

## Chairman's Report to the 2021 AGM

This has been a very turbulent 12 months for Southbourne Tennis Club which has mirrored the difficulties faced by us all in life in general.

Unfortunately, one of my first tasks was to close the club in November due to the second lockdown. We were open briefly in December followed by a much longer closure from January to April. I would like to thank all our members and the coaching team for their patience during our closure and for helping us to open up safely by following the rules that had to be put in place.

Thankfully things have improved over the summer and we are almost back to "normal".

During the winter Dave & Matt took the initiative while the club was closed and carried out a large amount of maintenance around the club. This included painting the interior of the club house, painting the practice wall and repairing and painting the wooden fence by courts 1-3. They also carried out many minor maintenance tasks that have largely gone unnoticed but are essential to the look and feel of the club. The committee are very grateful for their foresight and commitment to the club.

The club has also invested in new nets and new furniture (chairs & tables) inside the club house to improve the member experience.

As part of our commitment to the health and safety of our members and coaches a comprehensive review was carried out by one of our members, Paul Woods. A large number of improvements opportunities were identified and the committee has been working their way through the list. As part of completing many of these maintenance and improvement tasks, in the absence of volunteers, the committee took the decision to employ someone to help us. We were put in contact with a handyman, Colin Reeves, who has been working his way through our list of jobs. We are now in a position to carry out preventative maintenance rather than being purely reactive to situations.

In addition, we have had the compost heap/dump removed from the side of the shed along with two large trees (one was dead and the other was in a very dangerous condition). Some other minor tree pruning took place and we are awaiting a response from the council to prune trees that are impinging on courts 5 & 6.

When lockdown ended we were unsure how the club would recover from being closed over the winter. We were pleasantly surprised that the membership has actually increased with a large number of adults who are returning to tennis joining the club. The coaching team have been very busy during the summer with courses being full across the spectrum of adult, junior and disabled coaching. Although this has sometimes put pressure on the availability of courts it is good to see the club being so vibrant and busy every day of the week.

It is interesting to see how adult usage of the club has changed. The constraints on play early in the summer have led to a larger number of "fixed 4s" taking place compared to lower attendance at scheduled club sessions. Attendance at the Monday and Tuesday mornings has fallen along with the Friday morning session. This has been offset to some degree by a slight increase in usage in the evening sessions. The committee will monitor the situation and manage the availability of courts for club sessions to optimise usage of the club.

The Southbourne Open run by Zoltan was very successful with over 80 players attending. The Southbourne Closed tournament has been a bit of a headache with a significant number of players leaving matches to the last minute causing many matches to be conceded. It may be necessary to change the format, duration or time of year to try to ensure a more successful tournament in 2022.

Match tennis has been disrupted over the last year. Fortunately the summer leagues have taken place this year within the constraints in place at the time. Thanks go to Celia for ensuring our team captains have

courts booked and know where and when they should be playing matches. I cannot imagine the number of emails and phone calls required to make sure things run smoothly.

An additional offering at the club has been Pickleball. This is a padel game that is played on a small court. We have marked out a court on the existing "mini tennis" court. All equipment can be borrowed from the club if you want to give it a try.

Our major project for the year was the installation of the new flood lights. I would like to thank Colin Gilbey for his efforts in managing this project from conception, tendering and supplier management to turning the lights on. The new lights should provide a more even lighting pattern for players and a large reduction in running and maintenance costs for the club. The project was done in record time with disruption being limited to 5 days. We would also like to thank the Dorset LTA for a grant to help with the cost of installation.

Another large project is due to commence at the end of September and will hopefully be finished well before the AGM. This is the surfacing of the car park near courts 5 & 6. While this will be very disruptive we hope that the outcome will be worth it.

So what is planned for the next 12 months?

The main project that we are planning is the court 1-3 resurfacing. It is likely that this will be carried out in August 2022. Again this will be very disruptive for approximately a week but we need to invest in our infrastructure to provide the facilities our members deserve.

We will also be replacing our outdoor furniture to enable us to socialise in a pleasant environment.

There will also be a survey of members views issued during the winter. We would encourage all members to return it either with suggestions on how to improve the club or just to say you are happy with the way things are. We cannot guarantee to act on all suggestions but they will all be considered.

We have been unable to hold any social events over the last year so it is really positive that we have booked a Christmas Party for Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December. I hope that many of you will be able to attend and celebrate the end of a very difficult year and look forward to a more normal 2022.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee, Dave Sanger and the coaches for all their hard work behind the scenes to make Southbourne Tennis Club a great place to play tennis. I would also like to thank all the volunteers that have helped us run the club during the last year from supporting tournaments with catering, helping out with junior tournaments and coaching and doing the gardening to keep the grounds looking nice.

I look forward to see you at the AGM, on court and at the Christmas party.

Best wishes

David