



PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2021

As Autumn now is making its presence felt as the long summer days fade into darker, cooler evenings it is as well to think about what needs our attention over the next few months. Members will be well aware of the ongoing plans to refurbish tennis courts 3 and 4 but your committee is open to ideas from members concerning any other aspects of the club. For instance, the squash and racquetball section has mooted the idea of adding glass backs to the courts to bring them in line with some other clubs. The tennis section has suggested the provision of a hitting wall and a practice fence. Your committee is also looking at the possibility of introducing the fast-growing Padel Tennis and Pickleball games to KDRC. More urgently, the lighting between clubhouse and the squash courts is being addressed for the safety of all users of all courts in the evening. We would very much like to hear more ideas from members, please!

COURT REFURBISHMENT: We are now in the final tender process although there is a delay due to Solihull MBC dragging its heels over granting planning approval (is there any organisation as leaden-footed as our local council?). We understand that it is unlikely to be considered this year so, unfortunately, the project is likely to be postponed until the spring. We thank all the respondents to our survey about the new court colour (almost 200 responses) with over 80% voting for two-tone green.

TENNIS: There are a number of initiatives going on in the tennis section. Rusty Racquets has been a success using court 1 so as not to interfere with general bookings. We have also had a series of discussions with the coaches about the need to balance the requirements of both coaches and members. While ensuring that coaches will cancel courts if they no longer need them, it has also been agreed that coaches will pay for their use of both lights and courts from next year to ensure a level playing field for all. We are already discussing membership packages for next year with plans for new temporary and junior arrangements.

TENNIS COURT BOOKINGS: It has come to our attention that some members have introduced guests without paying the visitor fee that is collected through Bookit. Those members are being spoken to but we would ask all members to ensure that they use the guest entry on Bookit when they introduce a visitor and pay the appropriate £6.

TENNIS BALLS: Members will be aware that I made it one of my priorities to reverse the previous committee's decision to stop providing balls for social tennis. At present, the club spends well over £1,000 on balls each year for the benefit of all members – the only club in the area to do so. I can confirm that the provision of balls for social tennis (including all

tournaments, club nights and matches) will continue for the foreseeable future. As a club we are faced with the prospect of significantly higher costs next year (particularly energy) and your committee is looking at ways to save money to avoid large increases in subscriptions. It now seems an appropriate time to ask members to provide their own balls for non-social play and it is proposed that balls for all sports will be made available for purchase behind the bar at trade prices, or from Sally-Ann Shaw during the week.

RECYCLING: I have now been in touch with a tennis ball recycling (not-for-profit) business and it looks as if we should be able to fund the majority of our social and match balls from the proceeds from recycling all our old balls. A recycling unit will soon arrive at the club and members will be able to return used balls for recycling in this way. Members may be interested that Recycaball donates to the following charities: Make A Wish, Cancer Research UK, The British Heart Foundation, The Alzheimer's Society, The National Autistic Society, The Parkinson's Disease Society, CALM, Macmillan Cancer Support, Blue Elephant, Help For Heroes, Foodbank Fundraising, The Stroke Association, ASYTST, NLAAS, Veterans Lifeline, The Tennis Foundation, Tennis First, & Tennis For Free. It also donated over 1,200 balls to the following charities: Save The Children, NSPCC, Barnardo's, Under Privileged Nurseries/Schools, Children's Homes, Rescue Centres, RSPCA, Police Dogs, Guide Dogs.

SQUASH: The squash and racquetball section has joined the social nights for both games together to free up court time now that matches have started. These will take place on the first Friday of each month. All abilities are welcome and the courts will be booked from 6pm to 8pm. The team matches started on October 4th and I am delighted to report that the 1st team won 5-0 and the 2nd team won 4-1. In addition, a new lady member has joined the club enabling us to field a Ladies' team. An excellent start to the season!

BAR: I am pleased to announce that we have a new team to run our bar, initially for a six-month trial period. Rachel and Gemma are now staffing the bar, arranging maintenance work, completing weekly line cleans and ensuring that the cellar is maintained to a high standard of cleanliness. Members will probably already know both Rachel and Gemma as they have worked in the bar before, but we hope that all our members will give them lots of support going forward. I am sure that they will be introducing a few new ideas of their own for evenings at the bar! (In passing, we are still looking for the Bose speaker that was present in the bar before lockdown, so if anyone can shed some light on its whereabouts, please let us know).

SPONSORSHIP: Members may well have spotted some new advertising banners appearing on the courts. We are very grateful to our new partners including Broadstreet Wealth Management, Elecride, Wiseman Motors and DM &Co for their support and I would encourage all our members to support our new sponsors. We are hoping that this list will get longer as the year progresses.

HOUSE MATTERS: There have been a number of in-house matters that our Operations team have successfully completed including the provision of new CCTV equipment for the entire club, including the squash courts, alarm systems (beware of trying to open the patio doors without approval!) and cycle racks in front of the clubhouse (as requested by members).

Observant members will also have noticed that a vehicle has extensively damaged the exterior wall of the kitchen of the clubhouse. While it is disappointing that the person concerned has not reported their part in this accident to the club, we are now studying CCTV footage to establish the time and cause of the damage. We will also be talking with both our own insurers and other parties to get this matter sorted out as soon as possible.

I should like to thank Lynn Brown for her leadership in these matters and Paul Tinley, House Chairman, for all their hard work in getting so much of the hard work done. Paul has now decided to take a back seat, having achieved the majority of these improvements, and thus we are now looking for a new House Chair to take over what I am sure will be a much easier role going forward. So, if there is anyone who has an aptitude for both hands-on maintenance and administration, we would love to hear from them.

SOCIAL EVENTS: With lockdown hopefully behind us, and COVID under control – or at least being addressed, Della has been getting teams together to organise some social events which I hope you will all support. The main dates in the social diary are:

Friday, November 26 – President’s Quiz Night (including fish and chips and prizes). A fun quiz for teams of up to six people. Please see Lisa Eyre for full details and tickets.

Saturday, December 18 – Christmas Party (welcome drink, hot food and an amazing professional and unique entertainer, NuTone DJ, who will entertain us all for the entire evening. Please see notices for details – but hurry, as the limited number of tickets are selling fast.

FINALLY: It is the season of leaves and “mellow fruitfulness” which means that the courts have to be maintained more regularly than during the summer. Chris, our groundsman, is doing an excellent job but I should like to remind all tennis players to sweep courts 1-4 after use as always to keep the levels of sand in place.

Steve Williams
October 2021