

Weybridge Lawn Tennis Club AGM - 8th April 2018

Chairman's Report

Welcome to the 2018 WLTC AGM and a big "thank you" to all for sparing your valuable time this afternoon. It was going to be a first for the Chairman to have to skype his report from 400 Kilometres north of the Arctic Circle in Norway and a biting -40 degrees for it all to be abandoned because of a slight flurry of snow in good old blighty !

We very much appreciate all of your support for what has been another progressive year for the club.

With much regret we have had to say goodbye to our outgoing treasurer Foggy Dessillas who has now moved from the area. We are also losing Sandro Cafasso who has changed jobs recently and is only able to come back to the area less often than he would wish. I would like it on record to thank them both for their wonderful support and enthusiasm over the last couple of years and we wish them both well. We very much welcome their replacements though in John Barlow (Treasurer) and Cath Wallace who we have already witnessed will be fantastic replacements. We also have a "first" in having an ex Committee member requesting they would like to actually come back on board. Clearly amnesia has set in but welcome back Mike McNulty. You have always been a great character and contributor to our club.

Talking of John I would like to thank his accountant wife Patricia for kindly auditing this year's accounts. With Foggy moving away he only took possession of these accounts very recently and he has had to work very hard to bring these up to date. I can confirm though that the Club Accounts (Receipts and Payments) balance with the cash at bank as of the beginning of April 2018. If any WLTC Member wishes to view these accounts they are of course available for inspection.

Over the last few years we have done our best to keep subscription rate increases to either zero or in line or below inflation and I am delighted to announce that most categories will remain the same as last year.

However, with a number of expensive outgoings on the horizon especially with the essential re-surfacing of courts 1 and 2 we have taken professional advice from Lee West a recognised expert LTA consultant in this field. The carpet has reached the end of it's life and needs replacing, we also intend to address the long standing drainage problem.

His recommendation is to raise the court level by 10 inches and install a new sub-base. These new foundations will conform to modern court construction and prove effective for the next 50 years before adding the final playing surface of artificial clay. We would also like to replace the old fencing and fit wider gates to allow for wheelchair access. The cost of these improvements are significant though. With careful financial management over the years the club has built up a substantial capital fund to meet most of these costs. However we may have a shortfall of perhaps up to even £30,000 which the committee is aiming to cover from members' loans. I will be writing to you all next week with the terms and conditions for this loan offer.

I mentioned artificial clay as our preferred replacement surface option earlier and would like to thank Geoffrey Mullens, Paul Buckingham and Andy Pepper amongst others whom have done a lot of excellent investigative work into this project and we will advise back to all very soon with our final preferred option. However, I have included below a quote from Corin Moore the club captain at Camberley Tennis Club who fully advocates their decision to adopt artificial clay as their primary surface.

“Team players are virtually unanimous in their approval and social players, hitherto wary through either ignorance of other surfaces or not wanting to change the status quo, have expressed their approval with very few exceptions. I have had many emails thanking me for getting these courts upgraded and even the naysayers have graciously admitted that although they voted against them..they have now found them both enjoyable and any original reservations completely overcome. The benefits, as you are no doubt aware, are quite substantial; slightly slower bounce and height giving more time to make shots and improve ability (hence coaches prefer them for juniors etc), less injury and strain to legs and body, the ability to slide rather than stick prevents twisted ankles etc and inclement weather not causing cancellations to matches and social play. Clubs that visit us for league matches have, without exception, voiced their liking and approval. Plus, of course, the ball leaves a mark and avoids bad calls...mostly!”

Our healthy financial status is due mainly to our continued and successful recruitment of new members to replace the fewer who leave or hang up their racquets for good. We will continue to attract these new members via Open Days and other subtle marketing

techniques and as ever if you see people at the club looking around tentatively please approach them, “sell” the benefits and attractions of the club to them and show them what a friendly club we really are!

We continue to try and improve our communication with members via emails and our website www.veybrigeltc.com ...but as ever good content is hard to come by so please if you have any news worthy items please drop a line to Cath Wallace or Richard Kottler or any committee member and we will ensure it will be posted on the website. When visiting our website you will now find under the “club info” a drop down box to a WLTC club clothing section where you can purchase club logo’d hoodies and polo/t shirts etc. to wear with pride.

An enormous amount of work goes on behind the scenes to ensure the clubhouse and grounds stay up to scratch. Tim Jones started as our groundsman back in April 2016 and is doing, I am sure you will all agree, a splendid job. His predecessor Gordon Mackett was hoping to attend today but is unfortunately unable to join us because of family commitments. Gordon will always be most remembered for the “Most Improved Player” tankard which he created and provided. Stephen Parrish has now assumed this role and always reads out the names of previous recipients, which amuses everyone. You do have to question the quality of their eye vision over these years!

As you can see, where you are all sitting today, the old junior’s table tennis room has been transformed into a very nice club room. This is part of a continued project to improve our clubhouse facilities.

A big thank you must go to Paul for all his efforts here in achieving this and it means we can potentially rent this room out for business meetings etc. We are also hosting yoga sessions under the watchful eye of the lovely Sulyone who is offering a free yoga session to all our members as a way of persuading people to join regularly.

I am as ever particularly proud of our continued progress with the junior members. (We now have 130 +) and I urge you all to take away with you Adrian Joly's excellent summary of his programme and achievements within this area. I am constantly hearing from both local primary schools and parents alike how good a coach Adrian is especially with the Children and I would like again to thank him for his splendid efforts here despite a constant battle for court space.

Our club was deeply saddened by the premature death in January of our great friend and my mixed doubles partner Susan Pettinger to bone cancer. She loved this club and we loved her for her infectious happiness and warmth. We plan as a tribute to name our annual American tournament that we hold after her, and present the Susan Pettinger trophy to the winner. All proceeds from the day will go to her favourite charities like the McMillan Nurses. We do really miss you Susan and I hope you are looking down at us today from that great tennis club in heaven.

I regrettably also have to announce the death of Andrew Scorer's Mother Susan who kindly donated a substantial sum towards a Defibrillator. A Defibrillator is a valuable advantage when someone has a heart attack. Unfortunately someone has "borrowed" the item from the locked clubhouse (there was no break in). If anyone has any information to its whereabouts we would be very grateful to receive it. If the person who borrowed it is hearing this message can you please return it without delay? Let's just hope no one is in need of a Defibrillator before then. I want to take this opportunity to also say how poor generally many members are when it comes to security. Can you all please ensure you firmly close the clubhouse and lock doors when you leave? Whilst I am in rant mode I also want to point out how profligate many of our members are with the balls we generously provide free of charge. We are tired of finding perfectly good balls left on court overnight and often 4 balls from a tube when it should only be 3 which is just not on. Please be more vigilant?

As ever, apologies to anyone I may have omitted and whom did not deserve to be. And finally a huge "thank you" to the rest of our Committee and the support team who ensure that WLTC has such an excellent and varied calendar of events. It takes a huge amount of time and effort behind the scenes to make sure our club has something to offer for everyone and do remember those involved give their time freely for the benefit of the club, so I really do urge you to show your appreciation by making an effort to get involved with as many activities as possible throughout 2018/2019.

Thank You.

Patrick Gibbon. Chairman WLTC