Occupational health and safety", "Diversity and equal opportunities", "Resource efficiency", "Fair working conditions", "Climate-friendly operation" and "Climate-friendly mobility".

## MILESTONES

- ✓ Development of the new strategy 2020+ "We Drive Football" with integrity as the fundamental value
- ✓ Implementing a sustainable range of articles "Green at Heart" with products certified according to the Global Organic Textile Standards (GOTS)
- ✓ Organising a dialogue on the potential of football for influencing social topics

## OUTLOOK

VfL adopts a high level of responsibility for the integrated development of its young players, and has developed a comprehensive child protection concept for this purpose since summer 2020.





# EMPLOYEES

# EMPLOYEES: WORKING TOGETHER TO BRING VALUES ALIVE – FOOTBALL, YOU SHOW THE WAY

Football also lives from the people behind it. Their work deserves recognition, and their needs deserve to be respected. Fair play and mutual respect are therefore a key aspect of the working environment in the club, and in line with the shared values defined in its guidelines and standards. The management stands squarely behind the philosophy on which they are based. Values and standards also guide the reporting. Their objective: transparency, commitment and trust.



### THEY MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

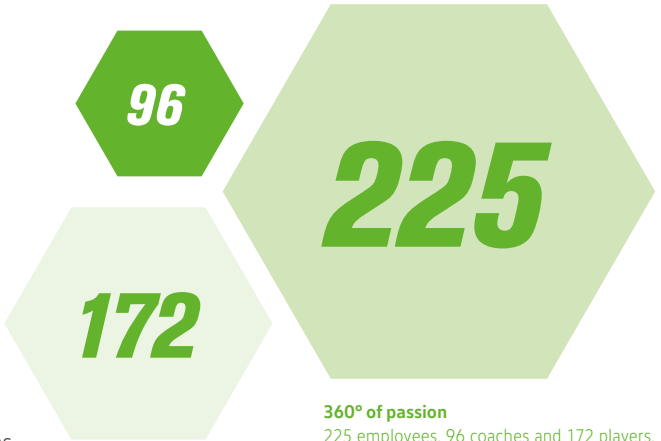
The players and management, as well as the commercial, sporting and medical experts at VfL Wolfsburg all work together to make top performances possible, and assure they are achieved. VfL provides optimum conditions to realise these ambitions: qualifications, job security and health are as equally important in its human resources work as fair working conditions, good opportunities and development possibilities, as well as a high level of respect for all individual personalities. The associated work and commitment ensure that there is a measurable improvement in the satisfaction of the employees, and that they can fully satisfy their roles as ambassadors for responsible football. VfL sees all that it has achieved so far as an inspiration to improve the sustainability performance of the employees in the office and the players even more.

VfL Wolfsburg's human resources structural data reveals a great deal about the success and the effectiveness of its human resources activities. It clearly demonstrates for instance that diversity is pursued with commitment, and that VfL also provides its employees with many part-time working offers, to enable them personally to find the correct balance between work and private needs.

Most of the personnel in the office are on permanent contracts because VfL is very keen on binding qualified employees to the company. The teams and the trainers, however, are largely on seasonal contracts as is typical in this sector. The figures also reveal that VfL has been promoting the employment of women in football for many years. This is not only clearly seen in the two women's teams, but also in the high ratio of women in the office. Another of VfL's priorities is the vocational further education of its players, as well as giving them the opportunity to establish a second career path. In accordance with this philosophy, VfL thus also allows them to work in a different capacity part-time away from their footballing activities.

### Responsibility for its employees is a fundamental undertaking

A comprehensive set of regulations is relevant for VfL's human resources management as



**360° of passion**  
225 employees, 96 coaches and 172 players, and their combined team spirit, underpin VfL Wolfsburg's success, and are also very well looked after themselves.

	Office employees	Trainer teams & staff	Players
Total	225	96	172
Of which temporary	21	70	172
Of which permanent	204	26	0
Of which male	145	87	148
Of which female	80	9	24
Of which full-time	170	77	82
Of which part-time	55	19	90

a company. These range from the code of conduct, to work regulations, and all the way to a large number of company-wide agreements, including the company-wide agreements for working conditions, for employees with specialist or management functions, and the agreement covering pay scales and training allowances.

The responsibility for VfL Wolfsburg's human resources work is in the hands of its own Human Resources department. This is supported by Volkswagen AG's Collective Bargaining division, the Volkswagen AG Works Council, as well as its Health department and Occupational Safety division.

To facilitate the co-operation between the employees in different departments, VfL Wolfsburg has used SAP Sports One since the 2018/2019 season – this is a professional software for the management of all teams. It provides access to a wide spectrum of relevant data, including data from training, scouting, as well as performance diagnostics. The VfL-Football.Academy, and the Contract Player department also use this software. It makes co-operation between the different trainers

and the supporting teams more efficient, and also enables the more customised, integrated management of all of the teams.

### **FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS**

Fair play is not only of enormous importance in football, but also in the way

the employees and the players at VfL are treated. Only those that feel they are being treated fairly, generate a good performance, have the courage to try something new, and always do the right thing for the right reason. This is why fair working conditions are one of VfL Wolfsburg's most important sustainability topics.

**MOOD  
BAROMETER  
RATIO:**

**75.2%**

VfL Wolfsburg has been measuring the **satisfaction of its workforce** since 2017 with a mood barometer adopted from the Volkswagen Group. The result of 69.1 % in the first survey was significantly improved upon in 2019. In the future as well, more and more employees should feel satisfied with VfL.



VfL works on a range of very different projects with interdisciplinary teams. As active project members, the employees can make their own personal contribution to VfL's success as a team – and in addition to their everyday duties.

# 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE

VfL Wolfsburg came in second in the **Bundesliga club ranking** in May 2019 carried out by the kununu employer evaluation portal.

## Solid corporate culture

VfL's corporate culture is specifically based on the principles of a family group, in short: the feeling that we belong together. In November 2019, the management committee dealt with the results of a study on the development of its corporate culture. This gave rise to an employee initiative looking more intensely at co-operation within VfL. It supports the specialist departments in the initiation and implementation of corporate culture-related projects. The results of the study were also taken into consideration when elaborating the new strategy 2020+ "We Drive Football" pursued by VfL. The VfL values: "Sustainably successful", "Passionately team-oriented" and "Holistically innovative" are key factors in the corporate culture, as well as in the configuration of the working conditions (see page 17).

## Discussion and participation

Football and sustainability require innovations. This is why the VfL employees are motivated to involve themselves specifically in the company's processes, and to drive innovations forward.

VfL established the "Ideas factory" project group in March 2019 with the intention of incorporating its employees in innovation processes, binding them to VfL, and putting into practise valuable ideas generated by the workforce. This project group developed formats to enable the suggestions for improvements from the workforce to be collected, evaluated, and implemented where possible. One of these ideas, which is already benefitting the workforce, is the "Culture café" dialogue format. This enables the employees during working hours to initiate meetings, pass on expertise, and to discuss

things amongst themselves. The dialogue is realised face-to-face as well as online.

## Fair wages and the harmonisation of family and work

The company-wide agreements on the implementation of pay categories and regulations covering bonuses, overtime, flexitime and pensions, were already introduced back in 2009 in co-operation with the Volkswagen Group Works Council. An increase was arranged in 2019 and 2020 for the employer-side contributions to the occupational pension scheme. In addition, an additional remuneration component was added which can be converted into six additional days holiday to look after children, or to care for relatives. The company-wide agreement also covers mobile working since 2017. This option was increasingly taken up by employees since spring 2020, especially those who had to look after their children themselves because of the lockdown of schools and kindergartens under Corona pandemic regulations.

## Attractive employer

VfL hired 33 new employees in the 2019/2020 season, of which four female and 29 male. Twelve employees left the club, of which three women and nine men. The fluctuation ratio was 5.30 per cent. Of the new employees, 20 were under 40, and 13 were over 40. The twelve employees who left the club were divided 50:50 into under and over 40-year-olds.

## TRAINING AND FURTHER TRAINING

Professional players and youth players also have to be able to establish a career outside of football. This is important because not every young talented footballer succeeds in becoming a professional, not to mention being able to pursue a professional career for many years. The employees in the VfL office can also expect a job with attractive and long-term career prospects. VfL Wolfsburg therefore makes it possible for its employees and players to undergo training and further training internally as well as at outside training and educational facilities.

VfL Wolfsburg introduced a new human resources development concept in the 2018/2019 season which is specifically based on the VfL core competences. The concept is managed by the Human Resources department and the relevant managers. Management guidelines are also introduced to standardised the perception of modern management.

With its annual mood barometer, VfL also surveys its workforce to find out what they think about their development possibilities, with the aim of evaluating its own human resources work. The results of these findings led to the introduction of measures to raise



After running for five years, the VfL Campus now boasts over **200 alumni**.

the awareness of the management board and the line managers for more transparent communications and greater openness with respect to the employees. Other important aspects were the break-down of silo thinking and the promotion of an error culture.

#### Higher education in the football business: VfL Campus

An important pillar in VfL Wolfsburg's educational offers is the VfL Campus. In this regard, VfL has established a publicly accessible sport management course in co-operation with SPORTBUSINESS CAMPUS GmbH. Beginning in the winter semester 2015/2016, this provided employees and players from a Bundesliga club with university further education for the first time. In addition to the state-recognised degree: "Bachelor in

management focusing on sports business", the Campus also provides further training courses in football management and eSports management for participants without a university entrance qualification. And as a football club, VfL can provide its students here with a very special additional factor: a direct insight into the professional football business.

After five years of operation, the VfL Campus can now count over 200 alumni. The students also include some well-known faces: two players from the professional women's team are currently making use of the courses available at the VfL Campus: Lara Dickenmann has been registered at the VfL Campus since the 2016/2017 semester, and takes part in a number of workshops. Pia Wolter has started a bachelors degree course at the VfL Campus.

#### Further education for qualified staff and managers

VfL also works closely together with the Volkswagen Group when it comes to further education. In this context, two employees completed a basic management qualification course at VW during the 2019/2020 season. This course begins with basic training, contains a programme for practical implementation, and courses in team management. It ends with the elaboration of a personal management profile. Students who successfully complete the course receive a management licence.

In addition, two employees from the CSR department completed the certified CSR management course of the IHK academy in Nuremberg in 2019/2020. This further education was co-financed by the Bundesliga Foundation.



Players in the professional and youth teams also make use of the offers provided by the VfL Campus. Midfielder Pia Wolter is studying for a bachelor's degree.



The youth teams are intensively supervised and mentored in the VfL-Football.Academy. The activities include regular training courses and workshops.



VfL Wolfsburg supports the Volkswagen Group in the promotion of female management trainees. Thanks to the unique exchange of experience with successful (ex) women's football players in October 2019 in the AOK Stadium, female management trainees gained valuable insights into their career in an environment traditionally dominated by men. The VfL women also talked about their experience with various management styles, and differences and shared aspects between sport and business.

### **YOUTH TRAINING: FOOTBALL TRAINING IN A HARMONISED SYSTEM**

As a modern football club, VfL Wolfsburg's youth training work deliberately not only focuses on footballing skills, but also on developing the personalities of its players, and enhancing their self-esteem.

VfL Wolfsburg's youth training centre started its work back in 2007. The structure provided the foundations in 2016 for VfL to merge its youth training activities under the

umbrella of the VfL-Football.Academy. This move enabled it to improve its assessment and hiring of highly talented sports men and women, and to guarantee more differentiated and individual promotion of young talent for the development of its professional squad. In addition to the VfL Academy, VfL has also entered a co-operation with the grammar school stream of a local comprehensive school.

For the development of a standardised training and play concept starting from the basics and grading through the development, competitive and final training phases, VfL

Wolfsburg has defined mandatory training characteristics for the VfL-Football.Academy which ensure that the development of talented footballers complies with the requirements of effective training: systematic, age-conform, no undue stress, in keeping with requirements, and at the appropriate competitive-level. The talented young footballers are looked after in an integrated approach as they pursue their objectives, and also attend school or undergo vocational training in parallel to training and matches in each of the junior teams.

VfL has revised the management structure of the VfL-Football.Academy during the

reporting period and installed a strong management team in the form of the sporting manager Pablo Thiam and the administrative manager Francisco Coppi. Sebastian Pedé, as the pedagogical manager of the training centre, has also taken on the role of the Academy prevention officer. At the same time, a new concept in the form of the "Life. Values" concept was introduced that focuses more strongly on the development of the players' personalities and getting across essential values: community, communication, esteem, creativity and attentiveness. Former world champion Conny Pohlers has been given overall responsibility for the new concept. She has also responsibility for child protection, alongside Roland Wolff from the administrative side.

In addition, a code of conduct, including expectations and a training philosophy, was developed for the youth training centre. The code of conduct is displayed for all to see in the corridors and changing rooms, and was

also handed out in some cases to the teams. On top of this, the values are brought alive by the conduct of the trainers.

The effectiveness of the work carried out at the youth training centre is also assessed on the basis of performance diagnostic data.

To ensure that young footballers are also equipped for life outside of professional football, VfL also works in close co-operation with schools and parents. This offer is also

supplemented by private tutoring activities provided by VfL's educational partner studyhelp.

The VfL-Football.Academy is very popular with the young players. VfL therefore plans to expand its capacities. During the reporting period, we had 37 boarding school places and twelve other flat-share rooms available. This number is scheduled to increase to 23 in the 2020/21 season. 17 of the youth players underwent vocational

## "ASSERTING ONESELF IN DAY-TO-DAY LIFE IS ALSO PART OF FOOTBALL"

Pablo Thiam, sports manager of the VfL-Football.Academy.

### "WHAT DO YOU WANT?"

**Why is it so important for the VfL-Football.Academy to also focus on other aspects with its "Life.Values" concept, in addition to the daily football training?**

**Coppi:** The top priority for everyone here is absolutely clear: being a footballer. But for us, certain values are also just as important as football. We are responsible for every single boy who comes to us, and we want to stand at their side as they progress in their own individual paths.

**Thiam:** We cannot and have no intention of replacing a real family – that would be illusory. However, there are still topics which we would like to teach the boys more about, such as nutrition or regeneration.

**What have you done to achieve this?**

**Coppi:** In the case of the U15, we have set up a nutrition workshop with a nutrition consultant: players were divided up into five groups. One group decides what to cook, the next goes shopping with a 50-Euro budget, a third sets the table, the fourth does the cooking, and the fifth has to clear the table and tidy up. In this way, the boys were first taught what it means to prepare a meal and everything else involved.

**Thiam:** If every player recalls at some time that they were able to prepare a meal for 30 people with 50 Euros, then they know: I could even feed myself on 50 Euros a month if necessary. It is also possible that they learn to cook a simple healthy meal at home three or four times, rather than going out to eat for 15 Euros.

**In addition to nutrition, the "Life.Values" concept also defines additional focus topics: sleep, regeneration, finances and social media. Finances are a difficult topic for**

**young people. What do you undertake here?**

**Coppi:** Many of them might think that the bank only consists of an ATM. During our discussions, we have found out for instance, that hardly any of them know what is contained in their job contract, because they have just not bothered to read it.

**Thiam:** The crucial point is the signal and the consequences for learning: for us as well – I can now guarantee that every player who signs a contract with us has then sat down at the table here and deliberately read through the contract themselves.

**So the idea is to promote independence?**

**Thiam:** Our employees are instructed to take the players by the hand and provide them with support. This is the only way the players find out what it means to open a bank account or to register with the authorities.

**Is that why the Academy players also visit other sectors every now and again?**

**Coppi:** Precisely. A good example is Michele Rizzi who spent time shadowing in the Event division of VfL Wolfsburg. It is important to get an insight every now and again into the normal world of work.

**So the players quickly learned that the workshops are of assistance, and in their own interests?**

**Thiam:** Self-motivation today is absolutely essential and indispensable – in sports more so than other places. And in life – whatever job you do – one should never forget that if you want to achieve something, no-one needs to wake you up before you get into the office. The boys have to know themselves what benefits and helps them. We have therefore begun right from the start to ask them: "What do you want?"



VfL chef Marvin Mende obviously enjoys preparing food suitable for professional sportsmen and women, precisely tailored to the needs of training and matches.

training during the reporting period. One of them is doing an apprenticeship at VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH, while the rest do their apprenticeships outside of VfL. One completed his apprenticeship during the reporting period.

In addition to the trainer teams and other staff at the VfL-Football.Academy, the young players are also looked after by seven

teachers and two sports psychologists, who in addition to supporting the talented youngsters with their schooling, are also available to help them with any psychological or social problems. When necessary, the supervisors and mental coaches can suggest alternative plans for their lives. The prevention officer Sebastian Pede also carries out mandatory training courses on the topic of competition/

match fixing, antiracism and anti-doping, in co-operation with sports physiotherapists.

The services provided by the VfL-Football.Academy were tested and certified in 2016 by the German Society for the Certification of Management Systems (DQS) on behalf of DFL and DFB. VfL gained an outstanding overall evaluation. The testing committee nevertheless still found ways of making further improvements: such as in the fire protection system, and checking the certificates of good conduct. At the recertification in 2020, these weak points had already been dealt with, but room for improvement in other areas were pointed out, and VfL is currently working on rectifying these aspects.

#### Responsibility beyond football

VfL supports its young footballers beyond the VfL Campus and the VfL-Football.Academy to establish a second livelihood. Up to five young players are given the opportunity every year

***“WHAT COUNTS HERE:  
CHARTING THE RIGHT COURSE  
EARLY ON FOR FAIR AND  
RESPECTFUL CO-EXISTENCE ON  
AND OFF THE PITCH.”***

Sebastian Pede, prevention officer of the VfL-Football.Academy

of taking up training or an apprenticeship in addition to their sporting activities, or to start a sandwich course – with Volkswagen Group services. The range of training courses tailored to the needs of the footballers was taken up by nine players during the reporting period. Active and former professional players also find jobs in the VfL office, the VfL Football School or in partner organisations.

### Flagship: women's football

VfL has been promoting women's football for many years. This commitment has borne fruit: the women's football team won the championship again in summer 2020, as well as the DFB cup. VfL has been involved in women's football for a long time, and has now implemented additional organisational

and sporting measures for promoting girls' football, and established a new full-time position for the administration of the young female players. Moreover, the programme for promoting women's football in the 2020/2021 season has been revised with the addition of new guidelines. In addition, professional players act as mentors for the kids teams.

### DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

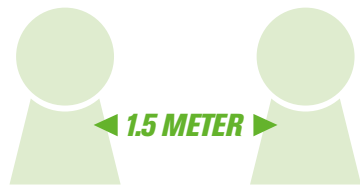
Professional football repeatedly demonstrates that place of origin, religion or skin colour are utterly irrelevant for producing a good team performance, and that more can be achieved when different people work together. This experience applies to all walks of life, not just sport. VfL Wolfsburg therefore deliberately promotes the diversity of its teams and its employees. VfL has defined the rules for handling diversity and equal opportunities responsibly in its code of conduct (see page 22).

**40-50**

The evaluation training session was very popular and attracted around **40 to 50 participants**.



Ex-U17 coach Holger Ringe during a training session.



You look better from a **distance!**

The performance profiles for the women's and girls' age groups were revised to reflect the age structure of the youth teams accordingly: the U23 was restructured into the U20 in the reporting period. In addition, the U11 was disbanded from 2020/2021, whilst one talent team was set up for the 9 to 13 age group. Another new feature is a six-monthly (instead of a yearly) evaluation training

event of the talent teams which is publicly announced. The evaluation training proved very popular and attracted around 40 to 50 participants. The successes already achieved by this work with the youth players are already very impressive: during the reporting period, three young players from our own development squad were promoted to the first Bundesliga squad.

### Diversity and equal opportunities in the workforce

The VfL Wolfsburg code of conduct demands that all of the football club's employees observe the principles of equal opportunities and equality, and raise the awareness of the people in their orbit to behave in a similar fashion.

Amongst other things, an important role is played here by the co-operation between VfL and the Fan Project of Wolfsburg council. This helps the club raise the awareness of its fans for this topic, and to cement a clear positive attitude to this topic amongst the workforce. Back-up here is provided by a workshop carried out for VfL employees at the shared Diversity Weeks in March 2019 on the subject: "DiverseThinking! – Sexism and homophobia in football". The aim was to take a fresh look at the topic for internal communications and raising awareness, and to plan potential measures.



The "DiverseThinking! – Sexism and homophobia in football" workshop led to the establishment of an internal diversity working group.



The VfL teams are looked after intensely, and benefit from the integrated health management approach.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health and safety of the workforce as well as the players is essential for the sporting and economic success of VfL Wolfsburg. Physical as well as mental problems can arise here, and they frequently also have a mutual influence on each other. VfL therefore takes into consideration both factors in an integrated approach within its occupational health and safety management.

The dominant health issue for the protection of employees, players and fans since spring 2020 has been the Sars-Cov-2 virus. VfL developed a comprehensive hygiene concept and implemented strict hygiene measures so that – despite the Corona pandemic – it was able to continue to run its office and the sporting facilities, not to mention the spectatorless matches. A working group was set up to control these measures, manage the implementation, and to issue sanctions in response to violations. The VfL intranet and the pin boards in the office inform the workforce on the risks and the protection measures, forbidden behaviour and special regulations.

Special Corona concepts affect the sporting side of the business. The contacts for the players are the team doctor and the hygiene officer: Dr. med. Günter Pfeiler and Heiko Wehe respectively.

### Occupational health and safety in sports

Competitive sports are always affected by a higher risk of injuries. They can therefore not be avoided completely. This makes intense medical supervision indispensable. VfL set up the VfL.Med department for this purpose in 2017. It bundles all of the medical-therapeutic disciplines for the professional players and the youth teams in the Academy. In addition to the provision of complete medical services for all

of the VfL teams, and all of the administrative and insurance aspects, it also includes all rehabilitation and therapy measures, as well as performance diagnostics, prevention and nutrition. And to ensure the permanent availability of its players, VfL also provides the teams with access to consultant doctors and physiotherapists.

In addition to chiropractic treatments for muscle and skeletal problems, examinations by internists and orthopaedic surgeons, as well as individual nutritional consultations are offered every year.

Moreover, a sports psychology department, now staffed by two sports psychologists,

**“BALANCED AND HEALTHY  
FOOD IS IMPORTANT FOR  
STRONG AND TALENTED  
YOUNG FOOTBALLERS.”**

Marcus Bars, Academy chef.

***“NO ONE IS LESS OR  
MORE IMPORTANT,  
WE ARE ALL EQUAL.”***

Alexandra Popp, captain and diversity ambassador of the VfL women's team.



has been founded in the meantime under the management of VfL.Med. This network also includes private psychotherapy practises. There were also events on various topics during the reporting period including about stress disorders. A mental coach is also available for the youth players.

VfL vehemently condemns any form of doping. To inform its players about the risks and sanctions associated with doping, VfL and the team doctor hold an educational meeting on the subject of doping once a year.

#### Healthy nutrition – staying competitive

The VfL-Football.Academy has its own chef to ensure that the young players receive the healthy meals required by people playing a competitive sport, and to ensure that their nutrition is always precisely tailored to the training and competitive matches. VfL is only too aware that a balanced and healthy diet is not only important for the health of the players, but can also improve their performance.

#### Occupational health & safety for employees

VfL's occupational health & safety committee is responsible for monitoring and promoting occupational health and safety within the company. This work is based on the occupational health & safety regulations. The occupational safety committee meets four times a year, and other issues are additionally pursued by a fortnightly meeting with the occupational safety officer.

Ergonomic office furniture of various kinds is procured in line with the occupational medicine prescriptions from the company doctor. The intranet is used to raise the awareness of the workforce for their own responsibility in handling health risks. The intranet also provides information on various occupational health & safety issues. A new risk assessment, including a risk evaluation, was carried out in summer 2020. The occupational health & safety committee used the results of this evaluation to implement counter-measures to minimise or remove any risks which were revealed. For instance, personal

protective equipment (PPE) was procured for the ground staff and facility management employees. The annual on-site inspection of the premises was undertaken to control the effectiveness of the measures. Thanks to these comprehensive arrangements, there were only four occupational accidents in the administrative part of the company in 2019.

In the sense of its integrated health concept, VfL wishes that its managers prevent the occurrence of mental illness amongst their employees, recognise potential symptoms early on, and are thus able to respond in an appropriate empathetic way. To this end, VfL implemented a management workshop in 2019 on "Risk assessment of mental stress and job-specific employee schooling".

All VfL employees are given the opportunity to undertake a free, comprehensive, strictly confidential health check-up during working hours, as provided by the VW Group. In addition, VfL's occupational health & safety committee, working together with the VW Health department, organises a health day,



## MILESTONES

- ✓ Establishing a sports-psychology department within VfL.Med
- ✓ Carrying out a workshop for VfL employees on "Sexism and homophobia in football"
- ✓ Implementing the "Life.Values" concept enhance the personality development of VfL youth players

including flu vaccinations, annually during the break in Bundesliga matches when international matches are played. In addition, free yoga courses have been offered since February 2020 by a yoga teacher who also works for the VfL Academy.

VfL Wolfsburg has been an authorised location for the training and further training of first-aiders since autumn 2018, and thus provides training and further training in first aid for its office staff, paramedics, and the stewards. An appropriate e-learning module has also been implemented as an alternative to the annual fire protection instruction course given to employees.

### ROLE MODEL

The VfL Wolfsburg players are permanently in the public eye. This makes them role models for fans, the general public and society. This also means they have a strong responsibility to act appropriately. They are also given an opportunity to use their prominence for the benefit of socially

important topics such as diversity or climate protection. Three players have chosen to take up this role, and agreed voluntarily to act as diversity ambassadors to speak out internally and externally on this subject.

The other side of the coin is that when players behave inappropriately, they can significantly damage not only themselves, but also the team and the club. To avoid this, a code of conduct was developed for the youth training centre in which VfL clearly stipulates the expectations it has of its players and its training philosophy.

Moreover, posters get across the club's values to the professional teams and the U23 team. In addition, regular workshops on how to handle social media responsibly, and media training courses are regularly held for youth players and adults. These workshops get across basic codes of conduct for their own social media channels, and include exercises to practise this behaviour. Workshop topics include protecting the club's interests, anti-cyber-mobbing, anti-racism, and the prevention of other forms of inappropriate behaviour.

## OUTLOOK

The "Ideas Factory" project group elaborated a number of recommendations for action with the aim of developing the corporate culture, and which are to be implemented in dialogue with the responsible technical departments.





# ENVIRONMENT: PROTECTING THE CLIMATE – FOOTBALL, YOU SHOW THE WAY

Training facilities and stadiums have to be heated and illuminated. Fans and teams travel by plane, rail or by car or bus to the venues. The administrative departments and IT consume energy. All of this has a negative impact on the environment and the climate. VfL's priority is therefore: avoid, reduce, compensate, and provide incentives for everyone to take part. To ensure this works, VfL has set itself ambitious targets, and not only measures its progress in achieving these targets, but also makes the data transparent.



## GREEN OUT OF CONVICTION

A successful football business is associated with major negative impacts on the climate and the environment. VfL Wolfsburg is committed to taking action to turn this situation around. In addition, the conditions for the football business have changed with the agreements reached by UN member states at the Paris Climate Summit: the international community has set itself the target of keeping global warming significantly below 2 degrees by 2030, and ideally to prevent it from going higher than 1.5 degrees. Many countries, including Germany, have adopted their own climate protection packages to achieve this target, and demand that industry support it in implementing these measures.

By signing the "Sports for Climate Action" declaration, VfL Wolfsburg was the first European football club in the top leagues to get on board in December 2019, and thus commit itself to playing its part. The club therefore implemented significant measures to successfully move towards a climate-neutral football experience, and has defined climate protection as an important part of its social and environmental commitment. Its aim is to implement effective measures to reduce



Reusable mugs are used in the Volkswagen Arena and the AOK stadium.



## **“FOOTBALL HAS ENORMOUS POWER TO INSPIRE THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY”**

Interview with Lindita Xhaferi-Salihi, head of “Sports for Climate Action” at the United Nations

### **What responsibilities do you ascribe to football associations in terms of climate protection?**

**Xhaferi-Salihi:** Football is such a beautiful game and close to heart for so many of us. Very few things in the world have such a big, global and socially diverse community as those playing and watching football. As such, it has a remarkable potential to drive change by addressing its climate impact and advocating for climate action towards athletes and fans. Professional associations will have a larger footprint, more resources and are in a better position to lead the way for a sustainable way of running football. They can pass on lessons learned to the upcoming generation and empower them with tools and knowledge for the football of the future. First, there needs to be a genuine commitment that the organisation will take a serious and a holistic approach to addressing its climate impact. That it will carefully plan how they build, run and maintain stadiums and focus on areas such as energy, water, transport, food, services & products and waste to identify ways to be increasingly more efficient and sustainable.

**The main target groups of football associations are fans and spectators. Their travel activity is the cause of a large part of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions attributed to it. How can spectators be persuaded to change their mobility behaviour? How can VfL Wolfsburg contribute to this?**

**Xhaferi-Salihi:** Transport is a crucial element in the fight against climate change. Sports can be catalysis of change for this sector by

increasing the demand for low carbon transport, by encouraging spectators to take low-emission travel choices such as bikes, electric vehicles or use of public transport. For example, Kombiticket is an interesting offer in this regard but for international events there is also a lot of value in exploring longer term strategies such as how to reduce long-distance air travel and incentivize more of local and regional spectators. VfL Wolfsburg could for example consider campaigns to educate spectators in using sustainable transport but also connect with key stakeholders involved in football to work collectively and introduce approaches on both local and national level so that low carbon transport becomes a norm and all football clubs take a consistent and universal approach for travel to matches. Finally, after reduction measures, one can compensate unavoidable emissions generated by travel through credible offsetting schemes.

### **Where do you see football in ten years? Can there be climate neutral match days?**

**Xhaferi-Salihi:** Unfortunately, never has there been a greater disconnect between the need for action and reality. Football can lead the way, create a legacy and empower everyone to demand more from governments and others. In ten years, if we are to keep the planet safe, I hope football will be mature in delivering climate neutral matches and Cups and working with sponsors and service providers who have also committed to transforming to net zero. In fact, I see spectators helping their favorite teams and clubs succeed in their climate neutral journey. The phrase “you can change the world” has been around for many generations, but never has there been a generation that can make it come true like this one. For me and for many others, football can change the world.



## TARGET CONFLICT DIFFUSED

The DFL awarded VfL the "Pitch of the Year" award in June 2019 for the excellent quality of the pitch in the Volkswagen Arena. Not included in the evaluation by the jury, consisting of the members of the German Lawn Society, was the associated resource consumption – despite the fact that large volumes of water and other natural resources are consumed, especially on a grass pitch used throughout the year. To mitigate this consumption, VfL therefore uses alternative and resource-saving sources, such as using residual heat from the building heating system to heat the pitch. Another example is watering its pitches with water from the nearby canal, which therefore saves using valuable tap water.

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, take responsibility for its own environmental impacts, and be a strong voice in promoting the green transformation of the football business.

New aspects of this approach are the strategic mainstreaming, and orientation to science-based targets. The course has been clear though for many years: VfL joined the Eco Profit programme ten years ago, and has been actively involved ever since in managing its environmental impacts accordingly. VfL has made a name for itself ever since on the strength of its systematic approach to environmental sustainability in the European football business.

The areas relevant for VfL in terms of environmental protection are not only its own facilities, including its stadiums, training centres and office buildings, but also the travel undertaken by the teams,

employees and fans. As a first division club, VfL Wolfsburg can also have an influence in all of the areas it touches. It has considerable charisma, and can act as a role model to raise the awareness of people for environmental protection. And because it can do it, it also wants to do it: VfL has therefore established the environment as one of its key commitments, and configured its contributions accordingly.

### Environmental protection strongly rooted

VfL's environmental activities are co-ordinated by its own environmental team. Together with the employees at the head office, it examines all of the different divisions to determine their potential for climate and environmental protection. The environmental team has the following members: Maik Rummel (technical manager of the Volkswagen Arena), Nico Briskorn (head of Corporate Social Responsibility) and Anja Melo (Environment Corporate Social Responsibility officer). In addition, all of VfL's employees, service providers and partners are told to use as few resources and as little energy as possible during their daily business activities. They are also motivated to avoid and separate waste, and

to arrange their mobility on a sustainable basis. The framework for these actions is defined in the environmental guidelines which are made public and obligatory for all employees. Of fundamental importance for the work of the environment team is also the corporate directive "Environment-Compliance-Management-System" which contains obligatory stipulations for VfL's environmental policies, with the overall aim of identifying and controlling environmental risks and opportunities. VfL will be arranging special training courses with the aim of getting across to the workforce the necessary understanding, support and qualifications needed to comply with the new stipulations.

VfL's procurement is also rooted in environmental protection: for instance, from the 2020/2021 season onwards, the tender for catering in the stadiums will contain stipulations that the tenderers observe sustainability criteria. This means that the catering services which are offered must also now satisfy specifications covering aspects such as waste management and efficient energy consumption.

#### **Sporting commitment to climate protection**

By signing the "Sports for Climate Action" climate protection agreement of the United Nations, VfL Wolfsburg again highlights the pioneering role it plays in environmental and climate protection. This agreement contains a clear commitment to the systematic reduction of the CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions of its sports operations, as well as raising the awareness of its target groups. Top professional football in particular, as a source of inspiration for dedication and involvement, plays an important part in the development of society, and therefore bears a special level of responsibility. The joint commitment to "Sports for Climate Action" is therefore also an important signal for the re-orientation of the sport at an international level.

In a first phase, the participating organisations set up four working groups in 2019 on: "Systematic efforts", "Reducing impacts", "Sustainable consumption", and "Education and stakeholders". VfL participates in the "Reducing impacts" working group. At the first meeting at a working group level, a survey was undertaken to determine the needs of the

members. The work will take place digitally until further notice. This was enabled by the provision of a software solution to all of the participants containing all of the relevant information and documents.

#### **RESOURCE EFFICIENCY**

Green keeping, pitch heating, floodlights and catering. Large amounts of water and energy are consumed running the training and match facilities, and operating match days. In addition, a large amount of waste is also generated on match days in particular, and in the shop. And the consumption of resources in the club's offices also plays an increasingly important role.

VfL collects detailed consumption data and uses digital solutions to centrally control efficiency measures, and to improve its results. Data analysis and the test results from regular audits – for instance by the DEKRA testing company – are used to identify and use the potential for making savings. A good example is the use of residual heat from the heating of buildings

**Global Climate Action**  
United Nations Climate Change



Per match day generated by the spectators 2019/2020:  
**approx. 4.9 t residual waste**  
**approx. 1.53 t paper**

for the pitch heating system. Significant improvements in efficiency were also achieved by digitising the office work.

#### State of the art: Stadium and shop waste management

The use of resource-saving reusable mugs in football has been the subject of a controversial debate for a long time. The mugs must not be so hard that they can be used as projectiles, and cause serious injuries. However, they also have to be tough enough to be properly cleaned, and used many times over. Ever since the first home match in the 2019/2020 season, VfL has used a new drinks

solution in the Volkswagen Arena and the AOK Stadium, which not only satisfies these conditions, but also reduces the energy and material consumption, and cuts the amount of waste. The reusable mugs satisfy high hygiene standards thanks to an industrial dishwashing machine and professional drying. Numerous locations are provided so that the mugs can be collected. Spectators are informed at these locations that they can donate their 2 Euro deposit to local charities.

The fan shop stopped using plastic bags in 2015, when it replaced them with the Tütte. These are made out of 100 per cent recycling paper in Germany in a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral process, and can therefore be completely composted.

When the VfL online shop was relaunched in June 2019, it also included resource efficiency improvements. The state-of-the-art electronic registration and purchasing processes save the customers time, and completely dispense with any paper printouts.

## RE-USE PLUS A GOOD CAUSE: TWO BIRDS WITH ONE MUG

Numerous spectators threw their used drinking mugs into special containers in the VfL stadiums in the 2019/2020 season, and therefore waived the deposit they had paid on the mug. They did this to support a good cause: by May 2020, this generated Euro 8,400. This money is donated to the House on Bernstein lake, a convalescence centre for families with children suffering from cancer, which is located to the north of Wolfsburg. The centre operators plan to use the money to equip an adventure and fitness room. This room is to be inaugurated in early 2021 to help the small patients and their families get fit again. Some of the money will also be used there to organise the annual "Maximilian Arnold Wölfe Camp", which takes place every year (see page 72).

#### Continuous reduction: water and wastewater

VfL prioritises the protection of drinking water. It can make an important contribution here by converting to



automatic systems in its stadiums. The VIP section has had WCs with automatic flushing systems since summer 2018, as well as being equipped with sink taps controlled by sensors. The public area was also equipped with smart sink taps in summer 2019. These measures save around 800 cubic metres of drinking water a year.

### Smart processes and systems help reduce consumption

Modern information and communications technologies are behind the sustainable digitisation of business processes, and thus help reduce the consumption of energy and resources in many divisions: including VfL Wolfsburg's offices. For instance, payroll accounting has only been available in digital form via the internal VfL portal since 1 January 2020. Printed slips are only handed out to people with no VfL-IT infrastructure, and interns.

With the support of the "Initiative Pro Recycling Paper" of the German Ministry of the Environment, NABU and the Club of Rome Germany, VfL publicly commits to the continuing reduction of its material consumption. The initiative was launched to reduce the amount of resources used by companies, and set up campaigns including the "CEOs demonstrate their commitment", in which managing director Michael Meeske is represented with his own commitment to the use of recycling paper. Together with the German Ministry of the Environment, the initiative has now honoured more than 100 companies for the first time, including VfL Wolfsburg, with the Blue Angel label for the use

of recycling paper.

The current print tender stipulates that the stadium magazine and writing paper should exclusively use recycling paper with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) certificate. Autograph cards have to have an FSC® mix certification as a minimum. The fan article catalogue is now also only made available in digital form to save resources.

In addition, VfL is analysing the need for using plastic packaging, and is currently assessing the use of alternative packaging materials. In this context, the VfL online shop has replaced plastic filling material with paper pads made out of 100 per cent recycling paper for its mail-order merchandising articles since



## PAPER CONSUMPTION

Printing and photocopying paper in A4 format and a grammage of 80 g/m<sup>2</sup> 2019/2020: **ca. 442,960 sheets**

## WATER CONSUMPTION

total Volkswagen Arena, AOK Stadium, fan house, VfL-Football.Academy and the VfL Centre 2019/2020: **102,760 m<sup>3</sup>**  
of which **grey water for irrigation** from the canal 2019/2020: **11,902 m<sup>3</sup>**  
**Wastewater volume** 2019/2020: **41,196 m<sup>3</sup>**

February 2020. This was made possible by investing in an innovative paper pad system.

**CLIMATE RESPONSIBILITY IN OPERATIONS AND MOBILITY**

VfL Wolfsburg has measured its greenhouse gas emissions every two years for the last ten years, and has set itself ambitious targets for reducing these emissions, as well as continually further developing these measures.

As part of its climate strategy, VfL Wolfsburg has begun to update its climate targets with the help of external experts, and to elaborate the net-zero emissions target. This task primarily involves defining an ambitious but also realistic reduction roadmap, with annual milestones and associated programmes. Top issues already identified for achieving the target include mobility, and the consumption of fuel used for heating.

In 2020, VfL Wolfsburg worked together with external experts to completely revise its climate targets, and develop a reduction roadmap for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions based on scientifically-based targets. The reduction roadmap is based on the methods issued by the Science Based Targets Initiative, and defines a set of concrete steps to be implemented to dramatically decrease the greenhouse gases emitted by the club. VfL wishes

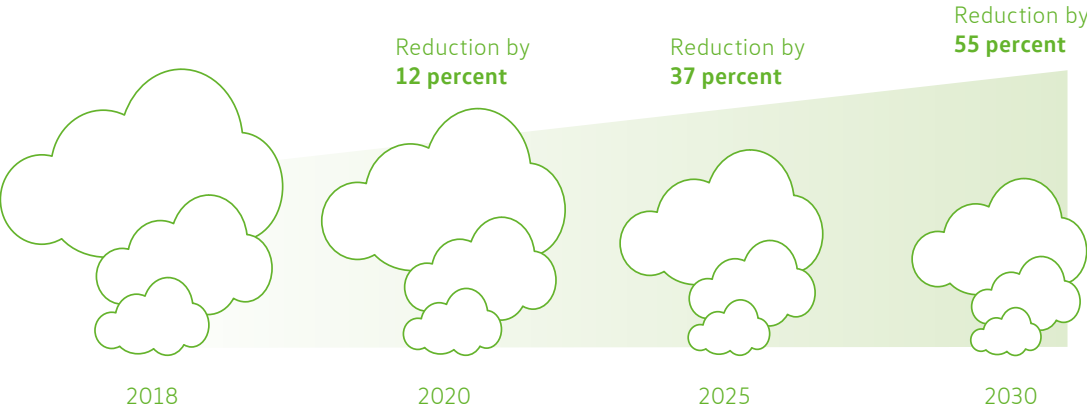
to comply with the stipulations of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, and therefore help restrict global warming to 1.5 degrees.

Specifically, VfL plans to reduce its emissions to net-zero by 2025. Net-zero means: reducing or using compensation measures for all of the greenhouse gas emissions generated directly or indirectly by VfL, and to thus achieve a net-zero climate balance. To reach this target, VfL Wolfsburg will reduce its total emissions (scope 1 to scope 3) by 6.45 per cent annually. This equates to a reduction of 55.07 per cent by 2030 compared to the 2017/2018 reference year.

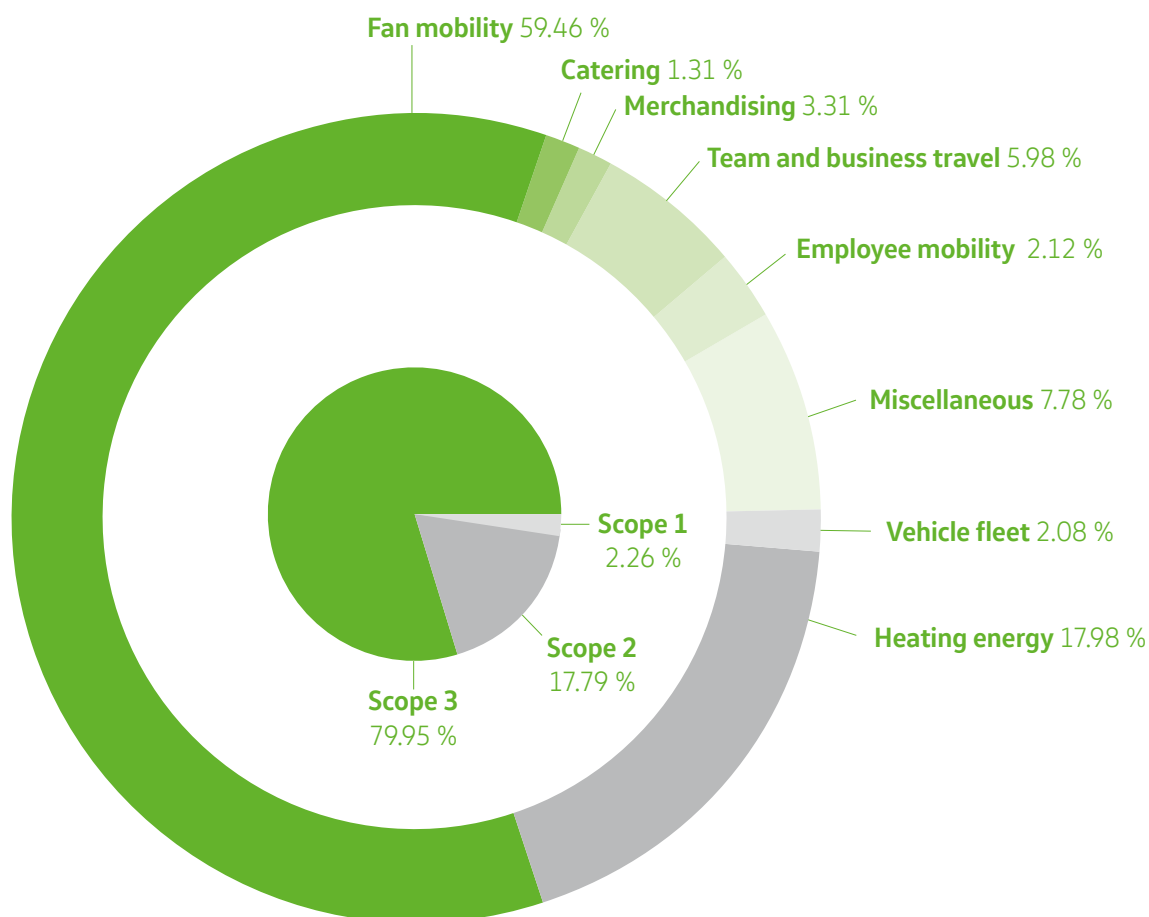
All of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from business and team travel (from the scope 3 category) which cannot be reduced, will be compensated for from summer 2020. This also applies to the 2019/2020 season retrospectively. VfL supports a United Nations compensation project here which involves constructing photovoltaic systems in a village in India. With this project, VfL not only helps support the transition to renewables, but also improves the economic conditions of the local people (see page 11).

VfL will also compensate for the non-reducible CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the scope 1 and 2 categories. The emission reduction certificates acquired in this context also meet the highest standards,

**CO<sub>2</sub>-REDUCTION PATH**  
**OUR WAY TO THE 1.5° TARGET**



# CO<sub>2</sub> FOOTPRINT



and are acquired via the Volkswagen power plant.

In addition, VfL Wolfsburg is also involved in concepts for adapting to the consequences of climate change. In this context, it supports a project for the practical elaboration of an education concept for sports clubs particularly affected by the consequences of climate change. This involves several modules which the clubs can use to adapt individually to climate change.

## Footprint: progress in climate protection

VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH has the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of its activities analysed every two years to measure the progress it is making, and to control the measures it implements. The total amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the 2019/2020 season (scope 1, 2 and 3) was 9,460,915 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. This is almost 10 per cent (9.98 %) less than

during the 2017/2018 season. This is primarily attributable to the strong decline in emissions which can be directly or indirectly (by the purchase of energy) influenced by VfL Wolfsburg (scope 1 and 2). These declined by 24.5 per cent compared to the 2017/2018 season. This development is largely attributable to the significantly reduced consumption of district heating: for instance, the pitch heating had to be used much less frequently because of the mild weather. Compared to the 2011 reference year, the scope 1 and scope 2 emissions were even reduced by almost 47 per cent (46.86 %). VfL had set itself the target of reducing the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 25 per cent by the end of the 2017/2018 season compared to the 2011 calendar year. This ambitious target was reached in the 2019/2020 season.

However, the emissions in the scope 1 and 2 categories only account for around 20 per cent of VfL Wolfsburg's total emissions. The other 79.95 per cent

are in the scope 3 category. The largest proportion of the scope 3 emissions in the 2019/2020 season was attributable to spectator mobility at home matches. VfL had an analysis carried out on the associated emissions on the basis of the latest survey results and the corresponding traffic statistics. The Corona pandemic prevented a fan survey of their mobility behaviour being carried out. The calculations revealed that there was a slight decline of 0.76 percentage points to 40.23 per cent compared to the previous season. Two key influences need to be taken into consideration in this regard: on the one hand, the VfL men's team again took part in the Europa League in the 2019/2020 season, which always gives rise to additional CO<sub>2</sub> emissions because of the increase in the fan and team mobility. On the other hand, the Corona pandemic meant that the games have been played without spectators since March 2020. Both effects basically neutralised themselves.

## 100 per cent renewable

One of the important pillars in the climate strategy is avoiding greenhouse gas emissions in the first place. For VfL

Wolfsburg, this means, on the one hand, procuring renewable energy: the power is already being provided 100 per cent by renewable sources since 2011. The regional "Moving Together" partner LSW Energie also offers to supply its fans with VfL green power. On the other hand,

generating the power ourselves also plays a role: to this end, a photovoltaic and a solar thermal system were installed on the roof of the new VfL-Football Academy buildings which were built in 2018, which were constructed according to the sustainable building concept to supply the building with power and warm water.



**Efficient energy use**

VfL undertook various construction measures during the reporting period, including those involved in the expansion of the training centre. The expansion was required for organisational reasons, and led to an increase in energy consumption. Even though VfL covers its power needs from renewable sources, it still sets a high priority on using power sparingly to avoid environmental impact where possible.

There is great potential for making savings in the lighting used at the stadiums and



the training facilities, as well as in the offices. VfL therefore implemented a number of measures in this context during the reporting period: a comprehensive effort was made to replace conventional light bulbs with LED lights in the indoor areas. The floodlights were also converted accordingly. In addition, the complete lighting concept for the VIP sections of the Volkswagen Arena was renewed with the help of an energy-efficient human-centric-lighting control system from TRILUX in summer 2019. The new LED lighting system enables the colour of the light and the intensity to be regulated to match the natural change in daylight over the course of the day, and to thus make it comfortable to the human eye. The system boasts a large amount of flexibility, and can be adapted individually at any time. This means that the same amount of light is generated as is actually used. In addition, VfL started a pilot project for additional LED upgrading during the reporting period: the high

## DISTRICT HEATING

total Volkswagen Arena, AOK Stadium, fan house, VfL-Football.Academy and VfL Centre 2019/2020: **4,712 MWh**

quality of the grass on the pitches is due in part to the lighting with sodium high-pressure vapour lamps. To make the turf lighting more energy efficient, VfL uses a new type of LED turf lighting system. Four modules have already been procured in total.



The turf lighting system has also been made more energy efficient since VfL introduced a new type of LED technology.

New energy technologies like these open up a great deal of savings potential. To leverage them systematically, VfL Wolfsburg has begun to introduce energy management software since February 2020. This automated the data gathering and archiving. In addition, it also provides a wide range of monitoring and reporting functions on the basis of live data.

### Making progress with e-mobility to achieve a climate-neutral football experience

The footprint calculations reveal that mobility continues to be the largest variable in the overall footprint. Sporting success increases the amount of travel. And at VfL, this not only affects the mobility of the teams and the club



## ROLLING UP THEIR SLEEVES WITH YANNICK GERHARDT

7 May 2019: Wolfsburg players, fans and environmental activists plant oaks, honeysuckle, spindle trees, blackthorn and hawthorn.

Environment partner LSW Energie GmbH & Co. KG, donated one Euro for every kilometre run by the VfL professional players during Bundesliga matches in the 2018/2019 season – giving rise to a total 3,766 Euros. The money is used for environmental and nature conservation campaigns. The total amount was invested in the Wolfsburg urban forest to plant 400 endemic trees and shrubs with the assistance of the council forestry department. Around 100 fans, the Wolfsburg midfielder Yannick Gerhardt, and defender Robin Knoche took part in the campaign, and found out a few things they did not know about Wolfsburg's green lung.

"Campaigns like this, which put nature in the spotlight, are very important, particularly in these times of increasing environmental pollution," said the tireless VfL midfielder, who took to a vegan diet two years ago, and does what he can to generate as few CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as possible. "I am doing something good if I can make a contribution to leave future generations with a healthy earth."

The tree planting campaign was accompanied by the construction of nesting boxes and a thrilling tree climbing demonstration, to show how the nest boxes could be fixed in the trees. Snacks and drinks were served during welcome breaks, and Robin Knoche and Yannick Gerhardt also satisfied numerous requests for autographs.

As part of its "Moving Together" initiative, VfL Wolfsburg, alongside LSW, the Lower Saxony state forestry department, as well as 100 fans each time, had already been active in the "VfL forest" nature conservation project three times previously. These campaigns mean that the Wolfsburg urban forest now has 2,000 more trees than it had before.

employees, but also the fans and the media representatives. Unfortunately, VfL cannot influence their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions directly. Instead, it provides incentives for climate-compatible (travel) behaviour. In future, VfL has plans to work together with its partners to motivate those in its area of influence even more strongly for tomorrow's mobility on the basis of an integrated approach.

For instance, VfL offers season tickets and entrance tickets for the home matches of the women's and U23 teams in the AOK Stadium that can be used as combined tickets for the local public transport system, and thus provides free travel to and from all games, as a climate-friendly alternative to travelling by car. Stewards and volunteers can also travel free of charge on the buses run by the Wolfsburg Verkehrs GmbH public transport operator. The fan forums are also used to organise shared bus travel to away games. The fan officers provide information in this regard to the official fan clubs.

VfL also provides its employees with subsidised job tickets issued by Deutsche Bahn for climate-friendly commuting by rail. The employees can also use department-dedicated bicycles on the VfL site. And an electric car has been used at the VfL Academy since 2019. Two double charging points for electric vehicles have also been available in

front of the ancillary services building and the VfL Centre since autumn 2018.

### **NATURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

VfL Wolfsburg has been making positive headlines for many years with its commitment to re-introducing wolves to Germany. Preserving habitats for wolves is an important element in maintaining biodiversity. In addition, VfL Wolfsburg is also involved in many other nature protection activities: including combating pollution of oceans and soil with micro-plastic, as well as protecting and replanting forests as repositories for the climate gas CO<sub>2</sub>.

#### **Micro-plastic**

To prevent the emissions of smallest plastic particles into wastewater and the environment in future, VfL has contacted the non-governmental organisation Stop! Micro Waste during the reporting period, and closed a co-operation agreement. Emissions of micro plastics during the washing of sports clothing, or from the artificial pitches, is to be minimised by implementing technical solutions, and carrying out educational and communications measures.

## **MILE STONES**

- ✓ Signing the "Sports for Climate Action" climate agreement of the United Nations
- ✓ Use of reusable mugs in the Volkswagen Arena and AOK Stadium
- ✓ Setting up an LED control system for the needs-oriented use of light in the VIP zones in the Volkswagen Arena

## **OUTLOOK**

VfL intends to significantly reduce the emissions of micro-plastic, and is preparing a range of measures for this purpose as part of its collaboration agreement with the non-governmental organisation Stop! Micro Waste.



The E-charging infrastructure for electric vehicles has been expanded further.





***SOCIETY***

# ***SOCIETY: SHAPING HOW WE LIVE AS A SOCIETY – FOOTBALL, YOU SHOW THE WAY***

No other sport has as many fans and as much media reach as football. The enormous effect of football, and its ability to bring people together, provides a huge opportunity for influencing social issues — standing up against homophobia and racism, promoting education and health, and strengthening civil society — this is the potential harnessed by VfL as a regional partner.



## ***BRINGING ALIVE DIVERSITY – WITH SOLIDARITY AND COURAGE***

Football can break down prejudices, promote community spirit, and have an impact on society as a role model. As the number one national pastime, it boasts an enormous influencing potential, and therefore also has a responsibility to use its charisma to promote the message that people should live together in an open and democratic society.

VfL Wolfsburg uses this influencing power for many social activities in the region, as well as at a national and international level. VfL is committed to inclusion and integration, speaks out on behalf of diversity, and is an outspoken supporter of antidiscrimination and antiracism. Education and health are also other issues which have its strong support. Together with regional networks, the football club also takes on other responsibilities as an integral part of society. This commitment highlights a special aspect: social responsibility also benefits the benefactor.

To become forcefully involved in all those aspects where there is the greatest need, and opportunities to have a powerful influence, VfL Wolfsburg bundles its social responsibility

under the auspices of its “Moving Together” initiative. In addition, it also supports social institutions with extra material and financial donations.

In addition to its environmental activities (see page 46), “Moving Together” is primarily aimed at permanently improving aspects involving diversity, education and health. The initiative centres on targeted and long-term programmes. In implementing them, VfL pursues a fundamental partnership approach. This involves nurturing numerous co-operation activities with businesses, clubs, educational institutions and local authorities within the region and well beyond. As part of its “Kick-off VfL” project, VfL has for instance set up a wide-ranging network of social partnerships since 2006. These include schools, kindergartens and societies, which the club supports with a wide range of offers.

VfL has also expanded its offers to amateur clubs since 2019, and also built up a network of clubs under the auspices of the “Kick-off VfL” project. This provides amateur footballers with many benefits, and is intensely promoted by VfL (more on this in the Corporate Citizenship section).



### Pro diversity – against discrimination and racism

Xenophobia and racism are symptoms of an attitude which is inward-looking, avoids contact, and promotes fear. To fight these, it is important to tackle this attitude at its roots. This is not about passing on blame, but introducing these people to other, more friendly attitudes and ways of seeing the world, to demonstrate that they themselves can become a part of this diversity. Football has the ability to do this. It provides ideal

conditions to do so. Promoting diversity, and to act in solidarity, whatever the differences, is therefore one of VfL Wolfsburg's core messages. VfL therefore actively commits itself to a "welcome culture", and expressly and explicitly stands firm against racism and discrimination.

VfL Wolfsburg supports UEFA's ten-point-plan against racism, and signed the "Against discrimination in football" declaration of the European Gay & Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF) in 2011. In its

stadium regulations, and the code of conduct of the official fan clubs (OFC), VfL highlights its stance as a staunch supporter of mutual respect. Relevant standards are also defined in the code of conduct of the VfL youth training centre.

### With football against homophobia

In 2018, VfL Wolfsburg defined the fight against homophobia and sexism as its "season topic", and placed it at the centre of many events. This was also the background



With its #Diversity campaign, VfL sends out a clear signal for an open and tolerant society.



65 partner clubs with their more than 650 teams have been playing with rainbow captain's armbands since 2019.

against which managing director Michael Meeske on behalf of VfL, signed the Berlin declaration "Together against homophobia. For diversity, respect and tolerance in sport", an initiative of the Magnus Hirschfeld foundation. He thus committed himself to the promotion of an unprejudiced social climate, and a culture of diversity based on mutual respect and tolerance.

Another important platform for fighting homophobia is the declaration of intent signed in 2019 to co-operate with Wolfsburg council's Youth Development and the Fan Project. This

co-operation aims at creating offers for the promotion of democracy and diversity. A wide range of campaigns concerning homophobia were organised in 2018 and 2019 by the people involved in the co-operation and VfL. This included a street kick, where the core issues of homophobia and sexism were elaborated. These activities are supported by Nilla Fischer, a VfL women's footballer and an ambassador of the Lesbian and Gay Association (LSVD) of Niedersachsen-Bremen. The tournament was open to all teams committing to fight for an open and diverse society. In addition, the Diversity Weeks in 2019 were used to

highlight homophobia and sexism. Activities included an internal strategy workshop on this topic (see page 42).

With another co-operation project, VfL has supported the needs of LGBTIQ\*fans since 2020. The abbreviation "LGBTIQ\*" stands for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, intersex and queer. To enable these fan groups more opportunities to participate, VfL works together with the "Bring democracy alive!" project entitled "Diversity in stadiums – access, protection and participation" of the Fan Cultures & Sport Related Social Work Competence Group

## "TAKING PEOPLE ON BOARD WHERE THEY STAND"

In the context of the awarding of the doorplates, Antje Biniek, gender equality officer of Wolfsburg council, emphasised the potential of the project: "I am delighted that the launch was successful, and the first four schools in Wolfsburg have clearly demonstrated their support for diversity, tolerance and democracy. As a former employee of the Fan Project, and now the gender equality officer, I am naturally very proud that I have been able to launch such an important project in co-operation with VfL Wolfsburg. Together, we have developed an extra-curricular format which gets young people on board where they stand, and at the same time offers them the opportunity to take part in a societal discussion, and provides a forum for their points of view and their opinions."



(KoFaS) of Leibniz University Hannover. Activities include the elaboration and practical and structural measures for clubs and associations, with the aim of opening up greater access and participation for the fans. In this context, VfL has a clear position for sexual diversity.

### Campaigns for diversity

VfL began comprehensive communications measures on the topic of diversity in 2018. At the heart of the campaign was the “#Diversity” hashtag which was communicated in various ways, including on beer mats and other advertising media. In addition, an image and educational film with Nilla Fischer was also produced and published. The diversity campaign programme reached its preliminary highlight in 2019: at its heart were the Diversity Weeks, which have taken place annually since 2016, and were held in March in 2019. Male and female wolves wore a special football shirt to send out a strong signal against exclusion. As part of its collaboration with the Volkswagen Group, both teams on the campaign match day in 2019 were able to wear a special football shirt embroidered

with the rainbow-coloured #Diversity logo. In addition, a FIFA19 tournament for people with a refugee background was organised with other stakeholders during the Diversity Weeks. The captain's armband in rainbow colours which has been worn by the VfL teams since August 2018, was at the centre of a broad campaign at the start of the Diversity Weeks in 2019. 65 partner clubs with their more than 650 teams in various leagues in Niedersachsen and Sachsen-Anhalt joined the green-white campaign and have used a rainbow-coloured

captain's armband ever since. And with the special football shirt 2020, the green-whites, together with Volkswagen, took an even bigger step forward: for the first time, the teams wore a Volkswagen logo in rainbow colours.

### Diversity project with schools

VfL Wolfsburg closed several sponsorships with regional schools in 2019. The Am Fredenberg grammar school in Salzgitter ran a major campaign with Pablo Thiam.



VfL Wolfsburg and Wolfsburg council's Fan Project organised a street football tournament for diversity in 2018 and 2019. The tournament is open to all teams who actively support an open and diverse society.

This was motivated by the incorporation in the nationwide programme "Schools against racism – schools with courage".

Together with the Fan Project, VfL also initiated the "Wolfsburg schools for diversity" project in September 2019: the idea here is that after a visit to workshops run by VfL Wolfsburg in the first half of the school year, schools go on to develop their own project ideas, and implement them in the second half of the school year. The third part of the project was a closing tournament with a market for possibilities, and the planned award of the doorplate "Wolfsburg school for diversity". Unfortunately, the second and third parts of the project had to be cancelled because of the Corona pandemic. Nevertheless, the schools still received awards because all of those involved still want to jointly send out a strong signal in support of diversity, tolerance, human values and against discrimination. The "Wolfsburg school for diversity" project was selected as a test project in 2020 to evaluate the impact of VfL projects, in line with VfL's strategy launched in 2020 to assess the effectiveness of its CSR activities (see page 20).

### **INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION – PARTICIPATION FOR ALL**

VfL Wolfsburg endeavours to give opportunities to people with disabilities to directly experience professional football at its venues. A great deal has already been done in the Volkswagen Arena to create the necessary barrier-free conditions: the entrances are suitable for wheelchairs, and 80 specially furnished wheelchair places have been set up on the back straight, of which eight are available to fans from the visiting football team. There are also seven wheelchair-conform VIP places in the main stand, and 20 places for people with visual handicaps in block A. These measures won an award in May 2018: The Lower Saxony Ministry for Economic Affairs, Labour and Digitisation, as well as Lower Saxony Tourism Marketing,

awarded the Volkswagen Arena, and the VfL Football World their "Travel for all" certificate.

The aim in the foreseeable future is to basically ensure that all interested parties can gain access to the football experience without any hindrances. During the reporting period, VfL, with the support of the inclusion consultancy KickIn!, acquired valuable insights into the further development of its inclusive culture. A needs analysis was carried out as part of the first step. This will form the basis for the development of measures and structures by VfL for more intensive participation, and for even more barrier-free inclusion in football.

In addition, the stadium regulations were also adapted to enable the participation of people in other groups for which the stadium was previously inaccessible. Since then, VfL creates



The VfL Football School, whose coaches include ex-VfL player Frank Greiner, have been regular guests at 25 partner schools in Wolfsburg and the surrounding area since 2017, where they hold training courses for children.





The Volkswagen Arena is largely barrier-free.

customised means of access for people who, for instance, are dependent on having an accompanying person with them, but do not have anyone available, or who need to take their medication with them. VfL provides detailed information for fans with disabilities at its website, also in the form of an audio file.

The football club has also improved the possibilities for deaf or hard of hearing fans to participate. As part of a project week in 2018, the sign language names of VfL professional players were elaborated. The official poster prepared in this way, which presents the match day squad on the video screen, has been published by the DFL foundation (German Football League). It was updated in 2019; and this time, the names of the players in the women's team were also presented in sign language. The poster was developed by pupils attending the state training centre for the hearing-impaired in Braunschweig (LBZH), which has been a VfL partner school since 2007.

VfL is also actively involved in collaboration work with refugees: the club and VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH, are part of the nationwide integration programme

"Welcome in football" run by the German Children's and Youth foundation (DKJS), which is sponsored by the DFL foundation and the German government officer for migration, refugees and integration. Together with its co-operation partners, VfL Wolfsburg thus supports a large number of different integration projects for young refugees. The aim of these offers is to promote the social inclusion of new arrivals in the long term.

Another partnership in this context at a regional level was created with Bündnis Wolfsburg. Here, VfL works together with the integration department and the sports department of Wolfsburg council, StadtSportBund Wolfsburg, the Young Men's

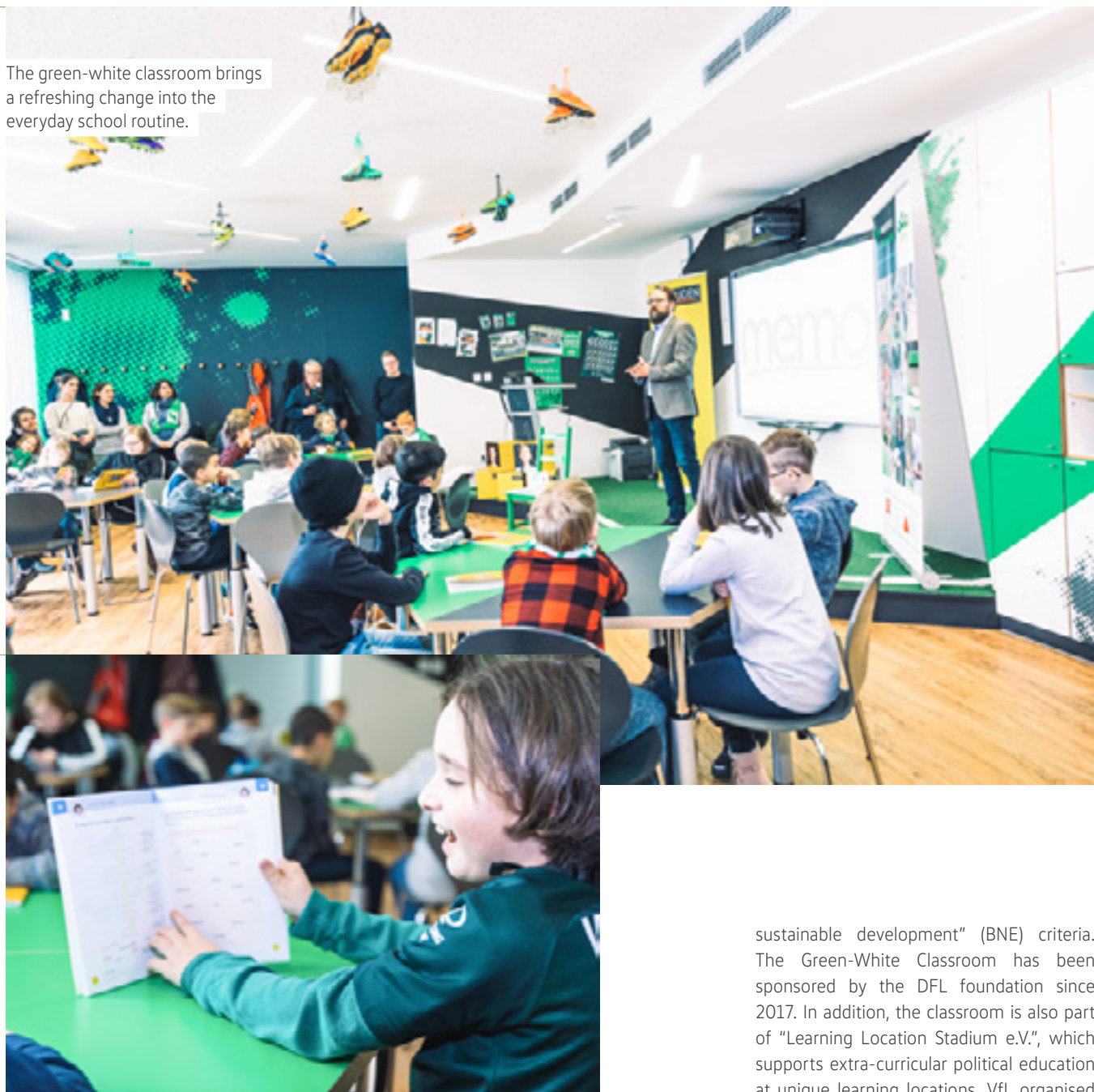
Christian Association, and TSV Wolfsburg 1950 e.V., a local football club. Within this constellation, VfL Wolfsburg invited the participants to the events centre in the Volkswagen Arena on 8 December 2018 for a dialogue event under the heading "Welcome in football – refugee girls and women in sport". The focus of the event looked at the question of how the offer of sporting activities should be configured to facilitate more access to women and girls with a refugee background.

VfL has also implemented additional measures with refugees: a midnight kick with around 25 refugees takes place once a week for those interested in playing football. In addition,

***"SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION  
FOR VfL WOLFSBURG MEANS  
COMING TOGETHER  
WHATEVER THE DIFFERENCES."***

Lana Binner, CSR diversity officer

The green-white classroom brings a refreshing change into the everyday school routine.



VfL has also planned a workshop for career orientation, and to help refugees get a foot on the job ladder. Unfortunately, implementation had to be postponed until autumn 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **EDUCATION – USING FOOTBALL TO MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO LEARN**

Football is a perfect vehicle for learning, because football is fun and inspires people to ask questions. Once the motivation is there, it is then also possible to get across abstract topics such as diversity, inclusion and environmental responsibility. VfL's approach harnesses youngsters' enthusiasm for football, and is therefore exemplary within

the sector. And there is also a good reason for the footballing world to get involved in this context: finding talented young players establishing a debate culture, and binding fans to the club for life.

### **On the ball with education in the Green-White Classroom**

With its Green-White Classroom, VfL has created a flexible learning environment for a wide range of age groups. The special feature of the VfL approach is an educational concept that conforms to modern demands for extra-curricular learning. We have established an extra-curricular learning location here certified according to the "Education for

sustainable development" (BNE) criteria. The Green-White Classroom has been sponsored by the DFL foundation since 2017. In addition, the classroom is also part of "Learning Location Stadium e.V.", which supports extra-curricular political education at unique learning locations. VfL organised several workshops for young adults and youths in the Green-White Classroom in 2020 on the topics "We don't look away! – Racism in football" and "Offside?! – discrimination and exclusion in everyday life". In addition, it also held a dialogue event with experts on questions covering all aspects of "Education at VfL Wolfsburg". At the tenth anniversary of Learning Location Stadium e.V., the initiative and VfL Wolfsburg invited people to attend a Wolfsburg evening in the swimming pool culture centre in February 2020. The importance of political education and promoting democracy within the footballing world was highlighted on the basis of specific projects. Representatives of VfL and the Green-White Classroom used the event to intensify the dialogue with other venues and hundreds of invited guests with its projects on inclusion and diversity. The VfL site was used in the preceding days

for a co-ordination meeting, and the annual general meeting of the club.

### For a creative kick

The popular VfL school writing competition organised with the Duden publishing house also took place twice during the reporting period: and despite the restrictions brought about by the Corona pandemic, 1,278 pupils from 102 schools in Niedersachsen and Sachsen-Anhalt took part in the school writing competition in 2020. It will not be possible for an awards presentation event to take place under the circumstances, instead, a website was set up to present the winning stories. In the previous year, the event set a new record with around 1600 participants under the normal conditions which existed at the time.

### Football enthusiasm for a more humane world

VfL Wolfsburg has realised many joint projects in co-operation with the children's charity terre des hommes.

Amongst other projects, a school for 70 pupils with two classrooms and two restrooms was constructed by a network of committed participants in a very

poor village in south-east Vietnam. This therefore established the staffing and material requirements for pre-school teaching. VfL sponsored some of the construction costs with a donation of Euro 17,730. VfL also contributes to the running costs. At a visit to the school in May 2019, VfL employees brought along football shirts and balls to awaken the children's interest in football.

### HEALTH

"Moving Together" has many meanings, including working together to improve health. However, this often needs something to kick it off. With its commitment to health, and the associated activities working together with competent partner organisations, VfL Wolfsburg therefore wants to raise the awareness of children and youngsters for a healthy lifestyle. In order to positively influence children at a young age to adopt an active lifestyle, VfL harnesses the inspiring effect of its Football School, fun and small adventures.

### Training and teaching concepts attracting attention

As part of the "Moving Together" initiative, the VfL Football School set up an enrichment

programme for partner schools in summer 2017. Ever since, the male and female professional players have regularly turned up at a total of 25 schools in Wolfsburg and the surrounding area, to take part in training sessions with the children. During the reporting period, a total of 575 children took part in these training sessions. The enrichment programme project was selected as a test project to evaluate the impact of VfL projects in a strategy started by VfL in 2020 (see page 20).

### Muuvit lighthouse project in its eleventh year

Muuvit, an exercise programme for children developed in Finland, is a fixed part of the "Moving Together" initiative. VfL Wolfsburg introduced it to Germany in 2009, and its Muuvit partners today are Audi BKK and the Autostadt. The key element is the "Muuvit adventure", a competition in which school classes take virtual trips, and collect exercise points along the way. Teachers use this to playfully motivate children to exercise more, strengthen classroom solidarity, and get across obligatory items in the teaching curriculum. In addition to instructions on how to exercise properly when engaging in sporting activities or everyday situations,



## DISCOVER, CONFIGURE AND DO IT YOURSELF

"I save the world right now!" is the title of the new, free teaching magazine from VfL Wolfsburg issued in co-operation with the Duden publishing house, and memo AG. The magazine for children from the age of eight, which was issued in 2020, is orientated to the 17 sustainability goals of the United Nations, and uses easy to understand methods to motivate children to join in and be creative. Examples include graphics which show how anyone can save water with simple tricks; what is meant by clean energy; the labels you need to pay attention to when buying clothes; and any number of things which can be made from old socks. It also breaks down prejudices against boys and girls, and highlights the importance of equal opportunities in our society.

The Wölfi mascot presented the magazine in the Green-White Classroom, and handed over numerous signed copies to the invited schoolchildren. The event was also attended by VfL managing director Michael Meeske.

teachers can also download pedagogically developed teaching units on health issues such as sleep, stress management, and self-esteem – all available from the Muuvit website. In addition, a “Muuvit environmental adventure” was launched for grades three to six in the 2019/2020 school year. This takes members of the class on a virtual trip from the Alps to the North Sea, and motivates them to ask environmental questions at the various stops along the way. This teaches them in a playful way how their nutrition, material consumption, and mobility, for instance, have an impact on the climate, and why they should protect forests and water, as well as other resources.

Many children have suffered under the school lockdown since spring 2020. This has also further exacerbated the lack of exercise. The people behind Muuvit found the following answer to this problem: “Muuvit together at home”, a programme for active digital lessons.

When VfL Wolfsburg first launched this teaching concept in a pilot project eleven years ago, Muuvit already managed to reach 6,000 children in the first year. The programme has been expanded and regularly updated ever since. In this way, VfL Wolfsburg and Muuvit show numerous schoolchildren every year that exercise can be fun, and motivate them and their families to be more active in their everyday lives. On reaching its tenth anniversary in 2019, VfL and Muuvit had already reached more than 50,000 children.

The old VfL bus also plays its part in promoting a more active lifestyle. The bus regularly tours around the region and inspires children and youngsters to get more exercise and eat healthily. It undertakes around 50 tours every season on average to partner schools, festivals, match days and other events.

#### Exercise for older citizens

It is not only children who have a natural urge to move around, everyone feels this need, and it is therefore well worth promoting it in the name of a healthy life. “Walking football”, is a special offer made available free of charge to members of the WölfeClub, and aimed at people over the age of 55 who, although they may not be quite as fast as the youngsters, still feel the urge to kick a ball around.

The golden rule is: No running. This dramatically decreases the risk of getting injured. And speed is replaced by other skills. During the reporting period, the members of VfL Wolfsburg’s Walking Football team came together once a week for training and to prepare for national and international tournaments.

#### CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP

VfL Wolfsburg acts as a lighthouse for the development of the region. This applies particularly to numerous amateur football clubs in Niedersachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Sachsen, Thüringen and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, who nowadays have to come to terms with social trends such as diminishing memberships, and the declining willingness to do voluntary work.

### #WEHELP

To ensure that nobody has the feeling that they are being left alone during the Corona pandemic, VfL Wolfsburg plays its part to demonstrate solidarity. Under the “#wehelp” slogan, it gives strong active support to people and organisations in the Wolfsburg area and the surrounding regions who are in need of or have offered help. It made use here of its well-established network of enthusiastic and committed people from the factory, the town and the clubs, as well as mobilising fans and members.

For instance, some professional players, as well as VfL managing director Michael Meeske, organised a telephone campaign. They called up fans with season tickets, as well as WölfeClub members, and asked them how they were feeling, and offered to provide them with support if they needed it.



### Network of partner clubs established

Under the auspices of its "Kick-off VfL" project, VfL has been systematically expanding its network of partner clubs since 2019. VfL specifically set up a dedicated project group for this purpose, and elaborated a new concept for them. After a productive exchange of ideas between three partner clubs, and subsequent revisions, the concept was rolled out to the existing 100 partner clubs. The network had grown to 120 partner clubs by August 2020. VfL also hopes to acquire more fans in this way and bind them to the club, as well as hoping to enhance its media presence, and to regionally and supra-regionally strengthen the "VfL Wolfsburg" brand.

This strategic approach was used as the basis for formulating a comprehensive range of advisory and support services. These range from sports management, to further training for football coaches, through to club equipment and the communication of important values. A special priority in 2020 was children's football. To this end, VfL set up further training sessions and organised training units in co-operation with the VfL Football School focussing on "Child-orientated training and competition systematics". VfL ambassadors were nominated on the part of the club to co-ordinate this work, and to act as contacts and multipliers. VfL itself

set up a full-time position for this purpose in March 2020. A set of metrics was also determined and collected for the first time to control the network activities.

### Voluntary involvement of VfL employees

On "Moving Together" day, 19 September 2019, "11 for 11" was initiated for the third time. Eleven teams comprising managers, employees as well as players, hit the road to implement eleven projects at eleven

locations. The novelty this year was that people from the region were able to submit project suggestions for the first time. A qualified jury consisting of VfL employees as well as professional footballers and the fan scene, represented by Sina Müller, chairperson of Supporters Wolfsburg e.V., then had the difficult task of selecting eleven from all of the submitted projects, which were then to be realised on the campaign day. Here are a few impressions of the "Moving Together" day:

### WOUT WEGHORST AND PERNILLE HARDER TRAINING WITH REFUGEES IN EHRA-LESSIEN.



### , ARNOLD AND VfL EMPLOYEES BUILDING A FOOTBALL PITCH FOR THE HOUSE ON BERNSTEIN LAKE.



### MARCEL SCHÄFER AND VfL EMPLOYEES HELPING OUT IN THE ANIMAL ENCLOSURE IN WOLFSBURG.



To promote its corporate social responsibility, VfL assigns employees who want to do voluntary work, to social facilities in the region. These corporate volunteering activities cover a wide range of social issues. The following examples provide an overview of the causes to which the employees and players are committed.

## **STRONG AS A WOLF WITH MAXIMILIAN ARNOLD**

The premiere of the Maximilian Arnold Wölfe Camp in early 2019 was a complete success. Nine children with cancer came along to experience an eventful day at the Bernstein lake, and to rub shoulders with the wolves.

The camp is a joint project between VfL and the House on Bernstein lake run by the José Carreras Leukaemia foundation, and is supported by the Wolfsburg professional player Maximilian Arnold. The aim is to help children who have undergone cancer therapy to rediscover their vitality and courage to face life again through play, exercise and discussions with similarly affected children. The second camp is already scheduled to take place in October 2020.



## **THE CHILDREN CALL HIM DADDY**

VfL captain Josuha Guilavogui not only goes to the limits on the pitch, he is also totally committed to his charity project "Action Sociale Fraternité-Vie" in West Africa. On the last occasion, the captain of the wolves flew to Conakry, the capital of Guinea, after the Christmas party in 2019. Guilavogui, who has Guinean roots himself, visited the nearby orphanage which he built together with the members of his family who still live in the country. 13 children live in the house for which he himself pays the rent. Here they can have regular meals, sleep, and go to school regularly as well. Some of Guilavogui's relatives have arranged people to look after the children. In addition, the children also get help with their homework, and are given an opportunity to learn French.

## **WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE CHILDREN HAPPY**

The annual hospital tour has a long tradition and took place for the 13th time in December 2019. The captain of the Wolves, Josuha Guilavogui, keeper Pavao Pervan, and Svenja Huth and Hedvig Lindahl, joined the VfL mascot Wölfi to hand out small presents, as well as home-made biscuits from the green-white Christmas baking campaign, to children in the children's wards in clinics in Wolfsburg and Gifhorn. The children received encouraging words, autographs and selfies from their idols, and the players were paid back generously by the sparkling eyes of the children.



## BACK IN COMMUNICATION AGAIN **DESPITE THE QUARANTINE – THANKS TO A TABLET**

Showing empathy also benefits the giver. This is the experience made by the women's footballers Lara Dickenmann and Anna Blässe every time they visit the AWO care home in the Goethestraße in Wolfsburg. Many of the inhabitants of this care home are closely associated with VfL Wolfsburg because this is where the "Goethe Wolves", one of the club's official fan clubs, is located.

Because of the contact restrictions during the Corona crisis, the players from the women's team had to use another channel to stay in contact with the people from the AWO care home: they sent them tablets which were made available by VfL Wolfsburg. This enabled the people living in the care home to carry out video phone calls to contact the women's players, as well as keep in touch with their own families.

Anna Blässe is relieved: "Lara and I have been very close to the "Goethe Wolves" for many years now. And in these difficult times in particular, it is all the more important to show them that we are thinking about them, and can stay in visual contact with them as well. And we can now do this very easily thanks to the tablets."



## MILE STONES

- ✓ Co-founding the "Wolfsburg Schools for Diversity" project to raise awareness of diversity and tolerance
- ✓ Carrying out a dialogue event in co-operation with Teaching Location Stadium e.V. on the significance of political education and the promotion of democracy in football
- ✓ Supporting the VfL Wolfsburg walking football team in preparation for national and international tournaments
- ✓ Expanding the joint ventures with schools to promote children's health

## OUTLOOK

Together with KoFaS, VfL wishes to elaborate practical and structural measures for the heightened participation of LGBTIQ\* fans in the football experience.





# ***FANS AND MEMBERS***

# ***FANS AND MEMBERS: BRINGING COMMUNITY SPIRIT ALIVE – FOOTBALL, YOU SHOW THE WAY***

Passion and elation. Chants, choirs and fanfares in the Wolfsburg stadiums. The home game atmosphere elevates us to new heights. VfL has therefore co-operated very closely with its fans and members for many years, and appreciates their support immensely. VfL initiates dialogues, and seeks active communication to be able to provide every group with their perfect VfL experience.

## ***EMOTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITY***

Football in the VfL Wolfsburg arenas regularly delivers tremendous community experiences, packed full of emotions. And everyone who observes the basic rules can take part in them. It is important that the football experience is always safe for all of the participants at all times. VfL therefore promotes mutual understanding. It supports dialogue between the various members of the football family, and actively involves its fans and members in these activities. Open discussions are sought first and foremost – rather than sanctions – because allowing fans their freedom is an important plus factor for VfL.

### **Decision making through dialogue**

VfL Wolfsburg sets great store by incorporating its fans and members in its decision making. This is important because dialogue is the only way to reach joint decisions, and therefore to find the optimum solution for everyone involved. During the reporting period, VfL therefore involved its followers when reaching decisions on big and small changes, such as the acquisition of tickets, the development of safety concepts, or configuring a gender-aligned stadium. Thanks to the dialogue with the fans, VfL is currently involved in preparing the installation of unisex toilets in the Volkswagen Arena and the AOK Stadium.

The Corona pandemic in particular made it necessary for those in charge to find flexible solutions. VfL's priority is to find ways to allow

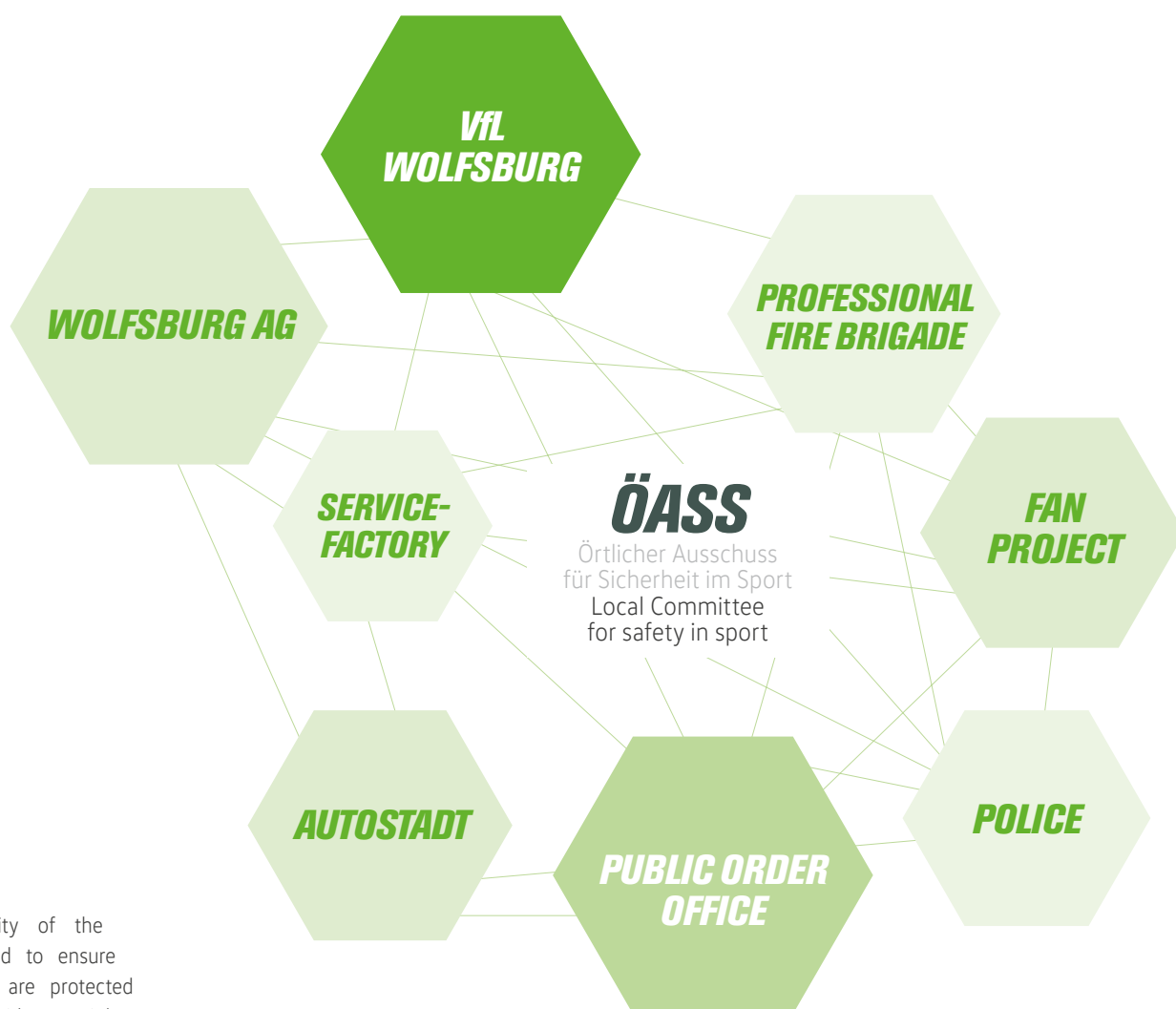


The Volkswagen Arena safety concept was upgraded in April 2020.

fans to experience football directly in the stadiums as soon as possible. The involvement of the fans and members is extremely important if this is to be achieved successfully. VfL therefore contacts them specifically with the aim of promoting responsible and respectful behaviour.

## ***SAFETY***

VfL is responsible for the games played in the Volkswagen Arena and the AOK Stadium, and therefore also for the comprehensive safety



and security of the venues, and to ensure all visitors are protected against accidents, violence and health risks. Avoiding risky actions in the stadiums and in other locations, enhanced hygiene standards in response to the Corona

pandemic, and the wish of the various visitor groups to express themselves as freely as possible: many aspects have to be taken into consideration and harmonised. Ultras, families and corporate clients clearly have different points of view when it comes to how they want to experience a football match. The objective is keeping any restrictions on the activities of the fans to a minimum, but at the same time to maximise the safety and security for everyone in and around the stadiums.

With a view to the step-by-step readmission of fans into the stadiums to watch matches during the Corona pandemic, VfL Wolfsburg is in favour of a standard procedure for the whole of the league, to avoid competitive distortions. To ensure that the health of all is protected optimally during games with spectators, VfL has been working on a hygiene and organisational concept internally and across all divisions since summer 2020. The aim is to find a concept which satisfies all of the demands for safety and protection

against infection on the one hand, and the expectations of the fans on the other – as far as is feasibly possible. VfL is in regular close contact with the local authorities in this regard, and with the organisations responsible for safety and security.

VfL places a great deal of emphasis on open dialogue and preventative measures, which are also always considered as a first step prior to weighing up the need to take sanctions against any individuals or even whole groups of fans. VfL relies here on dependable communication structures between the club, fans and the most important partner organisations, such as the local council and the safety authorities.

#### Networks underpin safety

The responsibility for co-ordinating the safety measures in the wider area surrounding the Wolfsburg Bundesliga location lies with the local sports safety committee of the city of

Wolfsburg (ÖASS). Stadium safety itself is VfL's responsibility, which it guarantees with an integrated safety concept, as well as specific safety concepts tailored to each venue. These are based on the latest DFB regulations, and are continuously improved and adapted to the immediate safety requirements. The safety concept for the Volkswagen Arena was upgraded by VfL Wolfsburg most recently in April 2020 in close co-operation with the competent authorities and the Safety division of Volkswagen AG. The special safety and security measures implemented on match days were evaluated by the DEKRA testing organisation and DFB back in January 2020. Despite a good overall evaluation, areas where improvements can be made were pointed out and were either rectified directly by VfL by implementing the appropriate measures, or will be implemented soon. In addition to the DEKRA and DFB certification, VfL also regularly has its safety concepts and organisational structures examined during internal audits.

The safety ring on the apron around the Volkswagen Arena has been a fixed part of the safety concept since the 2018/2019 season.

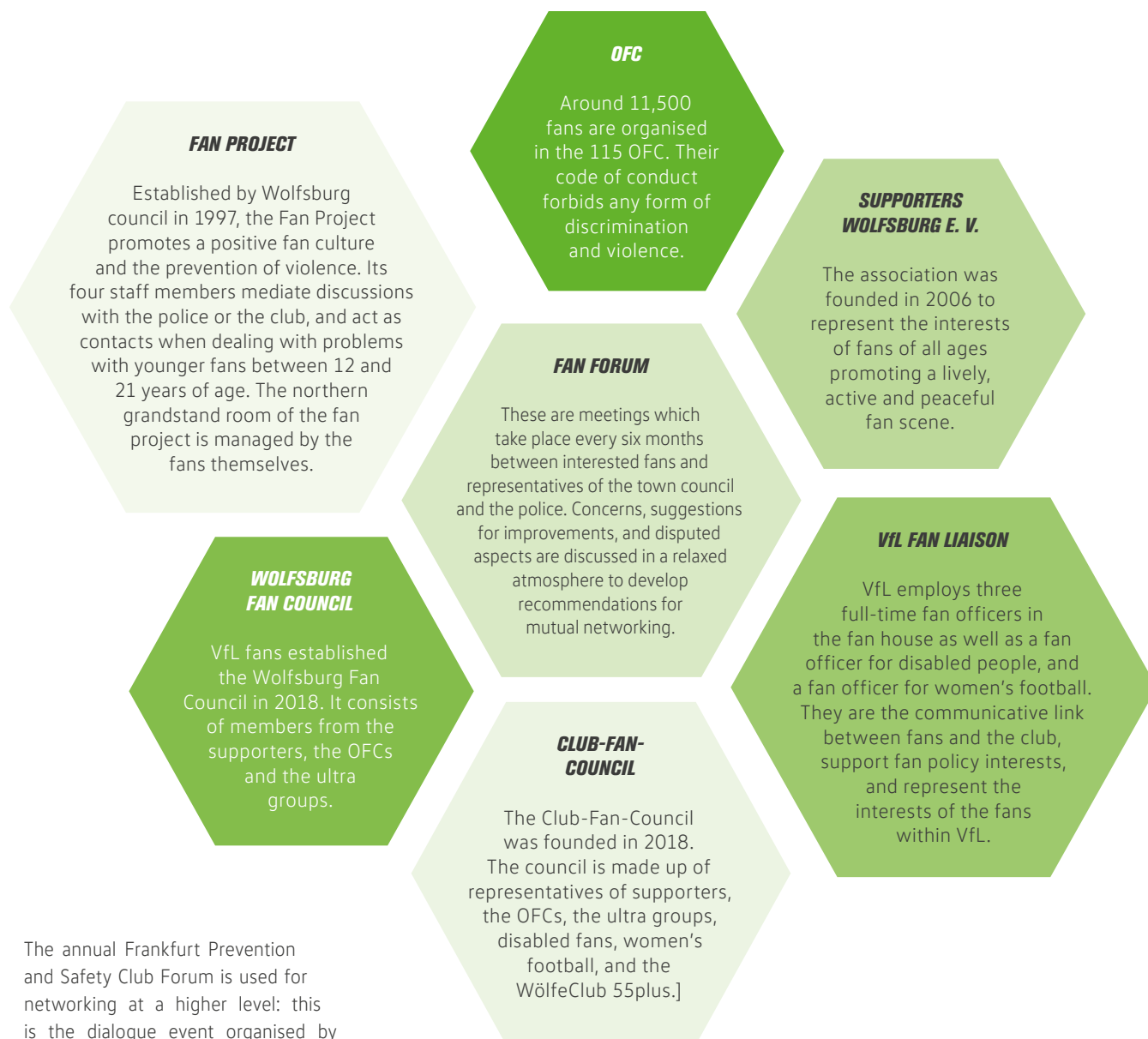


The security ring in the area immediately surrounding the Volkswagen Arena has been an integral part of the safety concept since the 2018/2019 season. The installation of nine visitor checkpoints and two vehicle checkpoints was established with the aim of achieving the highest levels of safety for all visitors before they even enter the stadium. These new measures have made the fans feel safer. In addition, the waiting times for identity checks was also reduced considerably in this way.

***“WE VERY MUCH WELCOME THE GROWING INTEREST IN STADIUM ALLIANCES, AND DFL IS VERY HAPPY TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE BUNDESLÄNDER IN PURSUING THIS STRATEGY. PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL HAS AN ENORMOUS SOCIAL CAPITAL. IT IS THEREFORE ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT TO BUNDLE ALL OF THE AVAILABLE FORCES TO ACHIEVE THE SAFEST POSSIBLE FOOTBALL EXPERIENCE.”***

Statement by Ansgar Schwenken, member of the DFL management board, on the opportunities opened up by the stadium alliances

The costs borne by the public purse for the policing of German Bundesliga matches have been the subject of increasing criticism in recent years. In response, the DFL introduced the Stadium Alliance concept back in the 2017/2018 season. The aim of this concept is to intensify and further expand the co-operation between all of the stakeholders (clubs, competent authorities, and security apparatus) at the Bundesliga venues. The goals include tailoring the size of the police presence with the aim of saving money. Prior to a match, VfL applies the Stadium Alliance concept to co-ordinate closely with all of the people and institutions responsible for safety and security, with the aim amongst others, of reducing the number of police on duty, and the potential for conflict on match days. The people and institutions involved include the federal police and the Länder police forces, event management, security officers, the fan liaison committees of the clubs, the private security services engaged by the clubs, local authority departments, the fire brigade and emergency services, fan projects, the security service of the visiting club, as well as the visiting club's fan liaison officers. These work together to prepare a risk assessment with which to optimise the level of policing required.



The annual Frankfurt Prevention and Safety Club Forum is used for networking at a higher level: this is the dialogue event organised by DFL for people holding responsibilities within the clubs, including the executive boards, the management and event management, as well as fan officers and safety officers. The third event of this kind took place in 2019 when the participants — including Kristian Mallon, head of the VfL Wolfsburg Safety department — took part in intensive discussions on aspects including how to handle the topic of police costs, and the configuration options for the stadium alliances.

### Prevention a priority

VfL's dialogue with the fan scene is aimed at preventing violence, racist incidents, and criminal activities, at the same time as not unnecessarily restricting the freedom of the fans. The framework for this preventative activity is a co-operation agreement reached between the Wolfsburg council and the Wolfsburg-Helmstedt local police department. Important instruments for the work of this network are the stadium

regulations, and a catalogue of measures developed in summer 2016.

It is still possible to issue sanctions if incidents occur despite the public communications structures and the implemented preventative measures.

Dialogue is also sought when configuring the sanctions to be implemented: the stakeholders involved in the network set up a stadium ban commission together with the Fan Project and the fan liaison officers. This commission comes together to discuss any necessary sanctions, and provides the fans involved with their legal right to a hearing. At the "regular fan meetings" which take place every month, those involved also openly discuss developments in the fan scene, and hold match debriefings and briefings on forthcoming matches.

### PARTICIPATION

In and across all divisions, VfL Wolfsburg works continuously to improve its services for fans and interested parties, and has set up a Central Service Centre specifically for this purpose. Configuring the services available at football matches in accordance with the wishes of the fans is an important success factor. And the fans would not be real fans if they were not interested in taking part in the processes involving their favourite football club. There is therefore a strong willingness to communicate on both sides.

### Creating and configuring affinity

The football club and its supporters are very much in favour of systematic and open fan communications. This helps VfL to continually develop further, to better understand the



The Club Fan Council is the joint organisation representing the interests of all fans, and meets regularly with VfL Wolfsburg.

needs of its fans, and to enable everyone to experience football in an ideal way. With the scientific support of the Fan Cultures & Sport Related Social Work Competence Group (KoFaS gGmbH), VfL Wolfsburg and the Wolfsburg Fan Council developed and closed a written agreement for future co-operation in the Club-Fan-Council in August 2019.

This institutionalises the communication between VfL Wolfsburg and the Fan Council, and further improves the co-operation between the club and the active fan scene. The Club-Fan-Council consists of members of the official fan clubs (OFCs), the Ultras Wolfsburg, and the Supporters Wolfsburg. The fan officer for disabled people, Andreas Marks, and the fan officer for women's football, Petra Biallowons, will strengthen the Club-Fan-Council further at the beginning of the 2020/2021 season. All of the representatives are official contacts and shared representatives of the interests of all fans in discussions with VfL Wolfsburg. This ensures that there is always

close co-operation between the fan groups, independent of the specific people involved. The Club-Fan-Council meets quarterly, but can also be convened at short notice in response to specific situations. At the editing deadline, the council had already held at three regular meetings, and other extraordinary meetings.

At the end of the reporting period, VfL Wolfsburg had over 119 OFCs with around 10,500 members. Three of the OFCs are explicitly involved in women's football.

#### Footballing activities for all age groups and skills levels

VfL offers children, youngsters and adults a wide range of opportunities to join in as members, and take part in footballing activities in Wolfsburg and elsewhere. For this purpose, VfL established the WölfeClub in 2004 for football fans over the age of 14, as well as the WölfiClub as the official kids club for the under 14-year-olds. The WölfiClub



A programme for the Mini-Wölfis was incorporated in the VfL-Club offers in 2017.

***“WHEN WE CARRY OUT THE  
EVENTS OF THE WÖLFE-CLUB  
55PLUS, IT IS AS THOUGH I WAS  
GOING OUT WITH MY FAMILY.”***

Wölfe-Club 55Plus supervisor Sabine Behnke

with 4350 members at the last count, is now one of the biggest kids clubs in the Bundesliga. In response to the big demand for age-compatible footballing activities, the club also established the WölfeClub 55plus in 2009. Each of the three clubs therefore celebrated their own anniversaries in 2019. 2017 saw the provision of activities for the youngest VfL fans, the Mini Wölfis. “Buggy-Fit” is open to babies up to twelve months old in co-operation with the charitable Protestant Family Education Service Wolfsburg. There is also a crèche for one to two-year-olds, a play group for three to four-year-olds, and a ball school for four to six-year-olds. These offers are taken up every year by around 1000 families.

#### Up close with the WölfeClub

The WölfeClub celebrated its 15th anniversary with a members-recruit-members campaign. A thank you in the form of customised scarves, exclusive football shirts and luggage trolleys were handed out for each successfully recruited new member.

The WölfeClub today is an indispensable member of the Wolfsburg football family. It provides its members with a wide range of exclusive participation opportunities throughout the year: at home matches for instance they can watch the game in the

Volkswagen Arena very close to the pitch. Members also have opportunities to rub shoulders with the VfL professional players on the fan club day or at the WölfeClub talk event — including photo opportunities and the chance to collect autographs. Fans aged between 14 and 17 years, are also given an opportunity to take part in supervised home match visits or joint visits to away matches.

#### Taking over responsibility for tomorrow's fans

At its tenth anniversary celebrations, the WölfiClub combined its annual VfL Kids Day with the VfL Stadium Festival for the first time, to turn the party into a big family festival with around 10,000 visitors. There was also a stamp card campaign throughout the 2019/2020 season. Members' cards were stamped whenever they visited an event organised by the WölfiClub, the VfL Football School or the VfL Football World. Members with a full stamp card were given an embroidered home football shirt for the 2019/2020 Bundesliga season.

The VfL Kids Day is a major event organised by the WölfiClub, and is open to all young fans. A lantern procession as also open to everyone. This took place in autumn 2019 for the third time, and for the first time together with the Grizzlys Wolfsburg and the Hotel Courtyard by Marriott Wolfsburg. The number of participants in the lantern procession has grown in the three years since 2017 from 150 to 1500. Other regular WölfiClub events are only open to members. Because many of the young members also participate in the VfL Football School, another of the WölfiClub's ambitions is to support up-and-coming young footballers from the region, and to tie them to VfL.

The activities of the WölfiClub are based on the Bundesliga Kids Club guidelines issued by the DFL. It is an expression of professional football's social responsibility. In addition, it sets high quality standards, and prioritises the needs of the fans of tomorrow.

#### Age-compatible football experiences from show programmes to international tournaments

A major anniversary party with 250 guests and a show programme in the Volkswagen Arena: that is how the WölfeClub 55plus celebrated its tenth anniversary in summer 2019.

A very popular initiative established by the WölfeClub 55plus is its walking football (see page 70), a team sport with a low risk of injuries.



## ***“NOBODY IS EXCLUDED, EVERYONE JOINS IN”***

The VfL Children's Football.festival took place on 10 November 2019 at the official training grounds of the wolves – right in front of the Volkswagen Arena.

The festival featured 130 boys and girls aged between six to eight years. They played mini football on twelve mini pitches and with 48 mini goals. The guests were welcomed by the tournament manager and presenter Denis Hillmann.

The head of the festival, Johannes Plecksnies, was thrilled right from the very first moment: “The benefits of our VfL Children's Football.Festival are immediately obvious: all of the children played for the same amount of time because of the rotation principle. In addition, the children always play against other children with the same level of skills. This guarantees fun, satisfaction and a rapid learning curve for all involved. And because they are all individually involved in refereeing decisions, they also learn all about fundamental values such as fair play and joining in.”

During the reporting period, VfL provided regular training to establish a Walking Football team capable of taking part in tournaments, and which participated in the Walking Football League. Twelve football clubs from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands participate in the new league, which has so far organised two tournaments a year. The league plans to increase the number of participants further in future to satisfy the enormous demand.

### **VfL Football School: the fun way to improve one's footballing intelligence**

Football for children operates in a slightly different way to football for adults. That is

why, in the nearly ten years since it was set up, VfL Wolfsburg has taught football in its Football School in ways which match the needs of children and youngsters. Initially started primarily as an offer for the children of members of the Volkswagen workforce during annual factory holidays, the VfL Football School has now grown into an attractive service with qualified trainers for young enthusiastic footballers from other walks of life. The training is based on a reformed training approach concentrating on playing on mini pitches. A very high priority is also placed here on the training undergone by the coaches themselves. They not only have to inspire the children in general about the fun to be had playing football and getting exercise, but also get across values such as team spirit and fair play. The VfL Football School sees itself as an innovative catalyst and provider of training opportunities for children's football and public football overall. Its guidelines express the objective of making a contribution to the development and strengthening of the clubs, schools and kindergartens in the region, and to get across positive values and team spirit.

The Football School's approach is oriented towards the development model

for children's football established by Horst Wein and/or footballing intelligence which strengthens cognitive training. It also resembles a new approach taken by the DFB with its children's football reform. The basic philosophy is to provide children with a game which is tailored to their skills and interests. Experience has shown that this makes it easier for children to absorb the core values of football: fair play, playing for fun, and a relaxed attitude to winning or losing.

The VfL Football School pursues a twin objective with its approach: it wants to develop the individual sporting skills of the children, at the same time as strengthening the grass roots of football as a whole, and its clubs, in line with the aims of the DFB Amateur Football Congress 2019. The VfL Wolfsburg management team therefore see the VfL Football School as making an important contribution to the development of the football sector overall: they therefore generously pass on their experience to their partner clubs and other co-operation partners, and help them configure the competitions and training courses.

Because of the major demand for the development of young footballers, further improvements were made to the staffing of the VfL Football School during the reporting period: the management team consisted at the latest count of three managers. The Football School employs around 50 trainers on a freelance basis, who undergo regular further qualification in training courses and skills improvement seminars.

#### Expansion of the Wolfsburg model

The Football School today has attracted a great deal of interest throughout Germany. VfL Wolfsburg started an online seminar as its first model project in June 2020 with the aim of enabling the countrywide transfer of skills in the training and further skills development of the football coaches. Other online and local seminars are to follow. There are also plans to organise a major congress every year in Wolfsburg with around 500 participants. The trial run for these plans was the "Football School Light" programme organised by VfL in June/July 2020. This enabled clubs from the region to take part in a training course to learn about Corona-conform training opportunities observing the social distancing regulations.



The VfL Football-School not only teaches basic football skills, but also gets across important values such as fair play.

Around 50 coaches and over 500 children took part in the programme.

The VfL Football School in Wolfsburg has also been continuously further developed. Measures include plans to further expand the range of activities offered covering "girls football and promoting girl footballers" in co-operation with the VfL Women's Football division. Planned activities include camps for girls, as well as tournaments and opportunities to form teams.

Another new aspect is the VfL Children's Football Festival. VfL provides services here to help clubs, authorities, schools and private initiatives to organise mini pitch tournaments, for instance in schoolyards. VfL also supports neighbourhood kicks in Wolfsburg, and training programmes with charitable organisations: For instance, Roy Präger – ex-professional footballer and VfL idol – joined forces with the Lebenshilfe charity in 2018 to train people with mental handicaps.

#### International VfL Football School involvement:

The Football School undertook a number of sponsoring trips in 2018 and 2019, financed by the Volkswagen Group and other industrial contacts. The Football School was in Mexico twice, including at Volkswagen and the Grupo Sesé logistics company. Around 250 children were involved each time. There were two trips in each case by the VfL Football School

to venues in the USA and to Saragossa, where 70 children were able to take part in the training events at each visit. There were also several trips to China during the reporting period to locations run by Volkswagen and the tyre manufacturer Linglong, at which around 700 children were able to take part in the training course. The German embassy made its premises in Beijing available for one of these courses.

#### TICKET ACCESS AND PRICES

It is very important for VfL Wolfsburg that all fans can afford its tickets. It is therefore one of the clubs in the Bundesliga with the lowest ticket prices. This is the same justification behind VfL's efforts to combat ticket touting in the internet, so as to prevent any distortion to its pricing structures. Moreover, VfL hands over a block of free tickets to social

institutions, so that their clients are also given an opportunity to visit the stadium.

The Corona pandemic currently makes it impossible to issue any statement concerning the future availability of tickets. The detailed planning of ticket sales is also complicated by the continuing lack of clarity regarding the overall situation. VfL Wolfsburg will therefore be offering its fans the opportunity to buy season tickets for the coming 2020/2021 season, whilst paying special attention to providing the highest possible level of fan-friendliness and flexibility with respect to its relevant regulations. Only when it is clear that matches can again be played with a full contingent of spectators, and thus that the seats for the season ticket holders can be used without any restrictions, will the actual price of the tickets be debited accordingly.

## FANS MAKE DONATIONS FOR REGIONAL SPORTS CLUBS

Sporting activities and opportunities for the general public have been seriously affected by the Corona pandemic. Help was provided by VfL Wolfsburg season holders: on behalf of VfL Wolfsburg and its fans, managing director Michael Meeske handed over a cheque worth Euro 15,000 on 23 July 2020 to sports associations in Gifhorn, Helmstedt and Wolfsburg. The money was donated by people who were unable to attend the home matches during the pandemic, but who waived the right to receive financial compensation for their unused season tickets. The donated funds were used to buy sporting equipment, which the clubs then made available for kids and youth projects.




**150**

children's birthdays with  
a total of 1500 guests in  
the Volkswagen Arena

**4,500**  
**WölfiCLUB**

members of the Wölfi-Club

**200**

appearances by  
the Wölfi mascot  
per season



Over 300 kids  
events in total  
per season


**200**

children as flag kids  
per season


**1,500**

children plus another  
1500 visitors at the  
annual VfL-Kids-Day


**100**

Wölfe-Club campaigns  
per season

**500**

player escorts at Bundesliga  
home matches per season

**800**

children on the Wölfi-Club  
members panel in the Volkswagen Arena


**750**

children and youngsters in  
supervised home match  
adventures per season

Christmas party with

**200**

children

## MILE STONES

- ✓ Renewed certification by DEKRA and DFB of the stadium security measures developed for match days
- ✓ Implementing a security ring for the Volkswagen Arena to make the football experience as safe as possible
- ✓ Increased staffing of the VfL Football School for the sporting development of children, and to strengthen grassroots football

## OUTLOOK





VfL wishes to position itself, with new offers and formats, as the most family-friendly football club






# CSR PROGRAMME




## MANAGED SUSTAINABILITY

The CSR programme provides an overview over the many ways in which VfL Wolfsburg gets involved in CSR projects, and provides information on each of the objectives, and the status of the implementation. It is used for the internal control of the measures, as well as to provide transparent reporting on the club's progress.

STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT			
Objective	Planned completion date	Implementation status	Status
Strategic development of the organisation	End season 2020/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launching strategy 2020+ "We Drive Football" and the VfL core competences</li> <li>Raising the awareness of the employees for the new strategy and their components by issuing information material and carrying out training courses</li> <li>Implementing the versatile target management method OKR, to improve the understanding of the corporate goals and for interdepartmental communications</li> </ul>	
Expansion and establishment of the sustainability evaluation of partner organisations and suppliers	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch of the sustainability rating "S-rating" of the Volkswagen Group for its suppliers in July 2019</li> <li>Assessing the new catering services on the basis of sustainability criteria</li> </ul>	
(Long-term) conversion of 10 % of the merchandising products to sustainably-certified products	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The strip for the 2020/2021 season is made of recycled PET bottles</li> <li>Offer of four T-shirts, a hoody and boxer shorts certified according to GOTS and/or Fairtrade standards, as well as a bag made of recycled PET bottles, and a sandwich box made of sugar cane</li> </ul>	
Boosting the popularity of the club	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An analysis reveals that VfL particularly emphasises its association with the region and the shouldering of responsibility</li> <li>According to the annual brand tracking, VfL improved its position in almost all value criteria</li> </ul>	
Continuation of regular stakeholder dialogue at various levels	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dialogue event with external stakeholders with the heading "Football Moves Society" and subsequent workshops</li> <li>Carrying out a dialogue on offers for extracurricular education</li> <li>Continuing the offer of dialogue for the sustainable development of the sector</li> <li>The dialogue event planned for March 2020 had to be postponed to 2021 because of the Corona pandemic.</li> </ul>	
EMPLOYEES			
Objective	Planned completion date	Implementation status	Status
Promoting sports and health-promoting offers for employees	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing a sports psychology department run by VfL Med</li> <li>Offering training courses for managers for the early identification of mental illness</li> </ul>	
Promoting youth work	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting the school and personal skills of the youth players via mentors and mental trainers</li> <li>Launching the "Life.Values" concept to strengthen personality development</li> <li>The offer of vocational training or a sandwich course at Volkswagen Group Services adopted by nine players</li> </ul>	
Broadening the awareness-enhancement measures for employees – particularly concerning climate protection and diversity	end 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation of two employees in the training course for CSR managers (IHK Nuremberg) and subsequent certification</li> <li>Planned implementation of topic-focused workshops and training courses</li> </ul>	
Strengthening the relationship to the workforce and the modern corporate culture	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slight rise in fluctuation ratio: 5.3 % (1st HY 2018: 4.6 %)</li> <li>Slight decline in female ratio: 36 % (compared to 2018: 38 %)</li> <li>Boosting employee satisfaction according to the mood barometer: 75.2 % (cf. 2018: 69.1 %)</li> <li>Establishing the "Ideas Factory" project group to improve the integration of employees</li> <li>Establishing a culture cafe as a format for open dialogue</li> </ul>	

ENVIRONMENT			
Objective	Planned completion date	Implementation status	Status
Reducing CO <sub>2</sub> emissions to net-zero	end 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction of Scope-1 and Scope-2 emissions by 24.52 % compared to the 2017/2018 season</li> <li>Reduction of all emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3) by 9.98 % compared to the 2017/2018 season year</li> <li>Compensation for emissions in the 2019/2020 season (2.463 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e)</li> </ul>	
Promoting sustainable mobility in the workforce, sports and amongst fans	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of four double charging posts for electric vehicles</li> <li>Preparing an integrated concept for electro mobility</li> </ul>	
Saving natural resources	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saving electricity by converting pitch lighting to LED floodlights and VIP zone lighting to LED lights</li> <li>Converting to water-saving and automatic taps in the stadium</li> <li>Use of recycling paper instead of plastic as a packaging material for the online shop mail-order packages</li> </ul>	
Minimising micro-plastics	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-operation agreement with the non-governmental organisation Stop! Micro Waste to reduce micro-plastics</li> </ul>	

SOCIETY			
Objective	Planned completion date	Implementation status	Status
Implementing measures concerning diversity and anti-discrimination	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the league-wide campaign match days against discrimination</li> <li>Implementation of VfL Diversity Weeks focusing on combating homophobia and sexism</li> <li>Special "Diversity" football shirt 2019 and 2020</li> <li>Setting up the "Wolfsburg Schools for Diversity" project</li> <li>Holding a project week for deaf and hearing-impaired fans</li> </ul>	
Expanding and strengthening partner networks	end 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing and implementing a systematic concept for expanding the partner club network to 150 in 2021 (summer 2020: 100 partner clubs)</li> <li>Establishing a new co-operation project with the Youth Department and the Fan Project of Wolfsburg council for the promotion of democracy and diversity</li> </ul>	
Commitment to education and health	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duden writing competition with 1,278 pupils in 2020 (previous year: record of around 1,600)</li> <li>Publishing first learning magazine with sustainability-oriented content together with the Duden publishing house and memo AG</li> <li>Expanding the schools sport enrichment programmes</li> </ul>	
Developing an integrated concept for establishing diversity in all areas	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing a new co-operation project with the KickIn! Inclusion advice office; and using this as a springboard to implement planned measures for even more diversity in the stadium and aspects involving match days</li> <li>Planned expansion of measures for gender and sexual diversity in co-operation with KoFaS</li> </ul>	
Promoting corporate volunteering amongst the employees	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing a "Moving Together" day based on corporate volunteering; planned continuation of the implementation every year.</li> </ul>	

FANS AND MEMBERS			
Objective	Planned completion date	Implementation status	Status
Institutionalising fan communications	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approving a fan communications concept</li> <li>Establishing a club-fan council made up of representatives of the OFCs, ultras, supporters and VfL</li> </ul>	
Expanding the VfL Football School activities	end 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International: implementing training camps in China, the USA and Spain</li> <li>Regional: implementing a festival for children</li> <li>Expanding the needs and target-group-specific offers</li> </ul>	
Improving the service quality for fans	continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned implementation of an integrated service concept including training courses for employees</li> <li>Planned implementation of new formats to boost the identification and satisfaction of fans and members</li> </ul>	

# GRI CONTENT INDEX

This report was prepared by observing the GRI standards: option “Core”. The standard was published by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The GRI contents index provides an overview on the general and specific details contained in the report.

GENERAL INFORMATION			
Organisation profile			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GR 102-1	Name of the organisation	Page 3	VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH
GRI 102-2	Activities, brands, products and services	Page 3, 26	
GRI 102-3	Headquarters of the organisation		Wolfsburg
GRI 102-4	Operational sites	Page 18	
GRI 102-5	Ownership structure and legal form	Page 18 f.	
GRI 102-6	Markets served	Page 18 f., 80 f.	
GRI 102-7	Size of the organisation	Page 34	Revenues and total capitalisation and other financial metrics are not reported on for competition reasons.
GRI 102-8	Information on staff and other employees	Page 34	
GRI 102-9	Supply chain	Page 26	
GRI 102-10	Significant changes in the organisation and its supply chain	Page 19	There were no major changes.
GRI 102-11	Precautionary approach or precautionary principle	Page 7, 18 f.	
GRI 102-12	External initiatives	Page 28 f.	
GRI 102-13	Memberships in societies and pressure groups	Page 28 f.	
Strategy			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 102-14	Declaration of the senior manager	Page 6	
Ethics and integrity			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 102-16	Values, principles, standards and codes of conduct	Page 16	
Company management			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 102-18	Management structure	Page 19 f.	
Involvement of stakeholders			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 102-40	List of stakeholders	Page 28	
GRI 102-41	Collective bargaining agreements	Page 35 f.	
GRI 102-42	Determination and selection of stakeholders	Page 28	
GRI 102-43	Approach for involving stakeholders	Page 28 f., 76 f.	
GRI 102-44	Important topics and raised concerns	Page 28 f., 76 f.	
Procedures for reporting			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 102-45	Entities contained in the consolidated annual financial statements		VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH
GRI 102-46	Procedure for determining the contents of the report and the delimitation of topics	Page 30	
GRI 102-47	List of main topics	Page 30	
GRI 102-48	New depiction of information	Page 18	There were no major changes
GRI 102-49	Changes in reporting	Page 30	
GRI 102-50	Reporting period	Page 3	
GRI 102-51	Date of the last report		Sustainability report 2016: November 2016 Progress report 2018: November 2018
GRI 102-52	Reporting cycle	Page 3	
GRI 102-53	Contact for questions concerning the report	Page 90	
GRI 102-54	Declaration on reporting in compliance with the GRI standards	Page 3	
GRI 102-55	GRI contents index	Page 84	
GRI 102-56	External auditing		There has been no confirmation of the report by a third party

SPECIFIC DETAILS			
<b>GRI 205: Combating corruption 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 21 f., 86	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 205-2	Communication and training courses on the guidelines and procedures for combating corruption	Page 23	
<b>GRI 206: Anti-competitive conduct 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Delimitation: within the organisation	Page 21 f., 86	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 206-1	Litigation due to anti-competitive conduct, cartel and monopoly formation	Page 23	
<b>GRI 302: Energy 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 48 f., 87	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 302-1	Energy consumption within the organisation	Page 56 f.	VfL reports energy consumption in megawatt hours (MWh). One megawatt hour corresponds to 3.6 gigajoules (GJ)
<b>GRI 303: Water and wastewater 2016</b>			
GRI-Standards	Name	Verweis	Kommentar & zusätzliche Informationen
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 48 f., 87	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 303-1	Water extraction according to sources	Page 51	
<b>GRI 305: Emissions 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 48 f., 87	Delimitation: within and outside of the organisation
GRI 305-1	Direct GHG emissions (Scope 1)	Page 54 f.	
GRI 305-2	Indirect energy-related GHG emissions (Scope 2)	Page 54 f.	
GRI 305-3	Other indirect GHG emissions (Scope 3)	Page 54 f.	
<b>GRI 306: Wastewater and waste 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 48 f.	Delimitation: within and outside of the organisation
GRI 306-2	Waste according to type and disposal method	Page 51, 53	Detailed figures on waste type are currently not available
<b>GRI 307: Environmental compliance 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 21 f.	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 307-1	Non-compliance with environmental protection laws and regulations	Page 23	
<b>GRI 401: Employment 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 34 f., 86	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 401-1	New employees and employee fluctuation	Page 36	Detailed figures on new recruits and employee fluctuation according to sex and age currently not available
<b>GRI 402: Employee – employer relationship 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 34 f.	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 402-1	Minimum reporting deadlines for corporate changes	Page 36	Worker representatives are involved in the processes early on if major changes to the company are being considered. No contractually defined minimum reporting deadlines have so far been established.
<b>GRI 403: Occupational health and safety 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 42 f., 86	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 403-2	Nature and rate of injuries, occupational illnesses, days of sick leave, absenteeism and total number of occupational fatalities	Page 42 f.	Detailed figures on injury statistics are currently not available
<b>GRI 404: Education and further education 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 36 f., 86	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 404-2	Programme for improving the competence of employees and helping them with transitions	Page 37 f.	
<b>GRI 406: Freedom from discrimination 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 41, 86 f.	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 406-1	Discrimination incidents and implemented corrective measures	Page 37 f.	There were no discrimination incidents during the reporting period
<b>GRI 419: Socio-economic compliance 2016</b>			
GRI standards	Name	Reference	Comments and additional information
GRI 103-1/2/3	Details of management approach	Page 21 f.	Delimitation: within the organisation
GRI 419-1	Non-compliance with laws and regulations covering social and economic aspects	Page 23	

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