

## **STEWKLEY TENNIS CLUB – CHAIRMAN’S REPORT – AGM 2022**

A funny thing happened on the way to tonight’s meeting. I witnessed a lorry load of terrapins crash into a coach full of tortoises. It was a turtle disaster.

I’m pleased to report that 2022 – the first of my two years as Chair – has not been total disaster for Stewkley Tennis Club.

The club hosted our first events after two years of COVID-19 lockdowns.

Pig Racing held here in April was well-attended and raised more than £600. I’d like to express special thanks to Julie Dawson for organizing a wonderful evening.

In June, the club hosted the American Charity mixed doubles Tournament in aid of UK Cancer Research. Thanks to Ian O’Neill for organizing the competition and to all those who helped with afternoon tea. I’m sure I speak for all who participated that it was great fun, and really good to see people old and young gathered around the courts.

Less successful was our Jubilee Weekend man-vs-ball machine competition. Thanks to Ramsey Crane for the use of his ball machine and Malcolm Lee for technical support. Despite the monsoon, we raised a few pounds for Willen Hospice.

2022 saw several successes for our teams.

The men’s first team captained by Ian O’Neill finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in Aylesbury & District Summer League Division 6 and will go up to Division 5 next year. The team currently ranks top of Division 7 in the Winter League to which it was promoted last year – so far, we remain undefeated against rivals from much larger-sized towns such as Berkhamsted and Tring.

Our new second men’s team captained by Malcolm Lee finished a credible third after its first outing in the MK Summer League.

The Ladies team captained by Claire Munday returned to Division 8 for Winter season 2022-23 and has so far played four matches, drawn two and lost two. Unfortunately the team was unable to complete half its matches in the MK Summer League due to injury and illness. That said, there has been a drive to recruit newcomers with 4 new players brought into the fold – 3 of whom enjoyed their first matches this season.

I said earlier that 2022 was not a total disaster – in fact, we remained in a strong position throughout the year for finances and membership.

We had no welfare issues to report.

Member numbers remained stable for 2022-23 with 54 adults (vs. 56 the previous year) and no change in numbers for other membership categories: so 11 family members, 4 students, 7 juniors and 3 non-playing members.

I am hopeful that our initiatives will attract new members.

Initiatives include facilities updates that started with the club hut this year and will continue with a new surface.

Initiatives include the return of the Tennis Ball in 2023 – tickets went on sale today.

Initiatives include support for head coach Matt Evan's programs. I need to say a big thank you to Matt and his team for their continued dedication to Stewkley Tennis Club and to getting youngsters into the game.

We are a small club run by volunteers.

I would like to thank the committee – Phil, Neil, George, Rob and Malcolm – for all their help over the past year. It is with sadness I report that Kris decided to resign from the committee and role of Secretary, and I would like to express my gratitude for all her hard work in planning and overseeing the build of the new hut.

The club continues to offer a safe, welcoming environment for new and existing members to enjoy the game, and is set to do so for the foreseeable future.

If I was a turtle, I'd find that cause for shell-abrasion.

Thank you.