



PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2021

Summer should be a time to enjoy outdoor pursuits, such as playing tennis and watching sports with a glass in one's hand. The current month is one of both excitement but also brings a tinge of disappointment. Excitement in that, despite the decision to offer refunds to members for the loss of facilities during lockdown, and the consequent reduction in reserves, your committee has decided to recommend the replacement of lighting and carpets on courts 3 and 4 for the good of the club. Disappointment in that some of the initiatives that the new committee have been working on are not working out as expected.

EGM: An Extraordinary General Meeting has been called for Monday August 16th at 8pm to ask members to approve the replacement of the carpets on Courts 3 & 4. There will be a second motion to replace the current floodlights on these courts and a further one to discuss the lighting on Courts 1 & 2. ***I would urge as many members as possible to attend this meeting to discuss this important and exciting development*** as, under the terms of the Constitution, 25 members are required for the EGM to be quorate. The Project Team will present the outline of the project and answer members' questions.

NEW INITIATIVES: The club can probably take up to 40 new members. Your committee is keen to increase the usage of courts and is considering daytime/afternoon temporary memberships to include playing at club socials. We are also investigating the option of running "Rusty Racquets" in the evenings at 8pm.

BALLS: I made it one of my priorities to reverse the previous committee's decision to stop providing balls for social tennis. While this seems to have been well received, the balls that we have been putting out seem to be wearing out or disappearing very quickly. The only conclusion that the committee can come to is that some members are replacing their own used balls with our new ones. Such behaviour is rather selfish and I am disappointed that our initiative may be being abused by a small number of members. The club spends well over £1,000 on balls each year for the benefit of all members, not a few. We would be grateful if members return the original balls in the trays after use and, if you are using your own, please consider returning them to the club for others' use or recycling.

CAFÉ: Another piece of disappointing news is that the café experiment is being put on hold, at best. This is partly due to the end of lockdown, as the main business of the operators, RJS, which is private and corporate catering, has recovered very quickly and thus they cannot afford the time or cost of running our café. However, although it has only been going for a short period of operation, the amount of business being done has been insufficient for RJS to want to carry on as they are losing money on it. Had the takings been better, there may have been a stronger reason for extending the café experiment, but demand to date has been lower than hoped.

While the café idea is thought to be basically sound with demand coming from the members, the parents and guardians of children being coached and external visitors, it appears that the current model needs changing and we will consider other ones, including paying staff to operate it on our behalf or asking members to run it for us. We shall consider these options and see whether some facility can be offered later in the year. Meanwhile, if anyone would like to have a go at running their own café at the club, please let me know.

We would like to make better use of all the facilities we have and, if the café cannot provide a sufficient return, then we shall look to utilise the function room space in other ways. These could include the hiring out of the hall for special events such as weddings and funerals, children's parties, indoor sports and games such as Pilates and bridge or business meetings. Annette Hammond is spearheading this drive and can be contacted for room hire on hammond.annette@googlemail.com.

SQUASH CLUB NIGHTS: I am happy to report that the squash section is starting club nights again on the first Friday of each month, starting on August 6th. All abilities are welcome and the courts will be booked from 6pm to 8pm. So come down and play a few games and, if anyone wants to stop in the clubhouse for a drink afterwards, I am sure that there will be a number of like minded people there. Please support this new initiative if you can.

BT SPORT: Now that BT has installed a new Wi-Fi system in the clubhouse, the signal is much stronger and can be used by members logging in to the club's guest setting. In addition, BT Sport has been installed in the bar area and we would encourage any member to take advantage of the service to watch a broad range of sports from Premier League and Champions League football to rugby union, cricket, MotoGP, boxing, WWE and UFC.

SPONSORSHIP: We are making slow but steady progress here with the first three sponsors now signed up, but we would love to have more! If you know of any local businesses (or national ones) that might be interested in either sponsoring or advertising at the club, please get in touch with either myself or Steve Dann. I should like to thank Gail Seymour and Anne Dann for their much-appreciated efforts to date in finding potential sponsors.

OBITUARY: It is with great sadness that we report that Chris Midgely recently passed away. Chris, a great character, was a member of the club from 1963/1964, still playing tennis once or twice a week right up to the end. He was one of the original members of the squash section of the club, joining when the first squash court was opened in 1963, and was a stalwart of the Men's first squash team until the 1980s and club squash captain between 1975 and 1977. His funeral is at 13.00 hrs on the 17th August at the Church in Honiley (St John the Baptist) where his first wife Stella lies.

FINALLY: I wish everyone a fantastic summer now that we can get out and about again. Have a great holiday, whether it be in the UK or overseas but, if you are staying in this area, come and have a game or two of social tennis and a drink or two on the terrace.

Steve Williams

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