

AGM Meeting Sunday 29th November 2020: Co-Chairs Report (Maidstone LTC)

Produced by Georgina Noakes & Richard Dawson

We must start by saying this has been an extremely challenging year for all our friends and families in our tennis community and beyond. We look forward to brighter days ahead when the likes of the Covid 19 pandemic, national and local lockdowns no longer are with us and we can all continue to enjoy tennis in a socially responsible way as we have been thanks to the work of the committee and our members all who have adapted throughout these times to whatever has been thrown at us all.

We would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to the continued tireless work that your committee has undertaken over this year in driving forward your suggestions for improvement and taking forward those key priorities since last year. In addition, a special thanks must go to members who have volunteered their time to assist with ensuring the courts are clean especially Mike Eames, Peter Law and James Day, our superb 11 x strong MLTC cleaning buster squad who have cleaned the clubhouse regularly, Nick Yandle who has been outstanding in leading the major clubhouse redevelopment project (more on that later) and Keith Rylands in support the lease amendments with Maidstone BC.

Even with the issues of Covid upon us the club has had another highly successful and landmark year with the award of Kent Club of the Year from the Kent LTA and the highest number of members we have ever seen (more from Georgina on that later). 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.

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 are taking up the opportunity to build 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 much time this year on this project in particular seeking contractors, gaining and certifying costs, applying for and securing a £8,700 grant from Kent CC Community Grant programme and a further Kent LTA £10,000 interest free loan over 5 years to support the clubhouse development plans and working with Maidstone BC to undertake lease amendments to gain right to have more land and prepare appropriate licences for the works. More details on the clubhouse project later as we aim to bring this to life and complete construction in 2021 as the main finances have been secured.

- **Our membership has significantly grown to the highest level ever this year and seen the biggest increase in one year in club records in part down to Covid 19 as tennis was one of the first sports allowed to restart and attracted members that had never played before and we look forward to retaining these members and our existing members too. Our junior membership has sustained despite the pandemic.** More on Membership later.

- 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. We are so pleased to have gained his expertise and I am sure you will have all seen the significant strides he, his coaches (Poppy, Emily, Remus) 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. **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. More on the coaching later.

- **The club was engaged with a company called Sport Directory who were working on a promotional campaign with Tim Henman for Slazenger Academy with the aim of encouraging schools and clubs to take up tennis.** As such Zane and two of our junior members (Luke Tucker and Milaya Dawson) went up to Oxford and got to play with Tim Henman and as a result have been involved in much promotional material including the club being mentioned on the ITV morning news. As an outcome the club has also received a free bag of Slazenger goodies including racquets, balls and equipment that can be used.

- **The LTA's yearly Venue Registration process opened in November 2020** 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, 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.

- 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 20 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 20.

- 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 2020/21 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.

- The re-chargeable leaf blower is now being used to the max and is very powerful to aid in moving the leaves of the court.

- **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. And of course our second club brochure 2020/21 was produced and distributed to all members.

- Unfortunately, this year we have not been able to hold a **club tournament and finals day 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 Andrew Heath and Jane Frankel winning the Mixed at Benenden for another year; Andy Heath and Solene Dawson winning the Maidstone Open Mixed final. Andy also won the club doubles and Zane the elite doubles. Zane is now also British Over 35's doubles champion!!!

- **The club has 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 2019-2020 leagues (as summer wasn't played due to Covid). More on the Fixtures later. 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 new booking system you know who and how many are attending.
- **We held another successful quiz evening in March 2020**, which again was a great fundraiser for the club with 100 people attending and making a profit of £450. Thanks to everyone who helped with arrangements and to Jamie our excellent quizmaster. We will be aiming to hold another in the new year so watch out...
- **Just a reminder to members we have also added a fundraising page onto the website** and have just under 30 members registered who have raised since the beginning of January 2015 - **£1,086.00 (a further £170.00 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 Andy Palin our Treasurer for 10 years now who unfortunately will be leaving us as he moves house closer to Folkestone/Hythe to enjoy retirement. He will be very much missed especially by Roger Bowman as both can be seen regularly most mornings playing tennis**

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

- (i) **To deliver a new extended clubhouse and patio area subject to funds being secured** to enable the club to sustain & grow thereby delivering on the priorities in our 28 year lease;
- (ii) **To support and develop the continued coaching team offer at our club** and jointly promote the coaching programme for members, schools and locally;
- (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, 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.