

STEWKLEY TENNIS CLUB – CHAIRMAN’S REPORT – AGM 2023

Thank you for making the effort and coming out on a cold night to have your say in how the club is run.

I nearly didn't make tonight's meeting – I've got a new job in shipping and we had an incident where a boat carrying red paint crashed into a boat carrying blue paint: the crew were *marooned*.

I'm pleased to report that, unlike those vessels, Stewkley Tennis Club has remained on an even keel in 2023.

The club hosted two notable events with the return of the Tennis Club Ball in February and the Kris Pratt commemorative tournament in September.

With the increased costs of catering and entertainment post-covid, the ball didn't prove a success financially – for a similar event in future, ticket prices need to increase, a less expensive band booked or the catering done in-house, or a combination of all three. Indeed, Pig Racing a year earlier proved much more profitable. That said, I consider the 2023 ball a PR success for the club. Thanks to everyone who helped out on what proved to be a very enjoyable evening.

In September, the club hosted the Kris Pratt Trophy mixed doubles tournament. Special thanks to Sandy Fitzpatrick as well as Penny Monk, Rebecca Hadley and Iain O'Neill for organizing the day. I'm sure I speak for everyone who participated when I say what great fun it was, and really good to see people old and young gathered around the courts.

Our teams continue to thrive in 2023.

The Men's team captained by Joe Millward was promoted in the Winter League and, so far, has played 3 matches and won one. The team is in a similar position to the summer league where Stewkley finished mid table after promotion. We have a team squad of around 6 or 7 players.

The Ladies team captained by Vicki Hull has made a good start to the season and is currently 3rd in the league after 5 matches. There are 10 regular team members but more always welcome to join.

Both Captains teams report high team morale: players are having fun and enjoying the matches.

Financially, the club continues to avoid boats made out of stone – we are not facing any *hardships*. Thank you to Geoff Ball for auditing the accounts and Phil for his continued stewardship as Treasurer.

We also had no welfare issues to report and renewed our membership to the LTA.

Subscription-wise, adult member numbers have fallen slightly in 2022-23 with 64 adults (vs. 69 the previous year) and 2 fewer family memberships (9 vs. 11 last year), and a small increase in juniors from 2 to 9 thanks to some summer signups.

We remain on the lookout for new members and welcome initiatives to attract them. Thanks to Neil Shefferd for representing us at the Stewkley Parish Council Drop in Day a few weeks ago – it generated one potential new member.

In terms of facilities, we have quotes for resurfacing and the budget to cover it – we do need to make a decision about choice of tiger turf or tarmac, and that isn't a decision I can make alone. I propose that we set up a resurfacing working group to oversee the work once a decision is made on choice of surface by EGM if it can't be made tonight.

Coaching-wise, I need to say a big thank you to Matt for his continued dedication to Stewkley Tennis Club and continued efforts to getting youngsters into the game – this year he hosted training sessions for St. Michael's School pupils.

We are a small club run by volunteers.

I would like to thank the committee – Phil, Neil, George, Rob and Matt – for all their help over the past year. And thanks to new member Natalie joining us today and volunteering to write minutes.

The club needs new committee members and new leaders to thrive – after a two-year spell as Chair I intend to stand down but would like to remain on the committee as Welfare and Subs officer. I welcome anyone with an interest to volunteer for the role – you will be supported.

Overall, the club continues to offer a safe, welcoming environment for new and existing members to enjoy the game, and is on the right tack to do so for the foreseeable future.

Thank you.