**AGM Meeting Sunday 1st December 2019**

**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.

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 and landmark year most notably working on implementing the community ethos which is all part of our lease agreement that provides greater certainty to the club in its continuation for a further 24 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 greater 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 with ongoing conversations held with Maidstone BC and secured our times to offer play from 8.00a.m. to 22.00p.m. everyday (Mon-Sun) on all courts. The clubs main priority this year has been to investigate the options and gain costs associated to developing the clubhouse – we have been fortunate in having Nick Yandle provide his expertise advice and support to the club committee. We are currently reviewing these options and the budget that will need to be applied before looking to submit a planning application to MBC in 2020 that will extend the clubhouse footprint and create an improved viewing area.

* **An adult club membership that is continuing to rise over the last year with several new members as a result of the new coaching offers in place for adults and their children and our excellent newly painted court facilities that were done last year in 2018. This has seen a landmark total of over 200 adult and junior members** an increase of over 66% over the last 6 years. (Georgina will tell you more).

• **Our junior membership has grown significantly in the last few years up to 74 signed members (increase 19% since last year) with the majority of these from ages 2-12 wanting to continue to join the club with the lower cost membership fee.** This has enabled many parents to come up and simply play with their children and seesome excellent new talent emerging with support from our established coaching team and the various junior coaching sessions available now running Tuesday’s and now Thursday’s and also Saturday’s.

* **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. We have also recently purchased team clothing for our junior players representing the club and these tops will be loaned so that they can be returned once grown out of and the next team can make use of them. Many thanks to Naomi Roots and Lisa Winrow for working on this for the club.
* The club has also developed a successful partnership with Kings Hill Community Tennis club which has seen a growth in returning and new adult members wanting to join our club again this winter. The reason being that there two public courts aren’t lit and of course we have more courts that are all fully lit, along with a clubhouse etc. This has been a mutually beneficial partnership that has led to resurgence in the Thursday night social sessions benefitting our club player’s play and enjoyment.
* As a committee we continue to invest time and energy in helping establish and develop the new coaching programme led by Hotshotz tennis with Zane Cheeseman as our Head Coach. We are so pleased to have gained his expertise and I am sure you will have all seen the significant strides he and the club have made in attracting many new juniors from 2 years of age and including new adults all being coached and playing at our club. We very much enjoy the partnership and rapport we have with Zane and his team of coaches and look forward to continuing to see this offer grow at the club. The club's ambitions and Hotshotz are very much aligned to jointly 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 ensuring we all love the game we play.
* Some key highlights from the coaching programme on offer have included so many new coaching sessions put on for all ages and supported now with really great numbers regularly attending throughout the week mainly delivered on Tuesday’s, now on Thursday’s and Saturdays including junior coaching from 2-11 yrs+, new adult sessions including a rusty racquets for beginners; 2 x cardio tennis sessions; special educational needs (SEN) group; an adult squad team coaching group and private lessons, alongside school holiday half term (Feb, May and Oct), Easter and summer camps held throughout the year and this year supporting three Junior Club tournaments at our club (Mar, June, Nov).
* We would like to pay recognition to all the Hotshotz tennis Team and especially Zane Cheeseman (Head Coach) and Poppy Thorne (Coach) for being highly committed in all weathers to delivering what has been a great second year coaching offer at our club and exceeded all our expectations with increasing numbers and sessions delivered. And we look forward to seeing this growth continue over the coming years.
* **Our local Palace Wood School** were engaged with us again this year and this is a growing relationship with our Head Coach in place and noticeably with more parents and children joining our club from this school and surrounding schools. You will hear further from Zane about this school link and several others now established and will be developed principally within the many primary schools on our doorstep.
* **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) alongside a free session offered by Zane; more social and community activities have been organised for members and the public (including drink and quiz nights); club policies have been updated and reviewed to ensure the club adheres / meets the new LTA Minimum Regulation Standards (MRS) which we did and are an LTA Approved club again for 2019/20 – having also had an LTA audit in August, which took some 12 hours to compile but has led to the club being approved by the LTA and identified as one of the top tennis clubs visited with appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures all in place; attracting more juniors and new adult members; 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. We have also significantly improved our website quality, functionality and content, produced up a first welcome to the club brochure issued in March 2019; created a new logo and branding March 2019; alongside the launch of our new club clothing line in November 2019 and have an established court booking system. We also changed the club tournament format to introduce a handicap event which was a great success.
* **The LTA’s Venue Registration process involving meeting the Minimum Regulation Standards enable us to get public liability insurance, allow entry to league matches, the Wimbeldon ballot and access to the LTA’s Clubspark management system to support clubs to grow among others. The MRS are focussed on welfare and safeguarding.** Our welfare officer who has completed her training is Anne Marie Doyle and she will be undertaking her further level 2 training shortly. The LTA audited our club in August 2019 and we were randomly chosen for review and received a glowing report as we addressed all the minimum standards without any further actions required and were rated as one of the top clubs visited with the correct approach, policies and procedures in place – thank you to all that were involved in helping achieve this status with the LTA and raising the profile of our club.

• **This year we returned to being able to offer a club tournament and finals day including a handicap doubles, which was held on Sunday 7th July (the middle Sunday of Wimbledon).** Congratulations to all the winners and finalists on the day there were some terrific matches seen by spectators who equally enjoyed the BBQ and drinks so again many thanks to Andy Palin for serving on the day. Also a big thank you to Andrew Heath who helped run the club tournament so smoothly this year. For those of you who are anorak’s and like to see the various club trophies that the club have won we have a club honours board (on our website) that shows what 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. [The list will be further updated soon with more recent achievements]

• **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 Jane Frankel winning the Mixed at Benenden; Rob Macinnes & Cantor Mocke winning the Maidstone Open Mens Doubles final and Gemma Hutchinson winning with her partner in the Ladies Doubles too.

• **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 Fraser will tell you more) - well done again to all involved and keep up the enjoyment and achievement next year. We also have an Adult Vets team over 45 yrs old and a new Junior Kent team.

• **The Social tennis format has now been bedded in for over five 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 and especially for welcoming our new members from Kings Hill community tennis. Speaking to members of other clubs we seem to have many more people involved in social sessions than they do during the days and now the evening session!! A renewed emphasis on the Thursday night social sessions are happening with club captains attending the sessions to play too.

* **Unfortunately this year we weren’t able to co-ordinate an American Tournament but we will look to do so next year.** 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** **2019**, which again was a great fundraiser for the club with 100 people attending and making a profit of £520+. Thanks to everyone who helped with arrangements and to Jamie our excellent quizmaster. We will be holding another one on Saturday 7th March 2020 so watch out…

• **We have continued to undertake vital maintenance improvements to the courts and clubhouse.** The most noticeable works being undertaken over the last few months since August with the moss treatment required on all 4 courts as they became very slippery and dangerous in just a few months. This has taken time to complete over 4-6 weeks but the end result is remarkable and essential enabling more grip and safety on court. 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 – this work was done in October and November. We have also addressed the maintenance of the lights with one light being repaired on court 1 and all light columns being checked and wiped clean. Following our request and site visit, the Maidstone BC Parks and Leisure Dept, have arranged the pruning of the overhanging trees beside courts over the winter season 2019/20 to lessen the damage caused to the court surfaces by the debris – this is very much welcome (and this is the time when these trees can be cut back due to nesting birds), they have also addressed our concerns when raised about the lights in the car park that were not working and of course this is a health and safety issue at night after finishing matches, along with a new car park surface installed. The container shed is working well and is storing away maintenance / garden tools, chairs. 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. We have also purchased and will be putting up netting that goes courtside where the hedge is for courts 1 and 2 to enable the balls not to get lost in the hedge. 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 in the shed for use. We have also purchased new recycling and waste bins for the clubhouse.

• **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. We have introduced new bins for recyclable waste and signs to help too. It would be great if ALL members and match captains could take away all waste. There is the bin by the field as you walk back to the car park that can take all your food peelings.

• **Communications:** **Club website continues to be updated we have a superb ‘promotional drone video’ of our club (one of a kind), and our content has been significantly updated and was launched in March 2019 providing us more control and ownership in updating the content ourselves. Our website is** wonderful and a big thank you to Naomi Roots and Lisa Winrow who have worked on this for the club. Naomi will be leaving the committee this year due to other commitments as a Governor at Palace Wood School but she will still continue to offer her support to the club. We would like to thank her immensely for her enthusiasm and hard work on the new website, club brochure and the new club clothing range. Our MLTC facebook page continually gets updated with stories and club images so keep a look out. And of course our new club brochure was produced and distributed to all members and around Maidstone newer estates. We know the website and our new club brochure, along with facebook is not only of value to club members but importantly for engaging the general public - essentially encouraging new members to join (as they tell us this) - so we cannot say enough about how great all this is.

• **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 - **£915.00 (a further £85.00 since last year)** – 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 have registered the club in 2018 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 **7th Quiz night on Saturday 7th March 2020** 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 have also organised a Xmas drinks at our local pub the Pippin on Saturday 7th Dec 2019, so come and join us for a drink and celebration next weekend…..

**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 Fraser for organising or should we say re-organising the fixtures! It is James’s last year as fixtures secretary so on behalf of everyone in the club thank you so much for all the tremendous work you have put into this role, having seen so many more teams evolve providing such enjoyment to many and seeing the club succeed at all levels – well done but thankfully you are continuing to provide some further support to the new fixtures secretary.

**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 agree on the preferred option, costs and funding available to develop the clubhouse facilities to enable the club to sustain & grow;

(ii) **To support and develop the continued coaching team offer at our club** and jointly promote the coaching programme for members, schools and locally 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 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 achieved through the website, club welcome brochure and our constant communication with 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 tennis coaching team and other local partners;

(vi) **To update, review and implement our LTA - Venue Registration Status and adherence thereof to the LTA five Minimum Regulation Standards and ensure we have supplementary club policies in place and updated to ensure we conform**;

(vii) **To develop our social tennis programme, social events calendar and fundraising capacity** to support our above priorities to continue to grow the club and its offering.