



Chair's Report 2023

Thank you

In my normal manner I must start by thanking all committee members, event organisers, team captains and volunteers for their involvement and input in the continuing success of the club. Without you we could not run the events, teams and competitions that we do so successfully.

Introduction

Given how much information about events, teams and competitions is available for viewing on the Cringleford Tennis Club website, whilst I will reference a number of key highlights, I am this year going to concentrate on issues involving the running and development of the club. All key reports are, or will, be on the website and can be accessed from the clickable links either on the Agenda or in this document.

Club Governance

At last year's AGM a query was raised about the potential to publish minutes of CTC committee meetings to provide club members with transparency about decisions taken by the committee. This has now been achieved and going forward agendas will be published on the website before meetings and the minutes will be posted once approved as being correct at the following meeting. An email advising that the minutes are available will be sent out with a clickable link to take you straight there.

The committee is also introducing sub-committees to deal with a number of topics as there simply is not enough time at committee meetings for everything to be dealt with in a comprehensive manner. Where appropriate non-committee members will be asked if they will serve on these where specific expertise is required. This is in accordance with LTA guidance for the management of tennis clubs.

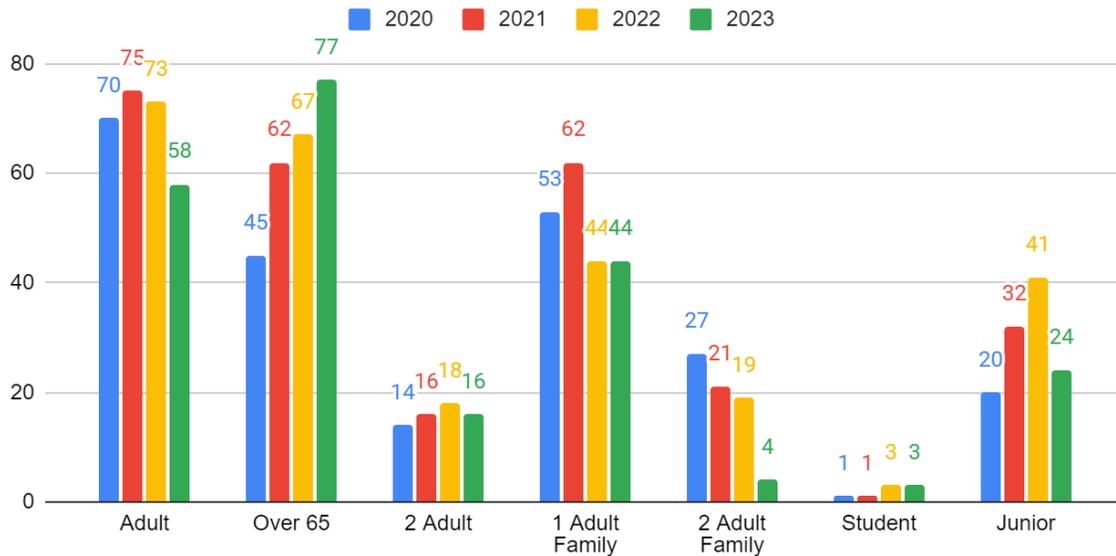
Membership

Membership which peaked after Covid has declined this year and currently we have 226 members of whom 55 are Juniors. This compares with 262 members this time last year of whom 74 were Juniors. Membership income is marginally below last year's £16253 at £15937 despite an increase in the membership fee.

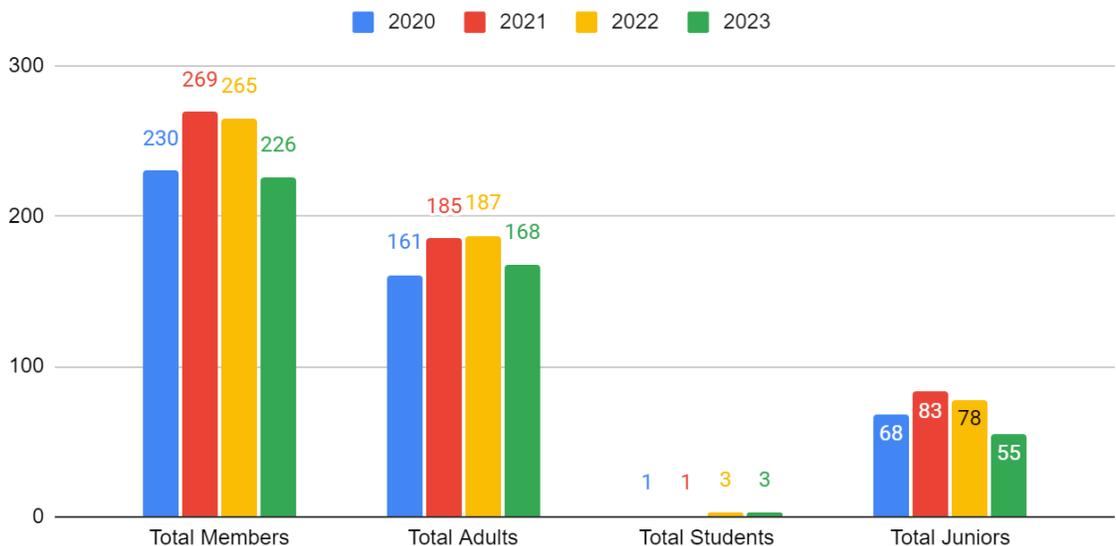
The drop in membership numbers is clearly concerning and it is clear we need to consider improving our marketing both inside and outside the club including the use of Social Media such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook and Instagram in order to attract younger elements to the club.

An analysis of membership numbers can be seen below and demonstrates the increasing importance of the Over 65 membership whose number, and therefore income to the club, is growing. Discussions have been held with Coach Katie and measures agreed to ensure all juniors on the coaching programme become members of the club.

Membership Totals



Membership Totals



Grass Courts

In my report to the 2022 AGM I outlined the research carried out into the possibility of converting the grass courts to an all weather surface and advised that *‘As a committee we have over the last twelve months been considering the future of the grass courts and whether converting them to an all weather surface was desirable/achievable/affordable. After a comprehensive review of our financial situation, sinking fund and replacement costs of the existing facility, we have decided against pursuing this option. Whilst the club hold a good level of funds, we came to the conclusion that we will not have sufficient monies going forward to replace our current facilities when due if we entered into a new and substantial commitment to replace the grass courts.’*

As a result of this decision a modest investment has been made in the grass courts with work carried out by the groundsman from Cromer Tennis Club, who is highly regarded. This work was at minimal cost compared to replacing the grass courts and in no way compromises any future development plans. Whilst this work has led to some improvement in the grass courts, the variable bounce and weather dependency mean they have not been played on to any great extent. We have faced further challenges in that the grass has not been cut short enough or often enough which has been disappointing. The groundsman from Cromer has now carried out further improvements including scarifying, feeding and applying loam to make playing conditions better next year as they may well be in use for another season.

Clubhouse Project

Recently, Steve Wright, a member of the club, supported by some thirty two fellow members, put forward proposals for a clubhouse on one of the grass courts, together with a practice wall and realignment of access points to enable all courts to be accessed from a central point.

The key elements of the proposal are:

A members clubhouse fitted out to enable teas and coffees to be served and storage provided.

Circulation area in front of the clubhouse.

Pathway to clubhouse and remaining grass court from the entrance.

Access ramp to bottom courts.

Access into top courts.

A practice wall with an all weather surface equivalent in size to a short tennis court.

Long term replacement of the remaining grass court with an all weather surface court.

An initial estimate of the costs has been worked up which the committee used to ascertain viability at their meeting on 26th October- see table below.

Phase 1 - Clubhouse with access ways, circulation area and access to upper and lower courts.

Phase 2 - Practice wall and associated all weather surface

Phase 3 - Additional all weather court

The budget figure for Phase 1 works of £40,000 has been factored into our long term plan and whilst it will deplete capital reserves, based on our current financial projections the committee consider it to be just about affordable without compromising the long term sustainability of the club. This is as long as there is enough surplus income annually for the sinking fund which has clear implications for membership numbers as membership income is our main source of finance. The sinking fund requirement of circa £10,000 is likely to need increasing annually in line with inflation. It is also of note that we did not achieve the £10,000 surplus this year, it was actually £4108 as a result of some one off costs and rising costs generally. Members should therefore be aware that annual fees might have to increase in the future to maintain the sinking fund.

We have not yet had any discussions with our landlord, the Parish Council or the Planning Authority, South Norfolk District Council. This or any varied proposal is therefore subject to discussion with these parties and requires their approval. An application for Pre-Planning advice for the Phase 1 work has already been made to South Norfolk District Council and if received before the AGM will be reported to the meeting.

The possibility of a practice wall has not been included in Phase 1 for both cost and technical reasons. There is a wide cost range due to the different specifications available and potential issues with sound transmission given the short distance to existing residential properties. Research is required before taking this idea any further.

Nothing has been agreed on Phase 2 and or Phase 3 as they would require additional finance which is currently unavailable. A master plan would however be prepared to ensure any further development was planned in at the outset.

The committee consider the Phase 1 proposal to offer a very real benefit to members at an affordable cost which allows further enhancement in the future as funds allow. A single grass court would be retained with a view to improving the quality of the surface which should satisfy those who wish to play on grass.

Any project will need to be carefully managed and the finances controlled to be successful. I personally have forty years experience in surveying and project management, whilst Nathan Dickinson, who has agreed to work with me on any project, is an engineer by background and is now heavily involved in property development. Members can be confident that the development would be well managed and the costs controlled.

An initial budget is set out below, it must be emphasised that the figures are initial estimates costs only and considerable further work is required to firm them up.

Phase 1 initial budget	BUDGET COSTS		
Basics			
Lodge timber building 5mt x 3mt	£12500.00	Consider building proposed by Steve Wright unlikely to be fit for purpose, believe will need to be more substantial - cost to depend on size/quality represents starting point	
Concrete/slab base 15 sq m	£1995.00	Gravel filled mesh base could reduce cost	
Concrete/slab externally 15 sq m	£1995.00	Considered to be minimum external circulation area	
Access path 15 sq m plus ramp to lower courts	£3000.00	A concrete/slab path will be required to and from the clubhouse plus ramp to lower courts - the cost will be dependent upon the location of the clubhouse. This does not include any upgrade of the route to the car park.	
Fence off remaining court & create new access points	£2500.00	Assumed minimum 2.6 mt high fence but could be lower which would reduce cost.	
Planning Application	£357.00		
	£22347.00		
Add on's			
Fitting out cabin - units, elec, plumbing	£1000.00	Will need electrical distribution board and cupboards/ fittings. Cost will depend upon extent of fit out	
Water supply to cabin assuming from current location in grass courts	£3000.00	Water bottles could be an option but not very practical - not known if water supply/quality from existing supply would be suitable - may not for instance be suitable for drinking water and new supply may be required	
Electricity supply to cabin 60 mt run plus connections	£5000.00	Solar electricity could be a more cost affective solution and would be investigated as an alternative.	
Drainage £50 per linear metre - 60 mt run plus connections	£5000.00	Assumed can connect near Pavilion but do not know and cost will depend upon length run, depth of trench, connections and depth of any new inspection chambers	
	£14000.00		
Sub-total	£36347.00		
Contingency @ 10%	£3634.70		
	£39981.70		
Suggested budget	£40000.00		
Phase 2 initial budget			
Practice wall	From £800 - £8000	Cost totally dependent on type as can be acquired for a few hundred pounds or cost thousands also can be incorporated into fencing dependent upon layout.	
Surface for practice wall 50 sq m @ £160 per sq m	£8000.00	If practice wall was movable 50sq m would double as a short tennis court	
Phase 3 initial budget	£66000 - £72000	Cost of all weather court	

Club sessions

Club sessions were run throughout the year with organised sessions on Saturday and Monday mornings continuing to be popular. Tuesday and Thursday evenings are not as well supported even when there was an organiser present. The committee continues to discuss the evening sessions and how we can improve on popularity. Suggestions from members on this would be very welcome.

Events

The club ran a full programme of events starting with the Quiz in March and running through the year from the traditional serve off followed by the Sunday tournaments. If members have ideas for further events please let a committee member know and we will see what we can do.

Competitive tennis

Teams

The stand out performance of the year was from the Men's A team who finished as Champions of the top division in the City League, an outstanding achievement and an enormous well done to those who played for this team: Will 'Fozzy' Foster, Jack Edwards, Louis Armstrong-Brown, Joseph Philpott, Ollie Palmer, James Henry. For information on where the various teams finished this summer see the Team Tennis page on the website..

S & P Summer Tournament

The main summer tournament was once again very well supported with sixty matches played including those on a great, although hot, finals day in early September.

Click for the full [S&P Report](#).

Box Leagues

Box leagues have continued to be popular over the last year with one round of matches in Autumn 2022 and another in Spring 2023. Autumn 2023 matches are currently underway. Click for the full [Box league report](#).

Coaching

At the beginning of February 2023 Katie Brooks was delighted to be awarded Norfolk LTA Development Coach of the Year particularly as this made her the only coach in Norfolk to have won this award twice! Katie's full report can be accessed here: [Coaching Report](#).