**Ightham Tennis Club**
**Newsletter, July 2020
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Dear members,

Well, 2020 has so far been a truly memorable year, and not for the best of reasons…!

The whole Covid-19 and lockdown thing kicked off in late March, just as traditionally we were gearing up for the start of serious outdoor tennis, with longer days and (theoretically) better weather. Covid-19 promptly paralysed all activity for a full two months. It put the kibosh on our annual McConnell tournament, also the start of our summer championships, which we had planned to launch earlier than usual this year, in the hopes of getting them all *finished* earlier….
So much for that idea!

Everything that has happened since, with progressively changing government advice and LTA guidance, has made it very difficult for us to function – in common with all other clubs. As lockdown eased, we were first allowed to play singles and then doubles, initially only with our nearest and dearest, and then with anyone but subject to “social distancing” – and so it goes.

Even now that we are able to pursue a more or less “normal” range of tennis activities, we have to be careful not to gather in groups of more than the officially permitted number. It is all extremely tiresome – but necessary in the face of this very nasty virus which threatens all of us in one way or another.

Because we were not able, at the beginning of our regular subscription year, to offer any tennis at all, there was of course no way we could ask you for any money, and we have only recently felt able to ask you to cough up! Once we were cleared to operate again, everyone was understandably raring to go, and we have seen a very gratifying influx of new members to the club. Half of these are “villagers” and the other half are other locals and slightly-less-locals who have played as guests at Ightham and decided to join up because they like us so much. We warmly welcome them and the breath of fresh air they are bringing to life at the club.

Some future events are still up in the air, depending on how the Covid situation develops. For example, we have **cancelled the quiz evening** we had hoped to run in September, and we still cannot know for certain if/how we are going to run some form of Finals Day, our statutory AGM, and the annual end-of-season supper and pre-Christmas drinks…

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS ON OFFER AT THE MOMENT AT ITC?

**Premises:** We are keeping our clubhouse closed for the time being, in line with what most LTA clubs are doing. Access to the bathroom facilities is available during club sessions only, when a club committee member is there to supervise, and we would ask members to help keep the place clean and tidy by taking any rubbish they generate home with them. We also ask members to make full use of the wipes and hand sanitizer provided on the table by the door, to minimise risk in and around the clubhouse.

**Summer championships:** We have launched these as of the beginning of July, so one month later than usual. A lot of people have entered, and we are running it on a round-robin basis rather than a knock-out basis, so we shall be hard put to finish it all by the end of October, which is the aim. But it is great having such enthusiasm, and new people to play against, so this can only be a good thing. That said, DO please get your matches played, people, or I shall have even more grey hairs than usual by the autumn…!!

**Social club tennis:** We currently have three regular weekly sessions of tennis, on a Tuesday evening, a Friday evening and a Sunday morning.

1. Tuesday evening mixed doubles (run by Fi Storey):

**A relaxed fun mixed doubles session from 7-9 pm.** Limited to 8 people – 4 women and 4 men. Organised through a WhatsApp group on a first come first served basis. On the night, you team up with a partner and play a set against another pair. Followed by winners playing winners, and the other two pairs playing each other.

To join, please email Fi with your mobile phone number and she will add you to the group: **FiStorey1@outlook.com**.

2) Friday night social tennis (run by Jenny Cooper):

Jenny describes her sessions as follows…

“**Session and player numbers extended due to high demand – a great way to finish the week!**

We have run three very successful Friday night club sessions which now due to high demand have been extended to a maximum of 16 players each week. Between 5.30-8.30 pm every Friday night members play for 30 mins per match and mix partners and opponents. Half the players are on the courts and the other half sit, watch, chat, applaud and generally enjoy some social tennis!

Picnics, nibbles & drinks etc are encouraged and the pizza van is in the car park from 4.30 pm!

Places to play are allocated on a first come first served basis via a WhatsApp Group.
So if you’d like to play, watch and meet some new tennis players please contact Jenny:

**07977 468061 or****jenny@lyddenevents.com**.”

3) Sunday morning club session (run by Max Robinson):
Max says…
**“Sunday morning club session - a great way to start the day!**
We have expanded a small group that used to play regularly on Sunday mornings and have now turned it into a Club session open to all members. We use both courts, and last week we had 11 players join us, playing four quick games before changing partners/rotating out.
We would especially encourage more women to join us.
Given the level of interest, we are now lengthening the sessions to start at 8:00 am playing through to 10:30 am, so that early risers can enjoy playing at the start of the day while those who may want to stay in bed a bit longer can still join the group later.
We have just started a WhatsApp group for those interested in playing, and issue invitations on a Friday morning with places allocated on a first come first served basis. So far we have not needed to ration attendance. If you would like to be added to this group please contact Max: **ighthamtennis@gmail.com**  **or via WhatsApp on 07557 268 944**”.

 **Sam’s junior coaching sessions:**1) summer holidays: Monday to Thursday, 3-8 August, 10:30 to 16:30.
2) from September: Thursday 15:30 to 17:30 and Friday 15:30 to 17:30.

Contact Sam on **sam.smith.tennis@gmail.com**, tel. 07580 140344

**FOOTNOTES:**

**Art competition:**We are planning to run a new art competition for the children of Club members/Ightham School parents. The winning entries will be used as adverts publicising the Club in Ightham’s village magazine. There will be PRIZES! As notified in earlier emails, the closing date is 22 July, and entries should be sent to Jenny at **jenny@lyddenevents.com**.

**Court keys**:
Just a reminder that new members not previously able to get a court key can now do so from Max (**ighthamtennis@gmail.com**, tel. 885966). A returnable deposit of £20 per key is payable.

\* \* \* \*