

Bovingdon & Flaunden Tennis Club

Questions raised in advance of the AGM 2022

1. There's no mention of Head of Tennis? Who will be overseeing tennis activities particularly without a coach on the committee?

There is currently no Head of Tennis role and we would need to formally change the constitution to create one. The Club Captain and Chair together will lead the tennis agenda at Committee level. Although the Coach is no longer going to be a formal Committee role it is expected that Mike will work closely with the Club Captain and Chair and have regular meetings. Mike will also attend Committee meetings regularly as an invitee.

2. From previous experience I know how full on the tennis activities piece is and it needs someone in this role as a separate position even if it's not a committee position. In fact, you may get more volunteers for the role.

We agree! We would like to support the Club Captain role with non-committee roles leading the various areas of focus (floodlight tournaments, box leagues, Juniors, Beginners). This will allow for a greater input from members into the direction we take as a club. It will also give people an insight into how the Committee works and hopefully mean we have more people interested in coming forward to take on committee roles in future years. We will still have the Head of Tennis Activities Role available to fill, if necessary, at a later date.

3. When courts 4&5 are eventually re-laid, I am hoping the membership will be consulted as to the surface, like we did for the colour. I feel that tarmac is holding the club back - so many people dislike playing on it and see it as old fashioned. Modern, progressive clubs do not choose tarmac any more for many reasons. Astroturf (in whatever form) is truly all year round weatherproof whereas tarmac is not in drizzle/rain/frost (just ask our own members) quite apart from other benefits such as maintenance and how it affects people's joints. We could easily lay Astroturf on courts 4&5 as the ADTL only use 2 courts, and all WDTL matches were played on courts 1-3 this year anyway. It is worth the extra investment. When do we envisage courts 4&5 will need replacing?

Court 5 is now 12 years old and court 4 several years older. As you will have read in the Treasurer's report both courts are likely to need replacing in the near future and active planning for this is likely to start in the next year. Decisions on precise timing and whether to lay a new surface as part of that process will have to take account of a number of factors:

- Technical and cost issues
 - Our site sits on heavy clay and we will need to do a proper assessment to ensure that when we re-lay the courts drainage is adequate. This led to much greater cost than originally envisaged when replacing courts 1-3.
 - We cannot just overlay AstroTurf. The probable approach would be to drill the courts, lay a new tarmac surface and then overlay AstroTurf. This nearly doubles the cost compared with sticking with tarmac.
 - When we do relay courts 4 and 5, we need to address the flooding issue which will add further to the cost.
 - Consideration may also be given to raising the courts so all five are at the same level.
- Economic environment - Past estimates of cost will have to be revisited in the light of the inflationary environment we now face and may affect our flexibility to carry out other discretionary projects.

- Planning constraints on lighting. Once our new lease is signed, we hope to get a variation to our planning permissions to allow lighting of courts in any order. This would give us the flexibility to stage evening matches without the need to play on different surfaces.
- Although there are members who have made clear their desire to lay some form of AstroTurf, others like our tarmac courts. As the decision point nears, the committee will of course want to gauge views in the light of the cost and operational implications of a new surface.

4. What is the latest with the changing of the planning permission regs for our floodlights?

We would still very much like to address the current planning regulations with regard to the floodlights. We planning to raise this once the lease has been formally signed. As the Treasurer reported, the terms of our new lease have now been finalised and we await drafts for signature progress is being made!

5. Membership: why do we think there has been such a massive drop in junior members? I remember when we were around 90 junior members. 102 full adult members is still higher than pre COVID but down quite a bit from last year and even more so from 20-21 This was the first year ever since I have been at the club where we didn't have some kind of offer e.g., Half price offer from the summer: hopefully we can do something moving forward because we are certainly not at capacity at the club.

As a committee we have been comfortable with the level of membership, including the adult membership. Our focus is on building usage during the day when there is plenty of court availability and growing the junior section.

6. We desperately need another beginners offer. Currently our beginner group is too small so we don't even have enough to make up a four for private play. I feel that the £20 taster wasn't as successful as other offers in maintaining our beginners we need some different kind of offer. I'm often asked about beginner offers by both existing members (who have friends/ relatives interested in trying tennis) and non-members...

The Committee has discussed building the beginners' group but the decision, rightly, has been to ask the incoming Membership Secretary to address this. Any queries regarding a beginner's offer, or general queries regarding membership, can be addressed to the membership secretary who will respond accordingly.

7. In the past we have offered holiday camps (although never extensive enough), regular junior socials and junior social events. Are there plans to bring these back?

The Committee has had discussions with both previous coaching suppliers and current coaching suppliers about the feasibility of running holiday camps. At the moment we are in direct competition for holiday camps with the school. It is very difficult to be competitive price wise, particularly since the school runs the camps for full days. We are already working with the school providing after school tennis clubs on two days per week. There are very well attended and act as a good introduction to the Club and our coaches.

We are hoping to bring Junior socials back as well as potentially run and / or enter Junior tournaments. We have already had conversations with Mike and the Everyball team on this subject. We would very much like to have a Junior Coordinator (as mentioned under question 2) to help us put some thinking and action behind this. It would also be very helpful to have some volunteers to help run events and we would need parents to be able to drive Juniors to other events. We are very conscious of our safeguarding and welfare responsibilities when we plan any Junior activities...