

Chairman's Report to the Southbourne Tennis Club 2023 AGM

Although our last AGM was only 12 months ago progress has continued to be made across a wide range of tennis initiatives, infrastructure projects and maintenance issues around the club.

Tennis at the club has been very active over the last 12 months. Although we have lost a significant number of "covid" members (approximately 30) our membership figures are slightly higher than those pre-covid and the club is very busy and vibrant.

Attendance at club sessions seems to ebb and flow somewhat throughout the year but in general most of the sessions are well attended with numbers increased on previous year.

Our annual club tournament organised by Zoltan had the highest entrance for a number of years. Finals day brought out the sun and was very well attended by members and their families. An excellent barbecue was provided by Colin Gilbey with the kitchen being manned by John Woodham. The tennis finals started at 10:00 with the last ball being hit after 18:30. The quality of matches was very high and seemed to be enjoyed by participants and spectators alike.

A Learning Disability tournament was held in mid-summer. It was very well attended and thanks go to Dave, the coaches and helpers for making it such a success. The event was attended by the Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Bournemouth and the Chairman of the Boscombe Rotary Club who sponsored the event. They had a great afternoon watching and meeting the players and their parents.

The Scala Singles League has been running throughout the year with an increased level of participation across the club. Most players enjoy the competition and the opportunity to play singles at their own level.

Our teams are doing well across the divisions. We had 10 teams entered in both the summer and winter Dorset league.

This winter our Ladies 1st team captained by Cleo Reid has won the first division and our Mixed 3rd team captained by Dan Light has been promoted. Many matches had to be rearranged due to bad weather which created a bit of a headache for our match secretary Celia.

An additional men's team captained by Neil Mackley has been entered into the summer league for this year.

At Christmas Ray Burningham, who has been at the club for over three decades, decided to take a step back from regular coaching with Dave's team. We will still see him around the club as he continues to coach a few members of the club.

The committee, coaches and many members would like to thank Ray for his commitment to furthering tennis at the club. Ray was presented with a retirement gift by Colin Gilbey and Paul Woods as a token of our thanks for all he has done at the club.

Tennis coaching at the club is going from strength to strength with our new coach, Taylor Bate finding his feet. The coaching sessions from mini tots to walking tennis and ladies mornings to learning disability are all very well supported.

The main improvement project carried out over the last 12 months was the resurfacing of courts 1-3. As with many projects, it took longer and cost us more (£47k) than we anticipated. At the same time we took the opportunity to carpet the mini court to make it safer for our children and disabled users.

This was funded 50-50 between the club and the disability fund (£1100 each). Once the courts had settled down we were grateful to Dave and Matt for distributing a tonne of sand over the surface.

We also had repairs made to the baseline area of court 4. Courts 4-6 are due to be resurfaced in the 2024/25 timescale depending on the cost. It is anticipated that the courts will need to be levelled before being resurfaced and we have yet to get a quote for this work.

A wide range of maintenance issues arise out of nowhere from plumbing to electrics and furniture to gardening. We are grateful for the efforts of Colin Reeves who keeps on top of the majority of our issues and to John Woodham and Geoff West for repairing our new club house chairs on a regular basis.

Social events have again been thin on the ground this year. Our Christmas party was a bit of a let-down but we have already booked a new venue that comes highly recommended by club members and so we are looking forward to a better experience this year.

By the time of the AGM we will have had our Quiz Evening and 10 Pin Bowling Evening. If anyone would like to organise an event or evening out then get in touch with the committee and we will provide as much support as we can.

There are always opportunities for people with a bit of spare time to contribute to the club whether it is organising the kitchen for tournaments, keeping the weeds at bay or wielding a paint brush on the fence.

Finally I would like to thank the committee, coaches and helpers for all their efforts during the last 12 months which I believe has created a happy and safe environment for people of all ages to play tennis and enjoy the company of fellow players.

I hope to see you all at the AGM and on court during the coming season.

Best wishes

David Bull

Chairman Southbourne Tennis Club