

Chair's 2023 AGM Report – Richard Hedley

**The AGM will be held in the Clubhouse
on Thursday 23rd November 2023 at 7:30pm.**

Thank you all for coming to the AGM.

I will start by saying a few words about myself. I have been a member for 20 years. In the past my wife, Catherine and my 3 boys were also members. Some of you may remember my youngest son George who was coached by Nigel, and he went onto play Div. 1 tennis on scholarship at an American University.

In 2022 I retired after a 40-year career working as a geophysicist in the energy industry. In a moment of weakness, I agreed to be co-opted on to the board. I blame my wife for me taking on this role. She told me the job of chairman is easy – I just had to hand out a few trophies on finals day! If only that was true.

One of my first tasks was to understand the spending that had taken place in 2022 in building the glasshouse and refurbishing the patio areas. The lack of information on this was the main cause of the acrimony at last years AGM. My investigations found we spent £177,000 of which £172,000 was capital expenditure. I sent several Newsletters to all members sharing the details of my findings.

Members were asking questions like:

- Did we get value for money?
- Were transparent processes followed?
- Did we conduct due diligence on main contractor?
- Were there any conflicts of interest?
- Did the board provide sufficient financial oversight?

I held a meeting in March 2023 to which all members were invited, and I presented the findings and addressed the questions.

Following this, in early 2023 we took steps to make sure we had better control on our budgeting and spending. Tom (our Treasurer) will talk more about the state of our finances in a few moments time when he gives the Treasurers report.

Tom will end by proposing an increase in next year's annual subscriptions. We are conscious that we are in a cost-of-living crisis - we are seeing a lot of our contractors raise their prices and our utility bills (gas & electric) have gone through the roof. Despite these pressures we have kept our proposed annual subscription rise as low as possible.

We are delighted to welcome our new Head Coach, Rob Flynn, to the committee. Later, Rob will say a few words about his vision for the club and highlight some of his early achievements.

The other important role of today's AGM is to approve or reject three board decisions which involve making changes to our Byelaws. Patricia will briefly discuss the rationale for each of these board decisions and then request members to either vote

in favour or against. If you vote against the first one, make sure you have a full drink because we would then be in breach of RBWM council licensing laws and would have to immediately close the bar. I would strongly urge you to vote in favour of each of the three resolutions.

I would like to remind people that we are a club owned by members and largely run by volunteer members. Thanks to our predecessors we own our land which we bought in 1966 for the princely sum of ca.£6000. It was a lot of money back then and many members (like Alan Frampton's dad) personally took on financial liability to guarantee a share of the bank loan. Thankfully that loan was paid off a few years later.

We have a lot to be thankful for. Successive past Chairpersons and Treasurers have prudently managed our finances and built-up significant cash reserves. In addition, they left a legacy of high-quality facilities.

We are a club with an excellent reputation throughout southern England and right now we are full. Currently we have 520 adult members and about 140 juniors.

Thanking Staff, Contractors & Volunteers

The most important job I have today is to thank the many volunteers, part-time staff and contractors who play an important role in keeping this club functioning.

Part-time staff

Thank you to our 2 part-time employees Karen and Di. Karen has good insight into how things work and has helped guide me during my first year as Chair. Di has worked here behind the bar for an incredible 35 years.....and we are very grateful for that long service to the club.

Committee & Contractors

A big thanks to two people whom we couldn't do without – Gwen our bookkeeper and Anne Chance our accountant. Thanks also to our cleaner Marco and our gardener – Wojciech.

Thank you to all our committee & board members for all their hard work throughout the year: Alan, Dave, Patricia, Tom, the other Tom, Claire, Anita, Sue, Owen, Suat, Karen, Mike, Nigel/Rob, Simon and Clive. You may not always see the work they do but rest assured they are working hard behind the scenes.

Let me give you a few examples.

- Patricia spent a lot of time with Karen updating a whole set of new safe-guarding policies that the club adopted in September. Also, Tom & Patricia worked incredibly hard in writing new budget/spending controls in Jan/Feb this year. Well done to both of you and thank you...you have both done great work for this club over the past 12 months.

- Another example of a hard-working committee member is Mike Bottomley – our Bar Chairman. Every few weeks he drives down to Rebellion Brewery in Marlow to buy beer and other drinks to re-stock the bar. He then has to claim back the money. Thank you, Mike, for all that effort – I believe you have done a great job for more than 20 years. Many thanks.

Team Selectors

The next group of people I need to thank are the team selectors and team captains. They spend hours each week ringing people, sending emails, telegrams, WhatsApps and twisting people's arms. Thank you for that massive effort (they include Kelly, Anita, Lewis, Leo, Simon, Steve, Sue Reid, Steph & Leah). Apologies for anyone that I may have missed.

Our teams performed well during the year, and we have some incredibly talented individuals. I believe that a high percentage of the Berkshire County teams are made up of Maidenhead tennis players.

Coaches

The high quality of senior and junior players is testimony to the high quality of coaching provided by our coaching staff. This year, we were sad to lose Richard Downs who has been a tremendous coach at MLTC for over 20 years. I am pleased he is staying on as a member and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

We thank Nigel for his 22 years of services as Head Coach and we look forward to Rob managing the team going forward. In recognition of Nigel's contributions to the club, your board of directors has awarded him honorary lifetime membership.

Honorary Lifetime Members

We now have 6 honorary lifetime members who are recognised for their massive contributions to the club over a long time. They are Alan Frampton, Dave Scarborough, Peter Herke, Keith Ashby, Elizabeth Moore & Nigel Mann. (In March 2023 it was sad to hear the news of the passing of one of our lifetime honorary members - Derek Hope).



Club Tournament

I would like to say a few words about this year's club tournament. Thank you to Paul Serjeant (Tournament Director) who ran the adult tournament and Julie Nucci who ran the Junior event. They assembled a team of volunteers to help, and they all worked hard over several months. To all of you I say: "you did an incredible job".

The tournament culminated in a well organised Finals Day where we witnessed a superb display of high-quality tennis. Judging by the noise levels of the cheering crowds I would say 200 – 300 people had a fun day out. Thanks to Paul, Julie, Chris, Geoff, Alison, Owen, Pat, Jenny, Suzette, and the army of volunteers that helped in the kitchen.

Lights on Clay-courts?

We have recently submitted a planning application to install lights on our clay courts. When I come down on a Tues or Thurs evening and see up to 16 people waiting for a court, I realise the importance of getting lights on those courts. I need to thank the working party led by Adrian and including Tim, Pete and Rosie for their efforts. If our plans, involving LED lights on poles, are rejected then we have other options we could consider – including one option which has specially adapted LED lights that sit on the top of the fencing known as the Tweener system.

Areas where we need to improve

I am proud of our achievements, but I have to say we don't always get things right.

- Just look at the bad painting job that I did at the back of court 4.
- Another area for improvement is in planning and executing large capital projects. If we do get planning permission to install lights on clay courts, then rest assured we will take steps to properly manage the project and learn the lessons from mistakes we made in the past.
- A third area where we have room for improvement is in organizing our social events. Next year I look forward to us hosting at least 5 social events. Possible ideas are Spring BBQ, American Tournament, Quiz, Summer BBQ, Annual Finals Day and Winter Santa event. We are open to any other ideas, and we welcome volunteers coming forward with offers to help organise. A number of people approached me to express interest in standing for the vacant Social Secretary role. In the end, a gentleman called Alex has put himself forward and the others agreed to let him go forward as the only candidate. Unfortunately, he can't be here tonight because he is organizing a social event in central London. I can say he is really nice guy and full of energy and ideas. I hope you the members will vote him in.

Conclusions

I will conclude by saying we are a fantastic club, with a wonderful history – now in our 144th year. We remain committed to being a warm friendly tennis club where people can have fun and enjoy themselves no matter what their standard.

As I have demonstrated, your club relies on wonderful hard-working volunteers. I am proud of all their efforts, and I think you should also be proud.

Richard Hedley

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November 2023 AGM



A few pictures on next page.....





Some pictures summarising events over past few years.....