

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Club AGM- 24th November 2022

After two difficult years affected by the covid pandemic, the last 12 months has been a year of consolidation for the Club, with no significant major projects having been undertaken. This has given us the opportunity to replenish our bank accounts ahead of works planned for the future, including the regular cycle of tennis court replacement for which monies have been earmarked in a sinking fund and a somewhat longer cycle in respect of the floors to the squash courts. The long discussed refurbishment of the Clubhouse is another expense for which further funds were required and this will again be addressed at the AGM.

Membership of the tennis section, in particular adult membership, has held up well during Covid and since. However, the squash section was affected more seriously by loss of numbers during covid and this coupled with a national decline in squash members means that the squash section membership is continuing to decline. All members are asked to try to encourage friends, family, neighbours or even complete strangers that you might meet on the train to come and try squash at our Club; it's a great sport and a great way of keeping or maintaining fitness, without taking up 5 hours that golf needs or a couple of hours for tennis. We may not of course be able to significantly change the decline in squash participation, but both the squash committee and the Club Committee will be considering options to increase revenue from squash, be it by a change to court fees or subscriptions or other ways of raising funds.

Perhaps the most significant issue over the last 12 months was a matter that I touched upon at last year's AGM, namely the possibility of the Club relocating to a new site at Amersham College. The Committee had been approached on behalf of Shanley Homes prior to last year's AGM and so I shared with the meeting the brief details with which we had been provided. The first step in what would have been a long road was whether or not to enter into an Option Agreement with Shanley, which would not have been a final decision but would have involved a significant amount of work for the Club officials. Based on feedback from you the members, we decided to hold an EGM so that you could decide whether or not we should proceed with the Option Agreement. Even though this would not have been binding on the final decision, we were concerned not only with the amount of work that would have been involved, but also whether it would have been right for the Club to enter into such an Agreement in all good faith if there was no possibility of a move ever taking place. The EGM was held at the Club on 11 May 2022 and was very well attended, with around 100 members present. The overwhelming decision in a secret ballot was that the members did not wish the Club to pursue the Option Agreement and Shanley were duly notified.

Although it would have had no bearing on the result of the EGM, the result having been such a resounding no, this issue has highlighted the fact that the requirement for any changes in the Club's facilities to be approved by 90% of members attending a meeting and voting for any such proposal means that a very small minority of members could prevent the wishes of the large majority. The Club Committee has therefore decided that this ought to be discussed and reviewed by the membership. We recognize that some safeguards need to remain in place and as such a proposal is to be put forward at this year's AGM to amend the Club's constitution to provide that changes to the Club's facilities need to be approved by 75% of those attending and voting at a meeting. This will be a significant change to the constitution and will need to be approved by 90% of those attending and voting on this issue at this year's AGM. You are therefore encouraged to attend to hear the discussion and make your views known.

The other significant event this year was the long-awaited questionnaire and thanks go out to Wayne Stretch for progressing this and to Christine Harvey for her hard work and expertise in implementing it. I'm pleased to say that the response was very good, particularly from the

adult members. We will be sharing the analysis of the results from this questionnaire at this year's AGM and again you are encouraged to attend to receive this feedback and enter into any discussions that may arise. I am not going to give out any spoilers here!

This year has also been a year of change of personnel. As you will all be aware from the recent email, Jeremy Sperling has decided to take well earned retirement following 13 years as our Club Manager and his place will be taken by Neal Gibbons, who has already been involved in assisting with the management of the Club with regards to IT for many years now. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to Jeremy for his dedication and hard work at the Club for all these years and which extends beyond the 13 years I have just mentioned, because prior to becoming our Club Manager, Jeremy was the Club Secretary for a number of years. I'd also like to take this opportunity of welcoming Neal into the role of Club Manager- I am certain that he will do a fantastic job. This year has also seen Julie Moan stand down as Club Treasurer and I would also like to thank her for undertaking this difficult role for a number of years. Peter Jordan has agreed to step back in as Treasurer for an interim period.

I too had also intended for this to be my last year as Club Chair but I have agreed to continue for now in the interim whilst we seek a suitable replacement. This may well therefore be my last AGM as Club Chair and accordingly I would love to see as many of you as possible at this year's AGM

Finally, as I always do, I would like to thank all our bar staff, our groundsman John Woodbury and all the unsung volunteers on the committees and teams, who together make this Club work in the wonderful way in which it does.

Stephen Ellis-Jones
Club Chairman