



Chairman's Report November 2023

Dear Members

Wow, another AGM has come around so quickly, where has the year gone, another great year at MPLTC. Below are a few of my thoughts from the past year, and the year ahead, but if I was to briefly summarise the state of the club: ***Still thriving!***

NEW COURTS

The most important development this year has been the acquisition of the spare bowling green from our neighbours MPBC. This land has been much discussed over the last 20 years, so I am absolutely delighted that we have finally bought it, and we can now get on with the job of expanding our club with more courts.

Martin Goodwin played a pivotal role in helping with getting this transaction done. Helping us, but also gifting a lot of time and support to MPBC, which they really needed. A big THANK YOU to Martin from me on behalf of the membership. I would also like to thank Sharon Wilson from MPBC and wish the bowlers all the best for the future. We know this sale will mean a lot to them too, helping to make improvements and secure their club for the coming years.

So what next? We have just booked our pre planning appointment with Wandsworth council, to talk through our plans before submitting our application for two floodlit tennis courts. Our intention is to secure planning permission for tennis courts whilst continuing to investigate if padel is a viable option for the members to consider. My growing view is that permission for padel will be highly challenging on this new piece of land. Once we know for sure what our options are, we will come back to the membership to ask their view.

I have been asked many times about what tennis courts we'd like to put down. This will be up to the members, but I would imagine there are 3 possible options, which we will put to a vote at the appropriate time:

- 1 – 2 x Hard Courts
- 2 – 2 x Clay Courts (with a watering option)
- 3 – 1 x Hard & 1 x Clay (with a watering option)

If we have 3 options, we will likely implement an alternative vote or ranked voting system. We will hold an EGM when we get to this point.

Two courts, floodlights and the necessary terrace / landscaping will likely be around £250k. We have a surplus well in excess of this (see Treasurers report) ready for when we pull the trigger.

I can't tell you how excited I am about the reality of new courts at MPLTC.

THANKS

I am very grateful that the volunteering spirit remains alive and well at MPLTC. A key duty of this report is to thank those who have contributed to the club in the past 12 months. Our spend on "paid support" is vastly reduced thanks to the vast hours volunteered.

At this point, I would like to call out 2 members in particular, long standing club members who are stepping down from the board.

Heartfelt thanks to Di Wemyss and Sarah Seaholme. They are two stalwarts of our club, part of the furniture really. They have served the members brilliantly as part of the board over the last 4 years. Both will continue volunteering at the club, Di on the membership sub-committee and Sarah on the social tennis sub-committee.

Thank you Di! Thank you Sarah!

The board continues to work well as a team, and I would like to thank them all for their contributions over the past 2 years.

Stewart – For keeping a steady hand on our finances and partnering me to Clay Classic glory.

Penny – Generously commits so much time to the slick operations of the club and bar. Being so close we often rely on Penny and she always says yes without complaint.

Dominic – Our facilities continue to improve year on year, thanks to Dominic's commitment. He also commits many hours to onboarding new member as part of our membership sub-committee.

Catherine – Website, booking system and comms is a job that means that Catherine is always "on duty" as members expect quick replies, which she manages to keep turning over.

Sam – Our Director of Fun! Our events continue to impress, so thank you to Sam and his team.

The Board would like to say a big thank you to Amy, who has delivered on every occasion and always with a smile!

We would also like to thank Catherine Copping, who has taken on the role of Welfare Officer and been doing a good job of keeping our members and staff, safe and in line with LTA guidelines.

Finally, we would also like to thank all the club unlockers who open the club every day to make sure we can get on court – these are Amir, Suzanne Eyre, David Hawkins, Giles Topping, Farouk Razvi and James Nethersole.

The BOARD

This board now begins to serve a new 2-year term, so all positions will be up for re-election again in 2 years time. Would you like to be involved in the Board or a sub-committee in the future? Please reach out.

We have had some interest from members about the Treasurer role. Stewart is chatting to those members and will line someone up to work with him over the next couple of years.

We have not had anyone show interest in the Chairman role. We will put this on our board agenda over the coming months, as my intention is still that this is my last term as Chairman. Personally I think the next Chairman should come from within the committee or have some experience on the committee, so it's important that we bring more people into the fold who want to be involved with the running of our club.

SOCIAL

Social events have had a great 2023, and The Masters of Fun would like to thank all of you who have attended them, making our job easy (ish). This year we have seen Miss Demeanour host the Clay Classic Finals Party, (despite the Mixed Doubles Final still being mid way through the 2nd set), the ever-iconic 8th Trioracketathon and another amazing 3 weekends of the Summer Tournament with more and more members joining the off-court excitement each year which we love to see!

The Fast-4s Committee (Joel, Steve & Ryan) had their biggest sell-out year yet as the Fast 4s tournament grows in popularity, Penny Sloman yet again delivered a great couple of events with the Ladies Dixons Cup & the Saffron Davies Charity Tournament, and we have started to branch out with new events like the Padel Open Days and the Rafa Nadal Academy evening.

As we turn to 2024, we want to continue putting on these amazing events all year round for our members. Dan and I love giving up control to other people so if anyone is interested in running an event at the club, please get in touch and we'd be more than happy to support you! For now though, a few mentions of thanks to the people who have helped make these events possible this year - Dan Robinson (nothing gets by him!), Sally Horder, Sarah Seaholme, Cassie Stubbs, Penny Sloman, Amy Cockle, Joel Morris, Steve Leighton, Ryan Pattle, Robbie Healy & Jake Whalley.

TEAM TENNIS

Great contribution to matches across the board in the Ladies Section but some special mentions to new joiner Ilge Alpay who played seven matches across the women's and mixed divisions in her first season with the club, as well as more regular team members Alex Cummine, Anna Lowe who played five matches in the winter season and Catherine Trevor, Danielle Snapes and Sarah Morse in the summer season.

We had a good summer season with the firsts securing promotion back to Div 1 which was a great outcome!

The seconds had some hard fought matches in a tightly contested division but managed some late wins (in summery October?!) to maintain their position in Div 3.

Thirds secured promotion in the summer season to Div 5, with fourths moving one division down to Div 6.

The fifth team are targeting Div 8 across both seasons as they are currently in Div 9 in the winter and summer after some close losses (championship tiebreaks can be cruel!).

All in all, a great performance by the ladies teams. Excited for the winter season ahead!

The Men's section continues to be oversubscribed and thriving. A brief summary of what happened last year:

Winter Season '23

A fairly average season by our recent standards! The highlights were:

- Our first team regained promotion to the 1st Div by winning the 2nd Div

- The 8th team won Div 12, really this was to be expected considering the depth in our men's section.

Most Valuable Player: Will Bannister had a captain's performance, winning 7 of 8 rubbers while guiding his team back up to the 1st Div.

Honourable mentions: Ben Scarlett (5/6) Lee Phillips 6/6) and Ben Mitchell (6/6)

Summer season '23

The men were back on form, winning two divisions and coming 2nd in 3. Congratulations to the 5th and 6th teams! The 1st team were within a hairs breath of winning the 1st Div, which has not happened for 10 + years.

Most Valuable Player: Matt Johnson and Jordan Pritchard won more matches than anyone, both winning 7 of 8!

Honourable Mentions: Jake, Will Bourne, Polish Tom and Felix all won 4 of 4, Louis and Jonny Hall won 6 of 8, David O' Brien and Ozan won 5 of 6, Luca won 6 of 6

MPLTC ladies have six *Midweek teams*, three in the open divisions and three in the over 49s. We are short of young players, so most midweek team players are in both the open and vets teams, so kept busy! In the Open, our teams range from division 4 to 9, so a big range of play. In the over 49s there are only four divisions and we feature in 2, 3 & 4 - tight competition.

The matches are played in the mornings, Monday to Friday and are usually followed by a snack lunch, tea/coffee and chat. New players are very welcome, so if you are available during the week and would like to play competitive tennis, do please let Edwina Le Blanc Smith know.

TOURNAMENTS

The summer and winter tournaments were absolute highlights of the club year. Over 100 men entered the singles this summer, showing how popular the tournaments remain. The results are included below for posterity.

Club Champs 2023

Mens Singles

- Jacob Whalley [1]
- William Bannister [2]

Womens Singles

- Elliesa Ball [1]
- Hannah Ferrett [2]

Mens Doubles

- Ed Gibbs [5]
Matthew Johnson
- William Bannister [1]
Joel Morris

Womens Doubles

- Hannah Ferrett [1]
Georgie Pool
- Maeve Crowley [3]
Katie Kelsall

MS 45+

- Guillaume Huteau
- Frederic Thomsen [1]

MD Handicap

- Guillaume Huteau
Ryan Pattle
- Simon Craig [3]
Lee David Phillips

WD Handicap

- Penelope Sloman [1]
Danielle Snapes
- Veronica-Jane Lowe
Samantha Wood

XD Handicap

- Gareth Nicol [2]
Penelope Sloman
- Dominic Adams [3]
Maeve Crowley

Clay Classic 2023

Mens Singles

- Jacob Whalley [2/16]
- William Bannister [1/16]

Womens Singles

- Lidia Burrows [1/4]
- Savannah Simons [2/4]

Mens Doubles

- William Bannister [2]
Joel Morris
- William Bourne [4]
Tom Brown

Womens Doubles

- Georgie Pool [1/2]
Savannah Simons
- Alexandra Cummine
Kelly Louise Spry

Mixed Doubles

-
- 1 Tom Brown [2]
Lidia Burrows
-
- 2 Spencer Alderton [1]
Georgie Pool

MD Handicap

-
- 1 Gareth Nicol
Stewart Tan
-
- 2 Dominic Adams [2]
Tom Dyakowski

WD Handicap

-
- 1 Katie Kelsall
Nancy Pickett
-
- 2 Monica Davis
Penelope Sloman

XD Handicap

-
- 1 Gareth Nicol [1]
Penelope Sloman
-
- 2 Mike Francombe [2]
Anna Lowe

See you at the AGM!
Gareth