

## AGM Meeting Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021: Co-Chairs Report (Maidstone LTC)

Produced by Georgina Noakes & Richard Dawson

We must start by saying this has been a year of great challenge for all our members, their friends and families through the period of Covid 19 but at the same time it's been a hugely rewarding year with the development of our new clubhouse.

We would really want to say a special thanks and gratitude to the continued tireless work that your committee has undertaken over this year in adapting to changes necessary to address the Covid pandemic, seeing through the development of the new building, continuing to drive forward your suggestions for improvement and delivering on other key priorities set last year. In addition, there are several members who play an instrumental part in enabling this club to function for the benefit of so many and its only right that a special thanks is extended to those that have volunteered their time to assist with ensuring the courts are clean and other maintenance jobs are attended to especially Mike Eames and Peter Law, our superb 16 x strong MLTC cleaning buster squad who have cleaned the old and now the new clubhouse regularly twice a week, Gary Titmus a local resident and member who has helped enormously over 30+ yrs in collecting public pay as you play fees and been of great help to the club and will be missed as he moves out of the area, Nick Yandle who has been truly outstanding in leading on the development and now the completion of the major clubhouse redevelopment project (more on that later) and Keith Rylands in supporting the lease amendments with Maidstone BC and many other members who supported the clubhouse build and have assisted with other jobs at the club with a special mention to Richard Ewence and Ron Taylor.

Even with the issues of Covid throughout the year the club has had one of if not the most successful and landmark years building upon the success of the award of Kent Club of the Year from the Kent LTA and having the highest number of members we have ever seen. 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, enjoying the community spirit and playing more tennis.

We would very much like to take this moment now to highlight some of these achievements with you.

- With our **28yr lease providing great certainty until 2043**, we have built upon and delivered 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), **and we have already taken one major stride forward by building a new extended clubhouse facility and large patio area following our successful submission and granting of planning permission by Maidstone BC in July 2020**. The committee has spent considerable time this year on this project in particular securing competent contractors, gaining and certifying costs, managing spends within the overall budget, securing additional finances from the Covid 19 grants, a £8,700 grant from Kent CC Community Grant programme, a further Kent LTA £10,000 interest free loan over 5 years to support the clubhouse development plans and completing with Maidstone BC the lease amendments to gain rights to have more land and prepare appropriate licences for the works. More details on the clubhouse project later as this is now completed in 2021.
- **Membership-** our overall membership numbers have increased once again and we have retained many people who joined last year during covid. We have raised a record sum of over £15,000 in membership fees which is usually our main source of income. Georgina will give more details in her membership report later.
- **Coaching-As a committee we continue to invest time and energy in helping develop and grow the coaching programme led by Hotshotz tennis with Zane Cheeseman as our Head Coach, since he started in Jan 2018**. We are so pleased to have gained his expertise and I am sure you will have all seen the significant strides he, his coaches (Emily, Luke and Remus) and the club have made in attracting many new juniors from 3 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 and as a result the committee have

agreed to extend the Hotshotz contract for a further 3 years up to Jan 2024. 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, offer fun and exciting holiday camps, 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. **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 many other surrounding schools. You will hear further from Zane about school links and several others now established and will be developed principally within the many primary schools on our doorstep.

- **The LTA's yearly Venue Registration process opened in November 2021** and the club has successfully re-registered demonstrating it has met the Minimum Regulation Standards (focussed on welfare and safeguarding) to get the public liability insurance, allow entry to league matches, the Wimbledon ballot and access to the LTA's Clubspark management system to support clubs to grow among others.
- **We have continued to communicate, listen to your views, take actions and undertake vital maintenance improvements to the courts and clubhouse. Highlights include:**
  - The committee have continued to be available, be open in its communication and respond quickly and efficiently to enquiries from members, the public, the LTA and organisational groups, and we equally want to thank our members for contributing ideas.
  - We have continued to enable the **public to play and facilitate the collection of fees** (thanks to Gary Titmas and Georgina Noakes);
  - The most noticeable works being undertaken in Oct/Nov 21 with the **moss treatment required on all 4 courts** as they were becoming very slippery and dangerous, with the end result remarkable 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 Oct 21.
  - Following our request and site visit, **Maidstone BC Parks and Leisure Dept, will be arranging the pruning of the overhanging trees beside courts over the winter season 2021/22** 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 about the lights in the car park not working at times to ensure safety.
  - **We hope that members can assist in clearing leaves off the courts** now they have been cleaned as the sap from the leaves creates moss issues and makes the surfaces slippery to play on. The rechargeable leaf blower is available in the clubhouse and makes everything so much easier to address in just a few minutes.
- **Communications: Club website continues to be updated, we have a superb 'promotional drone video' of our club (one of a kind) providing us more control and ownership in updating the content ourselves.** Our MLTC facebook page continually gets updated with stories and club images so keep a look out. Moreover, we continue to use the excellent club brochure produced in 2020 to explain all that is on offer at the club to new members – we intend to produce another in due course.
- Unfortunately, this year we have not been able to hold a **club tournament and finals day due to the new clubhouse build but we very much hope to do so next year with finals being around the return of Wimbledon. Other notable successes for our club members in other competitions** included having 8 x finalists in the Maidstone Open

tournament held this year in September 2021 with Andy Heath winning the Men's club singles and Men's doubles with Luke Tucker and Herve Zillioz won the Men's singles consolation final.

- **The club has teams entered in the Kent and Maidstone Leagues** with our teams competing well considering there were periods of lockdowns over winter and matches resumed in the summer season with no titles on offer this time which meant teams enjoyed getting back to playing socially/competitive tennis with no promotion or relegation. As we have started the winter season 21/22 the titles are back available to be won and we expect our club to be up there challenging as we always have been over many recent years. But for now, a big thanks 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.
- **The Social tennis format continues to be well received and working well** with many having more fun and enjoyment and with the addition of the booking system you know who and how many are attending to each session.
- **We held another successful quiz evening in Oct 2021**, which again was a great fundraiser for the club with 90+ people attending making a profit of £625. Thanks to everyone who helped with arrangements, gave prizes and to Jamie our excellent quizmaster. We will be aiming to hold another next year so watch out...
- **Just a reminder to members we have also added a fundraising page onto the website** and have just over 30 members registered who have raised since the beginning of January 2015 - **£1,330.00 (a further £244.00 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....
- **I would also like to take a moment to give a special mention to the following**
  - (i) **Andy Palin our Treasurer for over 10 years who has continued to stay on as treasurer this year (having moved away to Folkestone to live to enjoy retirement);**
  - (ii) **Georgina Noakes who will be stepping down from her Co-Chair duties and we thank her for all the time, dedication, commitment and tireless work she has done, but Georgina will be continuing to focus on the Membership role with enquiries and Communications with members and**
  - (iii) **Richard Dawson who will be stepping down from his Co-Chair duties and we thank him for all the time, dedication, commitment and tireless work he has undertaken over the last 10+ yrs.**

**So finally, looking to the future over the next year the committee's key principles and tasks include:**

- (i) **To ensure the new clubhouse, patio area and court/club facilities** (including treatment to courts) **are well maintained and improvements made** to enable the club to sustain & grow thereby delivering on the priorities in our 28 year lease;
- (ii) **To collaborate, support and develop the continued coaching team offer at our club** and jointly promote the coaching programme for members, schools and locally;
- (iii) **To build upon the above and start to look at preparing a business plan to consider the appropriate future options available to the club to consolidate, enhance and / or grow the clubs facilities and wider presence in the community.**

- (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, social media 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/benefit' 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 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.