

CHAIR'S REPORT 2023-24



I would like to welcome you all to the AGM and thank you for coming. The club has continued to go from strength to strength so there is a lot to cover. The report we are going to present to you covers the financial period of 2023 and period of activity for the club from May 2023 to May 2024.

Staffing

This has been a very busy year for Sara and Charlotte with lots of new members to look after and improvements to the club so please join me in thanking them for doing such a fantastic job. Kevin Pillinger, our bar manager has continued to ensure that the Hidden Gem is the social hub of the club. Thanks, must also go to his team of staff who ensure our members can enjoy the best bar in town.

Jan Randall has been the Welfare and Safeguarding Officer since the start of 2023 and has ensured this role is much more visible around the club and that we have all the right processes in place to ensure the welfare of our members. We are also introducing junior safeguarding representatives moving forward.

Thanks, must also go Dave Frankton and our contract cleaners and gardeners who keep our facilities well maintained, clean and tidy.

I would also like to say thank you to the team of coaches from both tennis and squash. The strength of the coaching set-up at the club is one of the elements that sets us apart from other clubs locally.

Club Finances and Membership

Dan Cale as treasurer, will present the specific detail of the accounts and membership. Once again, he will be reporting on a record year with the membership cap for full membership still in place. We have seen good growth in gym membership which is in part due to the introduction of Michelle Clements and her PT services. We currently have 85 social members who obviously see the benefits of having access to the Hidden Gem. We also continue to include amongst our membership the Bridge and Chess Clubs who use the club on Tuesday evenings and the Spa Striders who use the facilities throughout the week.

This seems a good point to say thanks to our club sponsors - Ascent Financial Consulting, Leamington Spa Cleaning Services, PB Forestry, Peter Staunton, C4 Logistics and Tom Wolstenholme Garden Design. Your sponsorship helps fund facility improvements, junior programmes, team kit, various activities and events.

Development / Maintenance of Facilities

The main facilities investment for this year has been the introduction of LED lights for courts 1-5 and 9-12. We were awarded a £20k grant from the local government to help cover some of the cost of these. I am sure you will agree that the light levels on these courts are vastly improved, plus the speed at which they turn on and we will benefit from the savings in electricity usage and future maintenance costs.

The other significant spend has been the new car park and gate at the back of the club. 10 new spaces, plus the inclusion of a disabled space has proven very popular. This was the final element of the planning stipulations

from the 2019 clubhouse developments. The new shed is underway and will provide some much needed additional and more secure storage.

The squash courts have recently been refurbished with work on both the floors and replastering on some of the courts.

The issue of damp is ongoing at the club as we try to resolve the issue in both the men's changing and squash courts. The very wet winter hasn't helped but hopefully we are on the way to solving the changing room and taking advice on the squash courts.

We are currently giving the old bar space a refurbishment with a fresh coat of paint, new storage cupboard, built in seating / storage and new furniture. This room will be renamed ***The 1928 Room*** to reflect the year the club first came to Guys Cliffe Avenue. This will be a multi-use space.

Charity of the Year

Our charity of the year for 2023 was Lillington Community Pantry (LCP) having been nominated and voted for by the members. LCP helps residents of Lillington and surrounding areas who are struggling to make ends meet by providing help with food and other essential items. The team is also on hand to signpost people to local support services and giving the necessary guidance required to overcome individual situations. Throughout the year from various quizzes, cake sales and other events a total of £2000.

The Community Pantry is a collaborative project between Feed the Hungry UK, Cadent and Warwickshire County Council. For a small weekly membership fee of £5, Lillington residents who are struggling to make ends meet can visit the pantry once every 7 days on a Thursday or Friday between 11am-3pm, for help with food and other essential items including a wide selection of store cupboard essentials; chilled; frozen and fresh fruit & vegetables. A small selection of cleaning products and toiletries are also available for a small additional charge.

The club's Charity of the Year for 2024 is Age UK Coventry and Warwickshire. Instead of the member nominations we took the decision to support older adults in our community to coincide with our 150th Celebrations and the 150 hours bursary we are offering to local older adults and carers with dementia and other health issues. Keep an eye out for our senior's tennis sessions starting on 5th June and please promote amongst your friends and family.

Age UK Coventry and Warwickshire are a local charity working in the community to support older people, their families and carers. The staff and volunteer team operate in over 30 locations and visit over 1,100 people in their homes, talking to over 400 people on the telephone each week. The services on offer include befriending, counselling, dementia day care, support in the home and garden as well as their free, confidential quality-accredited advisory service.

Sections

There are far too many things to report on individually for squash and tennis, so I have included a full report for each section at the back as appendices. Below is a snapshot:

Squash

- Last July the club celebrated 50 Years of Squash at LLTSC - this special day acknowledged past and present chairs, volunteers, coaches, and members and included the chance to play with 1970s wooden rackets.
- The full-time membership cap has continued but off-peak and junior memberships, which is not capped, has seen significant growth particularly with juniors (+21%). The other key target was to grow female membership, this has increased by 7%.
- We have hosted five England Squash Junior Sanctioned Events, and for the first time we co-hosted a gold event. A variety of squash and racketball events plus some high-level competitions have taken place at the club.
- The Empower Squash Foundation Programme is now in its the 3rd year, providing access to squash for y5-6 girls who otherwise wouldn't get this opportunity.
- There are close to 190 members in the box leagues which continue to grow with over 20 juniors and over 20 females as new joiners.
- Please do take the time to review the appendices as the list of junior, adult and senior successes at external tournaments and representing the county and country, it is very extensive and impressive! Heere are some highlights:
 - Sam Cross BU15 team won the Es Inter-county Championship Finals
 - Rob Staunton was M50+ winner of European Masters Squash Championships 2023
 - Geoff Redfern and the MO70 team were winners of Home Internationals 2024
 - Leonie Holt won her 10th title of the Warwickshire Senior Champs in 2024.

Tennis

- Success for the Men's and Ladies' teams with 4 out 5 of ladies' teams and both Vet B teams securing promotion in the winter leagues and the ladies 1st team securing the summer league with 3 matches remaining.
- Congratulations to Lucie Butler and Ferren Redza who have both had outstanding years, were awarded the Senior Women's player and Under 18 men's respectively at the Warwickshire LTA Awards.
- The club hosted many tournaments with the Easter Grade 4 leading to several member wins. The Summer Grade 3 finally saw an LLTSC player take one of the main titles for the 1st time with Ferran beating Denis in a closely fought final.
- 2023 Club Championships - another successful tournament with over 150 participants across the open and handicap events. Congratulations once again to Lucie and Ferran with their singles success.
- Both the adult and junior programs remain very strong. Tony and his team have over 400 juniors on their books and continue to provide services to local schools and the wider community. Miguel's adult coaching program attracts over 150 members and non-members from complete beginners to the high-level team players.
- Installation of LED lights on 9 out of 12 courts. Member satisfaction is high with over 90% approval from those members surveyed. We have plans to complete the upgrade of courts 6-8 as soon as finances allow.
- The singles and mixed ladders continue to be a real asset of the club. The singles involve over 150 players each month and we have recently invested in an online system to manage the process. Nick Seale continues to oversea this service, but long gone is the paper-based system and the hours and hours this took to manage. I would like to say a massive thank you to Nick for the hours of his life he has invested. He wasn't to know when he initially took it on with around 10 ladders that it would grow to be so large.

Gym

The gym is becoming more popular, and it is very rare to walk past the windows and not see someone in there at all times of the day. I think increasingly members are seeing the benefit of using the facility to help in the rehab and prevention of injuries. Moving forward we have a programme in place for the replacement of some of the large pieces of equipment. The services provided by inhouse PT, Michelle Clements are proving more popular, plus the weekly group session she leads on a Wednesday evening.

The Hidden Gem

Dan will provide more detail about the financial success of the bar, but you only need to visit on most evenings in the week to see many of you enjoy using this facility. It is very much run as a member benefit as we endeavour to keep the prices as competitive as possible. It is also fantastic to see so many of you using the space on Saturday and Sunday evenings for your own private parties.

The introduction last year of the paninis hasn't been a runaway success but does at least provide the chance for savoury food when you finish playing. The cake has been more successful and hopefully we will get better weather this summer to tempt you to have an ice-cream!

150 Years of Tennis in Leamington Spa

Throughout 2024 a whole series of events will take place to celebrate the fact that the first Lawn Tennis Club in the World, set-up for the sole purpose of playing lawn tennis, started life in 1874 at the Manor Hotel in Leamington Spa.

More details about future events will be provided later, but for this report it is noted that two events have already taken place – a 150 themed quiz and the resurrection of the Arthur Wellesley Tomkins trophy. In the days of grass courts, every year in May a tournament was held to celebrate the start of the new season. Our May event included the presentation of this trophy which bears the name of one of the four founders of the 1874 club.

There are many exciting plans on the horizon, but we will not lose sight of what a special thing we have with this club and how there are several different factors that come together to achieve that. Everyone involved in running the club works hard to ensure that we maintain our reputation as a welcoming and friendly, that is keen to provide opportunities to play whatever your ability. This is due in a large part to the various committees, volunteers and staff at the club who go that extra mile. Thank-you to you all!

Many thanks

Janette George (LLTSC Chair)

15 May 2024

APPENDIX 1 - FULL SQUASH REPORT

Since the last AGM meeting on 17th May 2023, there have been many improvements made to the facilities and many successes to celebrate at our club and with our members.

Facilities

1. New floor installed on court 3
2. Front walls replastered on courts 1,3, 5 & 6
3. Sanded and relined existing floors on courts 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6
4. All play walls on all courts cleaned
5. New nics created on courts 1 & 2
6. New TV in the corridor, regularly showing slides of monthly communications, events and successes in the squash section.

Membership

The inclusive environment and great atmosphere, facilities, programmes and activities continue to retain and attract new members. Our membership has continued to stay at its peak, with a total of 732 in squash membership subscriptions. We have maintained a cap on our full-time membership with a one in—one out system. However, off-peak and junior memberships have not been capped and we have seen a significant growth in junior memberships. One of our key objectives for 2022-23 was to grow female and junior membership and our female squash membership has grown by 7% since last year and junior membership by 21%.

Events Hosted

We work with England Squash to promote squash and racketball to the wider community and host regional events and county matches so members can participate in and watch high quality squash on their doorstep.

- ES Junior Graded Event 5, 29th May 2023
- ES Aspire Team Championship Finals U11s & U13s, 24-25 June 2023
- UK Racketball Series Event 7 West of England Racketball Open, 1st July 2023
- ES Leamington Junior Graded Event 6, 26th July 2023
- Women's Squash Week Event for women and girls in the community, 24th September 2023
- Warwickshire Senior Squash Championships, 24-25 February 2024
- ES Warwick University Junior Gold Event, 8-10 March 2024
- ES Junior Copper Event, 14th April 2024
- Firesquash UK National Championships and Festival of Squash for Fire Service, 3-5 May 2024
- Empower Squash Foundation started 09/2022 and is ongoing - LLTSC in conjunction with Empower Squash Foundation hosts this amazing programme every Monday with 12 girls from Lillington Primary School during school term. The Empower Squash Foundation is a charity that provides a free integrated squash, education, and nutrition programme to year 5/6 girls to empower disadvantaged girls with life skills and promote their overall physical and mental well-being.

Juniors Successes

- **20th May Squash Club Championships 2023**— Ladies A Grade runner up – Izzy Beynon-Cobb; Ladies B Grade winner – Charlotte Pickering.
- **24-25 June 2023 ES Aspire Team Championships** – Sam Cross and the BU15 West Midlands team were crowned winners of Division 2.
- **11 September 2023 Welsh Junior Open** – Sam Cross was the BU15 winner.