

AGM Meeting Sunday 26th November 2017

Co-Chairs Report (Maidstone LTC)

Produced by Georgina Noakes & Richard Dawson

Well time has flown by so fast over the last year and your two co-chairs and committee have continued to work tirelessly in driving forward your suggestions for improvement and taking forward those key actions since last year.

Before we say what we have done, it is appropriate we mention the sad passing of one of our club members Chris Walter earlier this year in March. Chris loved his tennis, enjoying the social side that tennis brought too and we hope that he is smiling down on us today.

The Co-chairs would like to firstly say a special thanks to all the committee members for their hard work and contributions over the last year, alongside the additional support and help provided from members.

As a club and committee we have again all together, made further strides building upon our success over previous years to make this another successful year most notably working on implementing the community ethos following on from our lease agreement providing more certainty to the club in its continuation for a further 26 years from now till it expires in 2043. We are so pleased that whether you are an existing or new member to the club that more of you are enjoying the club's facilities, getting involved and playing more tennis. Some of our key achievements are set out below:

- **The lease has achieved so much for the club enabling us to** have certainty until 2043, pay a rental fee of approximately £100 per year, build upon and deliver our indicative community use / access programme working with partners, we have the option to build two further courts on the land directly behind the existing courts throughout anytime in the lease term (subject to demonstrable demand), opportunity to develop a bigger clubhouse following early conversations held with Maidstone BC and securing our times to offer play from 8.00a.m. to 22.00p.m. everyday (Mon-Sun) on all courts.
- **An adult club membership that is stable again with over 150 adult and junior members** an increase of over third over the last 5 years. (Georgina will tell you more).
- **Our junior membership has grown significantly in the last few years up to 45 with 31 of these from ages 2-12 wanting to join the club with the offer of free membership.** This has enabled many parents to come up and simply play with their children and see some excellent new talent emerging with support from our coaching team too.
- **To support this activity further the club is now spending the funding it secured from the Police Property Fund of £500.00.** As a direct result, we have purchased more tennis play equipment for juniors from ages 2-12 which includes tennis nets, racquets, the correct balls and funny tennis game equipment to engage children to begin playing tennis. The equipment is available for FREE for any members and the public to come and make use of and are stored in the club shed – with the keys up in the clubhouse by the window – so please do make use of them.
- As a committee we took the difficult decision on 4th October 2017 to cease the contract for tennis coaching at our club with SETennis. We have worked with SET since 2011 and would especially like to thank Julian and all his staff for their contributions over the last 6 years. The club's ambitions are to grow our junior and family membership, provide a series of strong club coaching sessions to all, serve our local schools needs and very much place the club at the heart of our local community while raising our profile. As a result, we have been advertising for a new coaching team and I will say a little more about this in a moment.
- **In respect to the joint work our club has done with SETennis coaching team we have** ensured a programme of activity throughout the year. Highlights included the superbly organised 'Maidstone's Got Talent - Tennis Open Day' held on the 1 April 2017 drawing in 50 children and their families from across Maidstone and surrounding areas. Two sessions ran with 33 children aged 3-6 yrs old and 17 children aged 7-11 yrs old. This was a lower number than previous years, although some did go on to join the club and have taken up coaching. Again we had the local KM press in attendance and were in the KM paper (see club noticeboard).

- We would also like to pay recognition to our SETennis coaching team of Julian, Alex & Sam who have been committed in all weathers to delivering a coaching offer at our club.
- **MLTC supported the Schools Festival** event with a number of local schools in the Maidstone and District surrounding area taking part on 3 May 2017 at our club competing to be the school's champion for the Maidstone area. The winning school went on to represent Maidstone in the regional area competition. The event was co-ordinated by Julian our coach, working closely with Maidstone BC Tony Baptiste (Schools Co-ordinator) and we also worked on an agreed local risk assessment.
- **Our local Palace Wood School** were engaged with us again this year and we were able to arrange for the pupils to come to the courts throughout the summer period over a number of weekdays with the Deputy Head teacher Miss Emma Ridout. These sessions were part of their PE curriculum and were brilliantly organised by Julian. This has been a joint effort between MLTC, SETennis and Palace Wood School along with what we think was a growing pupil pressure as many local children have recently joined the club as junior members. This stronger link and emphasis from the school on sport and play will continue to be developed over the coming year and beyond, particularly now as we have more children and parents from our club at that school. We hope that other local schools that we will be engaging with will again be able to visit us in 2018 to try their hand at tennis and work with our new coaching team.
- **Of course coaching to improve members play** continues with team/social/beginner players, special needs group, youth and schools and community programme, alongside further attendance at promotions and events. Changes to our coaching programme offer will be made and displayed on our website, and we will circulate information once we agree this with the new coaching team.
- It is appropriate that I now take this opportunity to inform you of the successful recruitment of Zane Cheeseman, Hotshotz tennis as our new Head Coach along with his coaching team. We very much look forward to working with Zane as he will work directly with us all to achieve our ambitions as a community tennis club providing tennis for all.
- **Listening to your views and taking action.** The committee have continued to be available, open in its communication and respond quickly and efficiently to enquiries from members, the public and organisational groups, and we equally want to thank our members for contributing ideas. Again if there are any comments from members throughout the year just raise these with club committee members and we will discuss at our regular bi-monthly meetings, so we know what we are doing right, but also what needs doing (hopefully with your help too). We would like to cite here that we continue to offer an initiation process for all new members, which involves being supported by one of two colleagues to the club (Georgina Noakes and Cantor Mocke); more social and community activities have been organised for members and the public (including American Tournaments); club policies have been created as part of the LTA Tennismark status, attracting juniors; continuing to enable the public to play and facilitate the collection of fees (thanks to Gary Titmas and his wife for assisting with this) ; addressing maintenance matters and feeding in of quality balls for general club play.
- **An 8th successful Club tournament and FINALS DAY were delivered** with over half our adult club members playing in the tournament, alongside very promising juniors. A well-deserved thank you to Antonia Charalambous for leading and co-ordinating the tournament with assistance from James Fraser, alongside great support on the day from Andy Palin with his BBQ skills! And of course congratulations to all the winners and to all for taking part and enjoying the tournament again. And further thanks to Antonia as she has compiled a club honours board of all the trophies we have won since 2001 from across the National Club League, Kent and Maidstone/District leagues and this shows success of over 75 divisional titles seeing the club win on average 5 titles a year – something to be proud of and to improve on further (see website for further details).
- **From the outside, the club has been further recognised** with the achievements of our players with successes in local tournament competitions with Andrew Heath and Antonia Charalambous coming runners up in the final of the mixed doubles at the Benenden Tournament and one of our juniors Robil Gebelsslassie recently winning a Grade 3 tournament at Bromley beating players of a higher rating than himself.

- **The club has seen more teams entered in the Kent and Maidstone Leagues with further successful achievements** with our teams doing very well again in both leagues and winning division titles in the winter and summer leagues, alongside the AEGON leagues (and James will tell you more) - well done again to all involved and keep up the enjoyment and achievement next year.
- **The Social tennis format has now been bedded in for over three years now** and it seems to all be working well with many having more fun and enjoyment. Over the last year, we have received many positive responses saying it is far more fun with everyone mixing in and playing with all. It works well with larger numbers and leads to less wastage of time between games. For a small number of players it really only needs to be used for the first/second swap. Thanks again for your co-operation. Speaking to members of other clubs we seem to have many more people involved in social sessions than they do!! A renewed emphasis on the Thursday night social sessions are happening with club captains attending the sessions to play too.
- **We have also delivered an American Tournament event last autumn – thanks to Antonia for organising this.** These are immense fun and if you haven't played in these do come along and try them out. It's a really good mix of all standards of players and ages, you will also have a great time enjoying playing tennis and socialising with other members.
- **We held another successful quiz evening in February 2017,** which again was a great fundraiser for the club with 70 people attending and making a profit of £470.00. Thanks to everyone who helped with arrangements and to Jamie our excellent quizmaster.
- **We have continued to undertake vital maintenance improvements to the courts and clubhouse.** We have again as with every year had the hedgerow cut along all four courts to smarten this up and allow more light to get to the courts. The Maidstone BC Parks and Leisure Dept, kindly arranged the pruning of the overhanging trees beside courts in Oct/Nov 2017 to lessen the damage caused to the court surfaces by the debris – this is very much welcome. All courts have had moss treatment undertaken just this week since we last had them done in Jan 2016, to ensure increased grip and safety on our courts. The new container shed is working well and is storing away maintenance / garden tools, chairs, alongside the new tennis equipment to free up space in the clubhouse. We cannot thank Mike and also Peter enough for all they do at the courts clearing and tidying and being available to help with contractors throughout the year. This may go unnoticed by others, but certainly not by the club committee – so again thank you for all you do for us. The back fence of court 1 has had 'green netting' placed up to shield the reflection of the sun coming off the back of the white panels on the pre-school, which has done the trick and the communication noticeboard was moved to the side of court 1 to promote the club. Nick Yandle has kindly donated a re-chargeable leaf blower which is stored in the shed.
- **The clubhouse has been kept tidier by members** and thanks must go to all of you who help with this by tidying up, emptying the bins and taking rubbish away to dispose of it. Please can all members help out here - just taking your food and drinks waste including plastic water bottles away with you when you leave makes a difference - as they say 'every little helps'. There is the bin by the field as you walk back to the car park that can take all your food peelings.
- **Club website continues to be updated with a fantastic new 'promotional drone video' of our club (one of a kind), the LTA Tennismark accreditation and policies, and of course current news, a club honours board, a fundraising page etc** - this site is wonderful and a massive thanks must be extended to David Vale who has been updating the website regularly with communications and match results. Just a reminder to members we have also added a fundraising page onto the website and have with just 26 members registered who have raised since the beginning of January 2015 - £620.00 – just think of what more we could do if more of our members joined. Let us know if you would like to know more details on how to sign up to easyfundraising site (all is on our website too). We know the website is not only of value to club members but important for the general public - essentially encouraging new members to join (as they tell us this) - so we cannot say enough about how great this is - thank you.
- **We have also re-registered the club under the CASC (Community Amateur Sports Club)** our reference number is CH6636 and this provides tax relief benefits mainly on Gift Aid and of course any major

donations we may receive TODAY or in the future – so don't be shy we will be happy to take a cheque from you....

- **Finally, on our social club activities** – The committee will be organising a 5th Quiz night on Saturday 24 February 2018, and we hope this will be as much success as previous years and raise further funds for the club with over 100+ people. Further information will come out in due course, but please start pulling together your teams asap and come and have a great time and support your club. The club are looking to organise a Xmas and/or New Year's Blues get together drink and we will let you know nearer the time if you would like to join us.

All the club committee and members would especially like to pay thanks to Antonia Charalmabous. Antonia has been at the very heart of playing in our successful ladies and mixed teams and we will miss her very much as she has recently moved to Brighton for work. She also ran the club tournament this year, several social events alongside helping to improve our communications. In addition, she undertook an important role as our Welfare officer under the requirements of the LTA Tennismark and we will need to replace her in this role. Antonia's positivity & enthusiasm is a big loss to us, and her focus and passion on court to win will be too.

As far our club teams go a real big thank you - must go out to all those that have taken part and to the captains (and sometimes sub-captains) for their organisation and the hospitality shown to our visitors. I can't tell you how much our club is appreciated and seen to be welcoming as I hear these responses from the clubs we visit. And I also hear how friendly, nice and sporting we are when we play in competitive matches – this ethos and club etiquette is very much recognised and we thank everyone for your role in this. Thanks also to James for organising or should we say re-organising the fixtures!

We would also like to encourage more members to turn up to the sessions reserved for members to play socially at 10am on Mon. Wed. Fri. and Sunday mornings. Thursday evening from 7pm onwards is also reserved for members in the same way – come on – come down and enjoy a hit in the evening especially in the winter when there are less matches and more time to play.

We now have a Whatsapp group if you are interested in organising your own friendly singles or doubles matches- text Chris Brickwood on 07516 112282, if you would like to join.

So looking onto the future over the next year the committee's key principles and tasks include:

- (i) **To implement & deliver on the requirements of our 28 year lease** and commence investigations into the future options, costs and funding available to enable the club to sustain & grow;
- (ii) **To support and develop the new coaching team offer at our club** and jointly promote the coaching programme for members, schools and locally working jointly with the new tennis coaching team increasing the promotional tools and communication of the clubs activities;
- (iii) **To ensure we make suitable repairs to the clubs facilities** (including treatment to courts and major re-painting) and address members items on improvements to the club;
- (iv) **To ensure we welcome & increase the number of members to the club** (juniors and adults) and **maintain our effective communications** in all forms with all our members;
- (v) **To continue to be a part of the local community and improve our links within it** by delivering on our 'community use' programme jointly with Maidstone Borough Council, our new tennis coaching team and other local partners;
- (vi) **To update, review and implement our LTA Tennismark status** enabling access to info, funding etc;
- (vii) **To develop our social tennis programme and events and fundraising capacity** to support our above priorities to continue to grow the club and its offering.