

Redbourn Tennis Club Annual Report for 2021

Chair Report (Tim Moss)

Welcome to the Redbourn Tennis Club AGM and our review of the 2021 season.

Although Covid restricted our activities in the first quarter of 2021, I am delighted to be able to report that since that point our club has enjoyed unprecedented growth in membership and growth in court usage and play. New members both experienced and relatively new to the game are the life blood of any club and it has been especially pleasing to see our average age reduce as well as to be able to welcome new friends from different locations and backgrounds.

The restrictions led us initially to introduce WhatsApp Group sign up and pre- game pairings for our mix in sessions and almost accidentally this system seems to be highly popular with members with ever greater numbers signing up ever since its introduction. We have been especially pleased to see the numbers signing up to winter sessions which have used to quite low numbers when using the previous roll-up system.

Your committee has worked hard to bed in the new ClubSpark booking system and after a small number of initial glitches it has proved to be a very welcome means of reserving courts, communicating our “brand” on the website and communicating to members via its group email platform. The system is not perfect and further improvements are planned to finalise the booking app as well as improving the coaching booking flexibility, but we have been delighted with the ease with which members have been able to both receive communications and to book courts. In conjunction with the WhatsApp groups this has revolutionised our ability to arrange activities at the club keeping everyone up to date. There have been no requests to return to either roll-up play or phone booking of courts and so we plan to continue with the court booking system. The padlock combination has remained the same but hasn’t been abused and we will only change it when it proves to be a problem.

I would especially like to thank my “steady” players who have supported our Saturday improver/beginner sessions that are now so popular and so instrumental to bringing in new members. In particular thanks to Berni, Dot, Julia, Michelle, Brian, David, Euan, Katy and Ken who have all come to multiple sessions over the year giving help encouragement and well fed forehands to give such confidence to our new players. Many clubs are intimidating for newer players to join in mix in sessions and your support for these mornings has been inspirational for more than 50 players who have attended over the past twelve months.

As Chair I am also extremely grateful for the support of a very dedicated Committee who have supported the technical transition in the website and membership system, organised improvements to the clubhouse, kept our records and supported renegotiations of our lease, organised 4 fun tournaments, six individual club championships, the new singles box leagues, three teams squads and matches involving more than 30 players and 260 mix in sessions with over 80 different players. They have also arranged catering and refreshments for our events , provided 264 coaching and fitness classes, promoted the club to new members, applied successfully for grants and supported broader activities that have transformed our club finances and helped to develop our plans for the future development of our Club. It has been an unbelievably busy year considering the Covid background, but you will I’m sure be pleased to know that we believe that we still have much more that we can do.

We continue to be focussed on player safety with Covid but we also recognise that we will inevitably be moving to an environment where we are learning to live with Covid and so we plan to maintain sensible precautions whilst at the same time maximising our ability to continue to play a game that we believe is intrinsically safe. As the regulations have diminished we have tried to take a safe but pragmatic approach which gets back to social contact without putting our members at unnecessary risk. We have started to introduce some limited external social events whilst avoiding large indoor activities.

We are keen to promote our strengths as a club, but at the same time to work on addressing our weaknesses. We think that we can exploit a gap in the market that aims at newer and returning players who maybe feel a bit intimidated by more formal clubs. We offer better value than many, but more importantly the friendliness and approachability of our members has made new members feel really welcomed.

As a result we have set ourselves the objective of being a very open and accessible club that encourages players from all backgrounds and of all standards of play. We want to encourage players to develop and improve at a pace that suits them in a friendly and supportive environment. We of course want to improve our facilities as well as our tennis, but we want to remain at heart a village club offering lots of social tennis with loads of opportunities to easily meet other members. We need to retain our older juniors and help the development of younger female members to start to challenge our very strong senior lady contingent. We also want to improve our facilities.

Membership has increased very significantly to 215 over the past year and we expect to grow further in 2022. We are marketing the club in Redbourn, Harpenden, Flamstead, Gaddesden Row and Hemel Hempstead where we are a convenient better value option that welcomes players regardless of their experience and this approach appears to be paying dividends. We introduced a new lower rate for members in their 20's as we had too few members in this age bracket and this has had the desired effect of reducing our average age which is healthy for the club and helps us to get new members by referrals. Whilst adult and younger junior memberships membership has been very successful our weakest area is aged 10 plus juniors as we seem to lose the best players to bigger clubs and lose less committed players to other sports. We need to get together a plan to reinforce this important age group as the lack of teenagers leads to loss of juniors as they get to this age group. It would help us to add onto the committee a member with juniors who are about to enter this age group so we can understand better how to maintain engagement. We also want to continue the improvement to our membership diversity as tennis clubs remain predominantly white middle-aged and older sport and whilst we have materially improved our profile there is more to do here. We continue to believe that the friendliness and accessibility of our mix in sessions especially the Saturday improver session is key to improved inclusivity for inexperienced and new players who maybe wouldn't have considered tennis club membership before. Many thanks are due to Lizzie Geeson for managing our membership over the past twelve months and to Paul Benzie for supporting the IT transition and marketing materials.

Prior to finalising our development plans for the club, we need to secure our lease on Greyhound Meadow. We have existed for many years on a relatively informal lease with 6 months' notice, but if we are to invest material sums we need more security of tenure and we are agreeing this with the PC currently. We are especially grateful to Liz Philpott for helping to manage this complicated process.

There is starting to be some wear to court no1 nearest the clubhouse and we need to keep a close eye on this to ensure that the surface does not break up. We plan to review the various new surface

options in order to make the best long term decision for the club. Our current surface is quite long lasting and good value, but they are more slippery than we would like after rain, and they are hard on knees, joints, balls and shoes. There are a number of newer options that we can consider and if anyone would like to be involved in that process please don't hesitate to let us know.

If finances then permit we would also like to consider applying for consent to install lights on two of our courts.

The growth in membership has transformed the financial position of the club along with the successful applications for Covid support grants.

In terms of facilities we decided last year that in order to preserve the integrity of the clubhouse structure we needed to replace the rotten wooden single glazed windows with double glazed PVC to prevent water ingress. This was a significant cost but has transformed the building from a long term maintenance position as the windows themselves are maintenance free and the building now appears to be watertight. Moisture is the enemy of all timber buildings and if we can keep maintaining the external painting and replace the roof when required we should be able to maintain the existing building for many years and of course our top priority is ensuring there is funding available for court replacements as needed. We remain in Peter Jewell's debt for his fantastic work overseeing the maintenance to the building and the grounds which we manage. Thank you Peter

We have completed a ten year cash flow forecast and are confident that as long as we can sustain membership numbers, we can afford to replace the current court surfaces when necessary and also to proceed with applying for planning consent to provide LED lighting to two of our courts. This may prove to be controversial in the village, but the new lighting technology means that the light spill from the proposed lights is miniscule and the impact on our neighbours we believe in consequence will be minimal. Lights would allow us to continue with all year round kids coaching on court and also to provide winter and early spring and late autumn evening play on our courts. In reality without lights our working members can only use the courts at the weekend in the winter and we believe this opportunity would make a huge difference as long as we remain confident that we can afford the work and can gain planning consent. Our Treasurer Paul Jewell has done an amazing job during his tenure, applying for grants, reconciling our income and managing our costs and this attention to detail has resulted in our newly arrived ability to invest in the long term development of our facilities

Our tournaments on bank holidays and at Christmas remain really popular and were fully subscribed with many really close matches. Our Club championships introduced two new competitions. The first is an Improvers Doubles Competition which is aimed at less confident players who have not played in tournaments before. The intention is to give players experience of a competitive environment and to play in front of spectators both of which can be intimidating for the first time. The second is a Seeded Draw event where we aim to have as many players as possible in the club sign up and on the basis of our experience in the mix ins draw seeded pairs that give everyone a chance to get to the final. Both competitions support our desire to be inclusive and to encourage players to improve and enjoy new challenges.

Team Captains' Match Reports

Watford and District Summer Men's Doubles League – Paul Jewell captain

The Men's team had an excellent second season coming second overall but at the same time playing a significant number of players in the squad over the season. We won four games and lost just two

which in a non-Covid year would have meant promotion. Thanks to our 13 players who represented the club this summer including George, James, Nigel, Mike, Chris C, Steve, David, Chris O'S, Paul B, Tim, Graham, Euan and of course our skipper Paul Jewell! There are six players needed for each match and just three years we weren't able to field a men's team so great job all!

Watford and District Summer Ladies Doubles League – Jenny Turkentine captain

Due to Covid, this was run as a friendly competition, so the results did not affect our standing in Division 6. Only seven teams participated in the division with 3 home and 3 away matches played rather than the usual 12 matches. Only 3 clubs played all their matches – us, Chorleywood and Ravenscroft. We played 6 matches winning 2, losing 4 with 4 points overall winning 25 sets and losing 29 showing how close the matches were especially as we won 240 games losing just 228 – a big thank you to all of our players taking part this year!

Mid Herts Summer Mixed League – Julia Hanson & Tim Moss

A superb win for Redbourn in the Mid Herts Mixed League in 2021. Three mixed pairs played in eight matches, home and away, against Elliswick, St Albans, Potters Bar and Salisbury. We won six matches and lost two matches narrowly beating Elliswick to top the league. Every game counted!

Thank you to our enthusiastic squad of 18 Redbourn players. We managed to include a really wide range of players all keen to play competitive tennis, some for the very first time. The 2022 Mid Herts Mixed League will kick off in early summer. Greenwood Park will be re-joining the league so there will be 10 matches to play. We will start to get the squad together around Easter and try to plan a few mix-in sessions to get us ready.

Orchard League – Philippa Webb captain

Our Ladies Orchard League team enjoyed mid-table success winning two matches and losing two but with some very close games. This year we were in Division 3 with five teams playing each other. Overall, we came 3rd in the total number of sets won, but actually 2nd in the total number of games won! Many thanks to everyone who played.

Ladies Senior Winter League – Dot White captain

Over 60s Division 3B

5 matches, won 2, Lost 2, and one still to play (postponed due to weather) We have entered a team in the Over 60s league for the first time this year. The format is 2 pairs playing 2 sets against each pair, matches on weekdays. We are currently in 3rd place but will probably finish 3rd or 4th. The matches have been very enjoyable. Although we started the season with a squad of 10 players, it is has not been easy to field a team due to injury and personal circumstances.

Over 50s Division 4A

5 matches, won 1, Lost 2, 2 still to play. The Over 50s, run by Lizzie, have struggled to field a team for the matches which can take up to 4 hours at the weekend. I propose that our players have a discussion before the entry date in July as to whether we want to enter teams again next season. Thank you to everyone who has played, Dot

Mens Winter Indoor League Tim Moss Captain

Men's Indoor at The Vauxhall Courts in Luton has been a success with 7 Redbourn players playing in the Indoor Beds League Division 1 under our agreement with Slip End. This is a high standard league which has provided a step up challenge for our players and we have won 3 matches and drawn 1 so far which is our best performance for many years. Thanks to George Booth Chris Connolly, James Booth, Julie Thomson, Joe Glyn-Davies and Paul Jewell for taking part.

Our teams are very solidly competitive although we would love to see the new generation of stronger ladies coming through. The men's team has more players than spaces currently, so we need to understand whether we are trying to share out places or win the league!

Coaching (RTC view)

As a club we continue to look for coaching support outside of weekday working hours as we know that a number of members have requested this, and we believe that Saturdays in particular would be popular. This gives us a challenge making court time available whilst running our very popular Improver/Beginner mix in that is normally full even in January! We also want to structure coaching better so that participants know what they will be learning through each group of lessons and are able to progress from one group of course lessons to another. Our Coaching team plan to bring new proposals for this to members in April. In the meantime, we would like to thank Megan and Jess for their support over the past two years coping with the new rules and regulations and supporting our members. The new popularity of tennis means that there is a national shortage of coaches, and we are lucky to have two dedicated and supportive individuals to help to support our growth as a club.

Summary of 2021/22 season

Having had a year with minimal social events in 2021 we need to wait and see what will be permitted in 2022 but we plan to run BBQ's after the bank holiday tournaments and then review whether or not there is appetite for an autumn event when we better understand the Covid social impact longer term. We then have our Finals Day supper in September and the annual Jingle Bells Tournament and Christmas Buffet in December. We haven't been able to do as much social activity as we would like over the past twelve months, but we hope to put this right next year. We are especially grateful to Maria Allen for her support for all of the events bringing the food, cajoling volunteers and mixing drinks and she has been of course ably assisted by Margaret Jewell the Queen of Chilli for a hundred!

Overall, 2021 has been a transformational year for the club with more play, more new members, more safe social interaction, more competitions, more coaching a new website, a new membership system and more team play alongside an extraordinary improvement in our club finances. This is great but we must use our improved finances wisely and ensure that we are delivering what our members want in terms of facilities and activities. We continue to welcome feedback as to what we can do better and how we can better deliver for you. Your support to us as committee members has been amazing with help for painting, organising, washing up after events, baking and so on and this is much appreciated by all of us.

Thank you. Tim Moss RTC Chair

Treasurer's Report (Paul Jewell)

I have the great pleasure in presenting the Treasurer's report for the year 2021. The club has had a very successful year financially in 2021, both in terms of subscriptions and as Tim has previously mentioned in receiving further COVID support Grants.

Overall subscriptions in 2021 came in at £12,675 which was an increase of 160% over 2020 which was to be expected as 2020 was heavily impacted due to Covid but the subscriptions in 2021 has also easily surpassed the 2019 subscription figure of £9,140.50, underlying the positive growth the club is currently seeing.

<u>Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st December 2021</u>							
			2021				2020
<u>Income</u>				<u>Income</u>			
Subscriptions		12,675.00		Subscriptions		4,857.00	
Social		592.50		Social		208.50	
Coaching		0.00		Coaching		150.00	
Visitors		290.15		Visitors		15.00	
Water		155.14		Water		192.46	
Bank Interest		21.18		Bank Interest		220.52	
Recycaball		0.00		Recycaball		0.00	
Grants		18,240.93		Grants		11,082.19	
Balls / Match fees		498.50		Balls / Match fees		332.00	
Sundries		116.00		Sundries		14	
			32,589.40				17,071.67
<u>Expenditure</u>				<u>Expenditure</u>			
Social		438.05		Social		123.40	
Subscription system Fees		286.70		Subscription system Fees		0.00	
Business rates, Water Electricity		563.55		Business rates, Water Electricity		814.08	
Insurance		1,179.27		Insurance		813.79	
Tennis Balls		410.36		Tennis Balls		445.28	
Maintenance		3,452.52		Maintenance		3,280.75	
Court Resurfacing		0.00		Court Resurfacing		0.00	
Pavilion		5,225.73		Pavilion		710.38	
Printing, Stationery, Website		78.00		Printing, Stationery, Website		209.58	
LTA		584.00		LTA		584.00	
Miscellaneous		531.14		Miscellaneous		540.25	
			12,749.32				7,521.51
Surplus of Income over Expenditure for year			19,840.08	Surplus of Income over Expenditure for year			9,550.16
Subscriptions from members are included in income in the year that they are received.							

The club received three further Covid grants from St Albans Council of £8,144.93, £2,096 and £8,000 in January, March and August respectively. The total grant figure in 2021 was therefore £18,240.93 which was an increase of 64.6% on the 2020 grant figure. The committee decided to spend some of these funds on upgrades to the Pavilion, specifically £4,800 on new Windows but also door repairs and paint etc. The club has received £592.50 from social events, mainly social tournaments and this has covered the £438.05 expenses on these events. Hopefully the club will be able to have larger social events this year.

Moving the Website to Clubspark has meant that we are able to utilise Stripe which is the online payment platform. Hopefully you will agree that payments are now easier to transact using the website for Subscriptions, Coaching and Visitor Fees. I believe this transition has been successful and although there is a bit of work for me to categorise the bank transactions into those three groups, I think it is easier overall than the previous method. Roughly 75% of the subscriptions in 2021 were via Stripe, the rest through traditional BACS transfers.

The introduction of Stripe has meant that the club does have a transaction fee on all transactions which was £286.70 for subscriptions and £19.11 for visitors' fees. The club however has received a total income of £290.15 for visitors' fees which I believe is higher than previous years and could be down to the shift to paying upfront when the court is booked, rather than paying previously via a BACs transfer or cash. The club has received £498.50 for balls in 2021 versus purchases of £410.36, however this is due to a stock left from 2020 so over the two years income has matched expenditure.

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2021							
		2021				2020	
Skipton Building Society - Sinking Fund		42,373.08		Skipton Building Society - Sinking Fund		42,351.90	
Current Account		34,194.82		Current Account		13,806.95	
Cash in Hand		94.46		Cash in Hand		84.46	
		76,662.36				56,243.31	
Debtors		1,388.19		Debtors		1425.18	
Creditors		(671.98)		Creditors		-130.00	
		77,378.57				57,538.49	
Reserves brought forward at 1st January 2021		47,938.49		Reserves brought forward at 1st January 2020		43,188.33	
Surplus of Income over Expenditure for year		19,840.08		Surplus of Income over Expenditure for year		9,550.16	
		67,778.57				52,738.49	
Transfer to sinking fund		(4,800.00)		Transfer to sinking fund		(4,800.00)	
General reserves		62,978.57		General reserves		47,938.49	
Sinking fund for courts resurfacing		14,400.00		Sinking fund for courts resurfacing		9,600.00	
		77,378.57				57,538.49	

Overall, in 2021 the club made a very healthy surplus of £19,840.08. With a large cash reserve of £76,662 as at 31st December 2021 I feel very happy with the proposed large capital expenditure on floodlights as this would make the club more appealing and potentially further increase membership and justifiable increases to membership prices as the club would be able to offer more tennis throughout the winter months. I would like to thank the committee in the way they have continued to support me in 2021 and look forward to continuing in 2022. I would also like to thank Angela Barker our Chartered Accountant, for her assistance in reviewing and agreeing our accounts. This completes my treasurer's report for 2021.

Paul Jewell.

Head Coach's Report (Megan Godfrey-Evans)

Juniors Coaching Programme

In 2021, we welcomed back our juniors to their Friday nights of fun coaching, after having to stop due to COVID 19 restrictions. We had to rebuild the whole programme but were very pleased to see the new players grow especially in our mini red sessions.

When it came to losing the light in October, we wanted to offer an option that allowed us to keep at least the younger juniors going over the winter period. We swapped our red balls for sponge balls and moved into the scout hut remaining on site at Redbourn. I am very pleased to say this was a great success and we have continued to offer this during this term where we have been fully booked.

The coaching team look forward to opening to all ages of juniors after the Easter Holidays on our Friday junior nights and to continuing to hold holiday club sessions during the school holidays when possible.

Adult Coaching Programme

Our adult coaching programme now consist of 4 different sessions as we introduced our new improvers session and moved our cardio to have it on two different days.

We hope to see the numbers in these group grow as we reach the warmer weather; we want to continue to encourage players that tennis is an all year-round game and a great way to stay healthy throughout the winter months. Looking to the future we intend to introduce more structure into our coaching sessions so that players know what we will be focussing on during each individual week of a coaching "term". This will enable our players to understand the content of each course so that they can select the most appropriate course and also so that there is clear progression from one course to another once the previous course contents have been bedded in. We also want to try and match players to the most appropriate course for where they are on their tennis journey at the same time as trying to take availability into account. We expect to launch this appropriate after the Easter holidays so that players can pick their preferred course and arrange their diaries accordingly.

Growing the Club

It's been fantastic to see so many new faces in the last year join the club and we look forward to providing coaching opportunities for everyone. As a coaching team, we are very fortunate to have a strong committee supporting our programmes and working with us to offer what you as the membership are looking for. A big thank you to our committee for all their efforts this year, the club is in a great place thanks to your hard work behind the scenes.

I would also like to thank our coaches working on the team to encourage as many players as we can into the game we all love. Thanks David and Jess, your efforts are much appreciated.

Final thanks go to all the members, thank you for committing to your tennis and developing your skills. We love seeing so many people playing tennis.

Election of Officers (Liz Philpott)

The Chair Tim Moss, The Treasurer Paul Jewell and the Secretary Liz Philpott are happy to offer themselves for re-election to the committee for 2022 as required by the regulations. No other members of the club have put themselves forward for election to the committee.

Members voted for the election of the Club Officers with no members voting against

The remaining committee members, Lizzie Geeson, Peter Jewell, Paul Benzie, Maria Allen, Megan Godfrey Evans and David Lawlor are also happy to offer themselves for re-election.

Members voted for the election of the Club Committee with no members voting against

Membership Rates for 2022/23 Season (Tim Moss)

Please see on the attached slide the fee structure in place for 2021/22. We have reviewed the clubs membership, income, expenditure as well as the requirements of our ten year forecast. We are also experiencing the same upward pressure on costs as are being seen elsewhere in the economy on utilities and maintenance and we expect our future capital costs to go up disproportionately as well in line with current building industry inflation.

CURRENT RATES & PROPOSED FOR THE AGM

	2021/2	2021/3
▪ Membership		
▪ Rolling adult	£90.00	£95.00
▪ Rolling Family	£215.00	£220.00
▪ Rolling Junior	£40.00	£40.00
▪ Rolling Mini	£30.00	£30.00
▪ Social/Guardian	£15.00	£15.00
▪ Rolling Under 30	£40.00	£45.00
▪ Rolling University	£25.00	£30.00
▪ Rolling Friend	£5.00	£5.00

Having assessed these factors your committee believe that the increases shown on the slide are appropriate for our new financial and membership year. Increases are focussed on adults rather than juniors. The committee ask for your approval to implement these increases for any new members and renewing members with immediate effect.

Members voted unanimously to accept the proposal of the committee on membership fees for the 2022/23 season.

AOB

Paul Jewell confirmed that we expect membership reminders will be sent out automatically by Club Spark to members as they near renewal date.

We understand that the Wimbledon Ballot is now being undertaken by the LTA directly with members rather than via the club and you should already have received notification to register for the ballot via your LTA log in.

The club are in the process of replacing the existing honours boards which are now full with new wood replacements with all of the history included.

This concluded the AGM and the Chair thanked the members and the Committee for their time and support over the past twelve months.

Tim Moss

Chair RTC