



Chairman's report 2021

Welcome to the 2021 Horsham Lawn Tennis Club AGM. Thank you for joining us. First of all, I think we'll all agree that it has continued to be a strange year! The cloud of Covid-19 has determined what we can and can't do in our lives, and tennis has been impacted along with everything else. We were fortunate that tennis came out of Lockdown in time to enjoy our tennis during the summer. A big thank you goes to all our members for being so understanding and supportive and to my fellow Committee members, many of whom have put in extra work to keep everything running smoothly with the minimum of disruption to members.

Similar to last year there have been lots of positives. Due to a long period when tennis was just about 'the only game in town', and with many members not working so much or working from home, the courts were fully booked from dawn to dusk for much of the open times. Many members, including some who hadn't previously been regular users of the courts, took the opportunity to get outside and enjoy having a hit with family and friends. It's been great to see so many members on court

Our membership has remained at great levels and currently stands around a healthy 300 members! It's fantastic to see the courts full and I hope this utilisation continues through the winter months. As a polite reminder, due to the increase in membership over the last couple of years, the demand on the availability to play does become slightly more difficult. If you have booked a court and find you are unable to use it, please remember to unbook the court so that others have access to it.

Facility Development

Over the last few years, we have been looking at improving the facilities at Horsham Lawn Tennis Club and work has been continuing behind the scenes to achieve this.

I would like to place on record a massive thank you to Richard and Lawrence who have once again done a great job on the grass courts and the feedback from members has been fantastic. Work has started preparing the courts for next season and we all look forward to playing on them again next year.

I would also like to place on record a huge amount of thanks to Hans Lansbergen who has taken his role as vice chairman to the next level this year. Hans has attended meetings to help push forward the development of the facilities, written a number of funding applications and produced some fantastic presentations to show the benefits of a facility upgrade.

This hard work has culminated in £29000 inc VAT being spent on courts 4 & 5 having a full resurface and courts 1-3 being re-bonded and painted, providing us with a safer surface to play on through the winter months.

Further Development

As a committee we are aware that there are still some issues with the floodlighting, especially on courts 4 and 5. One of the areas that we have passionate about is replacing the current halide floodlight system to an LED system. Not only does this reduce long term costs, have an excellent lifespan and are kinder to the environment by reducing carbon emissions. They will also provide a better light to play tennis under!! As I previously mentioned, Hans has been writing presentations and funding applications to show the benefits of the club becoming green and upgrading our current lighting system. I am delighted to announce that he has been successful in obtaining £10,000 of grants to help push through the installation of LED lights.

The total cost of the project is just above £27000 and through the tennis section we are aiming to raise 50% of the total through grants and fundraising with the other 50% coming from Horsham sports club. We are aiming for a provisional date of 24th January to start the upgrade.

Fundraising and Subscriptions.

I would like to start by thanking the management committee of Horsham Sports Club for the support they have shown during the developments of the tennis facilities. Chris Wassell and the rest of the team have looked at our growing section and been instrumental in helping get these improvements over the line.

Why do we need to fundraise? Fundraising will help us achieve our goals and keep the tennis club sustainable - The projects that have been completed and those that will be undertaken imminently do not come cheap and we are looking at a number of ways to bring additional monies in to ensure when works need doing, we are able to progress quickly and make decisions at committee level, this includes raising a few more pounds for the LED instillation.

We have set up a go fund me page which can be visited at <https://gofund.me/96905487> which any donations small or large can be made into.

There will be some exciting opportunities on here too from having a 10-year membership, lifetime membership, court naming rights (named after our most generous donators) and sponsorship of our club tournaments. We having an exciting opportunity of fundraising support through Barclays Bank where up to £4000 of monies that have been fundraised will be matched.

During our discussions with the management committee, we have also discussed raising membership fees if this was to help raise funds for the tennis section. Once again it was agreed that increases made to the membership would go in to our sinking fund for future projects and developments. These include fencing replacement plus future court resurfacing and painting. Over the last years we have had moments that we felt as a committee we were unable to raise prices (poor grass courts, no floodlights working etc.) Therefore, we have found ourselves short of an RPI increase which in turn has diluted the funds coming in to the section – which are required to make the improvements required.

The two questions that are always asked when discussing a membership rise are “where does my money go” which is always a valuable question. The tennis club has direct costs which include LTA affiliation and league fees, electricity costs, booking site charges and court maintenance (grass and hard) etc.

There are also costs derived from being part of Horsham sports club and supporting the club that supports us – these include admin and staff salaries, marketing, utility bills.

The second question is “What do I get for my money” a very similar question but is one that is often harder to answer because league affiliation and insurance don’t always apply if you don’t represent a team and insurance is often taken for granted.

This year the answer is simpler as we can see the improvements – 5 fresh hard courts, 4 grass courts that played beautifully during the summer months (a facility that can be costly to maintain – but is adored by the majority of our members) The imminent instillation of LED floodlighting. The total costing of these works is close to £60,000. The monies we put in to the club don’t get “lost” however we also don’t need to spend this every year so we are in a great position to support and develop the rest of the club. Our membership stood at 126 when I took over as chairman, during this period we have seen Horsham Sports Club grow to the wider audience and it’s no coincidence that the tennis section has more than doubled in this period. The introduction of fireworks night and the big gig has seen thousands of people come through the doors every year many who didn’t even know the club was there – off the back of these events I still have new members join because they had been to these events and hadn’t realised the courts were there.

Coaching

The Coaching programme was once again disrupted at the start of the year with lockdown closing the coaching down through until Easter, however since the programme has resumed, we have seen many members, non-members and juniors head to the courts to improve their game.

As most of you know, I tore my achilles on court in September, I am now in the early stages of physio and hope to be back full time at the start of 2022 - I would like to thank Nigel Allingham for stepping in at a crucial time to help cover the programme in my absence, it great to see Nigel back home! Alex Welton who although has begun a university degree has helped the continuation of the Saturday morning sessions by filling in for me and Tessa Walder continues to work tirelessly with the little ones and I’m sure is pleased that they can now access the indoor facilities!

Club Tournament

The Club Tournament continued upon the successes of last year, A huge amount of thanks goes to Josh Thomas who organised the tournament this year and uploaded it onto the website. It can be a thankless task running a tournament with some players unable to complete matches on time, not being available for finals day etc. Josh did a fantastic job of maintaining order throughout the tournament.

It was great to see new members and players who took part last year for the first time entering again, with some great matches being played throughout all rounds.

Final’s day had a great turnout of spectators and were treated to some fantastic matches being played on the courts.

Well played to everyone who took part, it was a really enjoyable atmosphere at finals day and gives us the impetus to make it even better next year.

2021 Roll of Honour			
Men’s Singles	Daud Sadiq	bt	Zach Hodges
Men’s Doubles	Dom Hall & Daud Sadiq	bt	Dome Robeson & Glyn Jukes
Ladies Singles	Sophie Kitson	bt	Donna Copeland
Ladies Doubles	Donna Copeland & Sophie Kitson	bt	Emma Blair & Louisa Malcolm

Mixed Doubles	Sophie Kitson & Dom Robeson	bt	Emma Blair & Dom Hall
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With no winter league matches last year it was great to get some club play this summer. The teams had mixed fortunes but a huge congratulations to the men's 3rd who achieved promotion.

Standings Summer 2021

- Men's 1 Position 4 of 7 in division 7
- Men's 2 Position 4 of 7 in division 9W
- Men's 3 Position 2 of 8 in division 11W Promoted
- Men's 4 Position 8 of 8 in division 11 W
- Men's 5 Position 8 of 8 in division 13 W
- Ladies 1 Position 7 of 7 in division 3

In the mixed Dorking and Leatherhead league our team were successful winning Division 2 in a league of 7 teams.

Congratulations and thank you for taking the time to represent our club.

In Memoriam

I would like to pay respects to Horsham Cricket Club president Barry Peay.

Barry was a loyal servant to both Horsham Cricket Club and Horsham Hockey Club, as well as giving many years to the main club. Barry would always ask how the juniors were doing on the tennis courts and would take the time to have a chat about the tennis section. Our thoughts go out to Sarah and the Peay family.

I would also like to pay my respects to Rod Chapman – A tennis and squash member who sadly passed away. Rod was always full of energy on court and would often say with a big smile “get the kids to watch over here and see how it should be done” before striking the ball in to the bottom of the net or 2 meters over the back fence before saying “and that’s what not to do”.

Both gentlemen will be greatly missed at Horsham Sports Club.

And finally....

A big thank you goes to Josh Thomas who will be standing down from the committee this year as an imminent move back across the pond awaits. If anyone would like to join the team, please let our committee know.

The fantastic feeling around the club has continued with an amazing fireworks evening and with the return of the big gig it looks to be a great forthcoming year. There's lots of enthusiasm from our members to get on court so bring friends and family down and give everyone a warm welcome and make Horsham LTC even better.