

Chairman's Report 2019

This report reviews our special goals for last year and also our safety performance.

Safety: the good news is that in 2018 we had no accidents needing paramedics – we had one in 2017, three in 2015 and two in 2014. So last year we avoided the problem of running backwards, falling over and crashing our heads against the court surface. However, we ask our coaches to continue to make members aware of how going backwards sideways is the safer way to do it.

What we did have last year is pulled muscles or other injuries due to slippery courts. Some of these were on the clay when it was dry. During the summer we bought watering cans and a hose and tried to mitigate this by encouraging people to at least water the painted lines. This worked but watering the courts with the hose wasn't as successful. The clay went lumpy or dried too quickly in the sun. However, since then, we've replaced the painted lines and these are not slippery.

The other slips happened when the hard courts were wet. We are hopeful that we may be able to reduce this when the hard courts are repainted - some new paint formulations claim to reduce slipperiness. We will still need to take care of course when the clay is very dry, when the tarmac is wet or icy - and when we're running backwards.

Security: as ever, there have been occasions when the courts and even the clubhouse have been found unlocked. We continue to rely on all of us playing our part, especially in relation to ensuring all the doors (including the patio ones) are locked when we're the last to leave.

When it gets warmer, we will be asking people to keep the front door shut to discourage visitors to the rec from coming into the clubhouse and using the loos. It's not good from a security or safeguarding perspective to have strangers popping in and out.

Thank you for paying attention to safety and security around the club.

Our Goals: at last year's AGM, we set out three main goals for 2018 and I want to report back on these:

- 1. To complete the conversion of the club into a 'company limited by guarantee'.***

On April 1, we successfully converted from *Leatherhead Lawn Tennis Club* to *Leatherhead Tennis Club Limited*. The club can now enter into contracts in its own

right and we are all now better protected from potential personal financial liabilities arising from the club. This is because the liability of each member is capped at £1.

The conversion involved quite a lot of legal work in the first quarter relating to transferring our lease, liaising with HM Land Registry, and formally transferring the assets and liabilities from the old club to the new club. Our thanks go to our previous Trustees, Tony Collett and Bernard Burbidge, to George Georgiou for his legal expertise, to Downs Solicitors for their pro bono help, and to Paul who partnered with me on this project.

2 To decide what we do about floodlights on Court 5.

You'll remember MVDC told us that we were unlikely to be successful if we applied for floodlights on both Courts 5&6. So, if only Court 5 is a possibility, would it still be worthwhile for us to apply and implement now for just one court, or should we wait address Court 5 when we replace the lights on Courts 1-4?

The first thing we did was to 're-lamp' the hard courts. The company that installed our floodlights changed all the bulbs and cleaned the glass that protects them. The lights were then brighter and more consistent. And we learnt more about how to change the bulbs safely. Yes, it does take at least three tennis players to change a lightbulb! This increased our confidence in being able to live longer with the current floodlights. So, we think we can replace them later rather than sooner.

We then took advice on whether there was a significant cost penalty on implementing Court 5 floodlights on their own vs doing them as one big job with Courts 1-4. We learnt that there wasn't a significant cost penalty.

Taking these two positive outcomes together, we have decided to do this project now. So, this year, we will apply for planning permission to floodlight Court 5.

We've engaged the LTA's floodlighting expert to help us choose the system and develop the application. We're still several weeks away from applying. Before we do, we will be writing to our neighbours and offering to share our plans with them. When we do apply, and when the council publishes them for public consultation, we will value your support. 'Lights out' will need to be earlier than 10pm, especially on Saturday and Sunday. We think we can put together a good case and help ease any potential concerns of our neighbours.

If we do get permission, and this is by no means certain, we anticipate that the floodlights will cost around £35,000 to install. We have the money for this and do not need a loan from members or anyone else. We investigated the possibility of an interest free loan from the LTA but found that they would require us to renew our

lease early - we reckon this would put up our rent and cost us more than simply funding the lights out of reserves.

3. To commence the Facilities Plan that we shared with you last year.

The Facilities Plan is what we need to do over the next ten years to maintain our playing infrastructure. It falls into two phases:

- a) The *short-term (2018 - 2021)* is about ensuring that our surfaces and lights can last their full expected lives. It's also includes improving access to the courts and some aspects of the clubhouse. We costed these at up to £50,000.
- b) The *long-term (2022 - 2027)* is about how and when we do the big items, replacing the clay carpet, resurfacing the hard courts and modernising the hard-court floodlights. We costed these at around £175,000.

With floodlighting Court 5, it's potentially around £250,000 over ten years.

We've made good progress in starting the plan. Last year we spent £23,000 on:

- Pinning down and repainting some of the fencing
- Re-lamping the floodlights
- Improving the electrics in the clubhouse
- Improving access so we can bring in modern maintenance equipment, and
- Rejuvenating the clay courts, replacing the painted lines, migrating to a new form of clay and acquiring the grit bins to store it in.

The things we need to do in 2019 include:

- Commencing an annual 'deep clean' of the clay courts
- Improving the look of the place by replacing our faded or old signage
- De-cluttering the clubhouse by adding an outside storage cabinet to hold the equipment that is kept in the changing rooms. (We need to get planning permission for this!)
- Most importantly, rebinding and repainting the hard courts. Rebinding is a process that stops the tarmac disintegrating but still lets the water through.

Big thanks go to Pam, Paul and Nigel who are the other members of our Facilities Sub-Committee – and especially to Nigel Catlow who led the rejuvenation of Courts 5&6. He worked out what the problem was, what we needed to do, persuaded us that it was worth the money, found the contractor and co-ordinated the work. And it's a big improvement. Well done Mr Catlow.

But as if three things weren't enough, two things landed on us out of the blue.

GDPR. Remember that! This was a load of unexpected extra work. We needed to review and audit how we held personal data and how we communicated with

members and then adapt and communicate a compliant Privacy Policy. Big thanks to Diane and Judi who worked with me on that.

Then the LTA announced new **registration requirements** for clubs. Before we could register for 2018/19, we needed to appoint a Welfare Officer and Deputy (thank you Diane and Janet), adopt new Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, Whistleblowing and Diversity & Inclusion policies, and update our club Risk Assessment. In total Diane, Mike and I adopted or updated 16 policies. Thanks go to both of them for the time they gave.

Our main goals for 2019 will be:

- (1) To apply for planning permission for floodlights on Court 5
- (2) To progress the Facilities Plan, particularly rebinding and repainting Courts 1-4
- (3) To consider what to do with the grass area next to the clubhouse - can we find a way of making it add better value to the club?

In addition, we need to move to a **new booking system and website**. We're doing this because Bookit is closing down and so we can release our webmaster, Marc Ashley who no longer lives or plays here. The new ClubSpark website will be much easier to update and the ClubSpark booking system looks to be an improvement. There's also an app version you can download to your phone.

I'll conclude with a **thank you** to my fellow committee members for the considerable time they volunteer to run the club. To our excellent coaches, Andy, Simon and Jamie. And to everybody who helps out or simply participates during the year, whether by captaining or playing in a team, joining social events and tournaments, or, just as importantly, regularly attending club play sessions and even AGMs. Thank you for supporting the club.

Nigel Turner