

Weybridge Lawn Tennis Club AGM March 13th 2016 Chairman's Report.

Thank you all for the very healthy turn out today and welcome to the 2016 WLTC AGM.

It has been another tremendous year for the club and despite 26 people not renewing their membership last year (mainly through injury or old age) we achieved in total a very admirable 36 new adult members joining us in the past 12 months – a tremendous feat may I add and what an interesting and diverse bunch we have. Italians, South Africans, Geordies and even a thespian luvvie!!! To achieve this net gain of 10 additional members in the last year we received approximately 57 enquiries for new adult membership. Two thirds of these came via the website; the other third being split between walk-ins, phone enquiries, and of course the highly successful open day which in itself resulted in 6 new adult members. We have also received approximately 40 enquiries from the website for the Junior section which have been passed directly on to Adrian for follow up and this has contributed to us now having in excess of over 150 Junior Members. An amazing figure considering the huge competition we face locally and the fact that we only have 5 courts and we reside in an area that has huge competition from an abundance of larger and wealthier clubs. When I first became Chairman we only had approximately 30 Juniors, so Adrian must be complemented for his tremendous efforts here...he is a wonderful ambassador for our club and with his excellent coaching programme and the links he continues to forge with the local schools etc as well as his very successful “rusty returner” sessions they all contribute greatly to increase our membership numbers. So please be a little more tolerant with his court usage!

Huge thanks must also go to the outgoing Chris Ford for his tremendous efforts over the last few years and his successor whom we are actively looking for has a tough but rewarding act to follow. Our Membership Secretary Richard Kottler must also be thanked for creating his excellent “on line app” which captures info on prospective new members and then the likes of Alison and Roz will lobby prospective female members to join and Andy Pepper and other Male committee members seducing new gentlemen members in to joining .
(Please take away Adrian's excellent coaching update on your departure)

Our outgoing treasurer Andy Sharp will follow me by running through amongst others last year's accounts – which have been kindly scrutinised as ever by Trevor Peacock. A big thank you must go to Andy for his excellent work over the last few years and he has been a huge contributor to the healthy financial state the club finds itself in. Chris Ford has kindly agreed to take the Treasurer role over from Andy.

I would also like to thank Roz for being a brilliant and tireless Honorary Secretary and Geoff Mullens for just always being there when needed. I must also thank the rest of the Committee members who tirelessly work behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of our wonderful club.

As ever we have had mixed fortunes in both the Chaucer and Woking leagues.

Well done to all the team Captains and players but I must single out Brian Chubb for his continued loyalty and efforts in this area and so I have asked him for an update at the end of this meeting as to what some of these successes were? (No surprise here, but yours truly made no contribution at all in this area!)

Other thanks must go to Sally Bean who has tirelessly contributed to our excellent and informative website over the years and has also battled along with Richard Kottler to get the club to be a little more digital savvy with the likes of facebook and twitter etc. A Herculean task to say the least!

As you will probably know by now but Gordon Mackett has decided to retire from both tennis and his grounds man duties. He has been a magnificent servant to the club for so many years and I wish him and Josie a very happy and enjoyable retirement. He has asked me to read this letter out to you in his absence.

"Most of you will be aware that I am no longer able to play tennis and some will say no doubt, thank goodness... no more Mr Grumpy (my excuse old age). Not being able to dash around the court any more has been difficult to accept, but as my grandchildren keep reminding me "Grandpa you have done well to still to be playing at 79" I hope members will bear with me on some of my memories?

I joined the club by the river in 1966 and the only other member, who was there then, was Keith Barnett. He was a much better player than me and you had to be played in to assess if you were good enough to join. I was played in by Keith and fortunately he took pity on me with the magic words " Providing you improve your back hand we will accept you" Thanks Keith I did!!!!!!

I became Chairman in the 1980s a position I occupied for 11 years and was rewarded a life membership which made me very proud. Ann Grossmith was my first Secretary and sadly no longer with us. As one of the founders of the club and for her services over many years, she also became a life member.

I should have mentioned that I only became Chairman, as at the first meeting for re-election I was the only one nominated because I was wearing s suit and tie!!!

My ambition was always to become good enough to play for our club and I finally achieved that in the 80s, much to the dismay of my wife as I was always practising.

This led me to being asked to captain the Mens Woking League A team for many years (happy team nights spent at The Old Crown)

Finally, in the last few years I became captain of the Mens Veterans summer teams, which was great as we were coming up against other guys of the same age group.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to the midweekers who because of my Friday morning gardening work, I have got to know very well. They are always immaculately turned out in mostly white and some full members could do worse than respect the mostly white rule on court.

On a finishing note members may not know that I live in Berkshire which is 40miles from the club there and back, which equates to roughly to 345,000 miles over 60 years.

How about that!!!!

Enjoy your tennis, and I hope to see you all on Finals Day

Gordon

Gordon would normally announce at the end of this meeting the winner of the much anticipated and coveted "most improved player of the year award" so he has asked the inaugural winner of the trophy Stephen Parrish to present this to the 2016 winner and also to read out the bizarre list of previous recipients !

We continue to negotiate with Elmbridge Borough Council about a potential lease for our grounds and so I have asked Geoff Mullens to give you afterwards a quick overview of where we are with these talks as they have a direct influence on future expenditure and decisions on court surfaces and floodlights etc.

I would also like to bring to your attention to a limited number of excellent "fruit of the loom" club sweatshirts and hoodies which are durable, warm, stylish and great value for money and when worn (by the majority of our members) they amount to great marketing for the club... so I urge you to put your hand in your pocket and purchase one for you and your partners and siblings so you can all wear our branded clothing with pride wherever you go!

As ever, apologies to anyone I may have omitted and whom did not deserve to be. The club would not be the wonderful club it is without the tireless support of your excellent committee and you our members. I must encourage you all to continue contributing wherever possible for the good of the club and to ensure another wonderful year for WLTC.

Many thanks,

Patrick Gibbon.
Chairman WLTC